

FACULTY COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
POSITION STATEMENT  
May 17, 2013  
SUPPORT OF ELECTED FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES ON  
SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR NEW PRESIDENT OF NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE

There is no appointment more important to the vitality and sustainability of a college or university than the appointment of its president. According to the “Guidelines for Presidential Searches for Community Colleges,” approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees on April 1, 2005, “The president of the college, as the chief executive officer responsible to the college trustees, is responsible for providing general educational leadership and for promoting the educational effectiveness of the institution in all its aspects.” The Guidelines go on to state that faculty representatives, along with other representatives from other constituent groups should serve on the committee charged with searching for a new president.

In fact, in her article for AAUP, Muriel E. Post writes, “The search for a new president is one of the most significant instances of shared governance in the life of a college or university, but it is also one of the most challenging.” Only those faculty who are most dedicated to the well being of the college will serve in such a capacity, and while others on the committee, such as students, trustees, administrators, and community leaders may come and go, the faculty members on the committee will not. They will be at the college to reap the results of their search process—positive and negative; they will be held accountable by their colleagues; and they will work with the president who is chosen on strategic planning, program development, and untold numbers of initiatives.

Faculty members are not required to participate in such processes, and yet many still do. Therefore, faculty representatives deserve the support of their colleagues, the college administration, the local board of trustees, community leaders, SUNY System Administration, and the SUNY Board of Trustees in this important undertaking. This is what is so tragic about the presidential search situation at Nassau Community College. While allegations have been made about improper process, racism, cronyism, and much more, because of confidentiality agreements, these elected faculty representatives who represent thousands of full-time and part-time faculty cannot adequately respond or defend themselves. They have to watch as the public and the press levy accusations against them. Without an investigation, they will never have the opportunity to defend themselves against such public and unfounded charges.

Therefore, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges wishes to publicly state its unqualified support of the elected faculty representatives on the search committee for a new Nassau Community College president. Dr. Kimberley Reiser has served on the Faculty Council of Community Colleges for well over a decade and served as its president for four years. We can attest to her commitment to shared governance, her love for Nassau Community College, her integrity, her tenacity, and her profound dedication to creating a tolerant world of equal opportunity for all. Further, we offer this same support for her elected faculty colleagues on the search committee, Professor Debra Desanto and Professor Lynn Mazzola, and Professor Charles Loiacono. We applaud and endorse Distinguished Professor Dr. Phillip Nicholson’s testimony in an email sent to the SUNY Board of Trustees, dated May 14, 2013.

If shared governance and democratic processes are to survive in our institutions of higher education, we must support our faculty as they find themselves embroiled in controversy, even when they are prohibited from defending themselves. To do less is to threaten sustainable shared governance at any college or university. In the end, those of us in higher education must resist the perversion of some of our democratic ideals and instead work together towards concretely achieving the egalitarian spirit of a democracy. The Faculty Council of Community Colleges, therefore, commends Professors Kimberley Reiser, Debra Desanto, Lynn Mazzola, and Charles Loiacono for their work on the presidential search committee for Nassau Community College and their dedication to the institution.