

# FREE TUITION IN DANGER

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The first blow fell two years ago when the Legislature in Albany amended the State Education Law, permitting tuition fees in the public colleges in City and State.

In 1962, despite the efforts of citizen groups, of student associations, of our Alumni of the City Colleges, to bring about a change in the 1961 law, bills to restore mandated free tuition never reached the floor of the Assembly or the Senate.

The second blow fell on January 22, 1963, when the State University Trustees announced the decision to introduce a \$400 tuition fee in the undergraduate public colleges upstate by September 1963. The Trustees also recommended that day that continuing State appropriations for the City's colleges be reconsidered in the light of the Board of Higher Education's policy with regard to tuition fees.

In February and March our Alumni were urged to protest tuition fees in public colleges; ten thousand reprints of our February Newsletter on the subject were circulated. Every member of the State Legislature received a copy. The other City College Alumni offices issued their own appeals and reports, the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of the four Associations conferring frequently on plans.

Now for our 1963-64 continuing campaign—since it appears at this writing that the State Legislature will not vote on our matter this winter despite all appeals—a State-wide Committee will be set up, with representatives of education, labor, and welfare groups, as well as our City Alumni Associations. This committee will be organized and staffed for continuing operations until victory for the principle of mandated free tuition in public colleges in City and State is achieved.

The issue is indivisible—tuition fees upstate will inevitably mean tuition fees downstate. Pressures will be brought to bear on our Board of Higher Education by the withholding of State appropriations.—Citizens upstate paying tuition fees for their children are hardly going to acquiesce in the allowance of State funds of \$32,000,000 or more annually for the City's colleges, if they remain tuition-free.

No one who heard the upstate students' pleas on March 11, as they visited Assemblymen and State Senators in their chambers, no one who saw them later that day parade on Albany's Capitol Hill can forget them, can forget their reports of their plight, as they face tuition fees in September.

The student march on Albany had been organized by the City College Alumni office, acting for our four City Alumni Associations. Between 2000 and 3000 students had come in busses from the upstate public colleges, and from the City colleges. Parading up and down and around the Capitol, their banners held high, the young people conducted themselves with dignity and decorum throughout the day. All arrangements had been carefully made in advance and were carefully followed. Towards evening the great crowd thronged into the theatre close to the Capitol, for the indoor rally. The enthusiasm, the response to the speakers who addressed them—I had the privilege of representing the City Alumni—remain in our memory—a spur to unremitting effort on behalf of all young people deserving of a college education who may have limited means.

Our Alumni Association's plans to carry this great campaign through to success will be outlined on May 8, at our Spring Reception at the Waldorf-Astoria.

We here reprint a recent release by the City College Alumni Association covering some contentions, and the *facts*, regarding the issue of free tuition.

## Contentions and Facts about Free Tuition

### CONTENTION . . .

Revenue from tuition is necessary to finance educational expansion.

### FACT . . .

Net additional revenue resulting from a \$400 tuition fee at state colleges has been authoritatively estimated at less than \$5 million per annum, after conservative reductions for rebates and administrative costs.

This is insignificant when compared with an annual operating budget of \$130 million for the State University and the billion dollar expansion program envisaged for the University.

If tuition is intended to contribute significantly to educational costs, the logical conclusion is that fees will have to be doubled and trebled in future years, pricing more and more families out of higher educational opportunity.

### CONTENTION . . .

A "means test" with a rebate procedure will enable poor but able students to benefit from a college education.

### FACT . . .

A "means test" is degrading and inequitable, no matter how carefully devised.

It fails to take into account students from low middle-income families. Such families, while earning more than the net taxable \$1800 a year that would exempt them from tuition, do not earn enough to be able to pay even a minimal tuition. A family of four earning only \$91 a week gross, would still have to pay tuition! A poll at Albany State Teachers College two weeks ago revealed that 20 percent of the students would be unable to attend if any tuition is charged, and another 20 percent said that they would find it extremely difficult to remain.

This would create a special crisis in teacher education at a time when there is already an acute shortage of teachers in the state.

Many of those who can barely afford to pay a minimal tuition will find it impossible to save funds for further study in professional schools.

### CONTENTION . . .

Tuition-free higher education is too costly.

### FACT . . .

A report by the Governor of Illinois' Committee on Unemployment in January 1963, based on U. S. Labor Department statistics, states that an individual with a college diploma earns about \$150,000 more during his lifetime than the man without a college education ". . . and the return to society is greater." *In increased taxes alone, the college educated person pays back to the state more than the cost of his education.* The measure of return in productive output and technological progress cannot be statistically computed, but it is extremely great. The Governor's Committee strongly recommended that more state funds for educational purposes would result in *lowered welfare costs.* "We suggest," the report says, "that a sharp increase in amounts spent for education and training is the best and most effective means of reversing this upward trend in relief costs, that it will prove, in the long run, to be a cheaper solution to unemployment than relief checks."

### CONTENTION . . .

Students should pay part of the cost of their college education because it would be more meaningful to them.

### FACT . . .

If this argument is true, then free public elementary and secondary education should be abolished. A college degree is a prerequisite for a great many more jobs today than it was in the days when free public school education was initiated.

Today a college education is as vital for our national security and to develop leadership for our democratic society as high school education was a decade ago. While family income has risen dramatically in the intervening years, so have living and education costs.

### CONTENTION . . .

Most students attending public colleges can well afford to pay tuition.

### FACT . . .

In a survey conducted at City College two years ago it was found that more than thirty-six percent of the students come from families earning a *gross annual income of less than \$5000.* An additional thirty-eight percent have gross family incomes ranging from \$5000 to \$7000 a year. Only twenty-six percent have family incomes of \$7000 or more a year. Ninety percent of City College undergraduates are forced to take after school and summer jobs in order to contribute to family income and/or pay for books and personal expenses.

While students do not pay tuition, their families must sacrifice the income their children would earn if they were not in college.

### CONTENTION . . .

Most public colleges in the country charge tuition.

### FACT . . .

An overall survey of tuition policies at state colleges revealed no consistent policy either among or within the states.

However, the highly acclaimed state university system in one of the fastest growing states, the University of California, does *not* charge tuition to its undergraduates.

Last week in a neighboring state, trustees of the University of Connecticut unanimously voted to oppose introduction of a tuition fee on the grounds that "basic educational and institutional costs of the University should be borne by direct state appropriation" rather than through imposition of any sort of tuition fee.

New York is 49th out of 50 states in amount of per capita aid to higher education.