Minutes of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York

June 13, 2017

Pursuant to a notice of meeting duly given on May 30, 2017, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York held a meeting on June 13, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at the SUNY Global Center with video connections to Ithaca, New York.

Committee Members Present:
- Trustee Ron Ehrenberg, Chair
- Trustee Peter Knuepfer (served as Acting Chair)
- Trustee Marc Cohen
- Trustee Angelo Fatta
- Trustee Eunice Lewin
- Trustee Richard Socarides
- Trustee Carl Spielvogel
- Trustee Cary Staller
- Trustee Nina Tamrowski

Committee Members Not Present:
- Trustee Stanley Litow
- Trustee Marshall Lichtman

Other Trustees Present:
- Chairman Carl McCall
- Trustee Edward Spiro

Others Present:
- Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor
- Alexander Cartwright, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor
- Eileen McLoughlin, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and CFO
- Joseph Porter, Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and General Counsel and Secretary of the University
- Elizabeth Bringsjord, Vice Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Sr. Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges & the Education Pipeline
- Carlos Medina, Vice Chancellor and CDO
- Stacey Hengsterman, Associate Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Chief of Staff
- Belinda Miles, President, Westchester Community College
- Nancy Brown, Dean of Education, Old Westbury
- David Cantaffa, Assistant Provost
- Jim Malatras, President, Rockefeller Institute of Government
- Jessica Todtman, Deputy Chief of Staff
- Ken O’Brien, Provost’s Fellow
- Note: NYSED Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia participated in the beginning of the meeting via telephone


Meeting Convened

Trustee Knuepfer convened the special meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee on behalf of Trustee Ehrenberg at 2:10 p.m. and gave a brief welcome.

Agenda

TeachNY Policy Discussion

Trustee Knuepfer began by thanking Chairman McCall for convening this meeting to allow the committee to focus on the proposed TeachNY Policy on Educator Preparation.

He reminded Committee members that they had an opportunity to review an initial draft of this resolution at its March meeting. He thanked Committee members for their feedback at that time, and thanked them and others who forwarded additional comments and questions after that meeting. He said that he understands that the staff found that feedback helpful and have incorporated that feedback into the revised policy document before them today.

Trustee Knuepfer shared a few thoughts about the policy development process. He noted that the Committee heard a lot in March about the collaborative process that led to the development of the draft policy. He said that process included the convening of the TeachNY Advisory Council, TeachNY regional meetings, the TeachNY Steering Committee; he noted he was involved in all. He also explained that the Chancellor and NYSED Commissioner led TeachNY round tables.

Given the critical role of faculty in driving curriculum, Trustee Knuepfer added that he appreciated that this draft policy provides a general framework that will enable the system to work with campus faculty and administrators, P-12 partners, and others to improve educator preparation. He said the policy would also provide a path forward that will help campus leaders in their work with shared governance to implement this policy.

Trustee Knuepfer then made a few comments about transition, noted that this was the second to last Board meeting for a number of those in attendance. He said that SUNY has had the great benefit of Chancellor Zimpher’s eight years of leadership and that we look ahead to welcoming Dr. Kristina Johnson this fall. He noted that Provost Cartwright will be departing soon for his new position at the University of Missouri. Also, Professor Gwen Kay (SUNY Oswego) will be presiding over the Faculty Senate and joining the Board as his successor at the end of the month.

Trustee Knuepfer said that in the midst of these transitions, it’s important that SUNY doesn’t lose momentum in its work. He said that the work of TeachNY – which has been going on for three years – is just one example, as we are engaged in a number of other academic initiatives that must continue even during changes in leadership. He gave a few examples: a revisit of general education requirements, the development of open educational resources and open access to scholarly publications.

He recognized that while Chancellor Zimpher and Commissioner Elia have undoubtedly been leaders and champions of TeachNY, he knows from firsthand experience that hundreds of faculty, staff, and leaders from across our system have contributed to this effort, and stand ready to see it through to its implementation.

Trustee Knuepfer then turned the floor over to Provost Cartwright.

Provost Cartwright began his remarks by joining Trustee Knuepfer in recognizing Chancellor Zimpher’s leadership and vision.
He also thanked the members of this Committee who provided important feedback on the draft policy.

Provost Cartwright then highlighted a few of the areas where staff added more specificity to the policy document; to highlight the reasons behind this effort.

Provost Cartwright said that SUNY has had a teacher education policy in place since 2001, called *A New Vision in Teacher Education*.

He said that the 2001 policy put in place what were, at the time, ground-breaking commitments to strengthening SUNY educator programs. He said *New Vision* ensured that students would be thoroughly grounded in the subjects they teach; specifically, that students preparing to teach secondary or specialized subjects will major in the relevant discipline, completing all course requirements.

