



THE STATE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW YORK

John B. Clark
Interim Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, New York
12246

518 443 5355
fax - 518 443 5360

chancellor@suny.edu
www.suny.edu

Carol,
Sorry we did
not connect last week.

Hopefully, the attached
meets your expectations!

Any questions please give
me a call!

Best wishes,

JBC



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November 5, 2008

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Mr. Carl Wiezalis
University Faculty Senate
State University of New York
SUNY Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

Dear President ^{Carl} ~~Wiezalis~~ and University Senators:

First of all, thank you so much for bestowing upon me the "Friend of the Senate" award, I deeply treasure it. Also, please accept my apologies for bring unable to attend the sector report section of the Plenary Meeting. I always find these meetings very informative and especially enjoy the give and take during the session.

President Wiezalis was kind enough to provide me with your questions and observations which I have done my best to respond to in a thoughtful and straightforward fashion. Attached please find my responses to the questions posed in the sector reports. You will find the questions are followed by my answers in italics. They are separated by the respective sectors in individual pagination as was provided to me originally.

Please let me know if you need additional information or have further questions.

Yours truly,

Dr. John B. Clark

Dr. Risa Palm

University Centers.

1. Campuses need budget information now so they can make reasonable plans.

I am in complete agreement, but over the past six months we have been in a constant state of budgetary change with yet another legislative special session on the budget called by the Governor for November 18th. This makes planning, System-wide and campus-specific, exceptionally difficult. At System Administration, we have attempted to be in as much contact as possible; on one hand with the Governor's Office and the Division of the Budget and the other; the SUNY Business Officers (SUBOA) and Presidents trying to provide as much information as was available. For your information, two SUNY-wide advisory bodies have been set-up: Chairman's Presidential Advisory Group and the SUBOA Task Force which works with Interim Chancellor for Administration and Finance Van Voorst to assist in the planning effort. We anticipate a finalization of our plans to be completed at the next Board of Trustees meeting on November 18th.

2. SUNY is special. Dollars going to SUNY are an investment in the future of New York State with there being no greater engine for economic development than SUNY.

This is a point which we make with great frequency with the Governor's Office, elected officials and the Division of Budget and provide them with a plethora of examples like our Centers of Excellence and the tremendous importance of the SUNY campuses to the State's economy in terms of education, development, healthcare and economic development. Given the geographic distribution of our campuses across the state we are well-placed to play a key role in the revitalization of even our most economically challenged communities.

3. SUNY's effectiveness is hampered by its status, effectively, as a state agency. SUNY needs more independence and flexibility, as recommended by the New York State Commission on Higher Education.

We will be presenting a comprehensive package of regulatory reforms based on the Commission's report to the Governor for his support and, the State Legislature for hopefully, their approval which will give SUNY the independence and flexibility it needs to be successful in the 21st century and become a national leader in higher education.

4. Campus President should be reminded that it is not acceptable for their administration to admit students to graduate programs, overriding the recommendation of the faculty.

The recommendation of the faculty must be a primary consideration in the admissions process. In a special meritorious case, an appropriate consultation should take place. Admission to a graduate program should be an academic decision.

5. Curriculum is a faculty responsibility and, as such, campuses should be more careful not to offer courses for credit that have not been approved by their faculty.

I am not aware of such a cases(s) and this should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Provost, but the Policies of the Board of Trustees clearly state that the faculty are responsible for the conduct of the University's instruction program. Developing the curriculum is a shared responsibility between faculty and campus administration which derives from the authority under the Education Law reposed in the Trustees to regulate the curricula.

6. The newly imposed 4 year limit on Teaching Assistant support causes great stress at both undergraduate and graduate level. Is this a SUNY policy or do campuses have flexibility in its implementation?

I have been informed by representatives of the Office of the Provost that this is not a SUNY, but a local campus policy; and accordingly, each campus has individual flexibility in its implementation.

7. The policy for forming Presidential Search Committees currently requires election by all teaching faculty. This is not practical for some units, e.g. very large numbers of faculty on multiple campuses. In such cases, we suggest it would be more appropriate to let campus governance recommend membership.

While the "practical" argument for large campuses may be well-taken, the current SUNY Board of Trustees policy was designed to be fully inclusive and not disenfranchise a group of faculty members in such an important election.

Health Sciences Sector

1. Have you included an assessment of success in shared government in your formal Presidential review? Is direct faculty governance feedback being sought?

During the interview session with the respective Presidents, this usually arises as a part of the discussion on campus operations, i.e. if there are any specific problems or difficulties the President is encountering with faculty and staff. Direct faculty feedback is usually sought during the formal five year review of a President's tenure.

2. If there is a campus in which the faculty governance structure is perceived to be dysfunctional, how should that be brought to your attention?

You can contact my office directly.

3. How are you directing Presidents to engage the faculty governance leaders (elected, rather than selected) in dealing with budget cuts?

At this point, once the budget cuts are finalized, Presidents should engage the entire college community including the faculty governance leaders, faculty senate, college council, staff, student leaders and concerned members and present the plan for the upcoming budget year.

4. Under the fiscal threat, faculty are experiencing even more pressure to increase clinical productivity – how are you planning to protect the research and educational missions?
Ex. Reductions in pediatric programs that don't pay, but are essential to educational missions

Above all, SUNY's core educational and research missions in this most difficult budget environment should be protected, even it means we must re-evaluate other programs, even those deemed worthwhile, but non-essential to the mission of the institution.

5. Can you explain why administrative positions have been excluded from the hiring freeze? (if that is accurate)

There has been no hiring freeze imposed by System Administration, this must have been a campus-specific decision.

6. As a sector, we are responding to external pressures to increase enrollment and have (ex. Stony Brook College of Medicine has increased 25%). How are we going to support this growth in class size in the current fiscal climate, especially in regards to faculty growth to keep pace with the increased enrollment?

The most direct way is to increase revenues and hire additional faculty. We have been in constant discussions with the Governor's office, Division of the Budget and members of the State Legislature to seek their support for a rational tuition policy which will allow us the funds necessary to meet the ever-increasing student demands by hiring additional faculty.

The exclusion of qualified ranks from consideration for Chancellor's awards unduly disenfranchises full time faculty educators (including many program and course directors) in the health sciences which have clinical ranks. Can this be addressed?

It appears that only persons in the title of Lecturer or Visiting Scholars are excluded from eligibility for the Chancellor's Award. All other Academic Rank titles, including professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor and assistant instructor are eligible. This policy has been in effect from the beginning of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence. Notwithstanding this past practice, we will discuss this matter internally and apprise you of our finding and/or any recommendation regarding this issue.

Specialized and Statutory Colleges

On each of our campuses, we are waiting to see the full impact of New York's fiscal crisis. Despite this overarching concern, we spent some time during our sector meeting discussing positive developments on our campuses. SUNYIT has a new president, who has done much to invigorate the campus. Because he's new, committed to share governance, and available, we nominated him to serve on the Governance Committee's panel discussion on May 1. We also learned that ESF is getting a new building – an impressive feat if one knows how small and contained their campus is. Maritime shared that the campus has undergone many infrastructure improvements, especially in its roadways and sidewalks. Both Maritime and Farmingdale mentioned the timeless problems that come with growing enrollment, including increased class size and expanding ranks of adjuncts. (On a side note, we were intrigued to hear that ESF has almost no adjuncts at all).

Like you, I am most pleased about the recent developments at SUNYIT and the positive impact of the new president as well as the good news at ESF and Farmingdale. However, with all due respect to the invaluable service adjuncts can perform in our system of higher education, I can assure you that in our discussions with the Governor's Office, Division of Budget and our elected officials we keep stressing our critical need for full-time faculty.

We also heard a report on New York State College of Ceramics. Sadly, there is no news since our last meeting. The unit head remains in place without a clearly defined job description; the results of last year's audit remain hidden from the campus (and the budget as a whole lacks any transparency); Alfred University continues its attempt to hide the "SUNY" identity of NYSCOC. We are all well aware of the full agenda that System Administration is facing – but in this very climate of fiscal concern, we ask Chancellor Clark to press forward with his efforts to clarify what actually occurs with SUNY's \$10,000,000 allocation to NYSCOC.

As both Interim Chancellor and especially as the former interim president of Alfred State, I am deeply concerned about the New York State College of Ceramics. Since the last UFS Plenary meeting, there have been a series of meetings over the contentious topics you have identified above. We are determined that to move forward and establish a truly collegial relationship with Alfred University, SUNY must have the ability to fully perform its fiduciary relationship with regard to the expenditure of State funds and fulfill its moral responsibility to the faculty and staff of the College by ensuring its SUNY identity. The SUNY Board of Trustees have made this absolutely clear in our negotiations with Alfred University. The next meeting is set for mid-November with Alfred University.

