



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

www.suny.edu

January 09, 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 fall plenary meeting at SUNY Delhi. As anticipated, we had a good and important exchange on a number of pressing issues; I applaud the commitment governance members make to their institutions and to SUNY at large. As this marked my first appearance before the UFS as Chancellor, I did take the opportunity to underscore my own commitment to shared governance. I appreciate your positive feedback about the way in which those remarks were received.

Thank you for sharing with me the resolutions adopted and for taking the time to provide me with background on each (I understand that I will be receiving additional information about proposed bylaw changes in January). I am pleased to provide brief responses below:

- **177-01-1: Resolution to Recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day**
I want to thank the UFS for raising the issue of recognizing "Indigenous Peoples' Day" over "Columbus Day" on SUNY calendars and appreciate that the University Student Assembly has proposed the same. I understand that this resolution was also forwarded to SUNY Board Chairman H. Carl McCall. We have asked the Office of the General Counsel to research this issue and advise us accordingly.
- **177-1-2: Resolution to Provide Free Access to Menstrual Products at All SUNY Campuses in All Restrooms**
You had asked that I discuss the recommendation to ensure free menstrual products in all restrooms with campus presidents. I read about the pilot program at Stony Brook University and understand that it is being paid for by the student activities fee and was informed by a community survey. That underscored for me the importance of student engagement and the need for local, collaborative, determinations on this. Therefore, I encourage local senates to discuss this with their respective student assemblies.
- **177-1-3: Resolution on Academic Advisors Related to Financial Aid**
Advising is a critically important, and admittedly complex, responsibility of our faculty

and designated department advisors across the System. One of the things I learned about our degree-auditing software, Degree Works, is that it is ideal for serving as an advising tool, showing students and advisors what degree requirements the student has met and which they have yet to complete. There is a companion software product available for Banner Schools at no cost through the SICAS (Student Information and Campus Administrative Systems) Center that utilizes Degree Works audit information to show how registration activity impacts financial aid eligibility; some campuses are already using it. I have asked our Office of Information Technology to explore ways that this functionality can be expanded to include non-Banner campuses. Interim Provost Wang has confirmed that discussion of this tool will take place at the first-annual SUNY-wide academic advising conference being held at the University at Albany on February 23, 2016. She will also issue a communication to all campuses making aware of Degree Works as an advising tool and the financial aid software.

- **177-1-4: Resolution on Broad-Based Fees**

I appreciate the UFS request that System work to ensure that all broad-based fees are implemented and administered consistent with appropriate policy and guidelines. I also appreciate the careful research done about the possible implication of fees on enrollment decisions. During my short time here I have come to see how seriously Senior Vice Chancellor and CFO Eileen McLoughlin and her staff take their work in this regard, including the detailed and iterative review process that has been instituted to ensure that fee increases are reasonable, defensible, and provide a benefit to SUNY students. We understand our important responsibility to do all that we can to continue to ensure that SUNY provides students with the best education possible at an affordable cost. Please know that I support our efforts to be transparent about tuition and fees, including the common SUNY Smart Track financial aid award letters.

- **177-1-5: Resolution on Attendance Policy Accommodation for United States Military Drills and Training**

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. Our Office of the General Counsel has confirmed that state law provides for up to 30 days of excused absences each year for active military or reserve military called to active duty (which would include drills/training during the week). Before the start of the Spring semester, Counsel's office will issue a memorandum reiterating the law, and what it covers, that will broadly distributed.

- **177-1-6: Resolution in Response to the Regulatory Action Taken by the Charter School Committee of the SUNY Board of Trustees**

I appreciate the UFS position on this matter. As you know, the full Board was invited to participate in the meeting of the SUNY Trustees' Charter Schools Committee where a resolution—strengthened considerably from its initial draft based on community feedback—was considered. The Committee also opened the floor to community

comment. I am not inclined to ask the Board to revisit this issue at this time but know that we will monitor the implementation of these new regulations closely.

- **177-1-7: Resolution in Recognition of Carol Donato**

This resolution was a wonderful tribute to Carol Donato's valued service to the UFS for 14 years and to System for more than three decades. I join you in extending my appreciation for her service and wishing her all the best on her retirement.

My thanks to you for your continued leadership and service.

Warm regards,

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

Kristina M. Johnson, PhD
Chancellor