



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

www.suny.edu

December 20, 2018

Dr. Gwen Kay
President, University Faculty Senate
State University Plaza
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Gwen:

Thank you for your recent letter sharing resolutions adopted at the University Faculty Senate (UFS) Fall Plenary in Binghamton. I was glad to be able to join you in person for the Plenary as well as the special meeting with senators from the comprehensive colleges. Responses to the October 2018 resolutions follow:

- **180-01-01: Resolution on Gender Neutral Language in All SUNY Correspondence**

My thanks to the University Faculty Senate for its consistent support of SUNY's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This latest resolution comes at a time when we are working to respond to multiple inquiries from campuses seeking guidance related to gender neutral language and use of preferred names. As we work together to ensure a welcoming and inclusive climate for all, our approach is focused on engagement of the SUNY community—across campuses and here at System Administration—to ensure that any guidance we provide is reflective of broad input, including of course, that of our governance bodies. Our General Counsel, Elizabeth Garvey, is convening a group to create practical guidance to assist System Administration and campuses when assigning, recording, changing, sharing and using the legal and chosen/preferred names of individuals. Further, the Gender Inclusivity Task Force charge will include a review of best practices and recommendations regarding use of gender neutral language in communications. Both initiatives will include faculty representation and participation.

- **180-02-01: Resolution to Support for Lactating Persons and Lactating Space(s) on All SUNY Campuses**

As this resolution rightly points out, SUNY's actions here are guided by State Labor Law and related guidelines from the New York State Department of Labor. There are also relevant sections of public health law that pertain. I have consulted with the Office of General Counsel and the Office of Human Resources for language to use in a communication ensuring that all campuses are aware of their important responsibilities here.

- **180-03-01: Resolution to Encourage SUNY to Become the First Test Optional System of Higher Education in the Nation**

I want to thank the UFS for its commitment to increasing applications by, and enrollment of, students from under-represented groups. We certainly share the goal of continuing to increase student diversity and further, to increase faculty diversity, across all institutions. With respect to becoming test-optional or test-flexible, our current emphasis is on continued support for a multiple measures approach to admissions (just as we do with assessment), with each campus having the autonomy to establish local policies and practices. The latter includes special admissions criteria such as via the Educational Opportunity Program as well as waivers for individual students from admissions selectivity goals where appropriate. We are also monitoring two institutions which were granted permission to pilot test-optional admissions approaches. We will follow pilot outcomes closely and continue to monitor national trends in this area as well.

- **180-04-01: Resolution Requesting to Reinstitute the Graduate Fellowship Incentive Program**

Increasing the numbers of students who apply for and receive prestigious fellowships is mutually beneficial to students, their campuses, and SUNY as a whole. The Provost and I support the idea of continuing this type of incentive program. We will work with SUNY RF and campuses in an effort to identify a sustainable funding model that could expand the program to include other national fellowships thereby increasing its applicability to additional campuses; and for identifying options for cost sharing the program with participating campuses.

My thanks to you for your continued leadership and service.

With warm regards,



Kristina M. Johnson, PhD
Chancellor

Cc: Tod Laursen, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor