

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A meeting of the Budget & Finance Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Tuesday, November 21, 2007.

Members Present:

Legislator Ricardo Montano - Chairman
Legislator Jon Cooper - Vice-Chair
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Jay Schneiderman
Legislator Steve Stern

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Bob Martinez - Aide to Legislator Montano
Linda Burkhardt - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Gail Vizzini - Director/Budget Review Office
Linda Bay - Aide to Minority Caucus
Ben Zwirn - Assistant County Executive
Brian Beedenbender - County Executive Assistant
Allen Kovesdy - Deputy Director/County Executive's Budget Office
Charles Stein - Vice President - Suffolk Community College
Dr. Sean McKay - Executive Dean - Grant Campus SCCC
William Connors - Executive Dean - Ammerman Campus SCCC
Yvonne Walters - Executive Dean - Eastern Campus - Riverhead
Debra Alloncius - AME
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Donna Catalano - Court Stenographer

(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:11 A.M.*)

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Can I call the meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee to order with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Stern.

SALUTATION

LEG. ALDEN:

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Yes. Go ahead.

LEG. ALDEN:

We normally observe a moment of silence, and that's for the men and women that are protecting this country and serving in the Armed Forces, some who have actually given their lives on a daily basis. I would also like to add to that list Legislator -- a long serving Legislator, Joseph Rizzo, who passed away yesterday. He served this Legislative body for 21 years.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

LEG. ALDEN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you, Legislator Alden. Good morning. Thank you for coming. We're going to start today's meeting with a presentation from Chuck Stein, Vice President for Business and financial Affairs at Suffolk Community College and his team. Maybe if you can just all identify yourselves for the record, Chuck.

MR. STEIN:

Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to provide you with a status report from Suffolk Community College for the year beginning September 1st. I would like to introduce the Campus Executive Deans that are with me. To my right is Dr. Sean McKay, he is the Executive Dean of the Grant Campus in Brentwood. And to my extreme left is William Connors who is the Executive Dean at our Ammerman Campus at the Selden -- in Selden. And to my immediate left is Dr. Evan Walters who is our Executive Dean at the Eastern Campus in Riverhead.

First of all, I would like to thank you, this Legislative body, for your continued support of the Community College. You have been a long standing supporter of the college and its efforts in serving the community, and it's very much appreciated. Today we want to provide you with a status report on where we stand this for year also how we're preparing for future years.

On an overall basis, what we want to talk about is enrollment, which is up over the previous year. And we also want to discuss the revenues and expenditures. As far as enrollment is concerned, we are the largest community college in the SUNY system in the State of New York. The fall certified head count shows us 22,0092 students. This is a 22.4% increase in head count over the last seven years. Today, there was a story in Newsday regarding SUNY overall. If you have a chance, take a look at it. It talks about the increased enrollment of SUNY.

As far as full time equivalent student numbers, the fall semester shows us up 1.99% over the fall of 2006. There is a caveat there, though. Three point five percent is the increase for our full time students, but our part time students have actually decreased 1.7%. That's an important distinction because full time students pay the same amount whether they're taking 12 credits or 15 credits or

18 credits. Part time students pay per credit. So there is a distinction, and it's an important distinction.

What I'd like to do is talk about the budget briefly. The adopted budget was \$162 million approximately, and the adopted revenues were at 161.3 million. That was -- that provided an imbalance of \$759,000. We are pretty much made up on that. Right now, we're estimating our revenue is up about 151,000 over the adopted amounts. We're estimating expenditures under the budget at this moment at 481,000. So we pretty much made up most of it. We feel very confident that we'll be able to cover the remaining amount.

I'd like to talk about some other activities, including the energy initiative that this Legislature included in our budget, our funding base, cost saving initiatives, our administrative system, capital program and a security issue. On November 2nd, we held the first session on the energy curriculum issue that was included in the budget for this year by the Legislature. And we had attendance from Farmingdale faculty, Suffolk Community, of course, we had teachers from William Floyd School District and even Joe Schroeder from the Budget Review Office right here attended.

Two trainers provided information in the first module that covered the science behind energy conservation design, and that was provided to the perspective trainers and students. The teachers learned the importance of energy conservation, participated in hands-on activities and toured the Megatronics Lab to learn how advanced manufacturing techniques save energy. Last week, we had an opening of the Megatronics Lab at the Grant Campus, and I'm sure Dr. McKay will talk about that shortly. So this is a very good program.

As we've discussed previously, we have agreements with seven area hospitals, and they provided over a six period \$4.4 million for assistance in training. We are the largest nursing education program in the State, and I dare say the best. And our enrollment is over 800 at this point. As far as what we do to control our costs; we monitor and review where our enrollment is and how we can adjust our offerings, program assessments on those offerings, we compare ourselves to our peers, we make adjustments when necessary.

With respect to energy and rebates, over the past six years, we've gotten rebates totaling over \$600,000. The last four years, we've avoided \$1.2 million worth of costs. A lot of this grew out of a recommendation from your Budget Review Office some years ago asking the college work with the New York Power Authority, and we've done that. And it's worked out very well.

We've eliminated certain mailings, we changed our banking service systems, we've implemented electronic retention of records, which saves us time and money. We constantly review the utilization of classrooms and lecture halls and the labs. And that's provided us with savings. We also use grants where we can to help us with needed equipment. Our banner system, which is the enterprise resource planning system is in its third year of implementation. And that certainly is going to provide increased operational effectiveness in our operation.

And With your help, our Legislative -- our Capital Program is moving forward. Our Learning Resource Center at the Eastern Campus is currently in the design phase. Our Workforce Development Building at Grant is the same as well as the Science Technology Building moving forward. And because this Legislature was so instrumental in keeping projects in our Capital Program, we were able to work with the State, and they have included in their next five year plan the Grant Campus Learning Resource Center, the Sagtikos Building renovations at Grant, East Campus Health and Sports Facility and college-wide cooling systems.

Budget Review Office this past year made some recommendations with respect to our capital submission suggesting that we adjust the inflation factor for those projects. We will be including those recommendations as we present the Capital Program recommendations coming forward. And we also are concerned about safety and infrastructure. Unfortunately, there was a terrible tragedy at Virginia Tech this past year. And all colleges are reexamining their safety and security. We are

going to be looking for some assistance for a campus-wide -- all campuses -- loud speaker communication system. We think it's vitally important.

What I'd like to do now is ask each campus to give you some specifics on their campuses. And I'd like to introduce Bill Conners from Ammerman Campus in Selden to start it off.

MR. CONNERS:

Good morning, Legislators. Over the next few minutes, I would like to share some of the challenges and accomplishments of the Ammerman Campus. This past fall, with your support, the Ammerman enrolled more than 12,500 credit seeking students. This represented a FTE, full time equivalent, increase of 4.1% over the fall 2006 semester.

At the Ammerman Campus, we address the needs of our large and increasingly diverse student population with more and better assessment, thoughtful strategic planning, careful resource allocation and through the tireless efforts of our fine faculty, staff and administration. Over the past year, the members of our learning community have responded to campus needs by expanding both our credit and continuing education offering to reflect the academic, occupational and personal needs of our students.

We have revitalized and expanded our Adult Learner Program to attract and assist our returning adults. We've delivered a rigorous English as a Second Language Program and carefully used resources to update learning environments with leading edge technology and appropriate furnishings.

We are especially pleased at the expansion of our International Study Program. Students studied abroad in Spain and Italy last summer, and next summer we plan to have students study in China. We've also completed another year of our innovative College Success Program and reached out to increase our partnerships with area high schools in our service area. To improve, enhance and enlarge our academic offerings, we have expanded the use of academic advisory councils seeking more input from our local and regional business community.

We've expanded course offerings designated as part of our Honors Program, expand the number course offerings available through the Distance Education Program, increased use of community learning sites including expanding offerings at the Sayville Downtown Center and continue to work with four year colleges and universities to develop stronger transfer opportunities through new or revised articulation agreements.

Another important area we focused on in 2007 was enhancing the Ammerman Campus environment. Our overriding goals were to campus learning community that was safe, secure, productive and attractive for students, employees and visitors alike. As mentioned by Vice President Stein earlier, we are very pleased to report the completion of Phase I of the Veterans Plaza Project, which has created the Ammerman Campus with a beautiful Bell Tower Center to our campus. Likewise, we have added to the campus environment through the completion of major renovations in the Islip Arts, Brookhaven Gymnasium, Babylon Student Center and Smithtown Science Buildings.

