

SUNY means \$195M to economy

Salaries, student spending - even on pizza - add up, study says

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New Paltz - Take some office furniture, ladle on a big helping of professors' salaries, sprinkle in college textbooks and pizza and top it off with parent souvenirs.

All that makes SUNY New Paltz quite an economic dish for the Hudson Valley. In fact, it's a \$195-million-a-year shot for the region's economy, SUNY New Paltz President Steve Poskanzer said yesterday.

Poskanzer gave about 50 members of the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce a sneak peek at the college's new study of

the institution's economic impact on the region. The study is so new, Poskanzer said, he didn't yet have the graphic materials to show chamber members.

One reason to do the study was to respond to the oft-repeated criticisms of colleges and universities: "You're a drain to the community" and, "You don't pay property taxes," Poskanzer said.

"To have a college or university in your back yard is the best neighbor you can have," Poskanzer said. "New Paltz is a critical economic driver of the Hudson Valley."

Salaries for the college's 1,594 employees pump more than \$41.7 million into the regional economy, the study says. That's

more than just professors and the like. It's also paychecks for chefs, architects and engineers. All but 132 of the staff live in the seven-county Hudson Valley region.

Those who live in the New Paltz area's 12561 ZIP code alone bring home \$15.5 million, Poskanzer pointed out.

A big institution like the college spends a chunk of money - \$6.4 million a year - on utilities, office furniture, paint for sprucing up dormitories and other things. Orange County captures \$2.4 million of those goods and services and Ulster County another \$2.6 million a year. "We are trying to buy locally," he said.

The college's 8,000 students plug nearly \$71 million into the regional economy.

They buy textbooks and pizza; pay for rent and transportation. Their parents and families, along with spectators to sports or cultural events, add \$1.5 million to the economic mix, he said.

Another factor in the overall picture: shop owners and business owners, in turn, use the college's money to buy other goods and services. That "multiplier" shoots another \$75 million into the regional economic life, Poskanzer added.

There's more the college has not included, such as the \$116 million in construction on campus over the past six years or the cultural activities and services the college provides.

The numbers and the story they tell will take center stage in his public presentations this fall and beyond, Poskanzer said.