DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 790 HE 029 637

AUTHOR	Burke, Joseph C.; And Others
TITLE	New Perspectives on System and Campus Roles in a Public Multi-Campus System.
INSTITUTION	State Univ. of New York, Albany. Office of the Chancellor.
REPORT NO	ISSN-1067-8662
PUB DATE	Sep 94
NOTE	40p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Office of the Chancellor, State University of New York, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Studies in Public Higher Education; n5 Sep 1994
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Change; *Administrative Organization; Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Evaluation; *Administrator Role; *Governance; Governing Boards; Higher Education; *Multicampus Colleges; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Public Colleges; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*State University of New York

ABSTRACT

Four papers address the changing roles of system administrators in multicampus public higher education systems such as the State University of New York (SUNY). In the first paper, by Joseph C. Burke, "Unity and Diversity: SUNY's Challenge Not Its Choice," the role of a public university system is defined as doing for its campuses only those functions that no single campus can, should, or would do: leading, allocating, advocating, protecting, evaluating, and (technological) linking. In the second paper, "What SUNY Should Do: Promote General Strength by Supporting Individual Strengths," (William R. Greiner) the system is asked to support individuality and diversity of the campuses, and individual campuses are told to direct efforts externally rather than wasting energy competing with each other. (A mission statement is appended to this paper.) Next, in "What Should the System Do? What Should the Campuses Do? One Trustee's View," (by Roderick G. W. Chu) the system is seen as a stewardship, focused mainly on the public served by the system. A new vision of excellence is envisioned, with each unit of the system defining its unique role. The fourth paper, by James R. Chen, is "System or Not? Governance and Faculty Voice at SUNY." This paper takes a critical look at the effects of decentralization in the neighboring state of New Jersey and, pointing to the successes of the SUNY system, argues instead for a strong federation that incorporates campus integrity and system leadership, plus increased flexibility. (CH)

STUDIES IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SYSTEM AND CAMPUS ROLES IN A PUBLIC MULTI-CAMPUS SYSTEM

Studies in Public Higher Education is published periodically by the Office of the Chancellor, State University of New York, State University Plaza, Albany, New York 12246. Telephone: (518) 443-5355.

ISSN 1067-8662

New Perspectives on System and Campus Roles in a Public Multi-Campus System

Unity and Diversity: SUNY's Challenge Not Its Choice

Joseph C. Burke
Interim Chancellor
State University of New York

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What SUNY Should Do: Promote General Strength by Supporting Individual Strengths

William R. Greiner
President
State University of New York at Buffalo

❖

What Should the System Do? What Should the Campuses Do? One Trustee's View

Roderick G. W. Chu
Trustee
State University of New York
Resident Partner
Andersen Consulting

❖

System or Not? Governance and Faculty Voice at SUNY

James R. Chen
President
State University Faculty Senate

Introduction

The respective roles and responsibilities of system administrations and campuses in public multi-campus systems of higher education have long been the subject of debate.

Campuses traditionally want the maximum degree of freedom and flexibility to manage their academic enterprise. Certainly, the rationale for such thinking is bolstered by present-day management strategies which emphasize that decision making should occur as close to the "product" as possible.

On the other hand, the demand by public higher education for a sizable share of a diminishing pool of public resources makes it ever more essential that public multi-campus systems deliver the maximum educational service — and find ways to measure the quality of the service they deliver.

In April 1994, Interim Chancellor Joseph C. Burke initiated a dialogue to explore these roles and responsibilities within State University of New York. Preliminary discussion occurred at the Chancellor's Forum, an informal annual retreat bringing together system Trustees, campus presidents, and key system administration staff members.

The four short papers in this volume address the newly emerging roles of system administrations and campuses during changing times. They represent the views of a system head, a system Trustee, a campus president, and a faculty member who is also head of the system faculty senate. We believe these papers will be of interest to other multi-campus systems of public education in elucidating a perennial issue with a contemporary focus.

APRIL 1994

Unity and Diversity: SUNY's Challenge Not Its Choice

❖ Joseph C. Burke

A public university system should do for all its campuses only those functions that no single campus could do, should do, or would do. In other words, a system should do for its colleges and universities what they should not, could not, and would not do for themselves.

The following responsibilities require system — or coordinated, collective action — because they cannot, should not, or would not be done by individual campuses:

❖ *Meeting State Needs*

No single campus *could* possibly meet the educational needs of all students in the state nor the research and service needs of the entire state and all of its major regions. Meeting these broad needs demands the coordinated, collective effort that only a university system can provide in an effective and efficient manner.

❖ *Ensuring Student Access*

No single campus *could* guarantee full access to all first-time and transfer students from every community in the state. Nor could it serve well this range of students with their wide diversity of academic backgrounds and program interests. And no group of autonomous campuses are likely to agree voluntarily to adjust their admission standards and curricula requirements to ensure full access. Again, a collective and coordinated effort is required, which only a system can effectively provide. Moreover, a system can provide full access while maintaining a diversity of institutions with differing student profiles. It can offer some units that are highly selective, others that are moderately competitive, and still others that are open admissions.

❖ *Setting Educational Missions*

No single campus *should* set its own educational mission or decide its own range and level of programs. If the determination of mission were left to each institution, SUNY might well have 60 doctoral campuses and no two-year colleges. Systems are essential to prevent "mission creep" and "program sprawl." In an age of tight budgets, when no campus can be all things to all students and clients, system constraints on mission and programs are essential and inevitable.

❖ *Championing Public Higher Education*

No single campus *could* comprehensively champion public higher education with every segment of the population in every area in the state. No single campus could claim to speak for every category of public institution: community colleges, technical colleges, comprehensive and specialized colleges, and health science and university centers. SUNY can, for it includes all of these types of institutions.

❖ *Advocating State Support*

No single campus *could* maximize financial support for all of public higher education, especially from the Legislature, where all politics are local. Surely, the combined efforts of 64 campuses in different areas of the state presenting and defending a single system budget is likely to produce more financial support for public higher education than the uncoordinated and conflicting efforts of many colleges and universities, which would naturally argue their own rather than the collective case.

❖ *Allocating Campus Budgets*

No single campus *should* allocate its own budget from the limited resources available to public higher education. Imagine a budget allocation system where each campus determines what it gets. Or better still, imagine the size of the total budget required to fund this allocation system. Equity in budget allocation among public colleges and universities of varying sizes and missions is not the only goal, for quality performance is surely a critical benchmark. But no budget system can survive that fails

to assure fairness to every campus or institutional type. A system allocation of campus budgets has the best chance of ensuring this fairness.

❖ *Determining Enrollment Levels*

No single campus *should* determine its own enrollment level, which could impact without consultation the enrollments of other public colleges and universities. Nor should a campus be allowed to alter without consultation its admission practices in ways that could affect access and quality in all of public higher education. Enrollment is much too important to all SUNY campuses to be left exclusively to individual campus choice. The system can assure the collective consultation and consideration required for determining both system and campus enrollment levels.

❖ *Protecting Against Political Intrusion*

No single campus *could* protect itself as well as a united system from political intrusion or undue public pressure. The system can serve as a buffer, because the united campuses and a system board of trustees can provide formidable opposition to such intrusion or pressure.

❖ *Assessing System and Campus Performance*

No single campus *could* assess the collective performance of a large number of public colleges and universities. And no single campus would always assess its own performance rigorously. Even if it did, such self-evaluation would lack credibility with the public and the public's representatives. Only the collective assessment of a system can provide the credibility, accountability, and fairness required for evaluating system and campus performance.

❖ *Providing Technological Links*

No single campus *could* provide a comprehensive telecommunication and computer system that links effectively and efficiently public colleges and universities with one another and with the databases and networks that are increasingly important

in an information society. A university system can provide these links most cost effectively.

Based on these responsibilities, university systems then should have the following roles:

- ***Lead***, by identifying state needs and system priorities and by setting systemwide goals, campus missions, and enrollment levels.

- ***Allocate,*** by distributing available funds in an equitable manner according to campus missions and performance on system goals.

- ***Advocate,*** by championing public and financial support for public higher education.

- ***Protect,*** by resisting political intrusion and undue public pressure on colleges and universities that would endanger academic freedom.

- ***Evaluate,*** by assessing system and campus performance in relation to mission and goals.

- ***Link,*** by connecting public colleges and universities to technology and worldwide sources of information.

When I say the above are system roles and responsibilities, I speak of collective decisions and not the unilateral actions of SUNY Trustees and system officers. Not one of the ten responsibilities or six roles listed above are the exclusive preserve of SUNY Trustees or system officials. System goals and campus enrollments are set, budgets are prepared and allocated, advocacy strategy and objectives are determined, evaluation plans and processes are devised, and technology networks are designed with broad input from a host of individuals and groups that collectively govern the State University System. Governance is a collective and collegial term in systems as on campuses. Trustees and system officers may have the final say, but the ultimate decisions have been shared and shaped by extensive input from presidents and senior campus officers collectively,

and in sectors and with faculty representatives and other constituent groups. We have to end the mistaken but common notion that "SUNY" or the "System" is only the Trustees or the system administration and not all of the campuses and constituencies. SUNY is everyone!

Despite this rational analysis about the need for systems in public higher education, I know all too well (having felt it myself) that in the heart of every president lies the yearning to be FREE — free from all restraints and regulations. (Presidents should also remember that the same yearning is felt by provosts and professors and deans and department heads.) Lurking in every system is the urge to revolt and secede from this troublesome union under the glorious banner of campus autonomy.

Reluctantly and reverently, it is time to bury once and for all the myth of total campus autonomy. The only organizations that are totally autonomous or self-governing are those that are totally self-supporting. The last time I looked, I found no public colleges or universities in that category. Public colleges and universities complain they should be free, because their state support has declined to only 30 to 40 percent of their total budgets. But the truth is that public higher education is much too important, as well as much too costly, to the state and society to be left to the separate determination of the administrators, faculty, and staff of individual colleges and universities. In an age when competitiveness in a global information economy depends on a highly educated work force and sophisticated research and service, no state is likely to let laissez faire determine the activities of its public colleges or universities. At a time when New York State spends over $5 billion annually on SUNY and CUNY, it is surely reasonable that the Governor, the Legislature, and the public should question what they are getting for that sizeable sum.

