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**To:** diannes@iastate.edu  
**Subject:** FW: Governor Spitzer to propose Endowing New York's State Universities

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## Spitzer Wants to Endow State's Public Colleges

By [DANNY HAKIM](#)

In his annual address to the Legislature on Wednesday, Gov. [Eliot Spitzer](#) will propose establishing an endowment for the state's higher education system and adding 2,000 faculty members, according to a person with knowledge of the speech. The proposals are part of an effort by the governor to put New York's public universities on a par with those in states like California and Michigan.

But it remains to be seen how much the administration would be willing to spend initially, as the state already faces a budget gap of more than \$4 billion and is confronting weakness in a critical source of tax revenue — Wall Street.

The proposal for more faculty members comes from a recent report on higher education by a 30-member commission convened by the governor.

It is unclear whether Mr. Spitzer will embrace the commission's other recommendations, including starting a \$3 billion fund for research grants, modestly raising tuitions across the system and allowing individual campuses to raise prices further. The last two proposals appear to have drawn the most opposition.

The person who provided details of the governor's proposals did not want to be identified because the speech was still taking shape.

The state's public higher education system includes the [State University of New York](#), with more than 400,000 students on 64 campuses, and the [City University of New York](#), with more than 200,000 students on 23 campuses.

Higher education experts have said the system has fallen short of Gov. [Nelson A. Rockefeller](#)'s goal of being a pre-eminent higher education system and lacks research institutions close to the prestige of the University of California, Berkeley, or the [University of Michigan](#) at Ann Arbor.

The state generally lags in the percentage of the budget it allocates to higher education, and while its relatively low tuitions are politically popular, some critics

say the system lacks the resources to soar in collegiate rankings.

Several top university systems have multibillion-dollar endowments — pools of money set aside for future needs — and also allow campuses to charge different tuitions to better finance campuses with higher research ambitions.

The latter idea, however, could be a political nonstarter. Both Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, the Republican chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee, and Assemblywoman [Deborah J. Glick](#), a Democrat who heads the Assembly's Higher Education committee, have expressed opposition to so-called differential tuitions. Ms. Glick said in an interview last month that price-conscious 17- and 18-year-olds who get into several SUNY colleges would choose based on price, not on which one was best for them, if differential tuitions were in place.

Undergraduates at SUNY colleges who are state residents now pay \$4,350 a year in tuition and \$4,000 at CUNY. At University of California campuses, by comparison, the cost is more than \$8,000.

The proposal to establish a central endowment goes beyond the recommendations of the commission, though the amount of money that the governor has in mind was unclear Sunday.

A memorandum from the governor's office said that the commission's plan over 13 years would require an initial investment of \$1.6 billion for new faculty members, buildings and capital projects, and \$226 million annually for the additional faculty members.

John Clark, the interim chancellor of the SUNY system and a commission member, said capital needs — new dormitories and academic buildings — were urgent.

"The great building of the State University of New York was done during the Rockefeller years," he said. "We need massive reinvestment. The governor has really embraced it."

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