



SUNY University Faculty Senate Statement on Chancellor Malatras and Workplace Culture

7 December 2021

The SUNY University Faculty Senate (UFS) condemns workplace harassment. We expect our leaders to honor this principle and to be allies to those who are experiencing harassment in any form. Text messages released as part of the investigation into former Governor Cuomo indicate that our current Chancellor did not live up to these values while a member of the Cuomo administration. Not only did he not push back against the toxic work environment that we now know characterized that administration, he also contributed to its polarized, ‘take no prisoners’ culture. This behavior was, and is, unacceptable. And it raises serious questions about workplace culture under his leadership of the Rockefeller Institute of Government, Empire State College, and now at SUNY System Administration.

Yet in their recent statement of support for the Chancellor, the SUNY Board of Trustees not only ignored these questions, they also failed to adequately explain why they retain confidence that he can effectively lead and advocate for SUNY going forward. SUNY needs strong leadership now more than ever, particularly during crucial budget negotiations that will determine the ability of SUNY to meet the needs of students, patients, communities, and citizens of New York. We have real concerns about the ability of the Chancellor to repair trust and restore confidence with key constituencies and stakeholders.

While many on the UFS Executive Committee want us to call for the Chancellor’s immediate resignation or removal, others want to first put the Board and the Chancellor on notice. We have the following demands:

- We call on the Board of Trustees to
 - in the immediate term, authorize an independent investigation of the Chancellor’s leadership at the Rockefeller Institute, Empire State College, and System Administration into workplace culture; hiring procedures and qualifications of those hired; transparency; collaboration with faculty and student organizations; and effectiveness of advocacy.
 - in the short term, work collaboratively with SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges, Student Assembly, and UFS to clarify and improve [principles and policies](#) for future Chancellor searches.
- We call on the Chancellor to
 - in the immediate term, lead an effort to foster diverse, equitable, inclusive, respectful, and healthy workplaces and leadership cultures in System Administration and throughout SUNY.
 - in the short term, advocate effectively for New York State to become a [national leader](#) in how it budgets support for public higher education.

We will continue to monitor this evolving situation and are prepared to take further action as warranted.

About the SUNY University Faculty Senate

University Faculty Senate (UFS) is the system-wide shared governance organization for the state-operated and statutory campuses of SUNY. SUNY UFS is committed to supporting faculty and staff senates on our 34 campuses, and advising on effective educational policies and other professional matters throughout the University. <https://sunyufs.us>