Provost Cartwright said that *New Vision* also ensured that students complete not less than 100 hours of clinical experience in a school classroom, exclusive of time spent in student teaching; also that clinical faculty must supervise all field experiences.

He said that these policy commitments helped our campuses and our students advance. The challenge today, he explained, is that the policy is out-of-date given the incorporation of key items into growing state and federal regulations on educator preparation.

He stressed that again, there is a need for SUNY to be proactive.

Provost Cartwright said that there is also a growing effort, championed by Chancellor Zimpher, to treat educator preparation as a practice profession, where teacher candidates receive academically rigorous, clinically based training that follows them into professional practice. He said that this concept of training teachers the way we train doctors or lawyers makes sense to him. He said that teaching is a field that must constantly change and adapt to address the diverse needs of K-12 students, while also being responsive to heavy regulation and professional standards.

To achieve all of those things, Provost Cartwright said that we need a modification to the current policy as outlined in the TeachNY document before the Committee.

Provost Cartwright also briefly addressed the connection between educator preparation and SUNY’s mission. He said that many of us know that a number of our campuses had their origin as “normal schools” focused on teacher training. So educator preparation is part of SUNY’s history. More specifically, however, Provost Cartwright noted that it is also part of our statutory mission, which charges SUNY to “provide a comprehensive program of higher education to address local, regional and state needs and goals.”

He said that there is no question that this state needs excellent teachers. Provost Cartwright said that SUNY’s work in educating this state’s K-12 students is not only critical to their academic readiness for college, but also their academic readiness for life.

Provost Cartwright concluded his remarks by stating that he believes that, with the modifications made over the past month, the policy before the Committee establishes a new standard for excellence in educator preparation that is consistent with SUNY’s mission and appropriate for SUNY’s important role in educator preparation.

Provost Cartwright then turned the floor over to Chancellor Zimpher.

Chancellor Zimpher said that one of the most important facets of the TeachNY work is the terrific partnership that SUNY has established with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and its Commissioner, MaryEllen Elia. She asked Commissioner Elia, who was joining the meeting by
phone due to a Regents’ meeting happening on the same day, to say a few words about the significance of the TeachNY policy.

Commissioner Elia said that NYSED views SUNY’s contributions to educator preparation as vital. A role so important that NYSED awarded SUNY the initial grant from Race to the Top funding to establish the TeachNY Advisory Council and support policy revision.

She said that she is proud of the initial report released by the TeachNY Advisory Council and the extensive work done thereafter. She noted that sometimes it can be hard for two State agencies to work together, but that what happened through TeachNY is a real partnership that will benefit countless educator preparation students, and in turn the countless more lives they will impact as teachers.

Commissioner Elia noted that the proposed TeachNY policy positions SUNY well for alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). She explained that ESSA focuses on fostering equity for all students: changing the way we work with schools and support teachers, from recruitment and retention to professional development and accomplished practice. She said that the process for New York’s ESSA plan is ongoing and that SUNY has had a seat at the table every step of the way.

Commissioner Elia said that she is a great supporter of Chancellor Zimpher’s premise that higher education and K-12 have a shared responsibility for excellent teaching and she believes that adoption today of the TeachNY policy gets us there in a way that makes educator preparation programs reflective of 21st century needs.

She said that she looks forward to working with incoming Chancellor Johnson and would like to continue to share the message of what SUNY is doing across New York and nationally. She said that lots of people are watching to see and celebrate the adoption of the TeachNY policy.

Trustee Fatta asked if this partnership between SUNY and NYSED is unusual. Commissioner Elia said that unfortunately it is, but that it is such an important partnership and one that brings value to both sides.

Chancellor Zimpher thanked Commissioner Elia for her time. She then explained that there are three obstacles that this policy revision is trying to address:

1. Balancing everything students know about content and pedagogy;
2. Addressing the practice nature of the profession, currently grossly underestimated. We need more focus on the clinical aspects of educating teachers; and
3. Given that most applied professions have labs on campus--and as teaching is an applied profession—it needs labs too.

Chancellor Zimpher noted that the interesting thing about establishing labs for educator preparation is that they can also be used for professional development of faculty, because, they all teach too.

She said that she wanted the Committee to hear from a small sampling of the hundreds of people who worked to develop the TeachNY policy and then played a video (available via the Office of the Secretary of the University).

Chancellor Zimpher then asked several guests to speak.

Westchester Community College President Belinda Miles said that the process for developing this policy was an excellent example of shared governance and is a model she has taken back to her campus for other work.
She explained that for community colleges, the TeachNY policy provides a better structure for the role of community colleges in the preparation of teachers and a better path for articulation with four-year institutions.