We've improved the campus infrastructure with new roofs, air conditioning and ventilation systems, are in the final stages of completing a new running track for academic, extracurricular and community use. And clearly, we are very excited about the prospect of adding a Science Technology and Classroom Building by 2011. This will be the first new academic building constructed on the Ammerman Campus since 1972.

In closing, on behalf of the faculty, staff and administration and especially the students of the Ammerman Campus, I would like to thank you in the Legislature who have supported us throughout the years. As we continue with the Eastern and Grant Campus reports, I would like to end by highlighting two special accomplishments that our three campuses participated in during the past year. We had the first combined one college graduation exercise where residents from throughout

Suffolk County watched friends and family members receive their degrees. And for the first time we had the first one college accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary schools. We used to in the past be accredited as separate campuses. We were now accredited for the first time as one college. Thank you for your kind attention. I'd like to now introduce Dr. Yvonne Walters who is the Executive Dean at the Eastern Campus.

MR. WALTERS:

Thank you. Good morning. On behalf of the faculty, staff and students at the Eastern Campus, we'd like thank you again for this opportunity to present. To start out, I just wanted to provide you with a brief profile of the campus. We have approximately 3000 students. And looking at that enrollment number, we are primarily supported by five high schools; Riverhead, William Floyd, Westhampton Beach, Eastport and Center Moriches. We offer unique academic programs. And as highlighted by the Power Point here, you can see the Culinary Arts Program, which right now is a buzz on the campus, graphic design and interior design.

Equally important to highlight is the growing academic programs, particularly over the past three years. We have pretty much seen where there has been a tremendous growth in the student enrollment in these six areas. In terms of campus trends, this past year, we hit a record of hitting over 3000 students. Of particular note, it should be kept in mind that of that number, at least 70% of these students were under the age of 24 years. We are seeing an increasing number of traditional-aged students now attending our campus. Equally compelling is the increased percentage of first-time students who require some level of remediation.

The campus continues with its efforts in being a green campus. Again, some highlighted things that we have done here on the campus; I should say the electronic golf cart that we have and our unique way of pretty much dealing with a problem that we have had on our campus related to tics. There are numerous areas that we would consider successes. And I think some items to highlight here, we are very proud of the fact that at least 70% are our classrooms are smart.

As I mentioned earlier, our new Culinary Arts Center is -- has created a buzz, and there's an expectation that it will have more than just an impact in terms of that particular academic program, but there'll be an increased visibility if not accessibility to the broader community. We are in the design phase for the new Learning Resources Center. Again, another opportunity, not only in terms of expanded the resources on the campus, but an opportunity in terms of enhancing and maximizing on the existing space limitations that the campus has struggled with for the past couple of years.

Some of the things that we are proud of is the accomplishments of our students or faculty and the outreach, ongoing outreach efforts that they've been doing with the community. Our students have been doing -- representing not only the community, but the campus well. We have been successful in being recognized in the Phi Beta Kappa USA All American Program, and we've also been successful in receiving the SUNY Chancellor Award for Excellence.

Our faculty remain at the cusp of excellence by their active engagement in numerous State, National conferences. Our faculty, despite having teaching as the primary focus, remain engaged with research as well. And to highlight a couple of items here that we have been involved with, again, you can see where our faculty and staff continue to remain engaged with the community.

Just, again, to highlight a couple of items here in terms of what our students do. Because we are the smallest campus, and the whole notion of student engagement, this gives you a snapshot of some of the activities our students are currently engaged with beyond, outside of the classroom. And it really, I think, encompasses some of the diverse array of the talents that they, again, possess, both locally and at the State level.

And finally, in terms of successes, I highlight, again, the design phase of the library. It will present for the campus tremendous opportunities in terms of our movement toward creating a one-stop shop operation, an operation in which we'll be able to more effectively and effectively enroll and

matriculate our students. We also function and realize that we have to consistently maximize on existing resources.

And with that said, we constantly move towards revisiting, realigning resources to ensure that we have in place is the best system to meet our students needs. And some examples of that is as we see in Bullet Number 2, the organized staff configuration to address a compelling need that has been fraught with us for the past two to three years.

And the last bullet highlights the co curricular emphasis that we're trying to place in trying to connect both the curricular and the co curricular. Again, the more you're able to engage our students, the better the opportunity you have in terms of retaining them. Thank you. With that, I turnover this over to Dr. McKay.

MR. MCKAY:

Thank you. Good morning. From the Grant Campus, our faculty and staff would like to thank the Legislators for their continued support, not only for the Grant Campus, but also for the college as a whole. Of particular note, if you go back to at least 2000 when we approximately 5000 or so students, if you look at the chart -- the bullets that are on the slide currently, in 2005, you notice that it was 7897 students, and in 2006, we hit the highest peak for the campus where we had 8240 students. These numbers with the double asterisk, of course, does not include the Police Academy numbers currently.

The second bullet talks about special needs, because as you know, that's an area at the -- at the County level that those students will have to come to the campuses. At the Grant Campus, we have a total 452 special needs students, which represents a 12% increase over 2004. Part of our ongoing efforts at the campus is to deal with space and capacity issues. If you notice, we increased our online offerings by 16%, and that's a phenomenal number in regards to enrollment achievement.

The other down side of that at the same time, which is a challenge for the campus in regards to resources, at least 58% of all incoming freshman tested into one or more developmental courses. So that means a shift in resources and realignment for the campus. We continually use data. It's very important to who we are, when we've accomplished, and have we accomplished what we intended to as we promised our faculty and staff. In saying that, we looked at all of our programs, and one of the programs we looked at recently was our Ophthalmic Dispensing Program and that area which was not utilized heavily in regards to enrollment. What we've done, we've come before this body and we've asked for support, because we have the largest nursing program in the State. All of our Allied Health areas are increasing, and we needed more space in regards to programmatic space. We have then put in a request for a new A&P Bio Lab.

MR. STEIN:

If I might interrupt, I do want to thank the Chairman for his leadership and all the Legislators for their support in providing the Capital Funds for this A&P Lab. Thank you so much.

MR. MCKAY:

Thank you. And the faculty and staff certainly send, you know, their thanks as well, because it's a growing need for us as we've indicated. We've offered classes at 6:30 in the morning Saturdays and Sundays, and we still did not have enough space for all science areas in our A&P courses. So this is a major achievement for the campus in regards of realizing the Needs of the constituents.

In regards to cost savings, the next few slides will talk about at the Grant Campus in the Art Gallery, what we've done this year is to go through a skills enhancement and retraining for our faculty and for our staff. This was done all in-house. At the end of the construction and the realignment, we saved the College and the County at least \$35,000 by doing the work in-house.

The next project you will notice is the music room. Well, we have a Music Program at Grant, but we never had a music room that had sound proof where we could run piano and other courses. What

does that mean? If you have a class above the room where the piano lab was, then you have interruption in regards to sound that would, you know, go through the walls. Well, we did this work, again, in-house. Our staff, again, would visit other campuses that did similar work, did their own training themselves and were able to save us, again, in this case, \$50,000. Again, an efficiency project.

For the Grant Campus, which, again, is the most sought after location in regards to community meetings, the Captree Commons Building has two conference rooms. And in that area, that building has not gone through any substantial renovations at all, meaning that in the restroom areas, it was in a state where we had to repair that. We utilized some state funding thanks to Vice President Chuck Stein's assistance, and now that is a location that is sought after.

A project we wanted to highlight here, for example, what the staff has never done before, which again is to take a look at the buildings and to simply power wash the buildings themselves, a project they have never done. If you look at the before, we have a small portion of the before, the entire facade of the building looked just like that spot. After the project, to the left is the after in regards to what was done. Now, the cost savings, there again, by doing it in-house, \$25,000.

Service learning. Where are the students in all of this? Our students in the SG approached me and said, "Dean, let's have a Grant Campus Ambassadors Program and a Dining with the Dean Program." What does that mean for us? That gives the students access directly to the academic officials of the campus. I meet with them regularly every month, and we sit in the cafeteria and we talk about what's happening on the campus in regards classroom, academics, curricular, pedagogy, how can we help. On the service learning piece, they want to get connected to the community. So we try to find community events, functions, organizations where we connect our students so they can then have out of classroom learning in the community as well.

The early morning classes, again, with space initiatives, was a way of doing build-outs. I've mentioned that here before. Right now, we have between 600 to a thousand students attending classes at the Grant Campus. Again, a historical achievement here at the college.

