Chancellor Search

The search committee for SUNY’s 13th Chancellor, on which I served, completed its work in March and recommended four candidates to the Board of Trustees for consideration. The Board has appointed Dr. Kristina Johnson, a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Inventors. From her days as a faculty member at the University of Colorado to her years as the Dean of Engineering at Duke University to her time as the Provost at the Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Johnson established a distinguished academic record. She was then tapped by President Obama as Under-Secretary of Energy, where she helped oversee the funding of new projects in renewable energy as part of the America Recovery Act. That experience prompted her to move into the private sector, founding and building a company that focuses on developing small-scale hydroelectric capacity, reflecting her personal commitment to sustainable development. This three-legged history—academia, public/government service, and entrepreneurship—places her into a unique position to advance the critical roles that higher education must play. She brings passion to her leadership in the development and growth of higher education, which is also the final day in the tenure of Chancellor Nancy Zimpher. I am excited by the appointment of Dr. Kristina Johnson as the 13th Chancellor of the State University of New York. Finally, it is also a time of transition for the nature of the funding of higher education in New York—the dawn of “free tuition” for some families sending students to SUNY and CUNY. The implications are significant, uncertain, but potentially very impactful on our campuses.
Presidents Message…
Continued from page 1

Implementation of policies as wide ranging (and often controversial) as seamless transfer, diversity equity and inclusion, applied learning, and most recently TeachNY, she has elevated the stature of SUNY as an institution that leads, that is a “player” in the national and even international conversation about higher education, and she does this by constantly pointing to SUNY as the innovator. Whatever one thinks about some of these and other policy initiatives that she has developed and/or led and/or championed, at the core of the success is an understanding that a system that works together can accomplish more than can its individual campuses. And all of this was accomplished with a clear understanding of the value, and strong commitment to the inclusion, of shared governance. It is for that reason in particular that the UFS conferred on her our Friend of the Senate award at our spring plenary meeting at SUNY Canton. This is the highest honor that we can bestow on a non-member, and it reflects what she has done to engage faculty (and student) governance leaders in all of the policy initiatives that have emerged during her tenure.

SUNY Budget
The Legislature and Governor agreed to a budget for New York (and SUNY) a little over a week after the April 1 deadline. There was certainly better news for SUNY than in last year’s budget, but New York’s commitment to operational support for SUNY continues to fall short, and this remains a far-from-perfect operating budget for the SUNY system. The budget authorizes the renewal of maintenance of effort in terms of no cuts to SUNY’s budget for the next four years, and also authorizes the Board of Trustees to raise tuition each year by up to $200/yr for State-operated campuses over the same four years. The language does NOT close the TAP Gap, which means that the cost of covering the difference between $5000 and full SUNY tuition continues to fall on the campuses for those students who are eligible for full coverage by the Tuition Assistance Program. This will continue to limit the effective increase in campus revenue that the tuition rise may produce. It also does not provide funding for mandated operational cost increases. On the other hand, the Legislature restored funding increases to opportunity programs, and there is an additional $2 million for open educational resources. There is also significant funding for capital investments and improvements.

Much of the discussion about SUNY (and CUNY) budget has centered around the Excelsior Scholarship program and the notion of free college tuition for the middle class. There are a number of “catches”, both for the students/families and for SUNY, as I suspect you are aware. For students, they must complete 30 credits per year and enroll for at least 12 in any given semester to retain the scholarship as well as maintain a satisfactory GPA toward their degree (a 2.0? unclear). In addition, they must remain in New York after graduation for as many years as they received the scholarship, considered by some to be a “poison pill” in the final legislation. For SUNY, the impact of the scholarship program is mixed, in my opinion. The availability of free tuition could well increase enrollments, which would certainly be a positive for many of our campuses. On the other hand, Excelsior covers only $5500 of SUNY tuition, and campuses must provide a tuition credit for the remainder. Furthermore, campuses can only charge Excelsior students the current tuition ($6470) for the next four years, which means that if or as tuition rises Excelsior students will not be providing any extra revenue to the campuses: the effects of any tuition increases will be much less than in the recent past. Fortunately, the State has agreed to cover the cost of the tuition credit out of the general fund as part of the maintenance of effort provision, although it is promised only after the student meets the annual credit obligation, from what I understand. And the program is underfunded, both for the upfront State money and the reimbursement of the tuition credit. I have heard that current students will receive priority, so who knows if any entering students will even see the scholarships. Will there be pressure on SUNY to fund scholarships? I can imagine the public outcry if indeed the program comes up short, and those promised “free” tuition don’t get it. Finally, it remains to be seen what the political fallout of this program will be in coming years; one can certainly expect that increases in SUNY enrollments will be at the expense of the independent colleges and universities, and what impact that will have is anyone’s guess (and their greatest fear).

SUNY Policy and Sanctuary Campuses
The University Faculty Senate endorsed a suite of statements and resolutions during our Winter Plenary at SUNY Old Westbury that spoke to our support for tolerance, immigrants and undocumented students. One of these endorsements supported the petition that originated from faculty at UAlbany, which called upon SUNY to declare our campuses as sanctuary campuses. The petition specified a group of actions that the petitioners—and, by our endorsement, the UFS—called upon SUNY to institute. The Board of Trustees passed a resolution on January 24, 2017 regarding Affirmation of Support for Undocumented Students that formalizes as policy a number of practices that SUNY has regarding undocumented and international students and that satisfies many (but not all) of the items in the UAlbany petition/UFS resolution.

The resolution requested 11 actions. Here I provide you a summary of the requested actions and what SUNY is doing/has done, based on the Board of Trustees resolution and my subsequent communications with Joseph Porter, SUNY’s General Counsel.

a. Prevent ICE from carrying out immigration enforcement on campus without a warrant unless there is an exigent excuse. [The Board resolution reinforces this practice.]

b. The SUNY System should instruct employees on their rights and responsibilities if ICE agents enter or seek to enter the campus: the default response should be to inquire into the justification and authorization for any enforcement action. [Some general guidance is provided in SUNY’s immigration website, www.suny.edu/immigration and the Board resolution, particularly with regard to the continuing SUNY position that a warrant or other court order is necessary for ICE action on a campus.]

c. Ensure that SUNY System campus police will not act on behalf of ICE officials to enforce immigration laws. Nor should they inquire about an individual’s immigration status. [This is a SUNY practice that is included in the Board resolution and amplified by requiring that campuses adopt policies consistent with the NYS Attorney General’s Immigration Enforcement Guidance.]

d. The SUNY SYSTEM should provide guidance that, wherever the campus police officers have discretion to arrest or to handle a law enforcement action without arrest (e.g. by issuing a ticket), they should opt to avoid arrest. [Unfortunately, SUNY cannot do this explicitly or systematically due to the requirement...
to follow State law, although University Police always have discretion.) An arrest, even for a minor traffic offense, may lead to consequences well beyond the intended punishment or law enforcement purpose for certain immigrant students, such as the issuance of an ICE detainer and possible immigration detention and removal proceedings. Each SUNY campus will ensure that if an arrest takes place, campus police will not report such arrests to ICE and will not hold anyone unnecessarily, as is consistent with state and federal law. [SUNY does not voluntarily detain individuals under ICE detainers unless required by appropriate court order; the latter point is made explicit in the Board resolution].

e. Guarantee student privacy by refusing to release information regarding immigration status and country of origin to any government agency. [FERPA protects student information with two exceptions: confidential information must be supplied in response to a court order alleging terrorist activities, and information supplied through the Student Exchange and Visitor Program is subject to review by SEVP field representatives (applies to student on F and J visas)!] The SUNY System should also discontinue any use of e-verify. (This applies to faculty and staff, and General Counsel Porter is checking about the status of this tool)

f. The SUNY System will affirm that it will continue to admit students consistent with its nondiscrimination policies so that undocumented students will be considered for admission under the same criteria as U.S. citizens or permanent residents. [SUNY has done this.]

g. Continue to allow DACA students to pay in-state resident tuition [SUNY reaffirms this in the Board resolution] and provide accommodations so they may complete their studies, such as online degree completion.

h. Expand financial aid efforts for students who have lost their DACA status as Columbia University has done. [This could be done through scholarship sources that the campus foundations oversee, but it is not something that can be done with other sources which SUNY controls.]

i. Assign an administrative office to take charge of and advertise counseling for DACA students on their educational and legal situations. Provide confidential counseling to students, faculty, and staff who are at risk of deportation, or whose families face this risk. [SUNY is actively making such information available through its immigration website, as the expertise to provide legal counseling resides off campus.]

j. Make every effort to collaborate with legal services and nonprofit organizations, legal clinics, and private lawyers and law firms willing to take pro-bono cases to provide free legal counsel to students placed into removal proceedings. [Again, SUNY providing links on the website. Many campuses have done so as well.]

k. Protect student privacy, following its longstanding compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) [Reaffirmed in the Board resolution]. The SUNY System shall remind faculty, and staff members that they should not inquire into any student’s immigration status unless they are strictly required to do so by law. [Such information is available on the website, but this is something we could do ourselves through our campus listservs.]

Neither SUNY nor the Board of Trustees is prepared to embrace the term “sanctuary campus,” because the term isn’t legally defined but instead is imbued with a great deal of political baggage. But clearly most of the items requested in the petition have been reaffirmed as SUNY policy and practice. In the final analysis, the best thing that we can do as faculty and staff is ensure that our campuses are open and welcoming environments to immigrants (whether or not documented) and international students.

**Membership on College Councils**

Another resolution passed by the UFS at our January plenary meeting calls for legislative action to include campus governance leaders on local college councils/boards. I met with Senator Ken LaValle and Assembly member Deborah Glick, chairs of the Higher Education Committees of the Senate and Assembly, respectively, to propose that the State education law be changed as requested by our resolution to make campus governance leaders full ex officio members of local college councils (or Board of Trustees in the case of SUNY ESF). I provided them copies of the UFS resolution as well as the wording that I believe would need to be changed in education law to provide for the requested membership on the councils/boards. They were both very receptive to the idea. However, we agreed that this is something that can best be considered outside of the budget period, so I will continue to pursue this with them in coming weeks (with the support of System Administration).

**General Education**

It has been nearly 20 years since the Board of Trustees imposed a SUNY-wide General Education requirement, and in the meantime many campuses have worked around the edges of that policy to provide their own unique “flavor” to local general education and graduation requirements. Also, two years ago SUNY adopted a policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion which is pressing further engagement in these areas, yet we don’t have any universal general education requirement for our students. More broadly, we should be asking the question, does SUNY’s general education program provide the competencies and experiences that we expect every student to have in the 21st century? Following from discussions among Alex Cartwright, the SUNY Provost, Nina Tamrowski, President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and myself, we have agreed to begin the process of examining the nearly 20-year-old GenEd policy by convening a group of faculty, students, and administrators to brainstorm about what it is we wish to achieve in a 21st-century GenEd program. This meeting will occur (or will have occurred, depending on when you read this) in late May, with a focus on addressing that broad question while adhering to the work that campuses have done in revising their GenEd programs, supporting the goal of seamless transfer, and being mindful of the expectations that Middle States has for GenEd in the accreditation process. I expect this to be the start of a more deliberative and inclusive conversation starting next fall, with the broadest possible outreach. I guess that’s one “gift” I am going to President Kay!

**Applied Learning**

By now, campus plans are being finalized, and I hope that many of you have been involved in the campus decision as to whether or not applied learning will be a graduation requirement for your students. The more interesting and worthwhile aspect of this process will be the implementation of any changes that your campus decides to pursue—all the while increasing the opportunities our students have to engage in high-impact applied learning activities.

**Graduate and Undergraduate Research Conferences**

Our Graduate and Research...
Committee organized a very successful Graduate Research Conference at Empire State College in Saratoga Springs on March 7. This event replaced the poster program on graduate research that we’ve held at the Legislative Office Building every other year. After considerable discussion among the Graduate, Undergraduate, and Executive committees, and in consultation with CUNY, we decided that the investment of time, energy, and resources at the LOB didn’t have a sufficient impact on legislators. Instead, we decided to try a SUNY-wide Graduate Conference, and Jim Campbell, Director of Legislative Relations for SUNY, brought several of the student presenters to Albany to meet with legislators and/or staff directly. This provided us the best of both worlds: a forum for graduate students to learn from each other in a very different kind of venue than the typical discipline-centered conferences which scholars attend, coupled with a set of meetings with legislators to show off some of the excellent scholarship that our graduate students do.

While we are meeting in Canton, the third SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference will be taking place at two venues: SURC East at Suffolk County Community College on April 21, and SURC West at SUNY Fredonia on April 22. With over 240 student presenters registered for each event, this promises to be an outstanding opportunity for undergraduate students to present their research and scholarship to each other. The SURC steering committee decided to accept two requests to host the conference this year when it became clear that we could provide venues at sites dispersed across the state. Whether future SURC events will be at a single campus or multiple ones will depend on which campuses apply to host. But for this year, the opportunity was not to be missed. UFS provides some financial support for these conferences. In future years, I hope that we will be able to engage some of the student presenters to meet with legislators, either in Albany or in their home districts, to show off their research and keep bringing to the legislators the message that their support for SUNY really does pay off.

SUNY Voices and the Joint Statement on Shared Governance

The SUNY Voices project, a commitment to improve the quality of shared governance across the SUNY system, has continued with a series of events this year, and more planned for next year. Many of you will have joined us April 27–28 in Suffern for the third SUNY Voices conference, thematically focused on continuity in shared governance through leadership transitions. We are also planning a fall Campus Governance Leadership institute to bring together student and faculty governance leaders from across SUNY; this is scheduled for Oct 6-7, with one day devoted to all three groups (State-op and community college CGEs and student government presidents) meeting together, the second allowing each group to caucus on its own issues.

The three governance groups worked together over the last few months to craft a Joint Statement on Shared Governance at the SUNY System level, following from an invitation that Chancellor Zimpher offered at our Fall Plenary. That statement has been adopted by all three groups at our spring meetings and is provided elsewhere in this Bulletin. Chancellor Zimpher has promised to include this statement in the briefing book that is being developed for Chancellor Johnson, so this is an especially good opportunity to build on the improvements in shared governance that have occurred as a result of Chancellor Zimpher’s commitments. Our hope is that these principles can help improve shared governance on our campuses as well.

Changes in the Composition of the Faculty

The UFS Operations Committee, specifically past chair Thomas Sinclair and his graduate assistant Aylone Katzin of Binghamton University, has completed a large report on the changes in the composition of the faculty among the State-operated campuses over the last two decades. To quote from the study:

“Among the most significant findings of the report:

“Total Black faculty in tenured and tenure-track ranks increased from 304 in 1995–96 to 323 in 2015–16, a gain of 19 positions and a 6.2 percent increase. The percentage of Black faculty in the academic ranks rose from 3.8 to 3.9 percent in this time. That is less than one Black faculty member per campus.

“The percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty system-wide declined from 60.3 percent in 1995–96 to 38.7 percent in 2015–16.”

Many of the findings of the report simply confirm what we already see: little change in the number of faculty of color, and a very significant increase in the number of non-tenure-stream faculty. The complete report is available on the UFS website, and I urge you to download it and, especially, examine the changes that have occurred on your campus.

Open Access and Open Educational Resources

Our ways of reporting and sharing the results of scholarly inquiry are changing, and SUNY must change (and lead) in the initiatives that are occurring on a national level. One initiative that we are developing at the system level mirrors efforts on many of our campuses: the establishment of open-access repositories through which scholars can make their published work available to a wide audience, should they so choose. SUNY is examining how a system-wide repository could be established, not to supersed activity ongoing at the individual campuses, but to coordinate campus efforts so that a scholar can find work that has been produced by other scholars across the SUNY system. These discussions are still in their initial stages, but I expect that the development of voluntary repository mechanisms, generally coordinated through our libraries, will continue to grow, with help from SUNY (especially for the smaller campuses).

A somewhat related area of open access is the ongoing national and international development of open educational resources, such as open textbooks, lectures, assignments, etc. A line item in the recently passed State budget allocates $4 million to SUNY, split between the State-operated and community college campuses. This funding, coupled with commitments SUNY has made to faculty and campuses through the investment fund and other grants, should provide significant opportunities for interested faculty to develop and make available online resources for use in classes. The development of high-quality OER materials can be difficult, but the rewards for students can be enormous, both in cost savings and in linking to the wide array of information that exists at our fingertips.

Some Final Retrospective Thoughts

Finally, as is not surprising, I’ve been thinking back to what I had hoped to accomplish as your President. Four years ago, when I was elected, I felt it was very important to improve our relationship with the other body representing faculty and professional staff—UUP—and through a mutual commitment by UUP Fred Kowal and myself, I believe we have been very successful. Whenever possible, Fred and I attend each other’s plenary meetings and
I met The State University of New York in 2009. In June of that year I became the sixty-year-old system’s twelfth chancellor, and I immediately embarked on a campus-by-campus tour to get to know the state and the institution, to discover how we could elevate SUNY across the board to a new level of excellence.

On the road, over the course of one hundred days, I met a university system that felt like a loose constellation of schools. There were heralded colleges, universities, and programs among them, and many of them were doing a good job producing skilled, knowledgeable graduates. But it quickly became clear to me that we weren’t making the most of being a system. We weren’t thinking or acting in the kind of coordinated, disciplined way that could empower us to do the best job we possibly could to serve the people of New York.

In New York State today, about 70 percent of jobs require a college degree but only 46 percent of adults have one, putting millions of New Yorkers at a disadvantage that translates into fewer career choices, limited mobility, and low income. It doesn’t have to be this way. Frankly, it can’t be this way: New York’s strength and vibrancy depend on closing that gap.

Eight years ago, SUNY looked in the mirror. We assessed our strengths and our students’ and New York’s needs, and we set clear goals for improvement. Cultivating shared governance—shared responsibility for the better student outcomes we need to achieve—has been indispensable to our transformation as a system. With the formal addition of UFS, FCCC, and Student Assembly voices to the Board of Trustees and the chancellor’s cabinet, SUNY leadership is better informed and stronger than ever. Together, we forged and followed a bold strategic plan. We advocated for and won a rational tuition plan. We created from the ground up multiple initiatives—seamless transfer, Smart Track, Open SUNY, applied learning, and dozens more—to make SUNY more accessible and to help students finish their degrees on time and protect them from debt. We are reinventing and elevating teacher training. We made history in sexual assault prevention and diversity-building measures. We increased transparency and accountability. We built working partnerships with our colleagues in K-12 to create seamless education pipelines in New York and to make sure when students finish high school, they’re ready to succeed in whatever comes next.

All of this system-defining, progressive, transformative work happened at the hands of many—because of the care, expertise, and dedication of thousands in the SUNY family.

Public higher education is in the business of creating opportunity, of creating knowledgeable, skilled, conscientious citizens and professionals. We know that with more education, people are more likely to be more civically engaged. Countries with more educated, engaged citizens have stronger economies, more stable governments, and an over-all higher quality of life. This is the picture of a society that we at SUNY envision and that we work toward realizing together every day, every year.

SUNY’s mission does not change. It is forever grounded in our unwavering, solemn commitment to serve all New Yorkers—to put higher education within reach for everyone, to offer the widest spectrum of courses and degrees, and to ensure that any and everyone who attends a SUNY school feels safe, welcome, and hopeful for their future.

What I have learned for certain over the last eight years, what I have been more convinced of every day, is the inexhaustibility of SUNY’s potential to do good for the state and good in the world. So, thank you.

Thank you to the courageous and thoughtful presidents of the UFS who served SUNY with me, Ken O’Brien and Peter Knuepfer, and for the seriousness and good will they brought to the SUNY leadership table and the consequential roles they played in shared governance. Thank you, SUNY’s tens of thousands of faculty, for sharing your expertise in the thousands of fields, disciplines, and initiatives our system encompasses. Thank you for being strong voices, speaking to the truth of the necessity and value of public higher education. Thank you for your dedication to your students and your research, to elevating SUNY to new levels of excellence. Thank you for all of this, and for your partnership in building The State University of New York that we know today—a cohesive, focused, dynamic, and coordinated system that is ready to meet the challenging needs of a changing world.
Transitions

It’s hard for me to believe that this marks my last contribution to the UFS Bulletin; that in fact, my days at SUNY are winding down. As some of you may know, I will be leaving SUNY shortly to move to the University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou) as Chancellor. It is an incredibly bitter-sweet transition for me. I have been part of the SUNY family for over 20 years, having had a terrific experience as a faculty member, department chair, and administrator at the University at Buffalo before coming to work as System Provost in 2014.

I will be at System until the end of July and still have a number of important items on my to-do list; one of which is to extend my sincere thanks to the University Senate. I am particularly grateful for my work with faculty governance as Provost. Having a strong working relationship with the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges was very important to me and something that proved to be invaluable.

I welcomed and benefited from the guidance of President Kuepfer and from my interactions with the broader Senate. I enjoyed its tough questions and high expectations and benefited greatly from its wise counsel. I loved being able to share early ideas with the Senate and to get its feedback. I will truly miss my interactions with the UFS.

Of course, the Provost’s Office at System is far from the only change ahead. Summer 2017 marks a period of transition for SUNY as a whole as we celebrate Chancellor Zimpher’s tenure and prepare to welcome Chancellor Johnson. We are also preparing to welcome a number of new campus presidents. These changes come at a time when we anticipate federal education and immigration policy changes and are also navigating a new State plan for free tuition. We are working to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and recruiting students in an increasingly competitive environment where the states closest to New York are facing significant declines in the numbers of high school graduates.

The interesting thing about transitions in SUNY is that we collectively stand on the incredibly strong foundation of our mission to, “provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs….”

We have been given a charge and hold a commitment to New Yorkers that is unwavering and consistent regardless of leadership transitions. “These services and activities shall be offered through a geographically distributed comprehensive system of diverse campuses which shall have differentiated and designated missions designed to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students and to address local, regional and state needs and goals.”

In fact, institutionally, I am more confident than ever in SUNY’s ability to weather challenges, adapt to change, and also to be successful in new engagements and opportunities.

Educational Effectiveness and Strategic Enrollment or ESEE

Over the past six months, Chief Financial Officer Eileen McLoughlin and Senior Vice Chancellor Johanna Duncan-Poitier and I have had the opportunity to meet face to face with campus leadership teams as part of the Educational Effectiveness and Strategic Enrollment (ESEE) planning process. These candid conversations provided us with an opportunity to hear first-hand about progress toward Performance Improvement Plan Goals (benchmarks set in the areas of access, completion, success, inquiry and engagement). Each campus leader also had the opportunity to share their vision for their institution—now and through 2025; discuss strengths, challenges and opportunities; and, importantly, identify ways that System Administration could be supportive moving forward.

Our goals for the process were to: re-establish the enrollment/resource connection; create and/or modify plans/policies/resource strategies that eliminate barriers to greater performance; eliminate the perceptions and reality of unwarranted internal enrollment competition; leverage our connectedness to better meet the needs of applicants on a regional and System-wide basis; and facilitate conversations about mission creep/distinctiveness.

The really good news is that, in practice, the ESEE meetings are helping us determine how to achieve these goals. After completing 63 of these meetings (SUNY Downstate’s meeting was postponed to give the new President time to settle in but will be held soon), we have a dynamic lens through which we can see a clear path forward. There are really outstanding areas of strength all across the System—programs, policies, practices, and initiatives—that could be further scaled to other campuses. There are also common challenges that we think can benefit from collaborative solutions.

Common Strengths

One of the very first strengths we identified during the ESEE process centers on vision. Clarity around campus identity—what makes an institution distinctive—was very strong at campuses that seemed to be weathering challenges particularly well. Specifically, they had identified a clear vision, that was also flexible, allowing the campus to adapt as its operating environment inevitably changes, whether these are changes in personnel, the needs of incoming students, advances in the fields on which their degree programs are based, or demands for programs in new and emerging fields.

We also saw that while nearly every campus had plans for academic program growth and many for research growth; their approaches varied. Some of the most transformative planning came from thinking about how to build on and around existing areas of expertise. There are new programs campuses want to offer to meet emerging demands, but there may be ways to build on existing strengths to get there.

Several campuses that are consistently seeing gains in retention and graduation rates have realized that the changing demands of students required a new approach to service and support. Instead of siloed services that are on standby waiting for students to seek help, they have transitioned to an environment where the student is at the center of an integrated approach to student support; where all service providers are talking to and learning from one another about how best to meet individual student needs and,
where possible, are located in one central location. Service hours are also extended to evenings and weekends. This approach, something that research from the Gates Foundation has supported for a number of years through its Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success or IPASS initiative, is particularly important as we serve more at-risk and non-traditional students.

Another marker of strength we identified at a number of campuses was investment in faculty support and innovations. Supporting more interdisciplinary connections in the curriculum and between and across faculty provides a more practical experience for students and encourages innovation. Initiatives include multi-disciplinary appointments; dedicated learning centers for faculty and administrators to ensure continued professional development; and multiple outlets for faculty to learn the most effective approaches for high-quality online and blended learning instruction.

An increasing focus on data analytics to inform student learning and retention is emerging as a key strength; this is an area where state support for System-level analytics could be invaluable. We are waiting on word of a 2020 proposal that will support University Centers lending their expertise to smaller institutions to build a system-wide effort.

Summer or Bridge programs are consistently proving to be successful. Students who weren’t sure if they could succeed in college were able to ease into college life through these programs and learn valuable skills to help them prepare for college-level work and to interact with faculty and staff.

And the list goes on…. Challenges

As long as the list of strengths is that exists within the system, the ESEE process underscored the fact that we are also facing multiple common challenges.

A number of campuses are facing enrollment declines and, as noted above, competition for new students is at an all-time high. We are seeing some progress in the retention and graduation rates of students who identify as under-represented minority students, yet achievement gaps persist. In addition to gaps between URM students and their non-URM peers, we continue to see achievement gaps between male students and their female peers, and between academically disadvantaged students and their counterparts. Consistent with SUNY’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, and consistent with our mission, closing achievement gaps must be one of SUNY’s highest priorities going forward.

We heard almost universally that we need targeted investments in professional development for faculty, staff and administrators to learn new strategies to help address achievement gaps, to adapt to changing technologies, to explore open educational resources, to plan for and respond to crises, and more.

In all of our meetings, it was clear that campuses were open to, and many were eager for, a collaborative approach to problem solving. One of the ways that we are trying to do that is by aligning the performance improvement fund to the ESEE process.

Aligning the Performance Improvement Fund to ESEE

At each ESEE meeting, we talked to campuses about potential investment fund projects that would allow us to scale up successes and address challenges. Campuses were asked to succinctly submit their ideas for review. We received 293 proposal ideas from 51 campuses and reviewed them through a lens of meeting challenges, continuous improvement, and opportunities for collaboration.

Our review of all of these ideas found that they could be grouped into 4 strategic areas:
1. Shaping Effective Educational Strategy;
   - New Forms of Degree and Credentialing Programs
   - New Technology-Enabled Innovations for SUNY Educational Offerings
   - An Expansion of Applied Learning Opportunities
2. Strengthening Student Recruitment and Success Infrastructures;
3. Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion Across the System; and
4. Knowledge Creation, Creativity and Impact.

These areas are consistent with SUNY Excels and with the needs expressed in ESEE meetings. Building on what we have learned from last year’s Performance Investment Fund process, this year, we identified content experts to help articulate strategic objectives in each of the four strategic areas above. These content experts or facilitators articulated principles/criteria for the screening of campus proposals; they then selected those proposal ideas that they felt had the highest potential to not only help one institution, but to more broadly scale successes or address common challenges.

The most distinctive component of this year’s performance fund process is our commitment to sustainable progress. To do that we propose bringing campuses together as communities of practice or what we are going to call: “communities of innovation” in each of the four areas identified above.

These Communities of Innovation will serve as ready networks to help solve difficult challenges. After the awarding decisions are made for this year, System will facilitate ongoing regional or system-wide discussions for award winners and other campuses seeking to participate.

The goal is to encourage new and stronger campus connections and partnerships that increase the impact of the PIF investment together with other campus and system resources to enable the best outcomes in each of these areas. I believe that this will create an enduring framework for strategic and collaborative system and campus planning in mission-critical strategic areas across the system.

All of this work will be very beneficial as SUNY moves through its many upcoming transitions. It allows funding support for essential progress in priority areas that are not leadership-dependent but rather foundational.

Leading this process has only underscored for me the many strengths of SUNY and its vast potential. There are many transitions ahead… but you, and SUNY are ready.

Again, my thanks to all of you. I hope to see Mizzou/SUNY partnerships in the future!
Greetings,

Here is a summary of the recently passed New York State Enacted Budget relevant to SUNY.

Background:

A 2017/18 New York State budget has been passed.

Major highlights include the passage of a modified version of Governor Cuomo’s Excelsior Scholarship Program, a slight increase in community college “base aid” per FTE, restoration of funding for University-wide programs reduced in the Executive Budget, and the return of a predictable tuition plan and Maintenance of Effort for the State-operated campuses. The definition of Maintenance of Effort in the enacted budget is flat direct cash support with continued support of indirect costs.

The positive implications for the current year Budget is that cash support is stable and there is continued indirect State support, meaning the State pays the debt service and fringe benefit costs. The chart below illustrates the history.

The negative implication, is that there is no additional direct cash support to invest in salary increases or programs. However, the capital budget has been increased to enable SUNY to address critical maintenance issues in facilities.

There are additional challenges in the budget with the uncertainty of the impacts of the Excelsior Program. The program provides free tuition for qualified students. The challenge for the State-operated Campuses is the unknown of the impact on enrollment and managing the administrative process.

The enacted budget also allows SUNY to raise tuition up to $200 dollars for the next four years. This will be an ongoing discussion as SUNY will need to consider the resource needs of the Campuses versus the desire of our Students to maintain tuition levels.

Overall a stable budget in terms of operating and capital funding, but a budget that does present its challenges. A summary of the funding changes, both operating and capital, along with a summary of relevant legislation can be found in CFO McLoughlin’s presentation to the SUNY Faculty Senate at the April Plenary in Canton. Budget Office Report - Eileen McLoughlin

Funding Changes:

The 2017/18 Enacted Budget table below only reflects funding directly to SUNY and does not include indirect support (e.g., fringe benefits which are projected to increase year-to-year) and/or funding available in other areas of the budget.

State University of New York (SUNY) 2017/18 Capital Budget Appropriation Summary

The current Capital Budget appropriation bill for SUNY includes all prior year appropriations (re-appropriations) and new appropriations as detailed in the table below. For the Educational Facilities program, the Executive’s proposed $396.6M lump sum for high priority critical maintenance projects has been reduced by $100.0M and reallocated to each campus based on the usual formula. While this $100M is for critical maintenance projects, the appropriation does allow for this funding to be used for new construction. In addition, language that was included in the Executive Budget appropriation bill authorizing the use of the “design/build” project delivery mechanism is not included.

In addition, several prior year re-appropriations for specific projects have been repurposed, including:

- $8.0M for two appropriations originally provided in 2008 for Binghamton University to support the renovation of a former manufacturing facility at 48 Corliss Avenue in Johnson City for the Decker School of Nursing. The original appropriations provided $5.0 million for new athletic fields and $3.0 million for a programming study related to establishing a Law School at Binghamton University.
- $5.0 million for an appropriation originally provided in 2008 for Stony Brook University to support the development of academic and student program space at the Southampton campus. The original appropriation provided $5.0 million for a monorail feasibility study.
- $2.5 million of remaining balances on several strategic initiative re-appropriations originally provided for various projects at Delhi are repurposed to allow these funds to support the renovation of Farnsworth Hall.

ITEM

The Excelsior Scholarship Program

SUMMARY

- Subject to appropriation and based on the availability of funds, the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) is provided authority to establish application procedures and a method of selecting recipients to eligible students for a last dollar award of up to $5,500 (or actual tuition).
- Eligible students are as follows:
  o Attend a public institution
  o If student was previously enrolled in college, they must have completed at least 30 credits per year, in the program of study, to qualify. If previous credits were in a private college, at least 30 credits per year must be accepted upon transfer in order to qualify.
The Carl P. Wiizalis University Faculty Senate Fellow Award.

Joe Hildreth, Distinguished Service Professor from SUNY Potsdam honored with the Carl P. Wiizalis University Faculty Senate Fellow Award.

- After acceptance in the program, students must complete at least 30 credits per year, and enroll in at least 12 credits per semester, in the program of study. HESC can prescribe limited exceptions to this requirement in regulation.
- In a student’s last semester, they must complete at least 12 credits, with at least one course needed to meet graduation requirements.
- HESC will promulgate modified criteria for students with disabilities.
- Meet Adjusted Gross Income limits as follows:
  - $100,000 in 2017/18
  - $110,000 in 2018/19
  - $125,000 in 2019/20 and thereafter.
- Awards are limited to the length of the program (2 year, 4 year, or 5 year). HESC can define allowable interruptions in study in regulation.
- Must have their Grade Point Average (GPA) certified by their institution to indicate that they are eligible to successfully complete their coursework.
- Must agree to live in New York State for a continuous number of years equal to the duration of the award received. There is no requirement that the student be employed during that period, but they cannot work in another State. If a student fails to meet these requirements the award will be converted to a student loan.
- Tuition charged to recipients of the Excelsior Scholarship program is “frozen” at 2016/17 levels until 2021/22. Starting in 2021/22 and every four years after, the new “frozen” rate will be the rate approved for the upcoming year.
- SUNY and CUNY institutions are required to provide an Excelsior Scholarship Program Tuition Credit to eligible students to meet the difference between $5,500 and the charged tuition rate.
- Note that the repayment of this Excelsior Scholarship Tuition Credit is intended to be made by the State and is added to the re-introduced Maintenance of Effort.

Undergraduate tuition by a maximum of $200/year from 2017/18 to 2020/21.
- The Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision Enacted with the 2011/12 budget, stipulating that State shall provide funding at a level equal to or greater than the amount of funding provided in the 2011/12 state fiscal year, has been restored starting in 2017/18 and ending in 2020/21.
- State responsibility to repay SUNY for the Excelsior Scholarship Program Tuition Credit has also been added to this MOE, and funding has been provided in Transfer Language to effectuate the payment up to $20.0M.
- Campuses continue to be responsible for the SUNY TAP Gap / Tuition Credit, which requires campuses to cover the difference between SUNY’s current Resident Undergraduate Tuition Rate and $5,000.

ITEM
Enhanced Tuition Awards

SUMMARY
- Subject to appropriation and based on the availability of funds, Enhanced Tuition Awards shall be made to eligible students in approved programs at not-for-profit private degree granting institutions in an amount, when combined with the student’s TAP award and the required matching award from the institution, shall not exceed $6,000.
- Eligibility requirements mirror those found in the Excelsior Scholarship program.
- Participating private institutions are required to provide a matching award that is applied after all institutional aid received by that student.
- Tuition rates charged to students receiving an award shall not be changed for the duration of time the student receives the award.
- Institutions may choose not to participate in the program.

ITEM
Part-Time Student Scholarship at SUNY and CUNY Community Colleges

SUMMARY
- A new scholarship program is created at and managed by HESC that will, subject to appropriation and availability of funds, provide awards of up to $1,500 a semester to eligible students for a total of four semesters.
- Eligible students:
  - Must take between 6 and 12 credits a semester.
  - Maintain a 2.0 or above Grade Point Average.

ITEM
Report on Making College More Affordable

SUMMARY
- On June 30, 2018 the President of HESC is to deliver a report on making college more affordable. Such report shall include:
  - Options for a program to allow students to refinance student loan debt for students out of college for at least 10 years.
  - Alternative methods to lower student loan debt.
  - A review student housing and costs at SUNY and CUNY.
  - Recommendations on programs and options for families to afford college, including pre-paid college programs.
  - Additional affordability options at public and private universities, including:
    - Reducing textbook costs
    - Reducing the cost of student housing
    - Student transportation
    - Reduction of administrative costs
ITEM
Hospital Disproportionate Share (DSH) Payments / Reimbursements

SUMMARY
- Language is provided in the Department of Health (DOH) “Global Cap” appropriations that makes a portion available for payment of DSH reimbursement to SUNY Hospitals dependent on those institutions providing sufficient financial information to evaluate the need to support current and future reimbursements.

ITEM
NYS Child Welfare Worker Incentive Scholarship Program / Child Welfare Worker Loan Forgiveness Program

SUMMARY
- Would provide full cost of attendance scholarships (based on SUNY costs and not more than $20K if attending a private institution) to eligible students working in a not-for-profit child welfare agency on a competitive basis and agrees to remain working at such an institution for a five-year period.
- Would also provide up to ten loan forgiveness awards on a competitive basis.

ITEM
Excelsior Jobs Program Tax Credit

SUMMARY
- The prospective Enacted Budget creates the Excelsior Jobs Tax Credit Program
  - This will allows a participant in the Excelsior Jobs program to claim a tax credit that is equal to fifty percent of the participants federal research and development tax credit on the same expenditures in NYS during the taxable year, however the tax credit will not be greater than six percent of the total attributable research and development expenditures.

ITEM
Excelsior Jobs Program / Start-Up NY Adjustments

SUMMARY
- Adjusts the definition of significant job creation for the Excelsior Jobs program from 50 to 10 for manufacturing jobs, from twenty to ten for agricultural jobs, from 300 to 100 net new jobs for financial services, etc., from 20 net new jobs to ten for scientific research and development firms, others from 300 to 150.
- Also newly defines what is a significant capital investment; $1.0M for manufacturing jobs, $250.0K for agriculture jobs, $3.0M for financial services, $15.0M for a distribution center, $3.0M for research and development, $3.0M for other businesses
- Repeals the reporting requirements for the START-UP NY / Excelsior Jobs program. Both the State reporting requirements and the individual business reporting requirements are repealed.

ITEM
Economic Development Reports

SUMMARY
- Requires the Department of Economic Development to prepare an annual comprehensive report listing economic development assistance provided by the New York State Urban Development Corporation and the Department of Economic Development.

In addition, legislation was provided to allow for the use of the Design / Build approach for several (outside of SUNY) upstate capital projects, including the prospective Life Sciences Laboratory project and the Executive Budget initiative to recognize the cost of facility related workers by moving their salary costs (in the first instance) to hard dollar capital appropriations is also included.
advocating for expanded state aid. I also voted in June to approve the new SUNY patent policy, which was changed for the first time in decades. The policy gives more flexibility to students and faculty affiliated with the University when registering patents and inventions.

At September’s Board meeting, graciously hosted by SUNY Cortland, we made history with a new policy spearheaded by student leaders at our Spring Conference: Ban the Box. Formally known as a ban on “pre-admission inquiry into prior felony convictions,” this was brought to the Assembly by the University at Albany’s Graduate Student Association and the New Paltz Student Association. Chairman Carl McCall praised SUNYSA for taking such a persistent and head-on approach to this important issue, and I articulated my thanks to New Paltz and Albany, as well as all of the student leaders who played such a significant role in its passage.

Also in September, the Board reinstated the Student Life Committee, co-chaired by myself and Trustee Eunice Lewin. The Committee had its first formal gathering at Cortland, and Trustee Lewin and I have used this platform throughout the year to work with students directly on issues like food security, mental health services, issues faced by student veterans and active duty military personnel, as well as services specifically for students of color. The Student Life Committee has met at each Board meeting since, with discussions including faculty, staff, and students from a half-dozen campuses talking about the issues that directly affect the student experience with the trustees who set policies for their colleges.

On September 23-24, we held the first semi-annual Presidential Summit in Albany, where our campus SGA presidents met to discuss concerns and learn from each other’s experiences. This event was also meant to enhance a feeling of unity throughout the system. Being a system this large and comprehensive, our unified power is immense. Advocacy breakout sessions were held in addition to panel discussions, a meeting with Chancellor Zimpher and other senior staff, and remarks from SA leadership. There is a large opportunity to sustain this event for many years to come. We also had a very successful spring meeting of SGA Presidents in Albany in late February. We were joined by Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Angela Wright from SUNY Government Relations and Carlos Medina, SUNY’s Chief Diversity Officer. Diversity was the theme of the summit and many conversations stemmed from ensuring diversity is a main facet of this system moving forward.

One goal of mine this year has been to really enforce the notion that my work is closely overseen and guided by the representatives that have been elected by the student leaders of each sector. I brought Treasurer Emeritus Robert Drumm back to the Executive Committee as Chief of Staff for Student Affairs, and he’s gone above and beyond overseeing our representatives and campus relations chairs.

Community Colleges Committee Chair Josh Barry, the student trustee at Finger Lakes Community College and a former representative himself, has led the committee through periods of turnover and led the charge on numerous initiatives. Our State-Operated Campuses Committee, led by Nicole Pereira, President from SUNY Oneonta and incoming Student Assembly Vice President, has made significant strides in policy development this year, including passing a comprehensive policy on broad-based fees at our colleges and universities. I’m thrilled to have Nicole join our senior leadership as Vice-President for the upcoming term.

Legislative Affairs Director Rey Muniz worked actively on the formulation of our legislative agenda for the year ahead. With such critical issues facing higher education institutions and students, there are so many opportunities to advocate and ensure the student voice is conveyed effectively.

In late November, the SUNY FY18 proposed budget request passed the Trustee’s Finance & Administration and Executive Committees. I voted against the budget, as it calls for increases to tuition, a position firmly opposed by the Assembly.

That same day, I also testified before the Tuition Assistance Program subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Higher Education. We worked with members of the Senate and Assembly Higher Education committees, as well as Assembly Ways & Means and Senate Finance; we planned to target our advocacy in Albany, Binghamton, Rochester, Buffalo, Manhattan, Long Island, and the North Country.

Governor Cuomo introduced a proposal to make tuition free for students from households with under $125,000 of income called the Excelsior Scholarship program. The proposal works by covering the difference between the cost of tuition and financial aid that students receive including TAP and PELL grants. According to the Governor’s office, they expect the program to cost the state a little over $160 million per year without any effect on our taxes. The Student Assembly stands firmly in favor of measures to provide more accessibility to affordable public higher education. I articulated during interviews and subsequent conversations that the debt issue in our state and country go far beyond
tuition, however, to include fees and costs associated with obtaining a higher education degree.

I was invited to attend Governor Cuomo’s State of the State Address and brought with me a few local members of the Student Assembly leadership team. The Governor unveiled his plans for the year ahead which included a rigorous higher education agenda. We were happy to hear a number of our initiatives incorporated including child care funding, ridesharing, the DREAM Act, and state aid. He also discussed funding for early college high schools and P-Tech schools, and aligning regional economic development councils and community college regional councils through an industry-driven partnership.

As the Board of Trustees met in late January, I testified alongside Chancellor Zimpher, Senior Vice Chancellor and CFO Eileen McLoughlin, and members of their senior leadership teams about the rising costs of college. Among other issues discussed were mental health resources on campus, food security issues, and campus child care. In addition, college preparedness programs, community college base aid, and EOP funding were recurring themes throughout the afternoon.

A week later, many members of our Executive Committee called their federal representatives in an effort to elevate widespread discontent with executive orders coming from the Trump administration concerning undocumented individuals. This united effort will hopefully catch the attention of pertinent members in the legislature. SUNYSA stands squarely in the corner of our undocumented students and we must make it clear that SUNY is, and will always be, a safe, welcoming and inclusive family.

We began March with a bang, with advocacy days at the Capitol on Thursday, March 2, for Higher Education Advocacy Day and March 3 for our Local Advocacy Day. On Thursday, we joined groups from across the state to lobby legislators for our higher education asks. One large piece of our advocacy centered around the mental health proposal put forth by the SUNYSA Legislative Affairs team and Dr. Ricardo Azziz, Chief Officer for Academic Health and Hospital Affairs at SUNY System Administration. We had material disseminated across the system so students on their campuses could reach out to local members, by phone, to talk about these issues in a more intimate setting. Rey Muniz and his team did a spectacular job with Dr. Azziz and his.

In collaboration with CUNY’s University Student Senate, we released two joint statements this year. In October, we discussed injecting a substantive higher education question into the recent presidential debate. Continued collaboration between our organizations opens many doors to increased advocacy and unites the students of the public institutions of higher education in this state. At the close of January, SUNYSA and CUNY USS authored a joint statement to denounce the executive order regarding immigration signed by President Trump. This effort highlighted the strength of public higher education in the state of New York. It also served as a reminder of the collective strength of our student population, now greater than one million students between the two systems. The release included a resource sheet for students who then called their representatives to voice their concerns.

I’ve also been grateful to work with faculty on the development of the TeachNY program and policies over the past year, working alongside Dr. Knuepfer and many faculty representatives.

I traveled to Saratoga for the Capital Region TeachNY Speak-out in October. Students, teachers, and master teachers from around the area gathered at SUNY Empire to discuss the importance of teacher preparedness and K-12 education. Chancellor Zimpher and Commissioner Elia did not hesitate to express their deepest gratitude to SUNY’s faculty for your involvement in the initiative.

TeachNY met with the Chancellor, Provost, and members of the Steering Committee to discuss a proposed resolution for the Board of Trustees adopting the TeachNY program in early January. Along with members of my team, I attended and worked in breakout groups to discuss the resolution’s various provisions with faculty and administrators from SUNY campuses, state agencies, and P-12 schools.

I was re-elected to another term as President at our Spring Conference in Rochester a few weeks ago. With a new year comes new challenges and new initiatives to focus on. For me, one of the most important things is continuing to build our network of student governments across the system. As a Student Assembly, we speak with a large voice because we can speak for students across the system. That much power necessitates representing the interests of all students, whether they are highly engaged on their campuses or not. Luckily, we have built a strong relationship this year with the student government associations across the system and their student presidents. This brings us one step closer to representing all students, all across the state, equally.

Another important issue for this coming year is advancing the fight for college affordability. The Governor did us a favor by offering help to the middle class with the Excelsior Scholarship. That said, other aspects of debt need to be addressed as well. We have the mouthpiece and the will power to battle for these issues that are important to students across the state, no matter what campus they attend. Again, that starts with representing the students as accurately as we can. I look forward to what we as students can do once we all realize the true power of our collective voice.

In closing, I want to extend my deepest thanks to President Knuepfer. As a trustee, Pete has been a strong supporter of the Student Assembly and a guide, mentor, and friend to me personally. I look forward to working with Dr. Kay over the next year in her roles as President and Trustee, and the Student Assembly and I will remember the contributions that Pete has made to strengthening shared governance at the State University of New York.
Nancy Zimpher became the 12th SUNY chancellor. She invited him to join her on her now famous whirlwind tour of the 64 campuses when it was convenient for him. He told me of a most impressive characteristic of Nancy Zimpher: she listened to people she spoke with, remembered who they were, and what they said. He told me about a day that he joined her as she visited a particular campus, met with a group of students early in the morning at which time they discussed with her their experiences on that campus, their concerns, their hopes, their needs. After a full day of meetings with faculty, administrators, Council members, etc., she then met again with the same students in the evening and remembered each of their names and what they had discussed. Most impressive!

Very early in her tenure, Chancellor Zimpher launched a process to develop a strategic plan for SUNY. A process that was unique in that it was not developed solely by administrators, as a previous plan had been. She set in motion a process that involved 200 individuals—administrators, faculty, staff, students, trustees, civic and business leaders—meeting over several months. The result was what she called “Six Big Audacious Ideas:” SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century, SUNY and the Seamless Education Pipeline, SUNY and a Healthier New York, SUNY and an Energy-Smart New York, SUNY and the Vibrant Community, and SUNY and the World. For each of these ideas, work groups were formed to develop specific action items to meet these goals. The groups were also required to develop metrics, where possible, so that the ongoing status of these actions could be evaluated. To ensure accountability, she insisted that SUNY provide a publicly-available annual report card on what had actually been accomplished. This was clearly an important way of setting system-wide goals and actions while, at the same time, allowing individual campuses to devise their own ways of meeting these goals.

I have worked in SUNY-wide governance with 7 chancellors and interim chancellors. None matches Nancy Zimpher as outspoken and effective cheerleader for public higher education in general and for SUNY in particular. She has been relentless in highlighting, on both the regional and national stage, the importance of public higher education to a well-functioning and vibrant civil society. It is no accident that at a meeting of campus and system heads at the White House, President Obama chose her to be the spokesperson to the press for the event.

Over the years, I have had substantial contact with Nancy Zimpher as a University Faculty Senator, UFS Vice President/Secretary, and member of the UFS Executive Committee. It was in these contexts that her deep commitment to shared governance was evident. Her decision to put the presidents of the three SUNY governance organizations (Faculty Council of Community Colleges, Student Assembly, University Faculty Senate) in her cabinet was a clear signal of the importance she attributed to shared governance. She welcomed collaboration with faculty, staff, and students as an important element in SUNY’s functioning—and it evidenced a trust she had in the commitment of these governance organizations to advancing the quality of SUNY and elevating its status in the academic world. In her introductory remarks at the first Annual SUNY Voices Shared Governance Conference in 2014, she made the astute observation that “collaboration moves at the speed of trust.” It is that trust between the chancellor and the three governance organizations, despite occasional policy differences, that has been a major factor in SUNY’s ability to move forward collaboratively on various initiatives. When I mentioned to her on one occasion that some campus presidents do not share her understanding of and commitment to shared governance, she used her next meeting with the campus presidents to discuss the importance of shared governance on the campus as well as system level.

I have also had the opportunity to work with Nancy Zimpher in my role as editor of this Bulletin. There is a dedicated column in each issue of the Bulletin for her to communicate directly with the SUNY faculty and professional staff. She is almost always the first person to submit the material for her column. She has often used her column to provide information about what she considers important for SUNY. For example, in the last issue of this Bulletin, she devoted her column to the importance for SUNY to train teachers and a mechanism to do so, TeachNY. In a special issue of this Bulletin on Shared Governance (October 2012), she entitled her comments “Shared Governance Drives Our Greatest Accomplishments.” In that article, she wrote, “Carried out effectively, shared governance serves as the foundation for a sustainable system of higher education that is operating at its highest potential…”

Nancy Zimpher, One Big Audacious Idea
“She is a willing communicator of her ideas, as evidenced in her discussions with the University Faculty Senate at its Plenary Meetings, which she both attends and participates—and in her dedicated column in each issue of this Bulletin. In some of her columns, earlier in her tenure, she focused on the importance of SUNY to the economic revitalization of New York State and its collaboration with the governor’s office and the legislature in this endeavor. Important as this is for gaining state government support for SUNY’s need for an adequate budget and regulatory relief, I pointed out to her that the SUNY faculty and professional staff would also like to know about her ideas about and support for the academic enterprise that is SUNY. To her credit, she devoted her column in the next several issues of the Bulletin to the academic activities of SUNY, particularly as they are detailed in the SUNY Strategic Plan, known as “The Power of SUNY.” Some of the initiatives for SUNY that were developed under her direction include: seamless transfer to facilitate student mobility; teacher education programs and working with school system through the appointment of a Vice Chancellor for the Seamless Pipeline to facilitate “cradle to career” education; Open SUNY to foster online education; SUNY Excels to require specific plans and metrics from campuses on how they will enhance student access and the successful completion of their academic goals, and how they will improve their academic and co-curricular programs to justify applying for additional performance funding; focusing attention on the importance of including an applied learning experience in the curriculum, but allowing each campus to decide whether to make it a graduation requirement; requiring each campus to have a Diversity Officer reporting to its president to insure diversity in its staff, students, and programs and to foster inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups.

In sum, though there have been occasional differences between the University Faculty Senate and Chancellor Zimpher, they have never led her to abandon her commitment to shared governance and to work closely with it (and the other governance organizations) for the benefit of SUNY. She has not only enhanced the quality of SUNY as a system, but she has also elevated its profile in the academic world. She has been an effective and exemplary advocate for SUNY, and will be a hard act to follow, but the previous experience of the newly appointed chancellor, Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, as an academic administrator, an industrial entrepreneur, and a government official suggests that she will be an ample successor.

SPEAK OUT

[In this issue, this section is devoted to a series of reflections on the tenure of Nancy Zimpher as Chancellor of the State University of New York by a former member of the SUNY Board of Trustees (Ronald G. Ehrenberg), a former SUNY Provost (David Lavallee), a former President of the University Faculty Senate (Kenneth P. O’Brien), and a former President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges (Tina Good).]

Nancy Zimpher: Perceptions from an “Unusual” SUNY Trustee

Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Former member of the SUNY Board of Trustees; currently, Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics, and Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow at Cornell University, and Director of the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute (CHERI)

I. On Becoming a Trustee

Subject to the approval of the NYS Senate, the Governor appoints 15 people to the 18 person SUNY Board of Trustees. The other three members are the nonvoting presidents of the statewide 4-year and 2-year SUNY campus faculty governance bodies and the president of the statewide SUNY student governance unit. The latter is a voting member, however as I shall argue below, I believe that whether these 3 members can vote is almost irrelevant to the roles they play and their importance as board members.

Appointment to the SUNY Board is typically a plum patronage position and appointees usually have some personal connection to the Governor or important people in the state who know the Governor. While I am a registered Democrat, I am a relatively apolitical person and I have never contributed large sums of money to any political candidate. My appointment to the SUNY Board was due to a rather unusual set of circumstances.

Many readers will remember that in March 2008, Elliot Spitzer resigned as Governor of NYS and was replaced by Lt. Gov. David Patterson. Most of Spitzer’s senior aides left their positions when Spitzer resigned and a new relatively young aide in charge of higher education was walking in the Capitol that fall when he ran into the Cornell administrator in charge of state relations and casually mentioned that Gov. Patterson, needed to appoint a number of people to the SUNY Board. Our guy quickly said we have an expert on the economics of higher education on our faculty, he has been a Cornell vice president and is currently a Cornell trustee, he has written extensively on the issues facing public higher education, and to top it off, he is a graduate of SUNY. The Governor’s aide was sent a number of things I had written and he saw something in them that led him to schedule a meeting for me with the Governor’s appointments secretary.