Comprehensive Colleges

The Comprehensive Colleges are concerned about transferability, budget cuts, administrative intrusion into campus governance, and administrative improprieties regarding curricular design.

Transferability and Articulation

Transferability presents significant problems by awarding baccalaureate credit for courses taken through NY community colleges that are taught by secondary school teachers. It may also establish a path for transfer of upper level courses now taught at community colleges.

Transferability may also create assessment problems for programs that are involved in licensure and professional accreditation, by requiring *de facto* acknowledgement of a program not registered to a licensing board or accreditation agency.

The Comprehensive Colleges oppose the misconceived deadlines and amateurish threats by which the SUNY Board of trustees has pressured the Joint Committee on Transferability and Articulation into a hasty contrivance, interfering with a fragile transfer environment that demands mutual trust and collaboration. Despite these problems, the comprehensive colleges endorse the joint committee's resolution on transferability.

It is important to keep in mind that this has a long-standing and legitimate area of concern of the Board of Trustees in both improving SUNY as a true "system" of higher education and serving our students and their educational needs and aspirations. The Trustees, especially Chairman Hayden and Trustee Ed Cox, should be congratulated for their hard work and unceasing efforts in this most important matter.

As the former interim president of two comprehensive colleges (Brockport and Plattsburgh), I applaud the colleges' endorsement of the joint committee's resolution. I also wish to especially recognize the loyalty, dedication and teaching competence that I have personally found among the respective faculties of the comprehensive and community colleges who work, in their respective areas of competence, tirelessly and selflessly on behalf of our students to ensure their academic success.

Administrative Intrusion into Governance

The Comprehensive Colleges detected six infractions by administrative offices on several different campuses. These intrusive practices included

- violation of standing committee appointment procedures
- inclusion of management/confidential personnel on campus review committees
- refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of a duly elected CGL; and
- continued administrative "creep" when *ad hoc* committees are established to governance procedures

While I am not familiar with the individual cases, these certainly concern campus governance and should be taken up by the respective Faculty Senates and, if necessary, referred to the University Faculty Senate to determine if further action is warranted (e.g. faculty governance and Presidential reviews as noted before).

Administrative Intrusion into the Academy

The Comprehensive Colleges noted several instances in which the administration launched curricular changes without approval or proper consultation with faculty. It also noted administrative intrusions into general education course design and assessment. In an environment of increasing administrative turnover, the Comprehensive Colleges oppose the increased practice of curricular change by short-term administrators as simple career proof of accomplishment.

My position as interim chancellor is that faculty should be involved in curricular matters, and is summarized in the Faculty Senate's Governance Handbook, 2007-08.

"Campus presidents and academic administration are statutorily responsible for the quality of academic programs and policies. However, the presidents and administrations cannot develop and implement curricula without the active participation of the faculty....Some academic functions are best performed at the level of departments, some in divisions, and some at college-wide levels...College-wide academic functions include such matters as setting admission requirements and participating in admitting of students; setting academic standards for measuring satisfactory progress toward a degree; advising the administration on graduation requirements; and reviewing departmental curricular proposals to assure that general college guidelines are followed..." (University Faculty Senate Governance Handbook, June 2008, p. 15.)

Budget Practices

The Comprehensive Colleges would like to see a conclusion of the current budget "vacuum" at the campus level. Our faculty wants to proceed proactively in assisting the University as it maintains campus missions during a reactionary fiscal period. The Comprehensive Colleges urge System Administration to instruct campus presidents to publish their short-term tactics, for the next two financial quarters, so that we can plan together to minimize expected mid-year budget cuts. The Comprehensive College faculty wants campus budget processes that will mitigate impacts and protect educational mission assets.

First of all, I would like to thank you for the support you have shown during this most difficult time which has been fraught with budget cuts, spending curtailments and heightened uncertainties concerning the state of New York's economy (especially with its reliance on Wall Street). All these fluctuating factors have made planning extraordinarily difficult. As you know the Governor has called for another special session of the State Legislature in November to deal with the budget once again and the outcome for SUNY is far from clear. However, the SUNY Board of Trustees do intend to act on the budget at their next scheduled meeting on November 18th.

That being said, the administration should take the lead because "budget transparency" is critical for both the faculty and the college community to have both the appropriate information and the opportunity for discussion and input so the right decisions are made regarding the financial future of the respective institution in question.