



THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW YORK

**Deborah F. Stanley**  
Interim Chancellor

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January 6, 2023

Trustee Keith Landa  
President, University Faculty Senate  
H. Carl McCall Building  
353 Broadway  
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Trustee Landa,

Thank you for your follow-up to the University Faculty Senate's (UFS) Fall Plenary. My response to your requested actions are detailed below.

**192-03-1: SUNY SLSC handling of college-held Perkins Loan payments and interest during the pandemic.**

Thank you for raising this complex issue. Nonfederal held Perkins loans were not initially included in the pause in payments. The SLSC has detailed their handling, including advocacy, with the Department of Education to allow those holding nonfederal Perkins loans to include these loans in the pause, and how they addressed this with their borrowers who were not on pause during those six months that these loans were not included.

In communicating with SLSC, they stated:

“Although Congress provided the option to extend the COVID benefits, such as the suspension of payments and a pause on interest for school-held Perkins loans, the option was not provided to schools until October, 2020-- 6 months after the original suspension for federally held loans was provided.

At that time, given the significant size of the Perkins portfolio for SUNY, it was determined that there was no feasible way to implement this provision retroactively, as would have been required. Since most of the Perkins borrowers in repayment make very small payments (on average \$40), we instead offered very generous options for deferral and forbearance to any borrower impacted by COVID.

We continue to make such options available to borrowers and to date have placed thousands of borrowers into a deferment or forbearance upon request. Any borrower who contacted us with a COVID related/financial related impact has been automatically granted a deferment or forbearance.

Our treatment of the COVID provisions is consistent with the majority of colleges across the country who service their own Perkins portfolios. Had the Department provided for the payment pause initially on school-held Perkins loans, we would have implemented it. SLSC was one of many college administrators who immediately advocated for that option to the Department, but it was initially declined. By the time the Department made the option available, we had already implemented the necessary policies internally to assist any borrower in need of assistance. We have continued to do so and have done so retroactively.

In addition, our placement of loans to collection agencies only occurs after months of outreach to our borrowers, which includes several phone calls, emails and mailed notices. If a borrower responds and needs assistance because they are unable to make payments, we are able to help them. If they ignore those attempts, we are required by federal regulation to place their account in collection. If we are not successful in collecting the loans, we are then required to assign the defaulted loans to the Department of Education for collection, which is even more detrimental to the borrower. We do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

Students are counseled at the time they take the loans and when they separate from college about their rights and responsibility. I am proud of the efforts of my staff and the level of sensitivity we offer every student/borrower who reaches out to us in need of assistance. But should they fail to do so, we are obligated to follow the regulations of the programs we administer.

We do not assess interest for borrowers in deferment and any fees that had been assessed in a period that is later covered by a deferment are reversed.”

**192-04-1: State Executive Budget advocacy.**

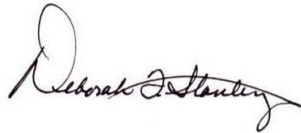
I have spoken with Vice Chancellor for Government Affairs and Marking Travis Proulx and he and I stand in agreement that we will have stronger inclusion in this year’s budget advocacy. As you know, pre-COVID, Government Relations worked very closely with UFS President Gwen Kay in this work. During COVID, when the Legislature remained mostly remote during budget season, this became difficult.

**192-06-1: Statement on Iran.**

On December 13, the [SUNY Board of Trustees approved a resolution](#) directing SUNY campuses to provide in-state tuition to students from countries that are designated by the U.S. Department of State under Temporary Protective Status (TPS). While the list is dynamic in nature, as of today, there are 15 countries in this category. Individuals who have refugee or asylum status are already granted in-state status. We will continue to monitor the TPS list and advocate for more robust consular services by US Department of State globally.

I thank you for leading the University Faculty Senate and for all you and your colleagues do for the betterment of the State University of New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah F. Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Deborah F. Stanley  
Interim Chancellor