At that meeting I told her that as a Cornell vice president my major goals was to make Cornell greater than the sum of its individual colleges by encouraging productive collaborations across our units. I said that as a trustee of the 64 campus SUNY system, my goal would be to make the system greater than the sum of its campuses. What I said must have made sense to her because in May 2009, Governor Patterson, who I never met, nominated me to become a member of the Board. I was confirmed by the NYS Senate in March 2010 in time for the board meeting that month.

Meanwhile Nancy, who had been named the SUNY Chancellor in February 2009, had assumed her position in June 2009. What I did not
know until I met her at the first board meeting I was permitted to attend as an observer, was that her goal as chancellor was exactly the same as mine. Our transformational Chancellor is SUNY’s first leader who took on the task of making the system more than a set of 64 separate campuses and who harnessed its resources to make the whole better than the sum of its parts. She wanted each campus in every sector of the system to prosper. She tirelessly advocated on behalf of all of our colleges and worked every day to make SUNY the best higher education system in the nation. So in my role as a trustee, supporting the Chancellor, which is one of the primary responsibilities of the board, has been easy for me because I was so in synch with her goals.

The SUNY system’s accomplishments during her years as chancellor are too numerous to list here and I will only note a few that I feel are extraordinarily important for the system’s future:

1. The development of the SUNY 2020 plan in which the Governor promised to halt cut backs in state appropriations for higher education and gave the system permission to increase instate undergraduate tuition by a predictable small amount each year for five years; this gave our campuses the ability to build back their resources after the cuts of previous years.

2. The development of a Seamless Transfer Initiative to facilitate transfers from our 2-year campuses to our 4-year campuses.

3. The development of Open SUNY—a menu of high quality online classes and online degree programs offered by individual campuses. Subject to availability, students from one campus who can’t find a class they need to graduate, or simply a class that interests them, on their own campus, can enroll in an Open SUNY class offered by another campus, subject to the approval by the campus at which the student is matriculated.

4. The development of a Performance Funding Investment Program to improve individual campus and system performance that encourages campuses to collaborate with each other in the development of their proposals.

5. The development of a Shared Service Initiative that included taking advantage of system wide scale discounts in purchasing and the consolidation of service provision between nearby SUNY campuses to achieve savings in administrative costs, which then could be directed back to the academic and student support missions of the campuses. During the first five years of the initiative the program reached a total of over $108 million in savings, with $30 million of this total being recurrent operating expenses. The program today continues under the title Operation Excellence and is focusing on continuous improvement in ongoing savings in areas such as strategic sourcing and shared IT platforms.

6. Finally, and perhaps most important, a broader overall initiative to improve student success by increasing the effectiveness of remediation programs, reducing times to degree, improving graduation rates and dramatically expanding the number of students receiving degrees or program certificates from SUNY. This initiative clearly takes advantage of all of the other initiatives discussed above.

II. What Can I Say About Nancy?

Nancy is an extraordinary energetic leader who gave new meaning to the Chancellor’s position being more than a 24/7 job. During the initial months of her tenure, she visited all 64 campuses and established a strategic planning process to define the goals of the system. This process included central administrators, campus administrators, faculty, students, trustees and alumni. She understood right from her start that a leader leads by building consensus and listening to the views of all stakeholders.

Nancy believes in articulating “Big Audacious” goals, setting time tables for reaching these goals, and developing metrics that can be used to publicly measure progress towards meeting the goals. While she knew the importance of having stable leadership at the top of the system, she also knew that her time in the position would be finite and this sometimes led her to publicly articulate big goals before the board had agreed upon them. She understood that a chancellor can never rest on her past laurels and continually introduced new programs and policies to move the system forward. This sometimes put stress on the campuses whose capacity to innovate was occasionally less than her ambition.

Nancy understood that in order to help make the system greater than the sum of its parts, the outside world needed to learn about SUNY. She spent an enormous amount of time externally publicizing what was going on at SUNY and with the aid of key staff hosted in NYC a series of annual national SUNY conferences on big issues in higher education. Each conference received considerable media attention and resulted in widely disseminated conference volumes published by SUNY Press. She also established the first SUNY System Foundation to generate revenues from private sources to help fund future system wide initiatives.

Our chancellor understood the key role that the campus presidents play. My rough calculation is that at least 5 to 7 presidential searches occurred each year that I was on the board. Searches for the campus presidents are run, in the case of our 4-year campuses, by their college councils and, in the case of our two-year campuses, by their campus boards of trustees. Each search is supposed to lead to two or three candidates being presented to the chancellor who then makes the final decision. Given her understanding of the key roles of the presidents, Nancy set very high standards for presidential appointments. In at least two cases, when she felt the recommended candidates were not up to what the campus needed in a leader, she rejected the recommendations and instructed the campuses to continue their searches. Nancy knew from her first day in office the importance of the two faculty and the student trustees, as well as the governance bodies that they led. Each of these trustees, as heads of their governance units, had an office in the SUNY administration building and she named each to her
leadership cabinet that held monthly meetings. In many respects, these three trustees became in my view among the most important trustees because from their cabinet and faculty governance roles they had much better information about the issues being discussed than most of the other trustees. And because of the constituents they represented, our students and our faculty, when the spoke at board and committee meetings the other trustees listened very carefully and took their concerns very seriously. I view the fact that the two faculty trustees were nonvoting members as almost irrelevant to their effectiveness as board members and at times during my term on the board faculty trustees each served as chair, or acting chair, of the community college and academic affairs committees of the board. Both of the faculty trustees and the student trustee were also among the subset of trustees that were members of the search committee for Nancy’s successor.

Shared governance is part of Nancy’s DNA. So, for example, when the seamless transfer initiative was being developed, it was a bottom up process with faculty from across the two-year and four-year campuses determining the classes from each two-year college that would be accepted at each four-year college for transfer credit towards specific majors, rather than being dictated top down by administrative fiat. Nancy and her provosts heavily involved the faculty and student governance groups in the development and shaping of virtual all new initiatives. Because of their involvement in system wide decision making, the governance groups often felt able to provide political support for SUNY during budget discussions with the governor and the legislature.

Finally, Nancy had the capacity to keep her focus on the well-being of the system as a whole, even in the face of severe problems that could have caused more mortals to think about whether staying in the position was worth it. To mention but a few of these problems. Early in her term as chancellor, a governor allowed us to raise tuition but took 80% of the increase in tuition back to help offset state budget problems. She and the board spent the better part of two years trying to develop a more rational budget allocation process that would provide incentives for campuses to behave in ways to help accomplish system goals; complaints by campuses that would receive less funding under such a plan led the political process to tell us to drop the idea. She and the board also spent years trying to stabilize Downstate Medical Center that had severe financial problems and trying to negotiate the sale of Long Island Community Hospital (LICH), which was losing millions of dollars a month and draining resources from the rest of the system. She had to deal with very serious issues relating to the leaders of Upstate Medical Center and SUNY Poly and to the finances and future of the latter institution. In each of these cases she did not lose her focus on the rest of the system and maintained her forward looking attitude. Her ability to cope with these problems was facilitated by her ability to delegate responsibilities to various senior administrators and to her relationship with our extraordinary chair during the latter years of her term, Carl McCall.

III. Final Thoughts

SUNY has been very lucky to have such a transformational chancellor who has truly helped to make the system much more than the sum of its parts. Nancy has long said that she hoped to stay in her role long enough to institutionalize many of the changes that have taken place. Her efforts have been facilitated in recent years by a system Provost, Alex Cartwright, who has made substantial efforts to involve campus presidents and provosts in discussions about proposed system policies long before the policies are adopted. But individual campus presidents do not like to view themselves as middle managers and their objectives for their own campuses may not always be in step with those of the system as a whole. It will be incumbent on the new chancellor to make sure the gains of the past years do not gradually fade away. Continuing to stress Nancy’s shared governance efforts and involving all of the system governance bodies and other stakeholders in the discussions about the directions in which the system should will be of absolute importance.

My term as SUNY Trustee will most likely have ended by the time you are reading this piece. Being a member of the SUNY Board of Trustees has been one of the greatest honors of my career. As Pete Kneuper and Ken O’Brien, past presidents of the University Faculty Senate who I served on the board with, can attest, my major contribution to the board may well have been my continually reminding my fellow board members that academic decisions are best made by academics. I believe most of the board has fully internalized this proposition.

Working with the Best
David Lavallee
Former SUNY Provost;
currently, Professor of Chemistry, SUNY New Paltz

I had the unexpected pleasure of being asked to serve briefly as interim provost for the SUNY system and then spending four years working with the best team I could imagine. I will direct my remarks specifically to my working relationship with Chancellor Zimpher, but, at the outset, I would like to acknowledge the dedicated, experienced and wonderfully talented group that surrounded and supported me in the provost’s office — Beth, Carey, Carlos, Bob, Dan, Ed, Cherie, the IR crew, especially John, Rick, Lisa, Teresa and Jinrong and, of course, Shirley, Cindy and Peg, as well as those in the offices that we depended on for support: budget, computing, HR, legal and the Chancellor’s staff as well. We got a lot done together because of their dedication and hard work.

Chancellor Zimpher and I came together “sight unseen,” quite literally. We had never met and there was no face-to-face interview. I had basically agreed to “fill in” after the previous provost left between the time Chancellor Zimpher was hired and when she arrived at System Administration to begin her duties. But she needed to give her “ok” and I did want to be sure we would be compatible. I wasn’t interested in spending any time in Albany, however short, unless it could be productive. So, when we spoke for the first time, it was a joint interview. In our phone conversation, we told each other what we had done that we were proud of, what I felt I had to offer and where she wanted to direct her efforts over the next five years or so. It was clear, at least to me, that we held similar values and, importantly, we complemented each other. She had grand, audacious plans, with the
necessary confidence and background from being a seasoned campus president to move an agenda forward. I had a broad and deep knowledge of SUNY, as well as CUNY, and the history of higher education in New York — and what was required to accomplish significant change with public, unionized campuses having strong traditions of shared governance (and a distaste for anything “mandated” or imposed). She was a natural strategist and I a veteran tactician.

Soon, it was Nancy and David. Our relationship, outside of board meetings and that sort of thing, was informal, open and candid. She saw things from 30,000 feet and I made sure there was nothing hidden in the weeds that could trip us up. She made it clear with just a word, or by glancing at me during a cabinet meeting, that I needed to devote attention to a particular initiative, whether part of developing or, later, implementing the strategic plan or dealing with the crisis du jour. Otherwise, she expected me to use my effort and that of my staff, to undertake projects that were consistent with her general direction. As those in faculty governance well know, a big part of that was enhancing student success. It was a sign of her support for me and my office that she had the patience for us to work with faculty governance and the campuses for the full four years I was at system administration to see the implementation of “seamless transfer” and, here come “the weeds,” SUNY-wide adoption of a student degree audit system. Nancy liked things done well, but with no time wasted — and she was willing to wait, literally years, for this result.

I learned a lot from working with Nancy. She is no-nonsense, high energy and, yes, can be demanding. But she asks no less of herself. Her energy level reminded me of Donna Shalala, whom I worked with at Hunter College. Always on the move, her mind working almost visibly, but always with time for a smile and a humorous or encouraging remark. Meetings only with an agenda, all meetings start and end on time, always a plan at the end.

Quite a few of her (which became our) audacious projects were highly successful. The strategic plan was (and continues to be) a big step forward and the reputation of SUNY has been, deservedly, enhanced. For five years, SUNY’s budget was stabilized. The Research Foundation was greatly strengthened. Nancy’s own projects in improving pre-college education (STRIVE, TeachNY) and enhancing the college experience (SUNY Works and the SUNY Passport) are of monumental scale and import. I needed her support to revitalize SUNY Press, disentangle SUNY from our TV network (the original NY PBS) and an obsolete library support office — “weeds,” but very large budget and difficult personnel issues. And, of course, our many projects to improve students’ academic progress and success. We were largely successful in recruiting great talent for campus leadership — and of resolving leadership problems on several campuses — falling short only in the level of diversity we had hoped to achieve. I was pleased that I could use my knowledge of SUNY to have a number of successful interim presidents appointed.

And, then, of course, there were the audacious challenges unmet — campus consolidation and a rational budgeting plan. Nancy could very well have just turned to me in public meetings where the shortcomings of these efforts were being (sometimes vehemently) questioned and said “well, David, what have you got to say for yourself here?” or “where did this #%&^ idea come from?” But she never did.

A little background on the campus consolidation, if I may. In his campaign and early speeches as governor, we heard, quite correctly, that a major reason for New York’s high taxes are the hundreds of overlapping jurisdictions for public works (villages in towns in counties in the state, all having their trucks and plows, etc.), utilities and other services. So, naively in retrospect, Nancy and I thought this would be the go-ahead to combine services and, in a few cases, small campuses close to each other, especially if a presidential position was likely to be open soon. We didn’t reckon with the local governor-appointed (!) college councils. Although unpaid and with few actual powers (parking and student disciplinary code), they valued their positions and resisted vigorously. And, ironically, faculty and staff supported keeping expensive administration when the funds could have been used for more faculty and staff. Though a little intervention might have gone a long way, no support for this consolidation was forthcoming from the governor’s office.

I have been and continue to be upset with myself for pursuing these lost causes far too long, but whenever I do bring either up with Nancy, she shrugs it off as a good try for a lost cause; never that it was I who put her in a difficult position with the board and our campuses. And she brings up one of our successes or something we started that was continuing to develop well.

I could not have asked for a more encouraging or supporting mentor, but most of all, for such a warm and inspiring role model and friend. Thank you, Nancy!

**Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor Extraordinaire**

**Candace S. Vancko**

**SUNY Delhi President, retired**

In 2008-09 I was invited to serve on the search Committee for SUNY’s next Chancellor. We worked hard, spent a lot of time with a search firm, reviewed resumes, interviewed a number of candidates and agreed that we just hadn’t found the right person, that is, until Nancy Zimpher walked through the door. Her smile lit up the entire room, her energy was contagious and her commitment to moving SUNY from good to great was exactly what we had hoped to find.

That day was the beginning of many firsts for SUNY under Chancellor Zimpher’s leadership. It may be hard for those who didn’t know SUNY until after Chancellor Zimpher’s arrival to imagine how different the environment was. I joined the SUNY family in 1999 when I became president of SUNY Delhi—that wasn’t its name then— it was Delhi College—many colleges in the SUNY system didn’t see it as advantageous to include SUNY in their name. That’s just one example of the state of SUNY “pre-Zimpher.” One SUNY colleague, hoping to help me better understand, described the SUNY system as a dysfunctional family. Some faculty and staff on my campus truly believed SUNY failed to treat campuses fairly, that SUNY had favorites and that those favored campuses received more resources. Once, facing budget cuts and additional SUNY mandates requiring more reporting and personnel time, a College Council member asked if the college wouldn’t be better off as...
a private college. Suffice to say, "pre-Zimpher," the relationship SUNY “Central” ("the mother ship") had with the campuses wasn’t always warm and fuzzy.

At that time SUNY Presidents annually faced the fiscal conundrum of perhaps needing to lay off some employees to fund mandated negotiated increases for others. Late (sometimes nearly six months) state budgets were the norm making it almost impossible for SUNY Presidents to plan. How could I approve additional faculty positions when I didn’t have a budget for the upcoming year? Mid-year cuts weren’t uncommon and often a nasty surprise. Just when I thought I had figured out a way to manage the campus finances, I was hit with a substantial budget cut (sometimes retroactive!). Prior to Chancellor Zimpher, SUNY presidents faced significant challenges in fiscal planning.

A similar scenario existed regarding capital funding. Campuses located in political districts with powerful political leaders scored special line item initiatives for new academic buildings, athletic facilities and special projects, leaving less politically endowed campuses with no special funding. In terms of capital projects, SUNY was a system of haves and have nots—pre-Zimpher.

Creating a system-wide capital plan outlining each campus’ needs and educating the public on the desirability of capital funding and critical maintenance dollars for all SUNY campuses was also a huge win for this Chancellor.

And of course, pre-Zimpher SUNY played “tuition roulette.” Tuition is determined by the New York State Legislature and I came to understand that no politician of sound mind would advocate for a tuition increase in an election year. Nor would a politician be interested in supporting a tuition increase during a financial downturn. The result, of course, was no tuition increases for a number of years finally followed by a large tuition increase in the belief that it would take care of all the campuses’ needs for a very long time. It wasn’t until Chancellor Zimpher tackled this issue that SUNY campuses could begin to make financial plans based on a predictable tuition policy—one that was fair to both students and their families and to campus leaders who needed to make budget decisions. It was a big lift, but to her credit, Chancellor Zimpher eventually prevailed and campus presidents breathed sighs of relief.

While some campuses had national profiles, the SUNY system was not well understood outside of New York state (and perhaps inside as well). I would be introduced at national conferences as someone from “Sunny” Delhi. SUNY was not on the national radar as a mover and shaker in higher education pre-Zimpher. Chancellor Zimpher took on a number of national challenges, teacher education being one example. She focused on the necessity of providing the very best education for our nation’s children, embracing it as SUNY’s responsibility to assure a high quality seamless education pipeline. This included providing the very best education for our future teachers. Chancellor Zimpher declared SUNY would lead the way to the national solution. Very early in her tenure Chancellor Zimpher undertook the Herculean effort of visiting every SUNY campus. We were incredibly excited to meet our new Chancellor and to showcase our beautiful campus, wonderful faculty, staff and students! This plan was political genius on her part—she got to see each campus first-hand, learn their strengths and culture and to promise her advocacy on their behalf as well as for the SUNY system.

As she gathered and synthesized information from her campus visits, she began to formulate a vision for SUNY. The plan had to be ambitious, yet attainable. “The Power of SUNY,” a strategic plan with broad goals and specific measures to document progress and be held accountable was created. Its launch provided the Chancellor with the opportunity to inform the public about the great things SUNY was accomplishing and how we as a system were going to be even better. She promised transparent tracking of our progress toward the goals (The SUNY Report Card) and promised that data would drive decision-making. She focused on The Power of SUNY when evaluating presidential performance, and encouraged presidents to set ambitious goals.

Governor Cuomo focused on the economic revitalization of our state, particularly the upstate region and Chancellor Zimpher made certain that SUNY played a key role (A Competitive New York), positioning campuses as economic development engines. She declared that not only is SUNY preparing today’s and tomorrow’s skilled workforce, but also that SUNY has an unmatched ability to create jobs, foster groundbreaking research, discover new technologies, support New York’s health care industry and strengthen the education pipeline from cradle to career. Who better than SUNY to strengthen New York’s economy?

Chancellor Zimpher provided critical leadership for organizational changes within SUNY. One that stands out in my mind is her championing the concept of “seamless transfer” across SUNY institutions. After formulating the vision, she then worked hard to implement it. The same is true for many initiatives—she would help us to establish the goal, the ideal, then inspire, cajole—do whatever it took—to convince campuses to adopt it and make it their own. We were urged and expected to increase campus retention and graduation rates even though SUNY rates already exceeded national averages. This was great for our students and their families, great for our campuses (placing the focus on academic outcomes) and great for enhancing SUNY’s national prominence.

Under her leadership SUNY urged campuses to increase their attention to diversity (Diversity Counts) in student populations, faculty and staff and to increase cultural awareness across campuses. This focus is invaluable to SUNY graduates who will enter the work force well prepared with strong academic backgrounds and a myriad of cultural experiences that will provide them with advantages in the work place and in life. SUNY needed a Chancellor who could balance the external requirements of the position with the need to be campus- and student focused—not an easy task, but one she quickly mastered. She spent time with elected officials, SUNY Trustees, corporations and philanthropic organizations. And she spent time with the University Faculty Senate, campus presidents, distinguished faculty, student organizations, etc. It seemed she was present at every event involving SUNY! Not only did she balance SUNY’s external and internal constituencies, but she also undertook to enhance SUNY’s position as a national leader in higher education.

And on a personal level, working with Nancy Zimpher was productive
and fulfilling. She is an excellent listener and no matter how full her schedule, she made time if you needed her. She is “direct speak,” a quality I appreciated. And of course, she expected the same in return.

She is thoughtful and caring, but is willing to make the tough decision when necessary. Her tireless energy and her positive outlook were inspiring and I took pride in her work and our work on behalf of SUNY.

And no conversation about the Chancellor would be complete without mention of the term, “systemness” which she coined. She aspired for SUNY to be a vibrant, dynamic, ever-evolving system, a whole greater than the sum of its parts. She believed that we could be better as a system than we could as individual campuses. She believed we could provide an even more exceptional education for our students by sharing our strengths and working together to overcome challenges.

Chancellor Nancy Zimpher is the definition of a transformational leader. She has moved SUNY from great to world class.

Nancy Zimpher and Shared Governance, A Comment

Kenneth P. O’Brien, Immediate Past President, University Faculty Senate; currently, Associate Professor of History, The College at Brockport

Historians know that an assessment of Nancy Zimpher’s tenure as Chancellor is premature, but that’s what I was asked to do. For me this assignment is both deeply personal, necessarily relying on my perspective as President of the University Faculty Senate during her first years, and professional, the product of a professional historian.

To make this piece manageable, I’ll focus on the changes the Chancellor brought to SUNY’s system of shared governance. I’ll start with the spring of 2009, two months before her term began, when a serendipitous series of events came together to serve as an introduction of Nancy Zimpher to the SUNY system.

That spring, my colleague, Distinguished Professor W. Bruce Leslie, and I organized a scholarly conference focused on the history of SUNY for the 60th anniversary of its founding. With funding from Interim Chancellor John Clark, we brought together professional historians of higher education and old SUNY hands for a two-day conference. By the time of the conference, March 2009, the then-current President of the University of Cincinnati, Nancy Zimpher, had been named SUNY’s twelfth Chancellor. A distinguished scholar of education and educator preparation, Dr. Zimpher had great experience in public higher education, with previous major administrative appointments at both The Ohio State University (Dean of the School of Education) and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (Chancellor). Throughout the conference, she was spotted moving from panel to panel, taking more than twenty pages of notes on yellow legal pads, learning all she could about SUNY’s complicated history and the multiple missions of its 64 campuses.

In early May 2009, I was elected President of the University Faculty Senate, and during my first weeks, even before I officially took the office on July 1, I encountered what could only be called an “interesting” comparison of administrative styles. Shortly after my election I visited the UFS offices to handle a number of details, such as travel arrangements for Albany meetings scheduled in June and the next Board of Trustees meeting, where I was sworn in as one of the newest Board members.

When I met with SUNY’s “Officer-in-charge” in June, he recalled an incident at a previous university when they nabbed a miscreant faculty member who had pilfered precious art books from the University’s Special Collections and sold them to a Greenwich Village bookstore. He wondered what I thought about that, and of course, I recognized the professor had been charged with a crime and the judicial system would resolve the problem. That wasn’t enough, he said. He and armed university police had marched into the professor’s class and arrested him in front of his students!

Was it true? Had it actually happened as relayed to me? Who knows? But, the fact that he used our meeting as an occasion to tell that story, with its veiled threat, spoke volumes to me about the problems we had been having for a decade with shared governance on the system level. For a decade, since the battles over the Board of Trustee’s imposition of the SUNY GER in December 1998, there had been a series of issues that revealed time and again that at the highest level there were administrators who had little experience with or appreciation for campus cultures, but who generally disregarded faculty participation in system governance whenever it promised to become more than window dressing.

My first private meeting with Chancellor Zimpher went quite differently. Without any mention of faculty misdeeds, we spent an hour one-on-one sharing our ideas about SUNY’s history and university governance in general, during which she extended an invitation for me (and the two other presiding officers of system-wide governance organizations) to join her “Cabinet,” a twenty-member group that would be scheduled to meet monthly. Additionally, she invited me to join her, whenever my schedule allowed, on a planned tour of 64 campuses and, in return, I invited her to attend the UFS’s Executive Committee’s Summer Planning meeting later that month. She accepted, establishing a warm relationship with members of the UFS’s Executive Committee. We also agreed to set a regular meeting schedule for the year, with the promise that I would have access whenever necessary, a promise she and her staff kept.

A stark truth about SUNY, to a greater extent than many publicly supported state systems, is that it is a product of state politics. Even during the “glory days” a half-century earlier, it was Governor Nelson Rockefeller’s singular commitment to build a great state university system that finally persuaded Albany politicians to fund the growing system. The battle to free SUNY from crippling state regulations, a function of its legal position as a state agency, has been one of the on-going themes of the system’s history. Former Chancellor Robert King, who had been New York State’s Director of Budget immediately preceding his appointment to head the system, once commented that his major budget objective was to move the State University up the ladder of budget priorities … just one rung above that of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

In addition, the long-term nation-wide process of state “disinvestment” in public higher education that began in the 1980’s...
accelerated markedly in the first decade of the new century with first the economic downturn in 2001, which was then followed by the Great Recession of 2009. Neither SUNY nor CUNY leadership could effectively challenge the loss of state support, which fell from 80% of instructional costs in the mid-1980s to approximately 30% two decades later. Increasingly, public higher education would languish for long stretches with cuts in public funding that were replaced by increased tuition charges, which really meant increased debt financed by federal and private student loans.

Many of the problems had been catalogued in the 2007 Report of the New York State Commission on Higher Education that charged New York State’s public higher education sector had “slipped in stature” due to chronic underfunding and New York’s lack of a clear strategy for investment. Facing a difficult budget season in 2007-2008 and a sudden resignation of Governor Eliot Spitzer in March 2008, New York’s politicians ignored the call for major new investments in SUNY and CUNY. And then the great recession hit, and for New York, it hit with a vengeance, as personal income tax collections fell dramatically and unemployment insurance costs mounted.

This then was the state of SUNY in June 2009 when Nancy Zimpher joined SUNY. To familiarize herself with the system’s many campuses and their leadership, she launched a three-month, 9,000-mile whirlwind tour of the state, visiting each of SUNY’s 64 campuses, at each stop meeting with members of both the campus communities and the regional political, business and economic leadership. With extensive notes in hand, she and her staff then designed a strategic planning process for the university.

While strategic planning in the first year of a presidency can be found on page one in the “new administrator’s” handbook, the approach adopted in this case was distinct. A new strategic plan had been high on the Board of Trustee’s “to-do” for the Chancellor, but the specific process was hers, and it was as inclusive as possible. First, approximately 200 participants, drawn from both SUNY campuses and the larger community, met six times over six months in locations spread all across the state. Each of the meetings focused on a specific issue facing the university and larger society, but a small Steering Committee on which sat the leaders of each of the system’s governance groups oversaw the process.

The inclusive process stands in stark contrast to that used for the previous strategic plan, which had been produced by a small group of SUNY administrators. The 2010 plan, “The Power of SUNY,” offered a distinctive “reboot” of SUNY’s relationship with the public. Adopting the spirit of the “Wisconsin Plan” and teaching-research-public service ethic of land-grant universities, SUNY committed itself to developing and using knowledge that addressed the critical issues facing the society: providing more adequate high-quality health care; generating and using energy more efficiently; enhancing entrepreneurial abilities; supporting vibrant community life; stemming the leaks in the educational pipeline; and working effectively in a globalizing world. Each of the “Six Big Ideas” contained a special note termed “Diversity Counts,” a fitting commitment for a system founded to combat discrimination. Soon, and each of these ideas had a working group of senior administrators, campus representatives and faculty providing goals for implementation. Together they formed the overarching commitment, which was “to revitalize the economy and enhance the quality of life” for all New Yorkers.

By the end of Chancellor Zimpher’s first year, then, SUNY’s administration had adopted a much more inclusive framework for policy development, with governance representatives, chosen by the governance organizations, fully participating in both the development and implementation of the system’s planning processes. In fact, shared governance had been one of several initiatives in the strategic planning process, and it has been continually funded through both direct support of the governance organizations and the SUNY Voices initiative. This pattern was repeated with other system initiatives, two of which I’ll briefly discuss here, “Seamless Transfer,” an issue that had plagued the system for decades, and PHEIA (the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act), and its successor, NYSUNY2020, both of which were created to gain more resources from the state.

The problems with system-wide transfer practices had been highlighted most recently by the Higher Education Commission’s 2007 Report. One of the Commission’s members was the President of the Student Assembly, and he had been denied credit for a core course in his major, despite earning an “A” after he had transferred from a SUNY community college to one of its university centers. The Board insisted that the issue, which had been reaffirmed as system policy seven times since 1972, be finally resolved.

The Chancellor, who had had experience with a state-wide transfer system in Ohio, accepted the challenge, but in what was to prove a characteristic way. She insisted that the solution emerge from a process that included faculty governance without providing a specific detailed prescription. By appointing David Lavallee as Interim Provost — and then recommending that the Board of Trustees make it permanent — she empowered a senior administrator who had both great experience with the issue and the respect of faculty governance to draft both the new policy and the process that would govern SUNY transfer in the future.

The often labored process by which it has been handled over the past eight years has been chronicled elsewhere and need not be repeated here. But, SUNY addressed the problem through extensive consultation with disciplinary faculty across the system that in its final phase authorized 900 faculty from every campus in the system to craft transfer paths that identified foundational courses in more than fifty academic majors. Today, the Provost’s Student Mobility Committee, chaired in alternate years by the presiding officers of the FCCC (Faculty Council of Community Colleges) and the UFS, makes policy recommendations and serves as a board of review for any transfer issues that emerge.

While student mobility was an issue internal to the university system, state funding involved a number of external communities, each of which brought different perspectives and interests to the decisions. In January 2010, Governor David Paterson presented the Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act, which had largely been designed by SUNY staff to provide new funding through modest tuition increases over each of the next five years without cuts in state aid, and greater flexibility...
Governor Andrew Cuomo introduced NYSUNY2020, a proposal that mirrored many of the major features of PHEEIA and that one of the New York State’s most acute scholars, termed “PHEEIA Light.”

The patterns established in these first years have persisted throughout Chancellor Zimpher’s term. As the University looked inward to “Build a Better SUNY,” governance representatives were at every table; for example, warning of the dangers of “shared services,” which sounded workable in the principle but proved difficult to implement at scale across the system. Every major initiative of the SUNY system in recent had governance representatives at the table, usually very early in the planning process. This list includes the Diversity initiative, SUNY ExceLS, and Applied Learning, among others.

Several Concluding Thoughts

If real estate success is determined by location, location, location, good governance can only occur when there is access, access, access; and no matter what we think SHOULD be the case, it is college and university administrators who are the gatekeepers who provide seats at the table when policies and special initiatives are in their formative stages. By that measure, the Zimpher administration earns a high grade for its willingness to engage governance leadership in meaningful, that is, early, consultation. It didn’t always work as smoothly as we would have liked, remember Shared Services and the new BAM (Budget Allocation Model), but shared governance during her tenure improved significantly over what we had seen before. And when we go to AAUP or other national meetings to talk about academic governance, we are reminded of the progress we have made. Finally, it must be remembered that the tone for that cooperation and collaboration began at the top.

When faculty governance leaders think of “shared governance,” which the AAUP wants us to call “academic governance” now, we too often fail to see it in its genuine complexity. In truth, it involves more than simply the relationship between the administration and faculty and staff governance organizations. Students are, and must be, a meaningful part of the governance process, as are outside agencies, which is especially the case for public colleges and universities. And, finally there are the governing boards, which have the final fiduciary and appointing authority over academic policies. With that in mind, I judge the Zimpher administration to have done very well, balancing the perspectives of many groups in the creation of and administration of university policy and practice.

But, to us, faculty and professional staff governance organizations occupy a special place in these processes, a fact Chancellor Zimpher as a former governance leader understood. The UFS meets in plenary sessions three times annually, which she regularly attended (21 of 24 plenaries, I think was the final count), offering her lead, the other senior system administrators did the same, each time taking unscripted questions from the floor. The questioning often became sharp, other times not. Sometimes the Chancellor, Provost and Chief Financial Officer left a bit more bruised than they, or we, had anticipated, but she — and they — returned again and again. For her support of shared governance, and the changes in practice during her administration, she received the Friend of the Senate Award, the highest honor the Senate can bestow on a non-Senator.

Lastly, I think personalities matter. While that may not be the determining factor in the good relations upon which good university governance rests, I think it is essential to break down the stereotypes through which we too often see others. We see in our current national political discourse too much demonizing, turning opponents into enemies, a pattern all too familiar on many campuses. Perhaps her years as a faculty member and a campus academic administrator made it easier for her to remember her roots, understand the faculty concerns and appreciate the real work of the university in its classrooms, labs, and studios. At this point, I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity I had to represent the University Faculty Senate at the time she served as SUNY’s Chancellor, the one who put shared governance back on SUNY’s system agenda.

Reflection on Chancellor Zimpher

Tina Good, Former President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges; currently, Professor of English, Suffolk Community County Community College

"Imagine the competitive advantage for New York State if SUNY institutions joined forces as never before, pushing and building on each other’s ideas and collaborating in
ways that deploy our distinctive capabilities to the fullest extent possible. Imagine the impact if, from this day on, we work toward a common goal: to revitalize New York's economy and enhance the quality of life for all its citizens. "This is the vision that Nancy Zimpher, our new Chancellor, asked us to embrace in the new strategic plan known as, The Power of SUNY.

Well before I met Chancellor Zimpher, a department chair once said to me, "You know, Tina, sometimes, it's hard to do the right thing or even know what the right thing is when you're a chair." She was a dynamic leader who had worked collaboratively with faculty to create a shared vision for the department, but when it came to implementation of that vision, the resistance she experienced, well, shall we say, was anything but collegial. A couple of years after having this conversation, I met Nancy Zimpher, the new chancellor of the State University of New York, who introduced the concept of leaders “striving together” to effect positive and sustainable change.

I was the new president of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges when Chancellor Zimpher started challenging all of us within SUNY to re-imagine the possibilities that our colleges could achieve not only as autonomous institutions but as a system of public higher education within the state of New York. "Big ideas," she said. "Good to great," she said. "Move the dial," she said. "Let's do this," she said. "Let's do it together," she said. "Let's strive together," she said. "Let's do the hard work of defining what's possible and creating a new framework for shared governance." I decided to join her on a journey that would explore this question along with many others.

Quite literally, I journeyed. I had not known how big the state of New York really was until the Strategic Planning Steering Council and the group of 200 traveled the state to learn from each other and from experts about the needs and possibilities of our communities and institutions. The first of these forums focused on the concept of the "education pipeline." Admittedly, I was among those who critiqued the troublesome metaphor; but beyond the metaphor, I was also concerned about the cost of such a vision. Not the financial cost, per se, but the cost to our institutions if SUNY System Administration was directing its energies away from our institutions. My thinking, as Jim Collins—often cited by our Chancellor—would say, constructed higher education into silos with strict boundaries. Yet, community college faculty had throughout their history sought ways to actually function as that transitional space that traversed the boundaries of our American education system. It was not too big of a step, therefore, to join that conversation, and begin imagining new possibilities without compromising our fundamental principles.

Commitment to open access for our students while maintaining academic rigor is a core value for those of us who have dedicated our lives to the community college mission. As a consequence of this mission, we are continually mocked mercilessly in academic, entertainment, and even political circles, but such ridicule often just strengthens our resolve. While resisting the boundaries of silos, Chancellor Zimpher still understood the need for equality and mutual respect across the sectors. It was encouraging to have a chancellor who understood that open access did not mean a lack of standards, but instead meant diminishing the impact of the barriers our students face. Whether those barriers included academic preparedness, transportation, access to technology, finances, course scheduling, negotiating academic bureaucracies, family support, etc., we could begin imagining a new framework through which our students could transform their lives through higher education without incurring overwhelming debt.

As we began to imagine the Power of SUNY, Chancellor Zimpher, however, did not trivialize the problems of the past or minimize the importance of process. Among her efforts to improve funding mechanisms, expand our data systems, and develop 21st-century infrastructures for our students, for our faculty, and for our institutions, her unwavering belief in the need for intentional collaboration led to the celebration of shared governance at the campus and system levels. If SUNY was going to achieve a collective impact that was sustainable, an infrastructure that provided pathways of collaboration toward that end had to be institutionalized. Through working with the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council, and the Student Assembly, Chancellor Zimpher helped us establish SUNY Voices, the ongoing initiative that explicitly articulates shared governance as a SUNY core value.

We should not have been surprised by her support of shared governance. Striving together was a value Chancellor Zimpher brought with her when she came to SUNY, and is a concept that helped us operationalize the concepts of an education pipeline and shared governance within SUNY. The word “strive” can be defined as "doing one’s best to achieve a goal" or "struggling against opposition." One definition suggests collaboration and the other suggests quarreling engagement, but, in any case, the idea of working together, arguing with each other, and identifying pathways forward in order to contribute to the achievement of a more equal, empathetic, and educated democracy, was a concept that many faculty and faculty governance groups could embrace. Striving together as a method of inquiry allowed us to create a paradigm of exploration rather than a monolithic goal with which we could either get on board or be left behind. Striving together allowed us to ask questions such as, what are the right things to do, how can we move forward, and when should we regroup, reflect, and even re-imagine.

There were times when I wished our striving together would have been a little less contentious. There were times when striving together led us the wrong way down one-way paths or even down paths with dead ends, but such are the perils of exploration. What has been clear over these last eight years, however, is that Chancellor Zimpher expected us to be our best selves, to be intentional in our work, to think big, and to celebrate the Power of SUNY. We accepted her challenge. Consequently, we may be a little more exhausted, but the lessons she leaves behind will keep SUNY moving forward from good to great.
Alfred State College

From a School of Agriculture to a College of Technology: A Century of Administrative Evolution at Alfred State

Joseph Petrick, Alfred State College

Throughout its history Alfred State, like other academic institutions in SUNY, has had to be responsive to New York State government. As a result of its relationship to the State, Alfred State has evolved into a hybrid institution, offering associate, certificate and baccalaureate programs in the applied sciences and technologies, but also with limited offerings in the liberal arts. Alfred State started as a publicly funded School of Agriculture in the first decades of the twentieth century, and many of the major changes to the mission of Alfred State have resulted from administrative actions coming of state government. The college has undergone changes over more than hundred years, and can be seen as a case study of the relations of public postsecondary schools with the State.

A School of Agriculture

With the establishment around the turn of the twentieth century of state-funded veterinary, agricultural and forestry colleges at Cornell, and the clay-working college at Alfred University, the administration at St. Lawrence University petitioned the state legislature for a school of agriculture. Alfred University, which had already gone through the legislative process to create the College of Clay-Working, followed the lead of St. Lawrence University in petitioning its state senator and assemblyman for an agricultural school, and legislation creating the New York State School of Agriculture at Alfred University was passed on May 6, 1908.

From the time of its inception to 1927 the relations between the School of Agriculture at Alfred University and its host institution was controlled by the University’s Board of Trustees. The Hughes Commission of 1926 proposed changes to the structure of state government, and was the first commission or committee to propose that there be a single administrator responsible to the governor. Legislation putting the changes into effect was passed in 1927. As a result, the New York State School of Agriculture at Alfred University was taken out of the direct control of Alfred University, and came under the direct supervision of the Education Department. A Board of Visitors oversaw the campus for the Education Department.

An Agricultural and Technical Institute

In 1935 Lewis A. Wilson, then Assistant Commissioner for Vocational and Extension Education for the State of New York, authored a report on technical education in New York State entitled “A New York State Technical Institute.” Wilson envisioned institutions that would train students for industry in a manner similar to the agricultural education available at the Schools of Agriculture. Because there was a perceived need for technical education, and because federal funding became available, the New York State Education Department in 1937 asked the Schools of Agriculture at Alfred, Canton, Morrisville, and Delhi to offer industrial and technical courses. Thus, the Schools of Agriculture became Technical Institutes, and for the first time graduation from high school became mandatory for admission. Tuition continued to be free, but nominal fees were charged for materials. With the expansion of the scope of the agricultural school came the possibility of an increase in enrollment. In 1941 the school had been renamed the New York State Agricultural and Technical Institute at Alfred. During World War II it became involved in the war effort, including training pilots who obtained flight time at the Hornell airport.

In 1948 a Division of Technical Institutes was created, and the six Agricultural and Technical Institutes were joined by five Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences that had been created as a result of the Board of Regents wartime plan, comprising a total of eleven institutions serving the post-secondary vocational education needs of the state. The five Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences were converted to community colleges in the 1950s. The State of New York considered the position for the Agricultural and Technical Institutes, and decided to separate them from the network of community colleges that was being developed.

