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March 2, 2011

(New York) - The New York State Senate today passed “UB 2020” legislation, sponsored by Senator Mark Grisanti (North Buffalo), that supports the University at Buffalo’s strategic plan to encourage economic growth and create jobs in Western New York. The bill benefits students, families and the economy of the entire region.

“This legislation represents one of the major pieces of the puzzle when you talk about the economic future of Western New York,” Senator Grisanti said.

“Bringing resources and jobs back to Western New York is my number one priority,” Senator Grisanti said. “I am hopeful this will be a catalyst to start a dialogue with the Governor and the Assembly so we can reach our goals and get these important reforms enacted.”

“I commend Senator Grisanti for his leadership on such an important job creation issue for all of Western New York,” Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. “He made a commitment to get this done and today’s action, the first bill Senator Grisanti passed in the Senate, keeps his commitment.”

“The Senate failed to act on UB 2020 under different leadership the past two years, but Senator Grisanti, working together with the other members of the regional delegation, is moving it forward,” Senator Skelos said. “Now we need the Assembly to pass this bill so it can be signed into law and the UB2020 plan can be used to start the economic growth and job creation that is needed in Western New York.”

The bill (S.3143A) is co-sponsored by Senators George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane), Patrick Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma), Michael Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst) and Timothy Kennedy (D, Buffalo). The legislation, entitled the “UB 2020 Flexibility and Economic Growth Act,” represents their ongoing commitment to the Western New York community and to improving public higher education.

Senator George Maziarz said, “We are following through on an issue that a bipartisan group of legislators and the vast majority of people we represent back home have identified as a top priority for Western New York. We are united in our belief that the UB 2020 vision is critical for growth of higher education and economic development in our region.”

Senator Michael Ranzenhofer said: “As a graduate of SUNY Buffalo Law School, I understand the positive impact UB has in our region and how critically important UB 2020 is to our community. UB 2020 will modernize and expand the University at Buffalo and, at the same time, create opportunities and provide research and technology for businesses and institutions in our community. The passage of UB 2020 today in the State Senate is the first step to making this a reality. I was proud to co-sponsor and support this legislation. I have always been a believer in the University at Buffalo and after today, the entire New York State Senate is a believer too.”

Senator Patrick Gallivan said: “UB is not merely an institution of higher learning; it is part of Western New York’s cultural and economic foundation. For years Western New Yorkers have been sold silver-bullet revitalization plans that have either failed to meet expectations, or been left on the drawing room floor. UB 2020 is a realistic and attainable economic development project. It has the potential to create thousands of jobs, and position our region to attract businesses and compete in a 21st century global economy.”

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“Even though Senator Grisanti has only been in office three months, he has shown great professional leadership in getting this critical legislation passed,” said Paul Brown, president of the Buffalo Building and Construction Trades Council. “The UB 2020 bill, which places no burden on taxpayers, will create thousands of the types of jobs that labor needs. I now call on the Assembly to show the same kind of strong leadership and do what’s right for Buffalo-Niagara.”

The bill would give the University at Buffalo the opportunity to create a tuition policy that is fair, responsible and predictable and enable the school to use tuition revenue to pursue the UB 2020 plan for academic excellence while at the same time protecting students’ access to high-quality education, especially for the state’s neediest students.

The bill proposes reforms to state law that will provide UB with the tools needed to move forward with the UB 2020 plan, a project that is expected to have a positive impact on Western New York, particularly downtown Buffalo with the creation of thousands of jobs in the construction and higher education industries.

UB 2020 has earned widespread support throughout the region because of its potential to spur economic development and create jobs over the next several years. The reforms are needed to provide students with access to world-class higher education that provides them the ability to achieve academic excellence.

Specifically, the bill allows the University at Buffalo to establish differential tuition rates starting with the 2011-2012 academic year. The rates would be limited based on averages from other peer institutions and a semester undergraduate limit of \$375 and annual graduate limit of 15%. The money raised from tuition increases would be used for financial aid programs at the University at Buffalo to ensure that no family making less than \$60,000 a year would feel the effect of the tuition increase; as well as for other University at Buffalo programs.

In addition, the bill provides maximum flexibility to the University at Buffalo for future capital projects on its three campuses by allowing capital project financing to proceed through campus-related nonprofit organizations, which would be allowed to procure financing through the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.



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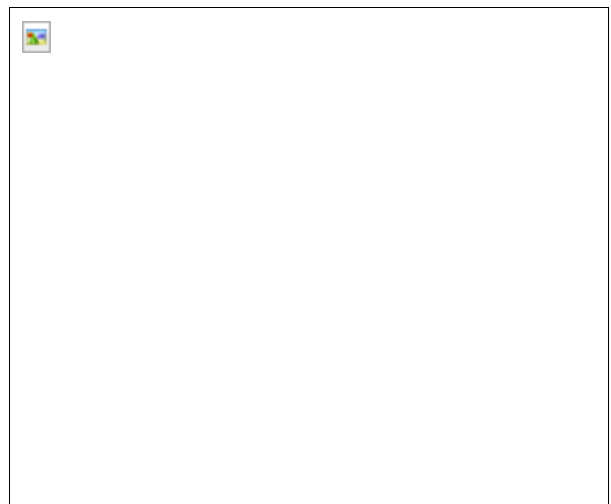
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