The Early College Program, if I could just talk a little bit about that, it's an initiative where we work with the high school districts. Right now, Babylon, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Brentwood, Deer Park, they're all involved. And I'm pleased to report that those students would -- upon graduation would have at least between nine to 32 college credits that are immediately transferable to any institution. Our Honors Program we've increased at the Grant Campus by 47% over 2005. Again, we've made another initiative which is, again, to include now all of our career programs in the Early College Partnership. So now we have the HVACR Program, Manufacturing, Computer Science, Vet Science, all the technical career programs.

The Workforce Development Technology Center at the Grant Campus will be constructed by totally used LEEDS standards. The campus has also embarked upon recycling efforts, and the students are also involved in that as well. Our energy savings initiative, again, we are looking at purchasing new boilers and chillers that fulfill the LEED retirements for the State.

For the HVACR Program, again, another major accomplishment, the Oil Heat Industry had given us \$80,000 for scholarships into -- for new people to get into the program. What does that mean for Long Island? Well, we've talked about folks moving off the Island. Here is a perfect opportunity where business is working with the college to provide scholarships to get more folks to enter the field where the average starting salary is \$56,000 a year.

We've had seven SUNY Chancellor Award recipients. 2006, we have a National Award Winner, Ms. Abbey Cassella-Graeser, one of our nursing students. Another initiative we did with the faculty, another cost saving initiative is an Arena Style Registration. In the first year we had the initiative at the campus, we had 35 faculty volunteers who actually took part in the Arena Style advisement process, whereby there was no cost to the faculty at all, totally donated time. We've enrolled 200

students. The second year, it was such a success, that more faculty got involved. Now we had 75 -- 70 faculty and over 400 students actually enrolled in that program.

Our Education Technology Unit, again, we talk about smart classroom and technology, we've added 20 smart classrooms from technology fees on the campus. A network storage device was in place. What does that mean for the campus? Our students can go to any lab on the campus and access any of their records. That means it's not isolated to that one lab, but, again, it's a software program we have where on the campus they can go to any lab and access their records.

Our library. Library research, when it talks about information literacy, it's important for our students to be able to access, know how to do research, learn how to conduct data base analysis to be successful in their classes. So now we have LR 11s and 15s, where, again, it's been taught by the library faculty. Again, no cost to the campus or the college, because it's built right into their salaries currently. And what does it mean? It gives us more FTE enrollment at the campus level.

MR. STEIN:

Thank you very much. As we prepare for the coming years, one of the things we're looking at -- earlier I spoke about our enrollment, and I note that following this meeting today, there's going to be a Stay on Long Island Session. I think it's important to note that the largest group where we're seeing a drop in enrollment is in the 36 to 50 year old age group. And I think that there are a number of factors contributing to that, but it's very possible that these people are leaving Long Island. So I think the session coming up, which is one of a number of sessions on the Stay on Long Island issue is vitally important not only for the County as a whole, but it certainly has, we believe, an impact in terms of the enrollment at Suffolk Community College.

As far as our other areas, we've already begun the process of pulling together the budget for our 2008-2009 year. It's a laborious process throughout the college. Everyone participants in it, presentations are made by the campuses and central units to a Budget and Planning Committee. You should note that when something comes to you, it's already gone through a gauntlet.

What we did ask for of Legislative body, they have been very supportive and have provided some initiatives. We ask that should you have initiatives that you're looking at, please communicate those as we're preparing our budget. It would be extremely helpful. We do plan on coming before you, again, hopefully in March to talk about how we're progressing with our budget so that you will be aware of the direction that we are going in. With that, we thank you for continued support, and we look forward to providing additional status reports to you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you, Chuck. Thank all of you. Appreciate it. It's very enlightening. I think there might be some questions from the members of the committee. I have some myself. Let me just ask a couple of quick questions. Chuck, you indicated the -- there's been a decrease in part time enrollment, about 1.7. What do you attribute that to? Is that the same factor that you just eluded to that maybe the older students who tend to be more part time students would be -- are possibly leaving the Island, or is it -- is it that maybe more part time students are becoming full time students?

MR. STEIN:

It could be a combination of everything, including the fact that maybe some part time students are busy at their jobs to pay for higher gas and other higher living costs, and they don't have time to enroll. The 36 to 50 year old age group, the enrollment level was at 92% of last fall. That's 8% drop in enrollment in that group. So there are a number of factors that we're exploring, yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Let me ask you this. You indicated -- I know you have a diverse population within the school. Do you keep figures or statistics as to how diverse the student population is?

MR. STEIN:

Yes, we do.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Can you indicate -- can you tell me how diverse the population is at the school and what the trend is? Is it -- I'm sure it's increasing, but by how much and what percentage, if you know. If you don't have that with you, we can discuss that at another time. Because I know that, for instance, in my district, which has a large diverse population, most of the students that I talk to, for some reason or another I ask them, you know, when you get out of high school where are you going. And invariably, they're going to Suffolk Community College for different reasons.

Some of them can't afford to go to a four year college, some are not ready to leave the Island. So in many cases, Suffolk Community College offers the first opportunity for, you know, a good education. In some of the cases, a lot of the students are first time students in their family that are -- that are college bound. Just I'm just trying to get an idea of where you stand in terms of your diversity.

MR. STEIN:

From our certified enrollment report in the fall, White Non-Hispanic group is up point one-tenth of one percent, Black Non-Hispanic group is down about one-tenth of one percent, Hispanic is up 8.69%, Asian up about two and a half percent, American Indian, Native Alaskan up almost 11%, non-resident alien, no change, and unknown up fractionally.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Well, that's up, but in terms of its present population, what does that break down to in terms of the categories you have, if you know? I mean, is, like, half your student population White Non-Hispanic, three-quarters --

MR. STEIN:

White Non-Hispanic is at 15,810.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Out of what, 23,000? What was the total population?

MR. STEIN:

Out of 22,092.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay.

MR. STEIN:

Let me stand corrected. These will be duplicated head counts, so the total number would be 23,374. We have students who take a class at the Brentwood Campus, and maybe another class at the Selden Campus. So they're counted in this.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Got you. So I would say, quick math, about 60% of your population, maybe more is White Non-Hispanic and the other breaks up into a more diverse population?

MR. STEIN:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

That's a high number. I was going to ask you later on, but since you mentioned it, in terms of students taking courses at one campus to another, is there a built-in transportation system that's provided by the college for a student to get from the Eastern Campus to the Ammerman Campus or

to the Brentwood Campus or is that something that the student is on his or her own?

MR. STEIN:

Pretty much the students are on their own. I know that there has been work in the past in terms of the County's bus system, and buses service our campuses. Could it be better? We hope so. I know this Legislature has been supportive of looking at that.

MR. MCKAY:

If I can add to that as well. I think it's important to note that, for example, at the Eastern Campus where we have the Culinary Arts Program, I know for a fact that we would have students in Brentwood that would want to take part in that program. For example, the Commack High School reached out to and asked us could they get involved in getting some of their students over to the Eastern Campus to take part in the Culinary Arts Program. Similarly, we have students at Grant who want to take part in that program as well, but would be prohibited from getting to the Eastern campus because of lack of transportation.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I think that's something we should look at. Just very quickly, the English as a Second Language Program, you said that that program is growing. I've attended some of the graduations. How accelerated is that growth? I mean, is it something that's -- and obviously, that's not credit courses.

MR. MCKAY:

Right.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

And students pay to attend that program, then they graduate and they go on from there. How has that program been increasing and how has it been doing?

MR. MCKAY:

ESL is a college-wide program. We have a college-wide Dean who oversees the program and a college-wide director who oversees the program. There's intensive portion to that program as well, which is called the IEB Program, which, again, is an intensive six credit portion. We have also that transfer -- transition between the ESL Program into the credit -- For Credit Programs. So, again, while we look for the traditional ESL population, we have variations in regards to how it can transition through into the credit side. Some folks come to us, again, for just skills enhancement. They can go through the intensive portion, which is an 18 credit program, where again, they put very intensive training in that area. Now, for the traditional ESL students, each of the campuses do have -- I believe the East Campus recently has seen an increase in regards to the ESL population as well. I'll have VP Stein just tell us what the numbers are for each of the campuses.

MR. STEIN:

Yes. For the fall semester, the non-credit ESL unduplicated head count was at 2247 students. That's slightly down. Last year, the same semester was 2502. We have seen an increase in the Eastern Campus. It went from -- I'm sorry. Let me give you this year. The Ammerman Campus has 433, the Eastern Camp, 471 and the Grant Campus 1343 students.

