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NYS budget cuts may put UB 2020 in jeopardy

By: Nicki Mayo

University of Buffalo officials are calling on state lawmakers in Albany to lay off cuts to higher education, especially those that will impact the UB 2020 plan. YNN's Nicki Mayo reports proposed changes to the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act may put UB 2020 projects in jeopardy.

BUFFALO, N.Y.--- "We need to let our elected officials and all of Albany know that the community demands this," said University of Buffalo President John B. Simpson. The SUNY Buffalo official addressed reporters Monday morning at the New York Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences building in the medical corridor.

Simpson called on the New York State Assembly to vote down a budget proposal that would hinder the UB 2020 plan.

"We recognize that New York has a huge budget deficit and that money is not available, yet the changes that we seek are policy, not financial," said Simpson.

New York is looking at a \$9.2 billion dollar deficit. The state budget is due April 1st.



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Last week the State Assembly cut out several policies from of the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act. The measure would allow the university to lease SUNY property for profit and raise tuition at their discretion. Officials say the policies will help UB compete with other large public universities like the University of Michigan. Simpson says increased tuition will help UB's research initiatives.

"Cost will go up whether we have this policy or not. I'd rather do it in a way that benefits and helps out students and their families rather than surprises them," said Simpson.

The UB 2020 educational and economic development plan would bring 6,700 hundred jobs, 20,000 construction jobs and \$2 billion dollars to Western New York.



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"These are old habits of the state of New York. We're in the 21st century," said former Congressman Tom M. Reynolds. He says it's time for Albany to pay attention to upstate education and economic development.

"We have competition of 62 counties and a lot of regents. We just need to make sure that Western New York is heard and understood in this very important and difficult budget season," Reynolds added.

SUNY Buffalo President Simpson says some legislators and unions are holding up educational reform that allows the university to move forward.

"UB 2020 the plan itself is in jeopardy, and that includes the downtown medical campus that's at risk," said Simpson.



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