

**SUNY Faculty Senate
President's Report
January 2017**

Greetings and Happy New Year to all!

Welcome back to a new semester and to our Winter Plenary meeting at SUNY Old Westbury. As far as I know, this is the first time the Senate has met here (at least in recent decades). And unlike last January, the weather forecast is promising, at least in terms of a lack of snowstorms! We will have a busy meeting, as always. We will be joined by Chancellor Zimpher, Provost Cartwright, and Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer Eileen McLoughlin. We also are welcoming two new senior administrators from SUNY System Administration—Dr. Ricardo Azziz, who is the Chief Officer for Academic Health and Hospital Affairs, and Dr. Jinliu (Grace) Wang, who is the new Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development. Dr. Azziz joined System in November, and Dr. Wang at the beginning of the year, so this is an opportunity for us to meet them and vice versa. We're also making some changes to the traditional flow of our meeting agenda, as you will see. We'll have the committee chairs present their reports (and resolutions) after lunch on Friday. We'll hold most of the time on Saturday for discussion of the resolutions and other actions. And (because Old Westbury is a fully dry campus), we'll have our Friday dinner at a restaurant off campus. Many of you have already started your semester, and I thank you for taking time away from your first classes to join us. For others, your classes begin next week, and I know how hectic this time usually is (at least, if you're like me, you're still getting materials ready for your students...), so I thank you as well for taking the time to convene here on Long Island.

I use this message to provide you with updates on key happenings and activities at SUNY, along with a summary of some of the key actions of the Board of Trustees.

1. **Civil Discourse in an Age of Heated Rhetoric, DACA, and Sanctuary.** We may as well start with one of the two “elephants in the room”. The political environment in our country has certainly changed, and with it has come a surge in hateful speech and actions. Many if not most of our campuses saw incidents, especially (but not exclusively) after the election, mostly (but not exclusively) representing a particular view that is intolerant of many of the differences that we have in our pluralistic society. Many campus presidents and faculty groups have issued statements that emphasize the importance of tolerance and civil discourse, and we in the UFS should be as well. The Executive Committee drafted a Statement on Tolerance in November, which we have shared with you, and we will ask for your endorsement at the Plenary meeting. In addition, the executive committees of the CUNY UFS, SUNY UFS, and SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges developed a joint Statement on Civil Discourse, which is included in the packet of endorsements and resolutions sent as a separate document; we seek your endorsement of this as well.
The rhetoric regarding immigrants has certainly produced great concern among many within our academic community, including those young people who have taken advantage of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. While we don't know what position the new

Administration will in fact take on this, the assumption is that all illegal immigrants are at risk. A large number of university leaders (including Chancellor Zimpher and at least 8 SUNY presidents) have signed onto a statement urging the incoming Administration to retain the program. We will ask the UFS to endorse that statement as well. Many of our colleagues have also called for our campuses to be declared “sanctuaries”. We will certainly entertain discussion of this at the Plenary.

2. **Free Tuition.** The other “elephant” is the free tuition proposal for SUNY and CUNY announced by Governor Cuomo. At face value, this would certainly be a boon for middle-income families. But as many commentators have noted, the proposal offers little or no benefit to the neediest students, who already qualify for free tuition from other programs; what they need is help with the other costs of higher education. By the time we meet, the Governor will likely have provided more detail in his budget proposal, and CFO Eileen McLoughlin will discuss as much as she knows about it during her report on Friday. You can expect to hear more from me as well, especially about the implications of the proposal Excelsior Scholarship program.
3. **Educational Effectiveness and Strategic Enrollment Conversations and SUNY Investment Fund.** Provost Cartwright will update us about the conversations that he and his System Administration team have been having with each campus. Some of you probably have been involved in the meeting with your campus. These conversations are providing campus leaders to discuss their short- and long-term goals and help System Administration develop System-wide strategies to address enrollment challenges that many campuses are facing. Ultimately, the distribution of some \$56 million in a SUNY Investment Fund, year 2, will be based on invitations for funding proposals that follow from these conversations. But the process is taking longer than the Provost had expected, and it appears unlikely that any of the funds will actually be available this academic year.
4. **Applied Learning Initiative.** Campuses have been asked to decide by May whether or not to make an applied learning experience a graduation requirement for all students. The Applied Learning Steering Committee has been providing guidance on the steps necessary to reach this decision. Some campuses have already completed their work. From a governance perspective, it is of paramount importance that whatever decision is made goes through the proper curricular decision-making process that your campus has developed. This is, after all, a curricular decision, and thus must be the purview of the faculty.
5. **TeachNY.** This signature effort of Chancellor Zimpher’s final year is moving forward on two fronts. The Provost’s TeachNY Advisory Committee has been working on policy elements designed to improve the educator preparation process in SUNY, which are to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration at the May meeting. At the same time, the Chancellor and State Education Commissioner Elia have empaneled a TeachNY Roundtable, comprised of members representing a wide range of other education stakeholders, from unions to superintendents to faculty and beyond. This group is focused on strategies to raise the respect for and interest in the teaching profession. You’ll likely hear more from Chancellor Zimpher on this at our Plenary, and if not there, tune in to the State of the University Address on Monday January 23.
6. **Search for the New Chancellor.** Although this search is being conducted as a closed process, I can assure you (as a member of the search committee) that we are making good progress and have a strong pool to consider. I think it is realistic to expect that a final candidate will be presented to the

Board of Trustees for consideration at the May Board meeting, although of course one can never be certain of a timeline for a search like this.

7. **UFS Communications Strategies.** We're on Twitter and Facebook, and we're working toward preparing press releases when necessary. You'll hear more at the Plenary from Joe Marren (Buffalo State) and Phil Glick (UB). Also, we're introducing voting by clickers at this Plenary meeting; I guess we'll find out how tech-savvy we really are.
8. **Upcoming Events.** I want to remind you of three upcoming events sponsored in whole or in part by the UFS; you'll hear about each of these at the Plenary. A Graduate Research Symposium is being held at Empire State College in Saratoga Springs on March 7 to highlight graduate research from many of our campuses. The SUNY Undergraduate Research Symposium (SURC) this year will be held at two locations: SURC East at Suffolk County Community College on April 20, and SURC West at PSUNY Fredonia on April 21. Unfortunately these are the same dates as our Spring Plenary. Finally, I encourage you to come to the third SUNY Voices Conference April 27-28 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Suffern, NY. I'll discuss this in greater detail at the Plenary.

I believe this covers most of the activities that have occurred since my last contact with you. We will be able to expand on these and any other issues you wish to discuss during the Plenary meeting. I look forward to seeing you at Old Westbury.