



The State University  
of New York

University Faculty Senate

State University Plaza  
Albany, New York 12246

[www.suny.edu/facultysenate](http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate)

August 29, 2011

Chancellor Nancy Zimpher  
SUNY System Administration  
SUNY Plaza – T12  
Albany, NY 12246

Dear Chancellor Zimpher:

As you are aware, the press coverage of the "Shared Services" initiative has generated a growing concern about what "shared presidencies" might mean for a number of SUNY's smaller campuses. Consequently, I have been in email contact with the CGLs and the UFS Senators to ensure that they have been getting the most accurate and timely information possible.

Given the potential importance of this initiative to our campuses, the UFS Executive Committee held a rather lengthy phone meeting on Friday to discuss a draft resolution on Shared Services that had been distributed previously. As a result, the Committee unanimously endorsed the attached resolution, which I believe represents a consensus of concerns currently held by faculty and professional staff on our state-operated campuses.

In addition, members of the Committee raised several issues that proved unsuitable for inclusion within the Resolution. But, we thought they were important enough that we wanted you and the members of the administration to consider them at this time.

1. I am formally requesting 15 minutes during the next presidents' meeting to discuss a role for existing governance organizations in the Shared Services regional alliance teams.
2. When I urged that specific targets should not be set for the Alliances, I failed to foresee that this could create additional complications for the six campuses designated to plan to work toward a single presidency during the year.

First, the campus representatives want to know how many other campuses were included in the administrative supplements given smaller campuses, and how much and when their campus would be faced with the loss of those supplements.

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In addition, after working the math, some have concluded that without academic programs becoming an important element in the projected savings plans, each of these six campuses could never reach the amount of money that would be lost under the new SUNY distribution formula.

Furthermore, even if they could make up the loss, it would probably mean that NO money would be available to strengthen academic programs, which is the way this initiative was presented to each campus community. As they see it today, it would take all and more in savings to make up what they will lose in their future state allocation. For that reason, they fear that the real target is the academic program, especially since 90% of campus costs are in personnel. Any losses here would have a devastating impact on the programs currently offered.

3. A number of the members of the Executive Committee urged me to remind anyone who would listen that agriculture continues to be a major element of the New York State economy, especially the upstate economy, and that having presidents of two of the major institutions devoted to agricultural technologies who have had little or no experience with the field is problematic at best. This could be of particular concern when campuses evaluate their investments in academic programs or research.

4. It did not pass notice that the strongest argument for a shared presidency – the need for second and third tier administrators to report to a single president – was precisely what was being asked of the other alliances, those that were not slated to be sharing a president. If unification did not occur at the highest level, but rather somewhere lower in the administrative structure, there would inevitably be the problem of an administrator reporting to two administrators at the next level, including the possibility of reporting to two presidents. So, the contradiction between the underlying arguments for the two patterns has not been satisfactorily explained, or it may not have been satisfactorily understood and reported by me.

5. Finally, as noted by campuses during the conversations of past two weeks, this initiative is not all new. In the 1990's SUNY underwent an attempt to solve some of the small campus issues that plagued the Colleges of Technologies through the creation of the UCT, which possessed both strengths and weaknesses. Some members of the Executive Committee wanted to make certain, to the extent possible, that the decisions that will be made within and for this sector will reflect the strengths of the UCT while avoiding its subsequent problems. To do so, the historical records, in both human and paper forms, need to be consulted. In addition, the

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experiences of some of the Midwestern systems, such as Minnesota, might also be instructive in this regard.

I expect we will be hearing more on "Shared Services," an idea that is playing much better in the press than it is on most campuses, and one that is evoking very different reactions between the proposal that campuses share services and the notion that campus communities share presidents.

For that reason, if you would be willing and your schedule(s) permit, I invite you – and/or Provost Lavalée and/or Interim Vice Chancellor Hutzley – to attend our "Fall Planning Meeting" on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in Albany at the Crowne Plaza. The attendees will include the Executive Committee and all members of our ten standing committees.

We have scheduled a "question and answer" period following our dinner on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> that I would be more than happy to offer you in exchange for another hotel meal, or better yet, a glass of wine. I am certain that "Shared Services" will be among the topics that the committee members will want to discuss. Or, we could schedule some time around breakfast the next morning, if you would rather, for a short question and answer session. I'll have Mrs. Donato contact your office(s) to see if arrangements can be worked out at this relatively late date.

We have certainly appreciated working with you and the members of your administration over the past two years to plan strategically and to help secure better funding for SUNY over the next five years. Based on this experience, we look forward to continuing our collaborations on this issue, as well as the equally difficult problems that our extraordinary University system will surely face in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Kenneth P. O'Brien  
President  
University Faculty Senate

C: University Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
David Lavalée, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost  
Brian Hutzley, Vice Chancellor for Financial Services (Interim)

**Resolution on Shared Services**  
**University Faculty Senate Executive Committee**  
**August 26, 2011**

Whereas, both SUNY System Administration and the University Faculty Senate are committed to making SUNY one of the premier systems of higher education in the world, and

Whereas, the administration and governance bodies on each SUNY campus are equally committed to making their institution one of high quality, and

Whereas, the time-honored mechanism of "shared governance" is the means by which the administration and governance bodies both across SUNY and on individual campuses can work effectively and efficiently toward that common goal, and

Whereas, shared governance requires detailed, timely, and relevant information through a significant consultation process prior to any formal decision, and

Whereas, the recent policy of SUNY to reduce expenses by having campuses share services on a regional, sector or mission basis is an appropriate policy initiative worthy of careful consideration and consultation in the current economic environment, and

Whereas, the scope, nature and provision of administrative and student services directly and indirectly impact the curriculum, methods of instruction and other academic matters that are the primary responsibility of the faculty, and

Whereas, the proposed policy of having two campuses share a president was developed without significant consultation with the University Faculty Senate, the relevant College Councils, or the relevant campus governance organizations,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the proposed policy of two campuses sharing a presidency be carefully examined through significant consultation with the appropriate UFS representatives, the affected College Councils and the local governance bodies before implementation, and

Be It Further Resolved that representatives from the existing governance bodies on each alliance campus be included in the work groups that are considering shared services across the regional campus alliance, and

Be It Further Resolved that decisions regarding the sharing of services among campuses be made only after significant consultation with the appropriate campus governance body, and

Be It Further Resolved that the System Administration and UFS leadership work to clarify the forms by which appropriate consultation occurs *before* the implementation of significant new policies or actions that affect the state-operated campuses.