Date: September 22, 1981
From: Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.
Chancellor

Subject: Designation of Campus Public Service Officers

I am encouraged by the continued expansion in our public service activities revealed in the recent budget hearings, despite the variation in levels of intensity among the individual campuses. While most campuses have greatly increased their public service activity, there still remains a need to provide a more visible focus and institutional locus for the effort. Therefore, I would encourage each campus to consider the possibility of designating a person and, in the longer run, a position or positions for the Public Service function(s) as you engage in present and forward planning under the Multi-phase Rolling Plan.

This is not a mandatory request since I realize that budget and personnel circumstances differ among the campuses. However, I believe that each campus should make every effort to address the spirit and intent involved.

Some campuses have already appointed a Public Service Officer. In the absence of such action, the President often is caught up too much in this function. The quickest, and quite possibly the best, avenue to strengthening our public service efforts on each campus and University-wide is the creation of an Office of Public Service on each campus that is identified publicly as such. A Public Service Officer who is known on campus and in the community as an advocate and broker can do much to lift part of the operational responsibility from the President in the expansion of research, training, and technical assistance services for the benefit of the community.

Public Service Offices are needed to provide advocacy on campus, to search out resources, and to work with community interests with respect to accessing and delivery of services to meet local needs. Public Service Offices are also needed as campus components in an interactive University-wide system that makes possible access and delivery of services to any locality, wherever specific unmet needs exist.

If you have already designated a Public Service Officer with that title to serve as on-campus advocate, broker, and person responsible for community outreach functions, please provide the person’s name to the Central Administration Office of Public Service.

Designation need not be that of a full-time person or position. Dual assignments may well be preferable at certain early stages. The important
step is to have on each campus at least one person in addition to the President who can serve and be seen as the Public Service Officer.

I know that each of you share my view that SUNY has a responsibility to increase services to business, industry, labor, and State and local governments as a public institution. There is at the present time an especially critical need to solve our social and economic problems. If we in SUNY can organize ourselves to realize the fuller utilization of our resources in research, training, and technical assistance, we, too, will be the beneficiaries.

This memorandum addressed to:

Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges

Information copies to:

Dr. Odle
Vice Provost Spencer