



The State University  
of New York

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November 7, 2017

Dr. Gwen Kay  
President, University Faculty Senate  
State University Plaza  
Albany, New York 12246

Dear Gwen:

I want to begin by thanking you for your leadership and service to the University. I have enjoyed getting to know you and learning more about the important work of the University Faculty Senate.

I appreciate your sharing with me the resolutions adopted by the UFS at its Spring 2017 meeting at SUNY Canton, attended by Chancellor Emeritus Nancy Zimpher. Thank you for taking the time to provide me with background on each item. Note that I have also conferred with Interim Provost Wang and staff for additional information, particularly in areas that I know will be ongoing agenda items for us both. I am pleased to provide brief responses below.

- **176-01-1: Resolution in Support of Chancellor Zimpher**  
This was a lovely tribute to Chancellor Zimpher that underscored the value and purpose of shared governance; something I sincerely support.
- **Resolution 176-02-1: Resolution on Contingent Faculty in Governance**  
The working environment for non-tenure track (contingent) faculty has been the subject of discussion for colleges and universities nationally. Some SUNY campuses, as with institutions of higher education across the country, have found that they rely heavily on the employment and utilization of non-tenure track faculty. They are an important part of our campus communities. I am supportive of local campus governance discussing ways to engage contingent faculty in governance, and respect that this may be addressed differently across the System. In regards to other terms and conditions of employment for non-tenure track faculty, they are represented by United University Professions as part of the Professional Services Negotiating Unit, and I have been advised issues pertaining to contingent faculty are currently being discussed in collective negotiations.
- **176-03-1: Resolution on Administrative Searches - Dean and Above**  
I have reviewed SUNY Trustee Policies, specifically Title B. College Administrative Officers, Sections 1 and 2, which indicate that appointments and interim appointments of "academic officers such as vice-president for academic affairs, academic deans and others with similar responsibilities shall be made after consultation with the faculty." I am prepared to ask CFO McLoughlin to remind campus human resource officers of this policy; Interim

Provost Wang and I will do the same for chief academic officers and campus presidents, respectively. I look forward to reviewing your white paper or second resolution with additional details.

- **176-04-1: Resolution on Part-time Assistantships**

I appreciate the concern you have outlined about the need to identify funding for part-time graduate assistantships. I know how valuable these experiences are for students and to each institution's research enterprise. What I have learned is that allocated spending authority for assistantships comes via a "dry appropriation," (i.e., spending authority within each campus's total allocation for this purpose). As a result, our budget office has indicated that determinations about assistantship funding are at each campus president's discretion, and that there is some local flexibility in how full- and part-time students are hired, dependent on the fiscal situation at each institution.

- **176-07-1: Resolution on Open Access Repositories**

I want to thank the UFS for their leadership on this issue. Based on the efforts of a working group, Interim Provost Wang will be sharing shortly a draft open access policy for discussion with the university community that supports creation of an accessible, searchable, repository network, as well as the need for local policies to address public interest and federal agency requirements about open access. I look forward to receiving your feedback.

- **176-08-1 and 176-09-1: Resolutions on Nomination and Selection, and Length of Service, for Distinguished Professorships**

My understanding from Interim Provost Wang and her team is that the UFS Awards Committee completed an in-depth review of the guidelines and made a number of excellent recommendations, nearly all of which were incorporated into new guidelines issued on July 10, 2017. My thanks to the Committee for its hard work. Dr. Wang shared with me that, based on additional feedback from campus presidents and provosts, then-Provost Cartwright opted not to make just one of the recommended changes for the criteria for the Distinguished Professor rank, leaving the required number of years of service on the SUNY campus at one. He had indicated that SUNY has become increasingly successful in attracting and retaining outstanding scholars and researchers to its professorial ranks. He wanted campuses to be able to appropriately recognize distinguished research and scholarly contributions to the academy at large. This is something that I have asked Interim Provost Wang to flag for continued discussion at the end of the current cycle.

- **176-10-1: Resolution to Revise Liberal Arts Requirements**

I want to thank the UFS for its careful work here and for bringing this matter to our attention. I have discussed this resolution with Interim Provost Wang, who will study the issue more carefully with her team, reviewing relevant regulation and SUNY policies, and

consulting with campus chief academic officers as well to determine appropriate next steps. I have asked that she keep the UFS informed of her findings and progress.

- **176-11-1: Resolution in Support of Stand-Alone Head for Alfred Ceramics**

I was pleased to learn that the Memorandum of Understanding between the College of Ceramics and Alfred University was re-negotiated just prior to my arrival, with the specific goal of addressing long-standing faculty and System concerns. I just recently reviewed the MOU and understand that some key modifications made include: specific reference to an identity for Ceramics that is distinct from the other colleges and schools of Alfred University; shifting language around the role and responsibilities of the unit head to be more active, recognizing their leadership role; and clarity around revenue generation and allocation. We will revisit discussions about reassignment of the unit head role once Alfred University has made progress on several pressing personnel matters. As you may know, immediate Past President of the UFS Peter Knuepfer, along with staff from SUNY General Counsel's Office, the Provost's Office, as well as the Office for Finance and Business, were actively involved in the negotiations with Alfred University's president and provost. I look forward to seeing positive change emerge from the understanding we've reached with Alfred University's leadership, and have asked Interim Provost Wang and CFO McLoughlin to ensure effective implementation of the revised MOU.

My thanks to you for your continued leadership and service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristina M. Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristina M. Johnson, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

KMJ:jfn