Given the importance and the cost of public higher education, as well as the needs of other worthwhile services that compete for public funds, states have insisted on increased

public accountability. This insistence explains the trend toward public university systems.

Contrary to popular belief — especially on SUNY campuses — multi-campus university systems are the rule, not the rarity, in public higher education. No less than 41 of the 50 states have organized their public colleges and universities into multi-campus systems. Seven out of 10 students currently enrolled in public higher education are in such systems.

If systems are necessary or at least inevitable, the real question for us in State University is what kind of system do we need and want — recognizing that these two requirements may be different and also that different groups may have different answers. All too often, the search for answers to this question jumps immediately to the issue of *centralization* versus *decentralization*. Posing this simplistic dichotomy ignores the complexity of goals and governance in public higher education, which reflects a complicated compound of internal desires and external demands. It smacks of H. L. Mencken's quip that "for every complex problem there is a simple solution that's wrong!" It offers an either/or approach that is self-defeating, for it fails to satisfy the dual requirements of public accountability and campus autonomy.

The challenge for SUNY, as for all large, multi-unit organizations — whether university systems or business corporations — is how to reconcile accountability and autonomy, how to make the most out of their unity and their diversity. Diversity in SUNY is useless unless its campuses have the autonomy required to pursue their different missions; and unity is worthless unless the system can assure the accountability for achieving its collective purposes. Autonomy is necessary to encourage creativity and innovation on the campuses; and accountability is required to ensure coordination and cooperation in the system.

The need for autonomy and diversity at the campus level is based on good management practice and on the unusual nature

of the academic enterprise. First, good management these days recognizes the need to delegate decision making to the professionals who are closest to, and responsible for, the design and delivery of programs and services. Second, colleges and universities deliver a myriad of specialized programs and services to a wide diversity of clients on campus, in the community, and at times throughout the state, the nation, and the world. They are staffed by highly educated professors and professionals working in a wide range of specialized disciplines that are beyond the understanding of even the most liberally educated system officers and trustees.

Clearly the size and diversity of SUNY make the delegation of operational authority to the campuses both essential and inevitable. Detailed and uniform rules and regulations issued from Albany can never fit the diverse educational missions of community colleges, colleges of technology, specialized and university colleges, and health science and university centers. Nor can they meet the diverse needs of different campuses within those sectors.

The Board of Trustees and the system administration, supported by the Governor and the Legislature, recognized this reality in the 1985 Flexibility Legislation. This law delegated to SUNY campuses increased authority over budgets, personnel, and purchases to assist them in pursuing their different missions and to allow them to respond in unique ways to the changing needs of their students and their regions. Legislation in the last two years has removed the last vestiges of position control, and the Comptroller has raised the dollar threshold on purchases to $50,000, a level that includes over 80 percent of campus transactions.

SUNY campuses already possess considerable autonomy and authority over budgets, revenues, personnel hiring, position classification, and purchasing. They determine largely who to teach, what to teach, and how to teach and design and develop

their research and service programs. They decide within the broadest possible guidelines who to hire, what to pay, and how to organize this work force. Within the constraints of available funds, they decide what to buy and when to buy supplies and equipment. In an organization driven by the mission of teaching, research, and service, the campuses have, as they should, the lion's share of the authority that influences their primary purposes.

The last ten years has seen a major shift in authority from the state government and system administration to SUNY campuses. The growing maturity of the campuses and the delegated authority under flexibility legislation has transformed the SUNY System by changing its character from a single unified university with constituent campuses into a single university system composed of colleges and universities that operate with considerable autonomy.

Increased autonomy from detailed regulation by the state and the system demands a different means of ensuring accountability to replace direct control of the operations of SUNY colleges and universities through centralized rules and regulations. SUNY must adopt new means of assuring accountability that each of its colleges and universities is fulfilling its assigned mission and that the system is meeting state needs. Campus officials must recognize that the price for increased autonomy is demonstrated accountability for the performance of the system and each of its campuses. The best way for SUNY to link accountability with autonomy is to follow the suggestion of Peters and Waterman in the popular book, *In Search of Excellence*. These authors argued that the most successful multi-unit corporations delegated an astonishing amount of autonomy to operating units while strengthening accountability for corporate goals. They were "tight" on goals and evaluation of results and "loose" on the "means" of achieving them. They funded units not for equity, but for performance.

SUNY's colleges and universities have done well with the delegation of authority. They have met one of the toughest tests of this increased freedom and flexibility by using it to take large budget cuts in ways that damaged least the quality and accessibility of their programs and services. Having obtained greatly increased authority over their state support and having used it well, many campuses want greater freedom to sell their programs and services in entrepreneurial ways without undue controls or charges from the system or the state. Many also believe their different missions and circumstances call for different fees and differential tuition, which they should have a larger say in setting. Leaders from some campuses want more diversity and flexibility in union agreements that could tailor the settlements to the mutual needs of managers and faculty on different types of campuses. They argue that colleges and universities are unique organizations that need different rules and regulations from other state agencies. It is time for the system, and where necessary the state, to explore each of these suggestions for additional campus autonomy with an open mind and with the sole test of whether they can be made compatible with system accountability, system diversity, and system productivity.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, delegation of more authority to campuses is not always the ally of campus diversity. It depends on how the increased delegation is used and how it impacts other campuses. Enrollment offers a good example. Delegating more authority to campuses over fees and funds from students could lead to destructive competition in recruitment and enrollment and possibly to a decline in diversity if some campuses lose their viability and others alter their student profiles to obtain additional tuition income. At the same time, the system should ensure that it maintains access and serves an increasing share of New Yorkers who want higher education. How can the system balance the need to maintain a diversity of campus types while encouraging campus entrepreneurialism? Too much competition could distress campuses, too little could

quest for equity has produced homogeneity and reduced diversity within the system. The benchmarks do try to reflect diverse campus missions by including enrollment by program and level as their dominant element.

My concern with SUNY's benchmark system — along with the conventional allocation system in higher education — is that nearly all of the elements are inputs and that outcomes or results are hardly considered. We say that quality should count for more than quantity in judging higher education, but the current benchmark formula of resource distribution is based almost exclusively on quantitative inputs rather than qualitative outcomes. The number of students enrolled as of the third week each fall determines most of the funding. Theoretically, all of the students could drop out after the third week and a campus would not lose resources, provided it recruited the same number of students the following fall.

The benchmark method says nothing about the percentage of students admitted who graduated, their time-to-degree, the knowledge and skills they acquired, the jobs and careers they entered, or whether their major was in a critical field of state need. Surely, SUNY's allocation formula should include some consideration of these quality outcomes. The funding formula should always allocate most resources to support workload, but surely some funds should go to encourage better performance and results.

It is time to rethink much of what we do in SUNY, but it must be done systematically. We should not tinker in ad hoc fashion with one element or another in the funding scheme, fee setting, tuition level, or enrollment planning without considering how that potential action might reverberate throughout the system, impacting in unforeseen ways on our colleges and universities. This is not a plea for constraint and control but for caution and care that the drive for diversity does not damage our unity or that the urge for unity does not destroy our diversity.

As the title "university" suggests, higher education requires both unity and diversity. Both elements are especially essential in a university system. SUNY need not — it should not, it must not — choose between unity and diversity. For SUNY, diversity and unity present a challenge, not a choice. Our challenge is to find that delicate balance between these two essential elements that best meets our needs and those of the state and students we serve. Though the balance will change with changing times, in SUNY as in our states, unity and diversity should remain now and forever one and inseparable.

APRIL 1994

What SUNY Should Do: Promote General Strength by Supporting Individual Strength

❖ William R. Greiner

This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.
Ralph Waldo Emerson — "The American Scholar" (1837)

This is a very special time for SUNY. It is a difficult time, but also a time of great opportunity. It is preeminently a time for reflection — a useful metaphor, since we now exist, in a manner of speaking, between visions. We should use the opportunity afforded by this time to further the process of shaping this vision for SUNY and for SUNY's role in New York, which our friend and colleague D. Bruce Johnstone started and led.

Now, as Interim Chancellor Burke has aptly reminded us, it is fitting, even "critical," for State University to "revisit its goals and sub-goals in *SUNY 2000* and determine its priorities in the future prior to looking at the characteristics that it really wants in a new chancellor." This is a time to appraise ourselves; discuss what we see; and attempt to forge some common understanding about what SUNY is and should be.

In this short paper, I will articulate some general observations about campus roles, attitudes, and behaviors. I will leave to future dialogue any attempt to give more concrete examples and illustrations of these general observations and principles. My reason for taking this relatively abstract approach lies in my first general observation about SUNY and the roles of campuses in SUNY, to wit:

SUNY is so large and so diverse a federation of institutions that there are very few general observations one can make about campus roles in SUNY, except at a high level of abstraction.

We are bound together by three great commonalities: a commitment and obligation to certain academic principles and activities; a commitment and obligation to certain public service principles and activities; and a commitment and obligation to certain levels of excellence in all that we do. (See Title 1, Section 8, § 351 of the New York State Education Law, page 23.) This much said, we are less a system of likes than a federation of unlikes, loosely bound together by some special family ties.

Within our fundamental shared mission, "to learn...to search...to serve," for instance, we differ extraordinarily in terms of governance and sources of funding. We are community colleges, funded through a state base-aid formula plus our students' tuition plus local sponsorship, and with local governance derived largely from our sponsoring communities. We are statutory campuses at Cornell and Alfred, funded by state appropriation and by our students' tuition (mostly held and managed at home), and governed both by our local institutional boards of trustees and the SUNY Trustees. Or we are state-operated campuses, with overarching responsibility to the State University Board of Trustees, guidance from our own local college councils, and with our state appropriations derived primarily from taxes and tuition.

Within the state-operated sector, our campuses differ by our academic missions, the constituencies we serve, and the range of expectations we meet. We are colleges of agriculture and technology, focused, historically, on the same kinds of practical service and contributions that have anchored the American land-grant tradition. We are university colleges, emphasizing the liberal arts undergraduate tradition. We are university centers, learning, teaching, creating, and serving in ways that span and combine the academic disciplines and the professions, encompassing all levels from associate's degree programs to postdoctoral study. We are health sciences centers where clinicians train and treat and where biomedical science is learned and advanced. We are specialized colleges that serve as modern-day guild houses for some very advanced trades, crafts, and professions.

