



State University of New York

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## Memorandum to Presidents

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Date: December 31, 1991

From: Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor  
Division of Administrative Affairs

Subject: Policy and Guidelines for the Designation  
of SUNY Associates

To: Presidents, State-operated Campuses

Vol. 91 No. 6

Last fall the Board of Trustees approved creation of the title of SUNY Associate to recognize the indispensable voluntary (and uncompensated) labor on behalf of the University by persons who provide extensive services that support the official duties of the Presidents and the Chancellor.

While the enormous contributions made by these volunteers (often presidential spouses) have been acknowledged and appreciated, SUNY has not had a method for formally recognizing their efforts or facilitating the performance of their duties. The SUNY Associates program remedies this omission. It was developed through a consultative process involving the campus Presidents and the volunteers and a review of the practices of other institutions that have such programs.

A copy of the Trustees' resolution and the policy are attached to this memorandum. Also attached is a set of guidelines describing the requirements and process for nominating a person for designation as a SUNY Associate. The requirements include: limitation of the authority to nominate, which is placed solely in the hands of the Presidents and the Chancellor; a statement of specific justification to accompany the nomination, including duties to be assigned by the President or Chancellor and performed by the nominee; a description of the benefits to the campus or the system from those services; and approval by the Chancellor (or by the Board of Trustees for a Chancellor's nominee).


The SUNY Associate program will be governed by the same statutory and regulatory provisions that apply to all University and State agency volunteer programs, e.g. coverage under the Worker's Compensation Law and the defense and indemnification

Memorandum to Presidents  
December 31, 1991

Vol. 91-6  
Page 2

protections available under the State's Public Officers Law when the Associates are performing their duties and responsibilities as assigned by the President or Chancellor; reporting by the campus of information about the Associates for inclusion in the roster of volunteers maintained by the Central Administration.

If you have questions about the program, please call Associate Vice Chancellor Tom Mannix at 518-443-5194.

  
Harry K. Spindler

**Attachments**

This memorandum for information to

Presidents, Community Colleges  
Deans, Statutory Colleges  
President Coll  
Provost Nesheim

## NOMINATION PROCESS FOR SUNY ASSOCIATE

### Source

All nominations for SUNY Associate to the President must originate in the Office of the President on each campus. A nomination for SUNY Associate to the Chancellor must originate in the Chancellor's office.

Nominations may not be submitted by the nominee or by other persons associated with a campus or SUNY Central.

### Timing

For any person (spouse, family member, or community member) involved for the first time in volunteering significant services for the Office of President/Chancellor, it is recommended that a nomination as SUNY Associate be deferred at least two months. This delay is intended to provide time and opportunity for potential nominees to determine if they desire to be SUNY Associates and, if so, how they expect typically to serve in this role. The documentation expected in a letter of nomination will also be enabled by this delay.

For a person who has performed such services voluntarily in a similar capacity at another campus and who both knows and can document the pattern of service intended, a two month deferment may not be needed.

### Process

A descriptive letter of specific justification signed by the campus president must accompany each nomination for SUNY Associate to the President. The letter may be shared with members of the campus community or its Council at the discretion of the president.

A similar letter signed by the Chancellor must accompany a nomination for SUNY Associate to the Chancellor and may be shared with the Trustees if desired.

When completed, the letter of nomination from each president should be forwarded to the Chancellor for appropriate action; a letter of nomination from the Chancellor should likewise be forwarded for action to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

### Support Documentation

Documentation will vary greatly as a result of the support services needed by each president and the services each nominee wishes to volunteer in relation to this need. Some or all of the following four elements may be incorporated in a letter of documentation. Guidance on considerations for each of these elements is provided in Attachment B. A form which may be used for nomination letters is provided in Attachment A.

**Typical Services** - standard, recurrent services customarily performed in support of the Office of President/Chancellor.

**Unique Services** - unique services for the Office of President/Chancellor which are more specific to individual campuses. In general, these occur in response to particular campus needs, occur thus less frequently than typical services, but often have critical campus significance.

**Time Volunteered** - hours typically devoted per week or per month in volunteering the services described above.

**Impact** - effects on the campus of the services performed.

SUNY ASSOCIATE NOMINATION FORM

Campus:

Campus President:

Name of Nominee for SUNY Associate:

Describe below the types of services that are intended to be provided by the Associate. (Continue on the back or on a second sheet if needed.)

Describe the approximate time in a typical month that might be devoted to these volunteer services.

Describe the beneficial impact to the campus or to SUNY from the services described.

SUNY ASSOCIATE JUSTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Typical Services

Services typically and frequently performed to assist the Office of President/Chancellor may include:

Organization, coordination, and hosting of campus functions

Such functions are various but may include: welcomes to new faculty and students; convocations of alumni or parents; testimonial events for distinguished students, faculty, outside lecturers or campus contributors; meetings of faculty officers, faculty organizations, student committees, staff associations, and faculty/staff spouse groups; and functions which bring together the campus and community.

Organization for these functions may include specification of a guest list; preparing invitations and receiving responses; ordering and/or preparing food; ordering and/or arranging flowers; errand running to secure the materials, such as food, linen, and flowers, required for events; supervising or performing all prior cleaning and set up, such as silver polishing, table setting, and determination of table seating; hiring, directing, or supervising staff at the event; and supervising or performing all post event clean up.

