Memorandum to Presidents

Date: December 1, 1989

From: Office of the Chancellor

Subject: Affirmation of Trustees' Policy on Academic Freedom

To: Presidents, State University of New York

As you know, the Policies of the Board of Trustees contain a strong and clear commitment to the principles of academic freedom (Article XI, Title I).

At its October meeting, the Board moved to restate its continuing belief in the essentiality of academic freedom and to express its concern over certain recent external attempts to intrude into academic matters of curriculum and research at, respectively, Nassau Community College and the University Center at Stony Brook.

A copy of the resolution approved by the Trustees is attached. In its central point, the Board affirmed its belief that "a strong commitment to academic freedom is essential not only for the vigorous intellectual life of the University, its faculty and students, but also for the health of the state and the nation, whose futures depend on leaders trained by exposure to diverse views and pledged to the pursuit of truth."

On behalf of the Trustees, who urge "vigorous support of the principles of this policy," I ask that you make the widest possible dissemination of this policy statement on your campus and to organizations and constituency groups, such as your board of trustees or council, which support the mission of the State University of New York.

Thank you for your cooperation in this most important matter.

D. Bruce Johnstone

Attachment
This memorandum addressed to:

Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges
Deans, Statutory Colleges

This memorandum for information to:

President Coll
Provost Nesheim
October 25, 1989

To: The Board of Trustees

From: D. Bruce Johnstone

Subject: Affirmation of Policy on Academic Freedom

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York has long been committed to the full exercise, within the law, of freedoms of inquiry, teaching and research and has expressed this commitment to academic freedom as a formal policy of the University; and

Whereas this Board of Trustees believes that a strong commitment to academic freedom is essential not only for the vigorous intellectual life of the University, its faculty and students, but also for the health of the state and the nation, whose futures depend on leaders trained by exposure to diverse views and pledged to the pursuit of truth; and

Whereas this Board is aware that in the course of the conduct of its affairs the University faces myriad challenges to this commitment and is especially concerned about external intrusions into the curriculum at Nassau Community College and into the conduct of biomedical research involving animals at the State University at Stony Brook; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that this Board of Trustees reaffirms the policy of the State University of New York on academic freedom as embodied in Article XI, Title I of the Policies of the Board (section 335.27 of Title 8 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York), and urges the vigorous support of the principles of this policy.