In terms of student enrollments, the largest among us is a hundred times the size of the smallest, and each of us has a special history that distinguishes us, usually very much so, from all the other members of our SUNY family. And, perhaps most important for a statewide alliance of institutions shaped by their own home communities, we differ vastly in terms of the people and places we serve.

I would argue, in fact, that it is our diversity which is our defining characteristic. Because we are so diverse, there is no other "system" of higher education in the United States quite like us. We should manage ourselves, both as campuses and as a "system," with that fact always in mind. And we should also remember that this diversity, unparalleled anywhere else, constitutes State University's unique and characteristic strength. A collective effort as richly varied as ours is the key to fulfilling the array of expectations set before a modern university, as enumerated by Jacques Barzun and expanded upon by Dr. Johnstone in his introduction to *SUNY 2000: A Vision for the New Century:*

> *"To turn out scientists and engineers, foster international understanding, provide a home for the arts, satisfy divergent tastes in architecture and sexual morals, cure cancer, recast the penal code, and train equally for the professions and for a life of cultured contentment in the coming Era of Leisure."...to play the major transitional role for young people into adulthood; to teach what high schools have failed to teach; to advance the status of minorities; to uphold technological supremacy for the advantage of American industry, agriculture, defense, and medicine; to upgrade the skills of the American worker; and to entertain the nation through the spectacle of intercollegiate athletic competition.*

We in SUNY do all these things; we lead in many of them; and we undertake them so that their maximum benefits may accrue to our fellow New Yorkers. We share a crucial mission. Nonetheless, in most respects, we are very, very different institutions.

To achieve in full the potential for the State of New York that we together represent, we in SUNY must dedicate ourselves to recognizing and nurturing our diversity. We must embrace rather than efface our differences, and use them to full advantage. To whatever extent we are all pressed toward one system standard, we are all driven back from the frontiers that our diversity could otherwise enable us to open.

A second observation:

> **Virtually all of the so-called "deliverables" that New York State and the nation expect from SUNY — the earned degrees, the advances in research and scholarship, the teaching and training, the public service and community service — come from the campuses.**

From this fact must flow both SUNY's "organizational culture" and a great many of our behaviors. The organizational culture I have in mind is one that most of us know from our own campuses. Campus presidents and vice presidents do not deliver the "deliverables"; rather than teach, research, serve, fund, or fix, campus officers facilitate. Bearing in mind Thomas Jefferson's epigram in his *Autobiography* — "Were we directed from Washington when to sow, & when to reap, we should soon want bread" — campus officers don't direct what syllabus to teach, what presentation technologies to use, what hypothesis to test in a lab, what agencies to place interns in, what account to bill.

Rather, campus officers encourage academic units and their faculty to articulate their own missions and priorities, generate more and more of their own support, and develop their own best means of serving their students and other constituents — all within the framework of general institutional goals and objectives. These institutional goals and objectives should follow from our institutional histories, locations, local and state needs, and natural roles, all as prescribed in statements of mis-

sion crafted in collaboration with central office and approved by our Trustees and councils.

At the University at Buffalo we describe this approach as "coherent decentralization," a phrase coined by Provost Aaron Bloch. Through this approach we expect to promote creativity, innovation, and assertive and entrepreneurial development of and by faculty and staff. We define the campus administration's primary job less as management and more as guidance and leadership. In this framework we campus officers serve as advocates, ambassadors, and resources for the talented, dedicated people who deliver the deliverables, and we mutually reinforce each other's efforts.

If we pursue this leadership style on our campuses, might that effort help to redefine our relationships within SUNY and with central office? I think so. This approach defines our academic units, our schools and departments, and our faculty and students as the clients of our campus administrations. So too we should ask SUNY's central administration to see the campuses as clients for whom the central office's primary roles must be facilitation, guidance, leadership, and advocacy. As clients, the campuses would help the central office choose more discretely and effectively the kinds of system services to be provided for the campuses, according to needs and priorities defined by the campus clientele. Such a model of mutual decision-making, in my judgment, offers far greater possibilities for all concerned than does the historical New York model in which central offices of agencies are more patrons than leaders.

This is no new or greatly radical strategy. Two and a half years ago, Chancellor Johnstone wrote:

> *SUNY is not a university in the sense of a single institution, but a university system — of substantially autonomous campuses with their own histories, strengths and weaknesses, aspirations and plans. The first phase [of SUNY 2000] sets forth a vision...and out-*

> *lines certain broad overarching goals that are truly system goals.*
>
> *...In the second — really the more important — phase, we will ask the campuses to tell us how they see this next decade and to respond to Phase I's overarching goals with their own proposals. The purpose of this, the real culmination of* SUNY 2000, *should be a set of campus plans reflecting the Trustees' vision of SUNY, but in the context of the special identities and mission of individual campuses, where SUNY's teaching, research, and service actually take place.*

This was and is a wise vision, well developed by the Chancellor and Chairman and Board of Trustees; it has been roundly applauded throughout the system, and most of us have internalized at our campuses, in our own ways, the *SUNY 2000* goals set forth in the first phase.