Assistance in campus fund raising

Assistance in alumni relations and alumni activities

Assistance in general public relations initiatives

Supervision related to the official residence and its grounds

Unique Services

Unique services may include such activities as serving as the president's representative on a campus committee; coordinating or assisting in a major campus project, such as establishment of a permanent arts or hospital volunteer support group; hosting an official campus guest which may involve pick up, touring, and accommodating special requests in the community or campus; hosting a conference; giving a speech or testimonial in the president's stead; and serving as a campus representative at national meetings.

### Time Volunteered

If the nomination is to specify time spent, this estimation of time should relate to services provided and not to event attendance. Event attendance may be separately recorded if desired.

### Impact

Description of the campus impacts assisted by services of a particular spouse will vary so greatly by individual circumstances that generic examples are problematic. One illustration, however, is providing preparations for biweekly meetings of faculty from various disciplines at the president's official residence that result in increased interdepartmental communication and a refocusing of joint undergraduate programs. Another example is organizing a dinner to thank key contributors that results in renewed gifts to the campus, some at a higher level.

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D. BRUCE JOHNSTONE, Chancellor

M E M O R A N D U M

October 16, 1991

To: The Board of Trustees  
From: D. Clinton Dominick, Chair,  
Compensation Committee  
Subject: Approval of Policy on SUNY Associates

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Resolved that the "Policy on SUNY Associates", dated October 16, 1991 (copy on file in the Office of the Secretary), be, and hereby is, approved.

Background

For many decades the State University, like other state agencies, has received the benefits of services provided on a voluntary basis by individuals interested in participating in official volunteer programs pursuant to state law and regulation. On SUNY campuses, volunteers work in University museums, libraries, theaters, laboratories and on campus improvement projects, as guides, and in a variety of fund raising activities.

Following development at other campuses nationally, among them, the Universities of California and Wisconsin, discussions within the State University of New York began concerning the appropriateness of extending formal recognition to those individuals who have provided extensive and invaluable services on a voluntary basis in support of the official duties of the Presidents of the state-operated campuses and the Chancellor of the University. Services by these individuals, most often presidential spouses, have to date received only very informal recognition.

The present resolution is designed to provide official volunteer status to those individuals designated SUNY Associates in accordance with procedures set forth in the Policy. This volunteer program is to be governed by the same statutory and regulatory

provisions applicable to all University and State agency volunteer programs (Chapter 391 of the Laws of 1966 and 9 NYCRR Part 141). The Policy provides that SUNY Associates, like all volunteers in State of New York programs, would be covered by the Workers' Compensation Law and defense and indemnification protections available under the State's Public Officers Law, when the Associates are performing their duties and responsibilities as assigned by the President/Chancellor. The designation of a SUNY Associate is not automatic but is premised on evidence of the nominee's significant involvement in and responsibility for activities which are clearly supportive of the official duties of the President/Chancellor. Such services would include planning of and participation in meetings, workshops, conferences and fund raising events and hosting of official University events. In accordance with campus policies, SUNY Associates would also have access to campus facilities such as parking and libraries to facilitate volunteer activities.

The programs at the University of California and the University of Wisconsin are similar in nature and afford comparable protections to those proposed for SUNY.

Extensive discussions with campus representatives, including presidents and presidential spouses and with state officials have been held regarding the proposed Policy. A copy of the Policy is attached to this Resolution.

## POLICY ON SUNY ASSOCIATES

OCTOBER 16, 1991

Upon recommendation of a President, the Chancellor may approve the designation of an individual, usually the President's spouse, as a SUNY Associate of the President; and upon consultation with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor may designate an individual, usually the Chancellor's spouse, as a SUNY Associate of the Chancellor. As a SUNY Associate, the individual would participate in an official volunteer program of the University. Designation as a SUNY Associate carries no expectation of salary.

This designation recognizes the contributions of individuals who provide to the University without remuneration substantial and valuable services which support the official duties of the President/Chancellor and undertake such services as assigned by the President/Chancellor. Such services include planning of and participating in meetings, workshops, conferences, University activities, alumni and fund raising events, faculty/student/staff activities; hosting of University events in an official capacity; and, where appropriate, management of an official University residence including supervision of employees assigned to the residence, and escorting and transporting of official University guests. Services and responsibilities of SUNY Associates may include other activities which are clearly in support of the official duties of, and are assigned by, the President/Chancellor. The University, to the extent feasible, will provide recognition

and support services to assist those so named in the execution of their duties. The designation of SUNY Associate is not automatic, but is conditional on the nominee's significant involvement in and responsibility for the conduct of the activities noted above.

An individual named as a SUNY Associate becomes a member of the campus's volunteer program and shall receive:

- (1) a University identification card which will provide access to University libraries and other facilities, in accordance with campus procedures;
- (2) coverage for an injury arising out of the course and scope of SUNY Associate service, to the extent available to volunteers in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Law;
- (3) defense and indemnification under Section 17 of the Public Officers Law with respect to claims resulting from acts or omissions in the services specifically performed as a SUNY Associate, except where the injury or damage resulted from intentional wrongdoing, to the extent available to volunteers; (Section 17 coverage is not available for incidents arising while volunteers are engaged in activities which are not part of their services as SUNY Associates. Decisions on defense coverage under section 17 are made on a case-by-case basis

as incidents arise by the New York Attorney General's Office. Decisions on indemnification are similarly handled but also include review by the Chancellor and the State Comptroller);

- (4) an official business card bearing the seal or logo of the campus, the name of the SUNY Associate and the SUNY Associate title; and
- (5) access to parking permits, where applicable, for use at University-owned facilities in accordance with campus parking regulations.

This policy statement as adopted by the State University of New York Board of Trustees on October 16, 1991 is applicable to the state-operated campuses of the University.