February 8, 2018

Dear Members of the Legislature:

I am writing to outline New York University’s (NYU) institutional priorities as the Legislature considers the Governor’s Executive Budget proposal for FY 2018-19. I applaud the Governor for his continued focus on access and affordability of higher education as New York cultivates the talented workforce needed for our global economy.

Affordability remains an important conversation at NYU: one that we are continuing to address in innovative ways. However, the Governor’s proposal to shift funding for the Direct Institutional (Bundy) Aid program into a capital funding program, the Higher Education Capital (HeCap) Matching Grants Program, goes against his stated goals of access and affordability for New York’s students.

NYU and many other institutions throughout the New York have made it a priority to serve students from lower and modest income families. Private institutions in the state have provided over $5 billion in institutional aid to their students; at NYU we provide over $540 million in institutional financial aid annually to our students. Bundy Aid is a long-established program, awarded to institutions based on the number of degrees conferred, that helps over 100 private colleges and universities meet the collective needs of their students through robust institutional aid and other programs that are critical to ensuring degree completion. NYU uses our share of Bundy Aid (approximately $4 million) for institutional financial aid that supports 160 scholarships annually. As both public and private institutions in New York look to further college accessibility, shifting funding of Bundy Aid to another non-student based program effectively eliminates a key state initiative designed to reduce the cost of college degree.

Similarly, HeCap is a vital state program for private colleges and universities that New York institutions remain competitive by providing up-to-date research and high-technology facilities needed for science, technology and biomedical innovation. The program awards capital dollars via a competitive merit-based application process, leveraging matching funds provided by colleges and universities. While HeCap has been a tremendously successful program that keeps the state competitive in developing new technologies and biomedical cures, it has been separate from the Bundy Aid program that has been focused on reducing the cost of an education for state students. Therefore, because each program has long been targeted to accomplish separate goals, Bundy to help students afford a college education and HeCap to keep the state competitive in the physical and health sciences, we urge that these programs remain separate to accomplish their targeted state-specific goals.

The Governor has also proposed reducing funding for the Opportunities Programs, which provide low-income, high need students with critical academic and mentoring services. As the institution with the largest Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) in the state, serving 575 students, we hope that funding for all Opportunities Programs will be restored to last year’s enacted budget levels. In addition, as an institution that has always encouraged students of all ethnic and economic backgrounds to pursue higher education, NYU is fully supportive of the passage of a NYS DREAM Act.
The New York State higher education system has been a remarkably fertile ecosystem, with all three sectors – public and private, aided by state support – doing their part. NYU, and other private institutions, hope to continue our long-standing partnership with the state to develop and train the workforce that our society demands while serving as an engine of innovation for our communities. As all institutions in the state continue to address the accessibility and affordability of higher education, New York should continue its investment of both students and of private institutions through the continuation of long-standing state programs such as Bundy Aid and HeCap.

I have enclosed a summary describing NYU’s priorities during the annual budget process and look forward to discussing our priorities further in the coming weeks. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

President