In order for this vision to be implemented, however, there is a set of corollaries which campus presidents must accept. That is, campuses will have to accept greater accountability for the realization of goals, objectives, and outcomes defined by and with central officers and the Trustees, in campus statements of mission, and in system plans such as *SUNY 2000.* Developing campus statements of mission should be one of the most significant interactions that the campuses and their officers have with SUNY's central officers and Trustees. And providing and maintaining oversight to assure realization of campus missions, goals, objectives, and outcomes should be the chief management activity of SUNY's central officers.

In this context, campuses would have the major responsibility for management in the SUNY system and decide how best to deliver the deliverables. Given such responsibility, it should be up to the campuses to deal with small resource issues, individual personnel matters, and other details of local management. At the same time, campuses should respect the central officers'

and Trustees' responsibility for macro-issues of leadership and advocacy and should support them in these tasks. In sum, we should not ask the central officers for anything small. We should ask the central officers and Trustees to work with us, help us, and lead us on the big issues facing State University.

Final general observation:

> **Our competition should not be primarily each other; it should not be primarily internal to SUNY. Our competition is not especially or exclusively internal to New York State. Our competition should largely be external to SUNY and, in some cases, to New York State.**

The University at Buffalo, the Colleges at Buffalo, Fredonia, and Geneseo, and Niagara County Community College: we all serve the same region, but seek to attract different but complementary student clienteles. The Universities at Buffalo, Stony Brook, Binghamton, and Albany: we all serve similar student clienteles and seek to ensure a full range of opportunity for these clients throughout the state. **But we have spent entirely too much time and energy worrying about how to divide up among ourselves a pie of some conceptually fixed size, whether that pie be state appropriation or the population of New York high school graduates. Instead, we should be focusing our attention on how to get our respective campus fingers into the other, bigger pies that SUNY can and should have a share of.**

For example, state appropriation is but one source of funding. In seeking to add to our resource base, we must aggressively and creatively develop that base. Yes, let's try to get a higher priority for the allocation of state tax dollars to SUNY, but let's also be willing to remove impediments to generating additional support from other funding sources that range from tuition to sponsored programs to philanthropy. Let's be entrepreneurial and encourage entrepreneurialism.

Let's recognize that tens of thousands of New Yorkers leave New York and go elsewhere for higher education — not just to elite private institutions, but to public institutions and not-so-elite private institutions in other states. Let's aggressively organize to decrease that export market. Let's also be willing to explore the possibility that, as is the case in other states, it may be very much in New York State's interest to import some students, especially highly talented students. As we do our job better and better, such students, who may stay in New York after graduation, will be willing to pay full-cost tuition for the privilege of attending a SUNY institution.

In sum, let's spend a lot more effort on expanding our opportunities; let's spend a lot less on comparing ourselves to ourselves and attempting to regulate competition among ourselves; let's work to be more competitive with our real competition. SUNY's diversity is in all likelihood our best competitive edge overall: no other university or university system can match the array of resources, partners, and opportunities available to each of the campuses within our federation.

This fact may also be an invaluable competitive edge for every one of us individually. To the extent that we collaborate with our colleague campuses, all of us can both maximize our talents and resources and get a very special "leg up" on the institutions *beyond* SUNY which are the primary competitors in each of our sectors. External competition ups the ante, raises the bar; internal collaboration makes us more competitive. Such collaboration, moreover, must be part of a larger redefinition of SUNY's overall organizational culture, one in which we clearly differentiate and foster our campuses' individual missions and strengths, then combine them to best advantage so that we can maximize the wealth of opportunities and resources that we together represent.

And, perhaps most important, each one of our campuses, regardless of mission or sector, must undertake and commit to the transformation to which we are asking SUNY to commit;

just as we support more leadership from the central office, we must also, through increased local management flexibility, demonstrate more leadership on each campus. **Every one of our campuses must both assume greater responsibility for management and accept greater accountability for management.** Each campus must carefully identify its primary clients and the "products" that they most demand, then focus on meeting that demand with the highest possible quality of teaching, learning, and service. And each campus must rely on innovative, cross-sector, cross-disciplinary collaborations — both within its own academic community and across the borders of the communities and constituencies that are its primary clientele — to make the most of its strengths, to become more competitive among its peer institutions beyond SUNY.

By seeing to it that each of our campuses is as strong, as competitive, as creative, and as committed as we can and must be, we truly will achieve what Chancellor Johnstone described as the "overall" goal of *SUNY 2000* — "a whole that is more than the sum of SUNY's 64 parts."

