

Commentary/Op-Ed - September 2018

Op-Ed: Getting New York's Excelsior Scholarship Program Right

Governor Cuomo is right to focus on college affordability, but his Excelsior Scholarship program is only reaching a small number of New Yorkers. With a few tweaks, New York can make Excelsior a powerful engine of educational opportunity.

by Tom Hilliard

Governor Cuomo created the Excelsior Scholarship with the right vision: that a college degree should be affordable for all New Yorkers. But new research from the Center for an Urban Future shows that only 20,100 students received Excelsior Scholarship awards in the program's first year—just 3.2 percent of all CUNY and SUNY students—and over 43,000 students' applications were denied.

In this *Albany Times-Union* op-ed, CUF Senior Fellow for Economic Opportunity Tom Hilliard proposes four key tweaks that can help Excelsior reach its full potential and increase college affordability for more New Yorkers.

Read the op-ed here.

This op-ed is a continuation of the Center for an Urban Future's extensive research on higher education and college affordability in New York, including the recent study *Excelsior Scholarship Serving Very Few New York Students* and the major report *Degrees of Difficulty: Boosting College Success in New York City*.

Photo Credit: Andre Hunter/Unsplash

This op-ed was made possible thanks to support from **The Clark Foundation** for ongoing research on improving college access and student success. General operating support for the Center for an Urban Future has been provided the **Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation** and the **Altman Foundation**. CUF is also grateful for support from **Fisher Brothers** for the Middle Class Jobs Project.

Center for an Urban Future (CUF) is an independent, nonprofit think tank that generates innovative policies to create jobs,

reduce inequality and help lower income New Yorkers climb into the middle class. For 20 years, CUF has published accessible, data-driven reports on ways to grow and diversify the economy and expand opportunity that are anchored in rigorous research, not preconceived notions about outcome. Our work has been a powerful catalyst for policy change in New York City and serves as an invaluable resource for government officials, community groups, nonprofit practitioners and business leaders as they advocate for and implement policies to address some of New York's biggest challenges and opportunities.

RELATED PRESS

Gov. Cuomo's Free College Hustle

The Indypendent, by Peter Rugh, September 04, 2018

Few students use Excelsior Scholarship here

Adirondack Daily Enterprise, by Jesse Adcock, October 23, 2018

Excelsior Scholarship Expands To Aid More Families

SUNY The New Paltz Oracle, by Nikki Donohue, January 30, 2020

Cuomo promised 'free tuition.' Has New York delivered?

City and State New York, by Alyssa Sims, March 06, 2019

The Ups and Downs of Excelsior Scholarship's Freshman Year and What Comes Next

Gotham Gazette, by Eric Neutuch, October 30, 2018

State funding boost could make 'free' CUNY tuition a reality for more New Yorkers

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, by Victoria Merlino, January 27, 2020

Free College, Strings Attached

Dissent Magazine, by Amir Khafagy, March 27, 2019

We've Got Issues: The Candidates for Governor on Education

City Limits, by Kate Pastor, October 31, 2018

Can free college work at 4-year colleges? Early examples offer clues.

Education Dive, by Daniel C. Vock, January 14, 2020

Free SUNY-CUNY Excelsior Scholarship Back for Year 3

Yonkers Times, by Dan Murphy, May 04, 2019

A Few Suggestions for Andrew Cuomo's Next Poster

New York Magazine, by Sarah Jones, January 09, 2020

Two-year schools giving pilot program applications the 'old college try'

ROI-NJ, by Brett Johnson, September 14, 2018

'Free College' at One SUNY School Shows 'Excelsior' Progress and Problems

Gotham Gazette, by Eric Neutuch, May 13, 2019

State Senate to hold hearings on rising SUNY tuition costs

Daily News, by Michael Elsen-Rooney, October 10, 2019

New York's middle-class scholarship program criticized

Fox 5 NY, by Fox 5 NY Staff, September 18, 2018

New York's Excelsior Scholarships rise 20 percent, but tough requirements exclude many

Times Union, by Rachel Silberstein, September 11, 2019

Cuomo's Free College Scheme Fails Poorest Students

Liberty Nation, by Andrew Moran, September 25, 2018

Why New York's free college program is still costing its students

Vox, by Michael Waters, February 13, 2020

CUNY students urging Bernie Sanders to call out Cuomo over free-tuition scholarship program

Daily News, by Denise Slattery, February 28, 2019

The Excelsior Scholarship, CUNY And The Students In Between

The Ticker, by The Ticker Staff, October 16, 2018

Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul Presents NY State Budget on Campus

Marist College The Circle, by Tara Guaimano, February 04, 2020

Why are New York's community colleges losing students in a strong economy?

Westfair, by Ryan Deffenbaugh, March 05, 2019

CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE
120 Wall Street, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10005

cuf@nycfuture.org © All Rights Reserved.