MR. MCKAY:

If I could add one more to that as well. As a point, on the record, in Suffolk County, as you know, there's other entities that would provide similar services that would not have a fee-for-service situation. So what we find similarly is that as we provide that service, again, we run up against an entity that may not charge. So what we try to do is to partner with those organizations to have a logical transfer, because, again, what they may provide is the first series of ESL training, when, in fact, at the Grant Campus and Ammerman and East we have several further iterations in which those individuals can then pursue to either career modification skills enhancement or the language modification as well.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I actually am aware of that. I know, for instance, that Pronto offers a course, I know that there there's a course offered at the Brentwood High School. And I think these are less -- much less expensive than at the college. But I don't think there's as intense or at the same level as the college. And what I'm thinking is that those that are at the college are really looking at that program as a way of transitioning into some kind of higher learning, am I accurate in that?

MR. MCKAY:

Yes.

MR. STEIN:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Last question, because I know there are other members that want to ask. You indicated that in the Eastern Campus there's a 48% population in need of remediation, and I think at the Grant Campus, if I heard you correctly, the figure was more or less 58% of the entering students that need some type of remediation courses. That's troubling in terms of why such a high level. And I would imagine that that has been increasing or has it? That's my guess that it's -- you know, I find that to be a high figure, and i'm trying to figure out why. And I know it has nothing to do with the college, but what is the -- is, in fact, that number going up?

MR. MCKAY:

Nationally, if you look at some of the national reports, we are right where the national numbers are. However --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

For community colleges or for --

MR. MCKAY:

Community colleges. And, again, if you look at for first time students that entering either the two-year system nationally or the four-year system, those who enter the two-year system perform at a higher rate successful at the two-year level than the four-year program. That's national statistics. At the college, we have several programs that we've put into place; College Success, EOP, Trio, there's a lot of programs that are there. Our president, this year, has now accessed a committee to look at the entire first year experience now. So now we're going to try to take a look at how our support services can get to the students much earlier.

With our partnerships with the school district, our faculty are now working with the faculty there. For example, in the Megatronics Manufacturing Program, we just had a tour last week with the Federal Government, State and other officials. We've had faculty from all -- from at least eight school districts that came on campus to meet with our faculty to talk about the simulations, the trainings. Now, we are going to give them several module trainings in which they can go back to high school and utilize that information in the syllabus.

We've met with the Deer Park Director of Curriculum. She is going to be working with us now in regards to taking a look at either doing {Copiant} grants and how we can take a look at working collaboratively on curriculum modifications. What does that mean? While we're unique to what we're seeing nationally, we're taking a more proactive step in regards to now getting the services to the students much earlier.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

With respect to the remediation, are you finding this -- I imagine that this is in the English component and also in the Math component. Are you finding that the remediation -- students need a remediation equally in both levels, or is it more in the Math versus the English? What are you seeing in that?

MR. MCKAY:

Again, just one and then pass it on to my colleagues. What we find is that, for example, at the Grant Campus in Reading, we have run every possible sequence for the Reading area. Now, our students test into Reading, Math and English. Now, if you can't be successful in either one of three, of course, you can't be successful in others. So we put a lot of resources into those areas to help the students when they arrive at the campus. And I'm sure my colleagues will share the same story.

MR. CONNERS:

One of the issues that we see is sometime there's a disconnect between the high school teacher expectations and the college expectations. This is especially true in the English area. The Regents is taken in their junior year. In the senior year, for example, many of the students can take literature courses, which may or may not have a writing component. We are very concerned about their writing ability. And that's why very often the students have to take a developmental course, because their writing does not -- is not at a college level, sufficient for college level.

Insofar as the number of sections in the English, Reading and Math, certainly Math is largest of the three. But, again, these are very, very, very costly courses. When you look -- we have 49% at the Ammerman Campus, 49% of our first-time full-time matriculated students have to take one or more developmental courses. When you look at all of that -- all those courses, all those students, if we didn't have to do that, we could have the resources in other areas. It's a very costly thing to do.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Last question. In terms of the remediation, is that -- does that set back a student six credits, nine credits? I'm imagining that -- and based on past experience when I went to school, you know, some of the students were losing as much as 12 credits. In other words, they'd have to be in community college two and a half years to graduate, because half a year was spent in remediation. Is that what you're seeing?

MR. WALTERS:

I would add that I think that's a national problem in that for a lot of the remediation courses that students are required to take, obviously, does not connect to them having credits towards graduation. There's this organization that's sponsored nationally called the Lumina Foundation that's working on a project that called "Achieving the Dream," that's really questioning on putting a charge forward to say, if we're indeed as community colleges need to have more of a focus on supporting these students move into credit bearing courses, should we provide some type of aide in supporting these students, particularly with the reality that the numbers for these students are on the rise. And I think back to your questions in terms of whether or not, you know, we are seeing more on the Math or the English side, for the Eastern Campus, I would say definitely Math has been the greatest challenge for us.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you. Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody. Good to see everyone today. My first question regarding the decline in part time students, for it could be for a myriad of reasons. What, if anything, efforts does the college make in following up with students, particularly these part time students, who don't reenroll to find out the reasons behind them not -- not reenrolling and finishing out their course work.

MR. STEIN:

Our enrollment management area reaches out to the students and actually has a survey that they do to find out exactly what are the causes. There's also outreach from each of the campus student's services areas to try to bring them back.

LEG. STERN:

So there's a procedure already in place throughout really to quantify the reasons why they're leaving and what's being done to follow up and try to bring them all back.

MR. MCKAY:

If I can add to what VP Stein just stated, I believe, when we look at the survey numbers, the predominant area that we see coming back to us in regards to factors is finance. Again, you have transportation, you have finances. What we've done is we've looked at not only the career programs but course sequencing for evening programs. We've created early morning programs, weekend programs, we've tried a lot of different things to react to, whether it be a time-of-day matter.

Now, for the finances issues, obviously, we're limited to what we can do there, because there's some cost factors which are built in and inherent. When it comes to, again, on Long Island, the population, as we've heard, is reducing in regards to who is attending. That's the population that is actually two or more jobs. On the survey, we've asked are you doing one job, two jobs or three jobs. And we have folks that are doing at least three jobs that are out there, that are in the part-time category. So, again, there's a myriad of factors that contribute to that, but the most prevailing one is finance.

LEG. STERN:

The Adult Learner Program, do you have any idea, any statistics, on the population -- well, first of all, let me ask how many students do you say make up that part of the program?

MR. CONNERS:

I don't have the numbers off hand. The Adult Learner Office, which is at the -- located at the Ammerman Campus serves all three campuses. What it tries to do is to -- one of the things is give various challenge exams and so forth for life experience credits just to facilitate the return to school. We have hundreds of students every year who will be doing that kind of thing.

LEG. STERN:

Are the majority of the students that take part in that program, are they part timers?

MR. CONNERS:

Absolutely. Absolutely. Mostly returning homemakers or people who had worked at one time and have been out of the workforce for a number of years.

LEG. STERN:

Second careers. The International Study Program, is that a -- is that a program that the college itself runs, or do you do that in partnership with some other -- with some other institution?

MR. CONNERS:

Well, we have our own program, but we work very closely with Stony Brook University. In fact, the trip that we had this year to Spain and Italy was done in combination with them.

LEG. STERN:

About how many students get to participate?

MR. STEIN:

I might point out also, the students pay for that.

LEG. STERN:

About how many students get to participate in that program?

MR. CONNERS:

We have 30 some odd this year, and we have a group that will be going to China next year.

LEG. STERN:

Very good. There's an Interior Design course. I don't recall exactly where that was offered. Is that across all three campuses?

MR. STEIN:

The Eastern Campus.

LEG. STERN:

The East End. Does any part of the program -- you know, we talked about LEEDs and, you know, green campuses. Is there any part of that course that focuses on LEEDs standards, and is there now or plans in the future to offer a LEEDs certification to students who are taking those type of courses?

MR. WALTERS:

I would have to investigate it further to get details on that. At this point, I don't have that specific detailed information.

LEG. STERN:

Certainly a growing area in the needs for LEEDs certification. If you're going to have a career in that area, it's going to be something that students are going to not only want but need in the future.

MR. STEIN:

Also, as I pointed out earlier, the Legislature provided funding for the development of an energy curriculum program. And as I mentioned, November 2nd was the first program that was put forward, and that will be developing. And that's certainly where LEED discussion takes place. We do -- for all our all new construction, we are conforming to LEEDs.