Diversity in Comprehensiveness:
The Mission of State University

State Education Law
(Title 1, Article 8, § 351)

§ 351. State university mission

The mission of the state university system shall be 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 including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary. **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. [*emphasis added*] In fulfilling this mission, the state university shall exercise care to develop and maintain a balance of its human and physical resources that:

a. recognizes the fundamental role of its responsibilities in undergraduate education and provides a full range of graduate and professional education that reflects the opportunity for individual choice and the needs of society;

b. establishes tuition which most effectively promotes the university's access goals;

c. encourages and facilitates basic and applied research for the purpose of the creation and dissemination of knowledge vital for continued human, scientific, technological and economic advancement;

d. strengthens its educational and research programs in the health sciences through the provision of high quality health care at its hospitals, clinics and related programs;

e. shares the expertise of the state university with the business, agricultural, governmental, labor and nonprofit sectors of the state through a program of public service for the purpose of enhancing the well-being of the people of the state of New York and in protecting our environmental and marine resources;

f. promotes appropriate program articulation between its state-operated institutions and its community colleges as well as encourages regional networks and cooperative relationships with other educational and cultural institutions for the purpose of better fulfilling its mission of education, research and service.

(Added L.1948, c. 698, § 3; amended L.1985, c. 552, § 2.)

Historical Note

1985 Amendment. L.1985, c. 552, § 2, eff. Apr. 1, 1986, in catchline substituted "State university mission" for "General provisions"; added the opening par. and subds. a to f; and omitted former subds. 1 and 2 which related to facilities comprising the state university system, and formulation of plans and recommendations under this article, respectively.

Effective Date. Section effective July 1, 1948, pursuant to L.1948, c. 698, § 8.

APRIL 1994

What Should the System Do? What Should the Campuses Do? One Trustee's View

◆ Roderick G. W. Chu

While the Trustees have regular opportunities to deal with each other and with SUNY system officers, I believe most of us have all too infrequent opportunities to get to know our presidents.

Conversely, while all of us have some ideas as to the roles and responsibilities of campus presidents, I think few of us understand what system Trustees do and what their concerns are. What I believe will be beneficial is greater interaction and exchange among the Presidents, Trustees, and System Administration.

What Should the System/Campuses Do?

I am struck by the "violent agreement" in which Interim Chancellor Joseph C. Burke and University at Buffalo President William R. Greiner find themselves. It appears that there is little disagreement between what they have advocated:

- Productivity and accountability
- Outcomes and assessment
- Campus driven missions and priorities
- Central services
- System vision and leadership
- Unity and diversity
- Focusing on increasing the size of our pie, rather than battling over how to slice it up

Indeed, I find myself in "violent agreement" with much of what they say — somewhat surprising for me as a self-described gadfly on the Board. The extent of this apparent agreement may be due to the erudite manner in which learned individuals express themselves. On the other hand, it may be due to the general, summary level of their remarks, for as we know, the devil is in the details.

So let me not jeopardize my reputation for being provocative and get into a few of these details.

First, let me pick at a couple of points they articulated.

President Greiner asks that "the central office and the chancellor should work for the campuses and the Trustees, just as the campus presidents work for the students, staff, and faculty on their campuses." I think he may be a little too simplistic in this wish. All of us have seen the recent push in corporate America for Total Quality Management and the need to focus on meeting customer expectations.

Although I have heard complaints from some presidents that some of our campuses are taking less than a customer view of their responsibilities, I think we have to recognize that both academia and government are somewhat more complex than business, which has well-defined customers. This is why I say those of us in government and academe should talk of our "stakeholders," rather than our customers.

President Greiner believes campuses should be viewed as "clients" by System Administration. This is fine, considering campuses as one type of stakeholder.

But I would caution against regarding the Trustees as "customers" or "clients." Trustees should be viewed as representatives of the "owners." As stewards, Trustees should look to maximize the return on our owners' investments, to press our institutions to change their focus from internal concerns and instead to focus on the public we serve — to adopt what we at Andersen Consulting call a "citizen-centered" view.

Also, while I agree with Interim Chancellor Burke's view of the roles a university system should play, let me disagree with the premise that the ten responsibilities he cited naturally require a system. We need look only next door to New Jersey and Governor Whitman's plan to eliminate that state's central university system office: the Department of Higher Education. Indeed, I was struck by comments in *The New York Times* article of April 12th and how they might apply just as readily to SUNY. Just consider the headline: "NJ College Officials [referring to campus presidents] Hail Demise of Higher Education Department. "

Now this is of some concern to me as a SUNY Trustee. After all, if you don't need a system university administration, you certainly don't need a system Board of Trustees. And this fact makes me to recall not Mencken or Socrates, but rather the immortal words of Mel Brooks, playing the governor in his film, *Blazing Saddles*: "Gentlemen, we've got to protect our phony baloney job here!"

While we might all agree that Dr. Burke's analysis is correct, political realities require us to examine the role of our state university system. But rather than adopting a reactive strategy, groping to protect our positions, I advocate being proactive — to justify the structure and investment in our state university system through the force of our collective vision and achievements.

A New SUNY Vision

Let me attempt to get into the devil of the details by proposing a systemwide vision consistent with the principles Interim Chancellor Burke and President Greiner have advocated and the business lessons which Board of Trustees Chairman Frederic V. Salerno has introduced.

Simply, I believe the SUNY System should be leading a pursuit of excellence, rather than administering to a consistent level of mediocrity — that we become a system of 64 "Centers of

Excellence" rather than each of our units trying to be all things to all of our stakeholders.

Striving for consistent mediocrity is a losing strategy. I recall Emerson's classic line: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines." [Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," *Essays: First Series,* 1841.]