The SUNY Institute of Agriculture and Technology

With the creation of the State University of New York, the Agricultural and Technical Institutes could award associate degrees, be granted accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and students could compete for transfer to other units in the University. The stand-alone institute could continue much as it had before, but created particular problems for its host institution. Although the Institute at Alfred had become independent of Alfred University, the main buildings were surrounded by Alfred University property. As the Institute grew in enrollment it increasing placed a burden on the private university that had lobbied for it over forty years earlier. In contrast, the New York State School of Ceramics was not independent, and continued to be administered by Alfred University. SUNY did not immediately take action that would result in solving the problems created by having a public Institute of Agriculture and Technology located on a private university campus. Alfred University President, J. Ellis Drake, reported to the Alfred University Board of Trustees in June of 1948 that the relocation of the Ag-Tech would be beneficial to Alfred University, since it would relieve the housing shortage in Alfred both for faculty and students, and would allow the University to expand its classroom and laboratory facilities. By 1955 the enrollment at the Ag-Tech had surpassed the University’s by a few hundred students, even though they
were located on the same grounds. The strategy of Alfred University, as expressed by President Drake to the Alfred University Board of Trustees in 1955, was to wait for the Institute to move to another location. Eventually land was purchased across Main Street from Alfred University, and the Ag-Tech built its campus essentially across the street from Alfred University.

Alfred State College

Ten years after Governor Thomas Dewey signed legislation creating the State University of New York, Nelson Rockefeller was elected to his first term as Governor. Soon after, Rockefeller empaneled a Committee on Higher Education, which in November 1960 issued the Heald Report, recommending that SUNY should be given greater freedom to carry out construction and charge tuition. Like most other SUNY units the Institute of Agriculture and Technology increased the number of its buildings in the 1960s, and substituted the word “college” for “institute,” becoming the State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology. In addition to the ongoing construction at the Alfred campus, a Vocational Division was created by renovating and remodeling eight buildings at the deactivated Sinclair Oil Refinery in Wellsville, and classes began there in October of 1966. Although the location of Vocational Division had advantages such as the use of existing structures, it is located fourteen miles from the main campus in Alfred and students living at the main campus have to be transported by bus to the Wellsville campus, because dormitories have not been built in Wellsville.

The administrations of the agricultural and technical institutes have sometimes been interested in expanding their missions. One example is President David Huntington’s 1972 “Proposal for a Polytechnic College at Alfred,” which included bachelor of technology and bachelor of business administration degree programs. Such elements of the proposal were of obvious concern to the administration at Alfred University, which was relieved that SUNY would not approve bachelor’s degrees at what President Huntington was already calling Alfred State College. It was not until the mid-1980s that SUNY encouraged the Agricultural and Technical Colleges to offer their first bachelor’s degree. After the building construction of the 1960s, the State Education Department in 1982 recommended the establishment of upper-division programs in engineering technologies, because of a perceived general need for more engineers in New York State. The SUNY Board of Trustees acted on the report by encouraging the Institutes to offer a limited amount of baccalaureate degrees in engineering technology. For example, in 1985 Alfred State offered a bachelor of technology in electrical engineering technology degree in conjunction with the State University of New York at Binghamton. In 1987 the Agricultural and Technology Colleges Presidents Association agreed to change the names of the college to the SUNY College of Technology at Alfred, soon known as Alfred State College.

Today Alfred State is comprised of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Management and Engineering. A recent addition to Liberal Arts and Sciences is the Radiologic Technology program, in the Physical and Life Sciences Department. Another recent addition is Criminal Justice in the Social and Behavior Sciences Department. Other departments include Mathematics, English and Humanities, and the Agriculture Department, which includes Veterinary Technology. The School of Management and Engineering Technology includes Business, Architecture, Civil Engineering, Digital Media and Animation, and Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. A recent addition to the physical plant at the Alfred campus includes the Student Leadership Center, which houses the Center for Student Engagement.

The School of Applied Technology in Wellsville includes Culinary Arts, Automotive Trades, Building Trades, and other vocational offerings. The recently-built Workforce Development Center and the Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing Center enhance the applied learning experience at the Wellsville campus.

Conclusion

The college at Alfred, having evolved from a School of Agriculture to an Agricultural and Technical Institute to a Colleges of Technology has long been responsive to pressures from various agencies and administrations in the State of New York. Its founding depended not only on the passage of legislation by the New York State Legislature, but also successive gubernatorial administrations. As the State Education Department suggested a change in mission, the school changed its curricula. With their inclusion into the State University of New York, the school continued to be responsive to the State as it has since, either through cooperation through building construction, a change in mission towards increased baccalaureate programs, or the experiment of a collective structure of the Union of Colleges of Technology. Alfred State has accommodated successive New York administrations, and will continue to do so. To paraphrase the report of the 1946 Joint Committee on Rural Educational Services, the rural people of New York will support Alfred State if the State continues to make it worthy of support.


The Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Committee

Ron Sarner, Chair, SUNY Poly

The charge of the Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Committee is as follows:

The Committee shall provide advice and guidance to the Faculty Senate on matters relating to undergraduate programs and policies throughout the University. To these ends, the Committee may review such areas as existing and proposed curricula, standards for academic degrees, undergraduate academic assessment, teaching techniques and evaluation, special undergraduate programs, articulation among units of State University of New York and the various aspects of international education and development.

In recent years a recurring area of interest for the Committee has been applied learning. In 2016, the Committee developed and published a comprehensive 106-page handbook (available on line at: http://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/Internship-Guide--update-10.19.16.pdf) entitled Internships
and Co-ops: A Guide for Planning, Implementation and Assessment. An important resource for many faculty in its own right, the relevance of the Guide is enhanced as the system-wide emphasis on applied learning rolls out. In addition to the sections on planning, implementation, and assessment suggested by the title, the Guide includes material on relevant laws, regulations, and policies and an extensive bibliography including resources from federal and state agencies, accrediting bodies, SUNY, and the campuses. Appendices include sample learning outcomes, evaluation rubrics, and learning agreements.

A second area of Committee interest with respect to applied learning has been to ensure that faculty retain control of the curriculum. As noted in the seminal 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, jointly developed by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (available online at: https://www.aaup.org/report/state-ment-government-colleges-and-universities), “the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.”

The Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Committee has developed several resolutions in recent years reaffirming the primacy of the faculty with respect to the formulation of policy associated with applied learning and with the delivery of applied learning experiences. Resolution 170-02-1 adopted by the University Faculty Senate at its Spring 2015 Plenary meeting at Plattsburgh states in part: “all applied learning and/or experiential education earning academic credit shall be a responsibility of appropriate faculty who are members of the academic department (or similar academic unit) within the discipline in which the internship is offered and should be qualified to supervise the internship and other experiential education in the respective subject area.”

This was followed up with a resolution adopted at the Fall 2016 Plenary meeting at Cortland calling upon campus governance bodies to: “develop and adopt policies to ensure that: 1) Academic faculty retain responsibility for the curriculum, for assessing student learning outcomes, and for assigning grades in applied learning activities as for other degree requirements; 2) The campus-level determination of what meets the applied learning mandate be made through the normal campus and governance curricular processes; and 3) the certification of an activity or course as meeting the applied learning requirement also follows the normal campus and governance curricular processes.”

That resolution further called upon the Chancellor to ensure that normal governance processes have indeed been followed. The result was that reports on the applied learning initiative by campus presidents to System Administration must contain a certification by the campus president that proper governance processes were followed. The intent here is to prevent campus administrations from doing an end-run around governance.

This spring the Undergraduate Committee published a report detailing the results of a survey that was administered by Wendy Gordon from Plattsburgh to determine the extent to which campus governance has been involved in the decision on each campus to make an applied learning experience a graduation requirement.

General Education is another area of interest to the Undergraduate Committee. Provost Cartwright has expressed an interest in re-examining the SUNY General Education requirements, noting that the essential structure of the plan is now close to twenty years old. Originally implemented by the Board of Trustees requiring one course in each of ten areas (as well as information literacy and critical thinking), for a total of 30 credits, the plan was modified several years ago to give campuses the option of requiring basic communication, mathematics, and intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field.”

The Undergraduate Committee sponsored a presentation by Deborah Moelck, its System Administration liaison, at the Spring 2017 Plenary at Canton, explaining the new Standard III and how campuses might meet the requirements for global awareness and cultural sensitivity.

Another area of interest to the committee is the practice of offering credit-bearing college courses at high schools across the state. A subcommittee, headed by Alice Krause from Delhi, has been investigating these programs, also known as dual enrollment, and seeks to develop a white paper detailing best practice. There are a number of issues associated with dual enrollment including academic preparation of the teachers doing the instruction, appropriate oversight by appropriate college faculty, ensuring academic rigor of the course, evaluation of learning outcomes, and cost to the student. As a first step, the subcommittee produced a report, distributed at the UFS Spring Plenary at Canton, identifying the state-operated campuses involved in dual enrollment, and providing some basic information about the extent of offerings, supervision, and student cost.

Our committee, largely due to the excellent contributions from Jane Nepkie from Oneonta, has a knack for identifying anachronistic SUNY academic policies; two were identified this year and resolutions were passed by the Senate urging the Chancellor to resolve the inconsistencies. At the Winter Plenary at Old Westbury, a resolution was passed asking the Chancellor to amend a 1976 Memorandum to
The work of the committee this year has set the stage for next year’s agenda. Discussions on General Education will still be in the early stages. Implementation of applied learning will be rolling out as a graduation requirement on many of our campuses, and the role of the Undergraduate Committee is to monitor the roll out and chronicle the level of faculty-involvement in both the design and implementation phases. Work remains on development of a white paper on dual enrollment. We also have a subcommittee that will be examining the role of faculty in micro-credentialing with an interest in ensuring appropriate faculty involvement and oversight. The topics are interesting and timely, and the work of the committee should be valuable.

Of course there’s still the problem of conflicting day and time
That hinders students taking our varied provender
Of unique offerings and gen ed—we need a paradigm
Addressing issues of each site’s incongruous calendar.
So far as that is feasible it would be quite a boon
Especially for those with jobs and other obligations.
For marketing online courses it is also opportune
(And faculty and students could better plan vacations!)

The disparate residence rules could also use rethinking
Allowing Open SUNY to be fully utilized
And two- and four-year programs could be truly interlinking
Without a transfer’s credits being cruelly minimized.
We also should eschew the silly ancient numbers game
Pretending 300-level work is always more advanced
Than major “sophomore” courses that essentially are the same
So speed to finishing degrees can better be enhanced.

In Zimpher’s tenure also came mandated “Applied Learning”,
A change which for our undergrads should help them with employment,
Reducing crushing debts, and with the higher pay they’re earning
Allow alums to give back dough for campuses’ enjoyment.
But coursework, seminars, I.S., and labs and practica
Yield credit by the Carnegie fifty-minute clock.
“Why sixty minutes for Experiential Learning?” Duh,
It’s stayed that way since ’76—isn’t that a shock!

Though all of us of course resent when politics and pork
Just squander funds that should have gone to education (formal),
The Chancellor was right in her support of “Teach New York”
And urging those that can return to being somewhat “Normal.”
If we’re not satisfied that our new students are equipped
To face our courses’ syllabi and our professors’ rigor,
One reason perhaps from our collective minds has slipped—
We used to train most teachers but now fewer, so “go figure!”

She’s met each challenge with sound programs, not some fad or gimmick,
And well deserves our thanks as well as every recognition,
Most recently “Support of Teacher Ed Award” (the “Imig”)—
True leader, intercessor, and a fine academician!
The plans are laid but then, of course, more challenges remain
So that the work she started can be even more perfected
By Chancellor Johnson for our common good and public gain
So SUNY’s worth and value will be properly respected.
Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher will step down as chancellor at the end of August, 2017 and become Chancellor Emeritus. At that time, she will join SUNY’s Rockefeller Institute of Government as a Senior Fellow and officially launch the nation’s first “Center for Education Pipeline Systems Change.” The Center will continue the initiatives that Chancellor Zimpher introduced in SUNY to further a “collective impact approach to education and community building, and the importance of approaching education policymaking and funding across the full continuum from cradle to career.” Additionally, she will join the faculty of the University at Albany’s Schools of Education and Social Work and serve as a chief advisor to President Rodriguez and his staff for cradle-to-career partnerships. She will also chair the first Strive Together Board of Directors, an organization that she originally co-founded that involves a national network of 70 communities in 31 states and Washington D.C. to provide coaching, connectedness, and resources to local partnerships to foster quality education.

Dr. Kristina M. Johnson has been appointed the 13th chancellor of SUNY. Dr. Johnson received her B.S. with distinction, M.S. and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford University. She was a professor at the University of Colorado-Boulder from 1985 to 1998, and directed the NSF/ERC for Optoelectronics Computing Systems Center at the University of Colorado and Colorado State University. She was dean of the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University from 1999 to 2007 and then provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Johns Hopkins University from 2007 to 2009.

Dr. Johnson is the current founder and chief executive officer of Cube Hydro Partners, LLC, which develops hydroelectric generations facilities that provide clean energy to communities and businesses throughout the country. She was appointed by President Barak Obama as U.S. Under Secretary of Energy. She has received numerous awards and honorary degrees, holds 42 U.S. patents, and has published 149 referenced papers and proceedings.

Dr. Alexander N. Cartwright will be leaving his post as provost and executive vice chancellor of SUNY, a position in which he has served since 2014, to become the chancellor of the University of Missouri-Columbia. Previously, Dr. Cartwright was vice president for Research and Economic Development, professor of Electrical Engineering and adjunct professor of Physics at the University of Buffalo. He received his B.S. and Ph.D. at the University of Iowa in Electrical and Computer Engineering. He is a recipient of many awards and has published more than 160 journal papers and conference proceedings. He holds six patents and his technologies have been licensed by three startup companies.