LEG. STERN:

Certainly that's done on the part of the administration and capital projects. I guess my question goes to the students themselves and their exposure to LEEDs standards and whether or not either now or in the future they're going to have the opportunity as part of their curriculum that attain a certification in LEEDs standards if interior design and architecture is where they want to pursue a career.

MR. WALTERS:

Certainly that's something that we could definitely explore.

MR. MCKAY:

And just to add to that as well, the Student Government Association has recently, on all three campuses, been meeting as one group looking at, as you mentioned, LEED issues and also greening issues on the campuses. So, again, very soon we'll see, from the student body, a discussion about how we can then include into our curriculum examples as you've just indicated. So, again, I think we're moving in the right direction. Currently across the country there is a push -- even all the presidents across the country -- we have over 500 presidents signed on to our national pledge to them move in that direction. So certainly, we're going to look at that as well.

LEG. STERN:

The Chairman asked a question before, I had the same question. I don't know if there was a clear answer. That 58% number troubles me as well. So I am willing to accept the idea that it is part of a national average. But I think the Chairman's question is my question. What is the trend that you have seen? I mean, is that 58%, you know, roughly averaged over the past five years, or has there been an increase over the past five to ten years.

MR. WALTERS:

I'll let Dean McKay talk about the 58% on his campus. Mine has been 48%.

LEG. STERN:

Understood.

MR. WALTERS:

And for the past three years, we have seen an incremental growth of approximately, I would say, 2.53% in terms of the first time full-time Students coming in.

MR. MCKAY:

Right. And, again, that's what we're seeing at the campuses. Again, we've been in the 50% area. Again, what we've seen also -- on the flip side of that is this: After the intervention -- 78% of our students, after intervention, test out of these developmental courses. So that's phenomenal, which means that there are things that we're doing that are working. Now, again, it would require more support, more services. Again, with the first year initiative that we're going to put into place after we've done leg work, that would help us in moving us in another direction. Now, again, it's a change in philosophy, because that also impacts financial aid funding, and, again, time to degree and time to career. So we're committed to that. And I think the president certainly and the Board of Trustees have made a pledge that we are going to look at the first year experience. And, again, if we have 78% testing out right after into one or more areas, certainly we can utilize our best practices in those areas and try to do some more upfront work on that as well.

LEG. STERN:

Sure. Thank you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

When you say testing out, you mean that's after one semester?

MR. MCKAY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Only one semester, not a full year?

MR. MCKAY:

After one semester. And, again, you're going to have those who did not test out. For example, in Math, we may have an MELA, which is a Math degree -- Remedial Math course. And the MELA, we'll have some students that may test out of one MEL 1 but still would be in MEL 7. So that's the other 30 or so percent that may still be within that category. They may test out of one portion of the developmental course, but still have another developmental course that they may be in. However, you may have, like we said, 78% that would totally test out and move into out of an EG 09 EG 10 into English 11, which is the first course, college level, outside of developmental.

LEG. ALDEN:

At Grant, you have 58% that have to go into the remedial programs, right? Are they counted as full time matriculating students even though they're in the -- the remedial course?

MR. MCKAY:

Yes, sir.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Is there a time limit from when you register -- when you enroll in college to actually graduate?

MR. MCKAY:

There's no time limits there; however, again, we've placed a lot of resources to ensure that we move a majority of the students through the program. So, again, there's a lot of support programs built into this as well. We have not only from the counseling side, but faculty office hours. We have also support programs that are there. We are now going to look at the orientation piece, which is, again, front loading more services.

Colleges Success, for example, that's a program we offer in the summer. What does that do? It teaches them study skills, Math, English, Reading. We provide a lot of services upfront in hopes of when they enter the developmental course in the fall, they've move through -- and we also test them again. Now, if they've tested out after College Success courses, certainly they would not go into developmental. But if you find that there's a natural progression during the summer where the tendency is that they will perform better, we continue to give them their services as well.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. So what's your dropout rate at the college? Is it a college-wide dropout rate, or do you keep tabs on a campus-by-campus basis?

MR. MCKAY:

Each campus is unique in regards to student performance. And, again, when you look at the college-wide retention rate -- and, again, the dropout rate, you're looking at somewhere towards 26, 27% dropout rate. So again, when you look at persistence to degree, we may have students that may take a longer time to degree, but again, they may take, for example, you know, a lower amount of courses. But, again, that would also be a factor that would skew the numbers. But, again, persistence to degree, I believe nationally, again, we're ahead of the curve in regards to those numbers. But I think the emphasis really is upon front loading a lot of support services for our students. And, again, once they have those support services, what we've seen is traditionally they get their degree much faster.

LEG. ALDEN:

But it's about a quarter of the students that enroll end up dropping out, don't go and finish up the degree requirement.

MR. STEIN:

If I might just point out also, when discussing graduation rates and community colleges, I think there's a discussion that has to take place there. Students come to a community college for different reasons. And, you know, the goals -- when they enroll, Student Affairs asks them what their goals are, and in many cases, students want to take a few credits and then transfer to a four-year school. Their goal is not to graduate from a community college.

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, Cathy's goal and my goal was to graduate, wasn't it? Yeah. So that's what I would base my experience on.

MR. STEIN:

Okay. I just wanted to point out that that does exist with the community college.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Along those lines, you mentioned before there's that block of people that don't see signing up for -- it's not full time matriculating students, you know, they come in for a course or a couple of courses. What type of measurement can we do, or what type of survey can we do, because that's the population at large, to find out why that population is not signing up or is down 8%? Do you have a survey that you've been using?

MR. MCKAY:

Well, that goes back to, again, I think, the returning student survey, which, again, when we look at

the factors -- and, again, we do for both part time and full time. And, again, I think the cost factor pretty much is a prevailing issue as to why they're not coming back.

LEG. ALDEN:

Your guess would be that you're down 8% in that age group for -- and it's part time students -- you're down probably because of financial considerations.

MR. MCKAY:

Certainly. And, again, you know, looking at other cost factors that are outside of -- within what we do as the college, and I think when you look at opportunity costs, what you're giving up in regards to what you want to achieve, I think --

LEG. ALDEN:

That's fair. The Culinary Arts is only given at the Eastern Campus?

MR. STEIN:

Correct.

LEG. ALDEN:

Do we keep statistics on inquire from the west, whether, you know, somebody would want to be in that program, but then decides they're not going to be in that program because it's only given in the East?

MR. WALTERS:

I think we can definitely get that type of information. I know the past year --

LEG. ALDEN:

I don't need it, you need it. But, you know, I would keep track of that, because that's going to actually dictate whether you should run a bus service, you know, college-wide from the Brentwood Campus, hit Selden, and then go out to the Eastern Campus to coincide with, you know, Culinary Arts type of classes, or to move -- and it would be really, I guess, economically not feasible to duplicate the Culinary Arts Program in any of the other campuses. You're just putting it out there.

So then the idea would be to keep statistics on who inquires when they're registering and if they would take Culinary Arts courses. That's another place, though, where you see a lot of online type of growth, or you should, from people that just want to learn how to cook. You know, there's been some successful -- a lot of success made on these, you know, internet and people offering those cooking shows on television. So I would hope that, you know, we're exploring the increase in our internet offerings to at least do something with the -- with the culinary arts.

MR. STEIN:

Academic Affairs takes a hard look at whatever is offered on the online situation to assure the quality aspects of the academic experience.

MR. MCKAY:

If I could add one more thing to that as well. I think the positive here for the Culinary Program is this: For the first time, we do have capacity whereby we can then build out. Prior to that, it was being held, I believe in the cafeteria. So, again, they were restricted in regards to how many students could have enrolled before. So I think a natural progression towards having more excitement and more students wanting to get in is going to occur. I think now, you are right, the measures in which we're going to put in place now, when our students do apply for a program, we have an inquiry card. So we to keep data at the college in regards to knowing where it's coming from and also --

LEG. ALDEN:

But even somebody that just calls and asks for information on the Culinary Arts Program, you know,

you might want to include, like, a broader catchment, so to speak, of who makes the inquiry, because it might just turn somebody off if they go to Brentwood and say, you know, how about Culinary Arts, and then they're told, oh, no, that's in the Eastern Campus, they've inquired, so there was some kind of interest, but now that distance has turned them off. And they might not say, wow, that's too far to travel, so you wouldn't even have, you know, that kind of a feedback from them. But you might want to just keep track of any, you know, like, whether they be verbal or phone-in interests in any of the courses that we don't give at all three.

MR. MCKAY:

Again, we do keep that information and we do pass it on to campuses that do have the program. Now, our Central Admission Office, again, they do all that sort of processing, and they send information out to the campuses. Simultaneously, if folks call the campuses, we also do the same for our sister campuses. So, again, we do capture information, however, in presenting it as you've just requested, which is, again, do we know yet as to the volume of inquiries that we're receiving for this program that has just expanded? We're in the process of getting that.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. And then full time versus part time faculty, and what's the trend there college wide?

MR. STEIN:

We're at about 63% of our daytime courses being taught by full-time faculty.

LEG. ALDEN:

That's higher than it was couple of years ago or lower than a couple of years ago?

MR. STEIN:

It's higher. The goal that's been established by our Board of Trustees is to attain a 70% level. We strive for that.

LEG. ALDEN:

Good. And I'm going to sound a little bit like former Legislator Brian Foley, I would like to see that -- that ratio achieved, because I think that that adds to the experience, and it adds to the reputation. So it's a good thing to shoot for that.

MR. STEIN:

Well, when we come back to talk about next year's budget and the level of financial support, we can discuss those issues.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. To be fair, then we're going to have to set in in a historic perspective, because year after year -- and it was Brian Foley and myself who put extra money in with the idea that we were going to go for that goal and would have achieved it in a shorter period of time.

MR. STEIN:

And we thank you for that support.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Now, one other thing you mentioned before. Tics at the East, how did -- you said you have a unique way of dealing with tics at the Eastern Campus.

MR. WALTERS:

The birds that you saw at the Eastern Campus -- again, I'm relatively new, I've been here six weeks. It was mentioned that one of the creative mechanisms in terms of trying to address it was through Guinea Hens. And the birds --

LEG. ALDEN:

Oh, those weren't Canadian Geese, those were Guinea Hens?

MR. STEIN:
Guinea Hens.

LEG. ALDEN:
Good. Okay.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:
On that note, Legislator Schneiderman.

MR. STEIN:
They multiply very rapidly, by the way.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:
Gentlemen, thank you for a very informative presentation. Couple of quick questions. One, I'm recalling a couple of years when Legislator Angie Carpenter sat with us, a resolution that looked toward doing an investigation of whether dormitories would be appropriate perhaps on the Eastern Campus. I don't think whether that passed or whether it passed and was vetoed, but I remember at one point there was some discussion about housing at one of the campuses. Is there anything going on in that regard?

MR. STEIN:
Not at the moment.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:
Not at the moment. On the Eastern Campus in particular, we've kept in the Capital Budget a Health and Fitness Facility. I know you have been seeking New York State grant support for that. Any information?

MR. STEIN:
Yes. Your placement of that in the Capital Program was very instrumental, and the State has included that project in the next five-year State plan. So we are very grateful for your support on that.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:
Will that project need to be moved out of subsequent years in the Capital Program and moved into -- given a number now or no?

MR. STEIN:
We will be looking at that as we present the Capital Program that's upcoming, yes.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:
Okay. Let me ask also another program that I think you're still maintaining, which I know is a fast growing area is in 3-D animation. How is that program going? I know you have had some people doing Maya, which is a particular program that they were training -- maybe you aren't familiar with that.

MR. WALTERS:
That area -- I think you're talking about the graphic design has been --

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:
Well, particularly 3-D animation, which is -- you know, a lot of the films today are now 3-D. It seems to be an increasing area of the industry. So that's an important skill. And I believe the Eastern Campus had some training in that area, and I'm wondering if that's being expanded.

MR. WALTERS:

It's still going. Actually, I think they have expanded in terms of a couple of courses. They have a full-time person, faculty person, who's dedicated to that area. So it's an area that has seen growth, and pretty much in terms of course offerings has seen some expansion.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I think you may be able to attract a lot of students to that area.

MR. WALTERS:

I think it will really yield a tremendous amount of opportunities in terms of student enrollment.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's also, I know, some industries on the East End now that -- in Wainscott there's a whole studio system where they're doing 3-D animation for PBS and some other big pictures out there. It's possible the two can be tied together. I mean, you have people who are employing animators now within in Suffolk County.

We mentioned before the environmental program, another area that's seems to be a fast growing area that doesn't seem there's a lot of people -- a lot of programs out there training in this area. The area I'm talking about is carbon trading. It's something at least to look at in this program so that people are prepared to enter those exchanges and know how to -- know how to trade those carbon credits, because a lot of money can be made in that area.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Well, thank you very much. Chuck, I want to thank you and all of you for coming forward. Actually, I didn't think we were going to be here as long, but you can see there's an interest. There's also a lot of support from this body for the college, you've seen that over the years. You know, we are interested, because -- you know, particularly for me. I know that -- and I've said this before -- for the kids in my district, if it weren't for Suffolk Community College, they wouldn't get a good education and move on. So we look forward to bringing you back. We'll discuss some of the budgetary issues. Congratulations, Dean. Welcome to the Eastern Campus. And with that, I want to thank you. We'll be talking. Anything further you want to add?

MR. STEIN:

Just want to say thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

You got it. Thank you. Have a good day. We're going to move into the public portion. We're running a little late. Debra Alloncius. Debbie, I'm going to ask you to come up, make a presentation, and then we'll get into the -- that's the only card that I have. Debbie, it's your call.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Good morning, Members of the Committee and Chairman Montano. I appreciate your letting me speak before you this morning. My name is Debra Alloncius, AME's Legislative Director. Thank you for allowing me on behalf of Cheryl Ann Felice, AME President, the opportunity to address the Legislature regarding Resolution 2203-2007, a proposed Local Law that will afford the Legislature and the public more accountability and transparency in agency operations by providing information essential to the budget decision making process.

For the past few years, AME has proposed many of the initiatives that are included in this legislation, including the public presentation of a multi-year financial plan. This would allow for the determination of the impact of decisions made in the current year on ensuing fiscal years. It is a tool that is essential in the decision making process for both the Executive and the Legislative Branches of Government. It will better explain the effect of one-shot revenues and expenses on our County finances.

You, the Legislature, must be provided with information in order to make informed budget decisions affecting our residents' futures. This legislation also proposes sharing information regarding monitoring agency spending against agency appropriations. Agencies will be required to explain significant changes in both revenues and expenses.

The Legislature needs to be made aware of problems as soon as they begin to occur, not when it's too late to participate in the decision making process. This will allow you more option and more time for dialog on how to resolve these variances. You'll be less likely to be placed in a position of being asked to approve actions that the Executive has already begun to implement. In addition, the sharing of this information will require faster action and resolution by the agency so as to be prepared to explain any aberrations directly to you.

Finally, we have proposed a resolution for the creation of an agency oversight report. We have watched as time after time this Legislature has been frustrated and stymied in an effort to determine which budgeted positions are funded are which are not as well as which unfilled positions should be considered critical to fill as soon as possible. Your attempts to collect workload and caseload information time result in failure as the agency's definition of these measurements either changes with the political climate or is inconsistent with your Budget Review Office's understanding.

This lack of consistent information and definition across our government has caused confusion and blurs the ability to make decisions as opposed to using one set of statistics that are accepted by all. This report will allow all participants the use of this data and assist in making rational, sound, enlightened and intelligent budgeting and hiring decisions.

We envision a report that will be divided by department and include a category -- excuse me -- and include an agency mission statement, critical objectives and performance measures and statistics, including workloads, caseloads, inputs, outcomes and head count. This information will allow you to better determine whether an agency is achieving their critical goals and provide you with the basic performance data that is necessary in order to make more informed decisions.

The specifics of this report and its implementation can be resolved through discussions between the Executive's Budget Office and your Budget Review Office. This report will ultimately provide you with tools that you've never had and will increase your capability to make more informed budget decisions. This report and the other information being proposed in this legislation will break the monopoly that the County Exec Offices -- County Executive's Office currently possesses. It will lift the veil other statistical and creat the transparency that all of us deserve. The Legislature will be put on a more equal footing in the understanding and the analysis of the County budget.

Please approve this resolution and allow more sunlight into the operations of our government. Our County needs our help. Legislator Cooper, we thank you very much for sponsoring the resolution. You have all been given a copy of it, and copies have also been given to the other Legislators on the Legislature. We would appreciate if they all get them. Thank you. Have a good morning.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you, Debbie. I have no further cards. Is there anyone else that would like to address the Legislature? Gail, are you leaving? The reason I asked that is, Robert maybe -- we received copies of the memorandum on the home energy portion of the sales tax and on the sales tax on gasoline and home energy fuels. Do you want to briefly summarize that? These two memos result from our last meeting when we had some questions on the impact of the sales tax and the energy home portion of the sales tax.

