



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

www.suny.edu

April 18, 2018

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

Dear Gwen:

It was a pleasure joining the University Faculty Senate (UFS) for its winter plenary at SUNY Polytechnic Institute. Thank you for sharing the positive feedback about Associate Provost Hildebrand's presentation. I am sure that the discussion about the UFS/System relationship was beneficial to both long-standing and recently joined Senators alike.

I appreciate your sharing with me the resolutions adopted and for taking the time to provide me with background on each. I am pleased to provide brief responses below:

- **178-01-1; Resolution to Develop Support Services and Best Practices within SUNY both at System and Individual Campuses for Undocumented Students**

I want to recognize and thank the UFS for its ongoing concern for our DACA students. With the support of the SUNY Trustees, we have taken a number of steps to ensure that DACA students have access to helpful resources. Rather than having just one point person on each campus—whom students may or may not feel comfortable approaching—we intentionally worked to inform a network of support on each campus. We shared information with Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, Student Affairs Officers, Senior International Officers, Chief Diversity Officers, the Student Assembly, as well as established regularly updated online resources for existing and prospective students alike which both include FAQ's: <https://www.suny.edu/immigration/> and <https://www.suny.edu/attend/get-started/undocumented/>. In addition, our Office of General Counsel stands ready to advise any office that receives a student inquiry that they are unsure how to address.

Regarding the Diversity Advisory Council, resources for DACA students was on the agenda of its first meeting. I have shared with Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Medina the UFS resolution. His office is currently working with Daisy Torres-Baez, Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives at SUNY Purchase's Multicultural Center Office of Community Engagement and Gabriela Quintanilla, founder of the Hudson Valley-based Adelante Student Voices organization, to identify and share best practices across the System. Dr. Medina will put the UFS request on the agenda for the Council's next meeting.

- **178-02-1; Resolution on Verification of Campus Governance Consultation on Academic Program Actions**

After consultation with the Office of the Provost, I understand that all program-related forms (requests for deactivation, new programs, and revisions) have, since 2010, required a signature from the campus President or Chief Academic Officer (CAO) which “affirms that the proposal has met campus administrative and governance procedures for consultation.” I did confirm that any proposal received by System without this signature is returned to campus as incomplete. With respect to your request to add additional signatories, I do want to be respectful of campus governance. If there are individual cases where local academic governance feels that the currently required consultation is not happening, I would ask that they pursue a local resolution.

- **178-03-1; Resolution to Institute a SUNY Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship Program**

My thanks to the UFS for raising the idea of a SUNY Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship program; I share and appreciate the commitment of the UFS to continuing to enhance the diversity of our faculty. Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Carlos Medina shared with me that the existing Faculty Diversity Program is a legislatively funded program, the purposes of which cannot be modified from the original intent without legislative intervention. The existing program has been funded at the same level for the last 10 years, \$422,000 annually, which drives a very competitive process for bringing diverse junior faculty (assistant professor level) into SUNY. Interim Provost Wang and Vice Chancellor Medina would be happy to discuss with the UFS how best to support postdoctoral fellows and how to pursue additional financial resources.

- **178-04-1; Resolution Recommending Academic Advisers Related to International Students**

My thanks to the UFS for your continued focus on this area. We will continue at System to do what we can to support the critically important advising process across the University—from participating in the first convening of the new Advising SUNY professional group to enhancements to SUNY Degree Works system. Interim Provost Wang and her team will continue to support campuses to strengthen SUNY’s infrastructure in academic advisement so that it serves as a valuable resource for all, including international students.

- **178-05-1; Resolution Re-examining the Definition of Liberal Arts Courses**

As you know, the New York State Board of Regents sets the definition of what constitutes liberal arts for SUNY, CUNY, and New York private and for-profit universities: “Undergraduate degrees shall be distinguished, as follows [table at link below], by the minimum amount of liberal arts content required for each degree. The required liberal arts core shall not be directed toward specific occupational or professional objectives.” (<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/lrp/liberalarts.htm>)

Our challenge then, should we request a re-examination and update of the criteria for the liberal arts definition—which I understand that the Office of College and University Evaluation (OCUE) at the State Education Department would be willing to discuss—is to

reach consensus on whether or not changes are necessary and if so, what should they be. I would encourage UFS to engage FCCC on this issue, perhaps as part of the ongoing conversations your two organizations are already having about evaluation of SUNY's General Education Requirement. Please also continue the dialogue with the Office of the Provost. Once we have broader input, we will be in a better position to determine how to proceed.

My thanks to you for your continued leadership and service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristina M. Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristina M. Johnson, PhD
Chancellor