She said that she supports the efforts for SUNY system to support campuses in educator preparation as outlined in the policy.

President Miles said that this policy addresses critical needs for improvement in educator preparation, including recruitment and retention.

Provost's Fellow Dr. Ken O’Brien said the TeachNY policy addresses the siloed structure of the academy and in particular educator preparation. He said the policy moves SUNY away from a model where teacher preparation happens on one side and content preparation happens on the other, which leaves students with the challenging task of piecing it all together. He explained that TeachNY emphasizes an interdisciplinary model where faculty can plan together to bring a fully articulated program to students. Dr. O’Brien said that TeachNY calls for an all-University approach that builds bridges across silos.

Dr. O’Brien also highlighted the diversity of educator preparation programs across the system and underscored the significance of the proposed policy continuing to support that differentiation. He said that the TeachNY policy establishes a standard for excellence but gives campuses flexibility with how they get there.

Dr. Nancy Brown, Dean of Education at SUNY Old Westbury, highlighted the value of the TeachNY policy’s emphasis on clinical experiences and practice laboratories. She relayed from personal experience how much more effective her program became once they began working in partnership with the local district, with Old Westbury faculty and K-12 teachers communicating together to build meaningful clinical experiences for students. She said the TeachNY policy gives her additional freedom to expand this important work and also to support teachers once they begin their professional careers.

Trustee Staller said that the revised policy document was improved, with more flexibility for campuses. He expressed strong concern that there was no discussion about the way that students learn; fearing that the policy ignores extensive research, including at NSF funded labs across the country, about how students learn and how the brain works. He said that not taking this into account was a missed opportunity and that the teaching profession can’t always focus on teachers, that it must consider the students.

Dr. O’Brien apologized for not addressing this specifically in his comments but noted that one of the benefits of the interdisciplinary approach called for by TeachNY is that it actually engages the faculty doing the type of research that Trustee Staller mentioned in the educator preparation process. He stressed the research-based focus of the profession, underscored in the new policy.

Trustee Lewin said she was pleased to have attended a TeachNY meeting in Buffalo and she commended the core principles defined in the policy document. She asked what steps were in place to ensure professional development for faculty. Provost Cartwright said that System is working on a way to invest in the professional development of faculty, in educator preparation and more broadly.

Trustee Lewin also asked how students transferring from community colleges would be impacted. President Miles said that there is close coordination between SUNY community colleges and four-year colleges and that she felt the policy would lead to additional articulation agreements. Dr. O’Brien noted that there is a teacher education transfer process.

Chairman McCall expressed his full support for the policy and shared his own experience of becoming a teacher early in his career. He also noted that he has discussed the policy with Chancellor-Elect
Johnson and that, while she needs to learn more, feels the policy is appropriate and looks forward to working on implementation.

Trustee Cohen explained that he has been actively engaged in this process and that students are supportive of the TeachNY policy. He said that he believes the policy is a giant step forward and commends all involved.

Trustee Ehrenberg said that he believes the resolution has been strengthened significantly, clarifying flexibility for campuses and the responsibilities of System Administration.

Trustee Staller said that some of the key items that Provost Cartwright mentioned as being in the current policy, New Vision, do not seem to be included in the TeachNY policy. He said that it was very important that we not lose things like majoring in a content area.

Dr. Cantaffa said that the Steering Committee did a careful walk-through of the existing policy to ensure that nothing was lost. He explained that the regulatory environment has changed significantly over time and that many of the leading elements of New Vision, including majoring in a content area, are now required under state regulation.

Dr. Brown said that every one of her faculty have a Ph.D. from a top research university and that they all continue to do research, publish and present at conferences. She said that all teachers consider the ways in which each one of their students learn best and act accordingly, she said, “we are teachers, that is what we do.” She also noted that the first standard of accreditation for an educator preparation program focuses on how they have educated their students to identify whether or not their student has learned.

Provost Cartwright explained that detail regarding implementation would be provide in a Memorandum to Presidents (MTP) shortly after policy adoption.

Trustee Tamrowski asked if the reference in the policy to campus strategic planning pertain’d to community colleges. Provost Cartwright said yes, and that would be clarified in the MTP.

**Trustee Knuepfer called for a motion to approve the resolution titled SUNY TeachNY Policy on Educator Preparation.**

A motion was made and second received.

There was one no vote (Trustee Staller), remaining Committee members voted in the affirmative.

The motion passed.

**Adjournment**

- Trustee Knuepfer called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

A motion was made and second received.

The meeting was adjourned.