MS. VIZZINI:

As you requested, we made it brief. This memo addresses some of the budgetary concerns and the economic concerns of the legislation to roll back a portion of or the home energy tax in its entirety. In the time allowed between the two committee meetings, we weren't able to do as complete a job as I would have liked to have done, and therefore, what we did was attach the fiscal impact

statements, which clearly indicate that, you know, the savings for the average consumer would be about \$90. However, the loss in revenue to the County, rolling back the entire two and a half percent, is substantial. On an annual basis, it would be about \$52 million. It's equal to almost more than the total General Fund Property Tax Levy.

Also, to give the economic aspects a little bit more attention, we attached a memo that -- a more comprehensive memo that we had done in 2005 when before you was the issue of whether or not to cap sales tax on gasoline at the -- you know, there were different iterations of the \$2 versus the \$3. So, you know, candidly, there is no question that there is the perception of a benefit to the consumer; however, among the many concerns that were addressed when we did the '05 memo as far as capping gasoline is what will the market place factors determine; you know, will this savings actually be to the consumer or will the gasoline companies or the oil companies, in this case, recognize that the market can bear this particular price, and will oil remain, you know, at -- I think our last file up was at 2.90 a gallon or \$3 a gallon. So there are those considerations.

As you all know from going through the 2008 Budget process, the 2008 Budget is what I would describe as a fragile document. There are shortfalls in many line items. There is concern regarding the rate of growth of sales tax and the slowing of sales tax. We never go by one check or one month. And as Mr. Kovesdy indicated to you in the last committee meeting, both property taxes and sales tax as revenue sources appear to be slowing. Property taxes, some of it is cyclical, some of it potentially an indication of the economic. And our concern is that we have not seen worse as yet.

Again, these are areas that we did not have time to go into within the time frame that we had. Some of the line item concerns in the current '08 Budget, if there are surpluses, surpluses that could perhaps be used to offset a portion of a roll back in the energy tax, might be need for shortfalls created by a continued slowing of sales tax or continued slowing of property taxes. That's basically the highlights of this particular memo.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Gail, thank you. Two very quick questions on my part, then Legislator Alden some questions. In terms of the sales tax receipts and the fund balance, when in 2008 will we actually know where we stand? I mean, when is the final count?

MS. VIZZINI:

The Comptroller usually releases the information or comes to the Audit Committee in April of 2008. By the end of February, we're still in the process of closing books and lining expenditures up in terms of where they're going to be debited or credited to. But we usually know by April of '08 where we ended '07.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Right. All right. So in April -- just to reiterate, in April, the end of April, we'll know exactly whether or not we reached our projection of the sales tax growth in the 2007 Budget, which I think was 2.75 for the year for 2007.

MS. VIZZINI:

We will know what the fund balance is for 2007 --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

And the fund balance --

MS. VIZZINI:

-- and we will very likely have a pretty good handle on sales tax at that time.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

I want to say thank you. This is a very good first step. Even though it is a small step, it's a very good first step into a very, very large and all encompassing discussion that we're going to have to have, because the future of Suffolk County, possibly the future of Suffolk County Government definitely depends on this.

One thing I'd like to point out -- and your testimony just now is it's approximately -- the affect would be about \$90 per family, per average family. When I first tried -- and that's going back three or four years ago -- to get rid of this tax, the -- I was kind of criticized on it a little bit, because some people said the affect would only be \$15. So now in a matter of only a few years, the affect -- and I think it was even more back then -- but the affect, recognized affect, would be going from \$15 per family up to \$90 per family.

So you can see the kind of multiplier that's happening here. A family wants to stay on Long Island, they're in a home, and part of the cost of staying on Long Island is energy, and energy is skyrocketing, whether it be gasoline to get to and from work or to and from a grocery store or church or wherever they're going, or whether it be the energy they use in their house. Now, we, as a government entity, have made it more expensive for them to live in their house. So on the one hand we want to promote affordable housing and we want people to stay here on Long Island and we want to make it so that young folks coming out of college can actually stay here, and then on the other hand, we make it more expensive and make it almost impossible for them to stay here.

And I'm glad you pointed out that this is a regressive tax, because it does affect certain people more than it affects others. If you have a large disposable income and basically a discretionary disposable income, this really don't -- the cost doesn't affect you at all. But when you are in anything under that 70 or 80 or \$90,000 a year household income that we recognize as far as for affordable housing purposes, now you're talking about major impact on any small increase on the affordability and the ability to feed the family and actually stay in your home.

So maybe we can attribute some of the foreclosures that are going on right now and the people that aren't paying their Suffolk County taxes to the fact that we tax them and we tax their ability to stay in their homes and actually heat their homes and light them up. So this is interesting. It's going to be an interesting discussion. And actually, people in Rick's district and my district might be hit a little -- and Elie actually -- too bad he's not here right now -- but Elie's district, we have people that are probably impacted a hell of lot more than other people on Long Island. And yet, there's people in every district that would be impacted to the point where they're going to loose their homes or they're not going to be able to pay their mortgage or their -- real estate taxes that we eluded to before, which are only about the same equal amount of these because of the fact that we do tax.

So this is something that we've got look at, \$50 million coming out of the economy and going to us could be an accelerator as far as a recession, if we do hit that point where the economy goes into a recession, and all signs are actually pointing at that kind of a movement. So I'm glad we opened up the conversation. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, the first two resolutions, they're not even timely to be discussed now, because I did make changes, and they weren't made in the date required to make these eligible to be voted on. So I'm going to be making a tabling motion on both 1701 and 1702 because of the changes and they're not eligible to be voted on right now.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

We'll discuss them further down. Legislator Cooper has some either questions or comments.

LEG. COOPER:

Yes. This is just in response to some of the comments by the sponsor of these two resolutions. In a nutshell, my comment is give me a break. But I have a question for Gail Vizzini. Legislator Alden said this might be a cause of home foreclosures on Long Island, the fact that they have to pay an estimated \$90 perhaps in an energy tax. Do you have any thoughts yourself as to the number of

people on Long Island who are losing their homes because they have to pay a \$90 home energy tax? I took my kids to the diner for breakfast this past weekend, it came to 90 bucks. So does Budget Review Office have any statistics as to the number of homes that were foreclosed on Long Island in Suffolk County as a result -- and by the way, I thought it was \$15 per person, which is about \$60 I guess for the average household. It was 15 versus 90, it was 60 to 90. But in any case, Gail, any thoughts on that?

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Let me say this. I get every week a report -- and I forget the name of the group -- which indicates the number of foreclosures in Long Island this week versus the number of foreclosures this week last year. And I also -- and with that, it also gives the number of Lis Pendens that are dance filed this week this year versus this week last year. And I can tell you very clearly that I think the numbers are doubling.

LEG. ALDEN:

They're going through the roof.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Yeah, they're very high. So those figures are available. The other thing I want to add with respect to the \$90, I don't think there's any way of saying that \$90 on the energy tax is going to cause you to foreclose. I think what it is is \$90 plus issues, you know, affecting overall economy combined are leading to the foreclosures. But, Gail, do you want to address that? I know Legislator Alden -- and I want to get moving, because we're running late.

MS. VIZZINI:

Only from the context that there are a variety of factors in terms of the foreclosures, primarily the subprime market, which as we all know, housing prices were going so phenomenally that if you followed the money, the products were there for people to get subprime mortgages. And that's a major contributing factor.

LEG. COOPER:

It was a facetious question. But my point --

MS. VIZZINI:

In the context, you know, yes.

LEG. COOPER:

If there was not a problem with subprime mortgages and school district taxes and everything else, would a \$90 home energy tax cause anyone to lose their home and go into foreclose, that was my question. The answer, obviously, is of course not. I'm sorry. I'll let Gail answer. Gail, do you think that taking everything off the table, would the \$90 home energy tax cause anyone to lose their home in Suffolk County?

MS. VIZZINI:

There's no data that I'm aware of that would correlate, you know, what straw breaks the camel's back, but in the context of that, this is a high-tax area.

LEG. COOPER:

Of course. But it's the school district taxes, it's not the \$90 home energy tax. The question for the sponsor -- and you were going to be speaking next anyway -- is you're proposing this, you've been proposing this for a couple of years now, I've never heard from you how you're going to make up this \$52 million shortfall in the County budget. If you can just -- forget the whole 53 million, let's take 25% of it, 50%, how will you make up \$26 million in shortfall in our budget? Go ahead.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

You want to see that in a nutshell, Jon?

LEG. COOPER:

Yeah, I'd love to hear this.

