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SUNY schools make the grade

by Trevor T. Alford

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State University of New York Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher received good news last week when 11 of the 64 SUNY schools were rated by "Kiplinger's Personal Finance" as among the "Top 100 Best Values in Public Colleges."

"What this ranking says is that SUNY is a bargain. New Yorkers have an outstanding resource right in their backyard and national publications are recognizing that quality and unsurpassed value," said Zimpher.

SUNY has more schools in the recent top 100 list than any other state university system.

The rankings placed Binghamton University at sixth place, Geneseo at seventh, Stony Brook University at 25th, New Paltz at 36th, University at Buffalo at 46th, Oneonta at 47th, Brockport at 63rd, Plattsburgh at 64th, Fredonia at 65th, Cortland at 70th, and the University at Albany at 73rd in the category of "in-state value."

SUNY New Paltz, which was ranked 78th two years ago, climbed 42 spots since 2009.

"The number of SUNY campuses on the list is really quite remarkable and stands out from other states," said Donald Christian, interim president at SUNY New Paltz. "This reflects the high caliber and low cost of higher education opportunities available to New York residents."

This positive review of several SUNY schools comes at a time when state financial support for the SUNY system is on the decline.

Many of the SUNY campuses that placed on the "Top 100 Best Values in Public Colleges" list have been dealing with cuts. The United University Professions, the union that represents academic and professional faculty at 29 SUNY schools, states on its website that \$585 million has been cut from the SUNY system over the past two years.

According to UUP, SUNY Geneseo is phasing out three programs: computer science, communicative disorders and sciences, and studio art. The University at Albany is doing the same to five of its programs: classics, French, Italian, Russian and theater. Also, SUNY New Paltz is in the process of phasing out its nursing program because of reductions to its operating budget.

"We are pleased once again to have our efforts noticed by a national publication," said John Ettling, president at SUNY Plattsburgh. "This acknowledgment is one of many