LEG. ALDEN:

I can actually sketch it out for you. Unfortunately, there's some cuts that have to be made. And, first --

LEG. COOPER:

Cameron, this is your chance. Let us know what you propose.

LEG. ALDEN:

I want to take issue with your attitude, number one, because you know what, Jon? Because you can afford a \$90 breakfast for you and your kids doesn't mean that everybody --

LEG. COOPER:

I've got five kids.

LEG. ALDEN:

-- doesn't mean that everybody in Suffolk County can afford to even feed their kids. And when you throw on top of the fact that they can't afford to stay in their house, you throw on top of that some of these regressive taxes that Suffolk County is balancing its budget on the back of the people that can least afford it, then, Jon, I take umbrage with what you've said. It's really an elitist and snobby type of attitude to take.

LEG. COOPER:

Oh, please, Cameron.

LEG. ALDEN:

You know what? I'm done with this conversation.

LEG. COOPER:

So you didn't answer the hard part, which we've been asking for two years.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

You know, what? I'm going to move on.

LEG. COOPER:

Where will you make up the \$52 million -- are you going to close health clinics? Are you going to take it out on the backs of poor kids or the elderly or veterans --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Wait. Wait. Wait.

LEG. ALDEN:

What do you think this tax does? This tax takes it on the backs of those kids.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Cameron. Legislator Alden, Legislator Cooper, it's already been stated that these two resolutions are going to be tabled today by the sponsor. We're running late, so we're going to take up this conversation when we get to our next meeting.

LEG. COOPER:

And I will raise the question again at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Absolutely. Absolutely. We'll have time to discuss it at that time. All right. I'm going to move into Tabled Resolutions.

1701. Repealing home energy nuisance taxes on Suffolk County residents (ALDEN).

Legislator Alden, what's your pleasure?

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'll second that. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

LEG. COOPER:

Wait. Let me think about this.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

What do you want to think about, your vote, or would you like to comment on the resolution? What do you want to think about?

LEG. ALDEN:

I'd like Legislative Counsel to comment on whether we can even vote on the resolution now.

MR. NOLAN:

We're passed the -- the dates for implementation, we're passed. We have made the changes to make it effective March of next year. There would really be no purpose in voting on either of these today. They're not eligible to be voted on in their amended form, so they should be tabled.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Right. I understand that.

LEG. ALDEN:

And if somebody would pay attention to what's going on in the committee, they would know that.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

On 1701, all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions. Motion to table carries. **TABLED (VOTE:5-0-0-0).**

1702. Establishing a program to reduce unfair home energy nuisance taxes on Suffolk County residents (ALDEN).

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Alden, motion to table?

LEG. ALDEN:

I make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'll second that. Any discussion?

LEG. COOPER:

I'll abstain on that.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? One abstention. Motion to table carries. **TABLED (VOTE:4-0-1-0 - Abstention - Legis. Cooper).**

1882. Amending the 2007 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Water Quality Protection (Fund 477) and amending the 2007 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with a Watershed Study of Lake Panamoka (ROMAINE)

LEG. COOPER:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Second. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. ALDEN:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

One opposition. Motion carries. **TABLED (VOTE:4-1-0-0 - Opposed - Legis Alden)**

1907. Amending the 2007 Operating Budget and the 2007 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds to support the restoration of the World War II Memorial Park, Town of Riverhead (ROMAINE).

LEG. COOPER:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'll second that.

LEG. ALDEN:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Any discussion? Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Are these omnibus monies, or are these in addition to the omnibus?

MS. VIZZINI:

The offset for this is \$20,000 from DPW rent, a portion of which was added in the Omnibus to the rental account.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

What's the offset?

MS. VIZZINI:

Public Works rental account.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'll abstain.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? One abstention. **TABLED (VOTE:4-0-1-0 - Abstention - Legis. Schneiderman).**

LEG. COOPER:

1963. Adopting Fiscal Discipline Tax Constraint (Mandated) Operating Budget for 2008 through Smart Management (COUNTY EXEC).

I'll make a motion to approve.

MR. NOLAN:

No. Table this subject to call. This is the County Executive's --

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll second the motion to approve.

LEG. COOPER:

Table subject to call. Is there a second? Are you making a motion to approve?

LEG. ALDEN:

No. You did. I'm just seconding the motion.

LEG. COOPER:

No. I withdrew mine, and I'm making a motion to table subject to call. You're making a motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

If I may, what are we on, which resolution?

MR. NOLAN:

1963.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

And what is the motion?

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, I'm getting confused now, because there was a motion to approve.

LEG. COOPER:

Motion to table subject to call.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Is that withdrawn? There's no second. I'm going to make a motion to table. Do I have a second?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Second. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Motion to table carries. **TABLED (VOTE:5-0-0-0).**

1964. Adopting contained Cost Tax Constraint (Discretionary) Operating Budget for 2008 through Smart Management (COUNTY EXEC).

I'm going to make a motion to table. Do I have a second? Do I have a second?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I have a second. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion to table carries.
TABLED (VOTE:5-0-0-0).

2005. Adopting a Local Law to require cash deposits to be made in accounts at authorized banks or trust companies (COUNTY EXEC).

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'll make a motion to approve. Do I have a second?

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion?

LEG. ALDEN:

Explanation.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Explanation by Counsel.

MR. NOLAN:

This Local Law would amend the Administrative Code to make it clear that the County's cash deposits can only be made with authorized banks or trust companies and not with a private banker or banking institution.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Is that sufficient, Legislator Alden?

LEG. ALDEN:

Yes. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Any further discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion to approve carries

APPROVED (VOTE:5-0-0-0).

Moving on to Introductory Resolutions.

IR 2086. To readjust, compromise, and grant refunds and chargebacks on correction or errors/County Treasurer by: County Legislature No. 286. (COUNTY EXEC)

LEG. COOPER:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'll make a motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED** and placed on the **CONSENT CALENDAR (VOTE:5-0-0-0).**

2106. To readjust, compromise, and grant refunds and chargebacks on real property correction of errors by: County Legislature (COUNTY EXEC).

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Same motion, same second. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **APPROVED** and placed on the **CONSENT CALENDAR (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

2107. To readjust, compromise, and grant refunds and chargebacks on correction or errors/ County Treasurer by: County Legislature No. 287. (COUNTY EXEC).

Same motion, same second. Any discussion. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED** and placed on the **CONSENT CALENDAR (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

2203. Adopting a Local Law, a Charter Law to promote accountability and transparency in government by requiring an Agency Oversight Report (COOPER).

I'll make a motion to table for public hearing.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by the sponsor, Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **TABLED (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

2218. Apportioning Mortgage Tax By: County Treasurer (COUNTY EXEC).

I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

2225. Authorizing the County Comptroller and the County Treasurer to transfer funds to cover unanticipated expenses in the 2007 Adopted Discretionary Budget (COUNTY EXEC).

By the way, welcome County Treasurer Angie Carpenter. I see you sitting back there. I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Any discussion on this? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

2226. Authorizing the County Comptroller and the County Treasurer to transfer funds to cover unanticipated expenses in the 2007 Adopted Mandated Budget (COUNTY EXEC).

I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED (VOTE:5-0-0-0)**.

LEG. ALDEN:

There's one other thing.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Go ahead, Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

We had asked the County Executive's Office to explain that money that was spent on an ad. And if they could give me an explanation in writing, that's fine. Not just me, it should be distributed throughout, you know, the full Legislative body; where the money came from, the amount, where there similar expenditures, how much is left, that type of thing.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

That is correct. That was brought up at the last meeting. Allen, do you have -- you want to indicate where we are with that and provide us with a copy of the report.

MR. KOVESDY:

I didn't do a report. I did check. The money will be paid for out of the County Exec's budget, out of the advertising account. There is sufficient money in the 2007 Adopted Budget, both in the adopted line and in the estimated line. And it will not require a transfer of funds from any place else to cover it.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. And what account is that exactly; is that a 456 Account?

MR. KOVESDY:

No, 377.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

377. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

I don't want to take up any more time, but I would like to see that in writing, and then Budget Review can review it for me. And also, we can go into a few more details on it, like, the process of developing those kinds of charges, whether it's competitive, whether it's not. Just hand it out -- that goes to policy decisions too.

MR. KOVESDY:

I'll bring it back to Ben. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. With that, I'm going to ask for a motion to adjourn.

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion, second. Goodbye.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:47 A.M.*)

{ } DENOTES BEING SPELLED PHONETICALLY