As a management consultant, the challenge I see before us is determining the competitive advantage we should be able to derive from being "the largest university system in the world" — the promise of synergy which former Chancellor D. Bruce Johnstone saw in *SUNY 2000: A Vision for the New Century.*

We are missing a big bet if we think it is good enough to be an anarchistic agglomeration of 64 independent units. What would distinguish us from New Jersey? Our size — our diversity, our resources — should be a source of competitive advantage. We must be viewed as an asset rather than as a drain on public resources.

Reinventing higher education: achieving both comprehensive excellence and individual excellence by applying distance learning to exploit the diversity and resources of the greatest university system — "in the greatest state in the greatest nation in the only world we know." [Mario M. Cuomo, Inaugural Address, January 1983.]

Americans love winners. The only strategy which can ensure public support is to build a system of 64 winners. This can be an ennobling vision under which each of our campuses identifies its strengths and helps define its own role in paying back the investment of the owners of the SUNY system — a vision in which no SUNY campus need apologize to anyone; that each, through strong local management and a commitment to our system, will "be all that you can be."

The debate shouldn't be on whether we are a system of 29 or 64 campuses. Rather, we should be celebrating and exploiting the richness of SUNY together with the private college and university resources in our state as part of an even greater whole. And indeed, why should we be constrained by state lines?

Shared Vision

In closing, I note that change is never successfully achieved from the top down. Vision and leadership must be joined by a sharing of that vision by all stakeholders. Stanford's Donald Kennedy pointed this out well in a wonderful paper in the Fall 1993 issue of *Daedalus.*

But Virginia Woolf put it more simply: "Masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice." [Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* 1929]

Alas, I don't think we have many years. The quick actions in New Jersey highlight the potential for unexpected change in academia that has already been experienced in business by giants such as U. S. Steel, General Motors, and IBM, and in the public sector with the fall of entire governments in Eastern and Central Europe.

But perhaps, with the strong foundations of *SUNY 2000* and this Chancellor's Forum, we can accelerate our achievements to meet the challenge.

APRIL 1994

System or Not? Governance and Faculty Voice at SUNY

❖ James R. Chen

New Yorkers usually don't take their cue from the folks over in Jersey, but this past July when Governor Christine T. Whitman signed into law a measure disbanding New Jersey's Board of Higher Education, system officials in neighboring states and across the nation took notice. To some this was a radical act of decentralization. In fact, such decentralization may be illusory, because real power will reside in the New Jersey state government and not on the campuses.

Although Governor Whitman says her plan will provide more autonomy for individual campuses, skeptics fear that it may lead to the opposite. Each campus will now submit its budget directly to the state treasurer, making that agent the *de facto* chancellor of higher education. The governor will assume broad policy-making powers. A commission she appoints will advise on long-range goals and a council of presidents from all public and private institutions in the state will oversee academic programs.

Of what significance are these governance changes to New York and its State University, to its faculty, campus and system administrators, and trustees? Where is SUNY on the issue of campus autonomy versus system control? What is the role of the university-wide faculty voice, the University Faculty Senate, in these matters? Are faculty heard at the system level or should we follow the lead of some of our most well-known sports teams and move to Jersey?

I am going to argue that SUNY, in contrast with the New Jersey experience, must remain a system, albeit on a federation model, and that faculty voice as currently embodied in the University Faculty Senate is necessary to the health of the system.

New York State Government and University Governance

One lesson of the recent events in New Jersey is the sharp reminder that the governor of New York is the single most important official with respect to SUNY's resources and governmental relations. The governor formulates general fiscal policies that influence the university's budget, which is now $5.0 billion. His personal convictions at times can be of greater consequence to the university than his formal power to appoint trustees. Governor Mario M. Cuomo is in a commanding position to affect the operation and activities of the university. No matter the outcome of the November election, the power and influence of the Executive Chamber is clear.

Governor Cuomo's meetings with the University Faculty Senate in the past two years have highlighted opportunities for dialogue on many crucial issues facing public education in the state. The issues include funds for undergraduate and graduate research and high tech projects, Excelsior Schools, differential tuition among campus types, liberal arts education and values, and the relation between higher education and the economy. The governor and his staff have listened, and they have responded to many of the concerns as expressed by the University Faculty Senate.

Some observers would hold that the Executive, the Legislature, and their administrative staffs are "outside" the governance structure of the university. While formally so, in reality, state officials and their staffs influence many critical decisions affecting fiscal matters and programs. As such, they are a very real and vital part of the university's governance structure. This circumstance may not be widely known on the campuses because day-to-day activities in Albany are not generally reported in the local press.

In recent years the University Faculty Senate has made a point of inviting the state legislative higher education committee chairs to address the SUNY faculty. We hear repeatedly that legis-

lators are reluctant to vote for proposals that lack unified support. All SUNY constituencies, we are told, "must sing from the same page"; moreover, we must do this persistently. Some legislators still see SUNY as an upstate university with little connection to New York City and Long Island. In fact, approximately 34 percent of SUNY students originate from downstate, with Suffolk county contributing the largest number in the state. Six SUNY institutions, including several of the largest, are on Long Island: Empire State, Farmingdale, Nassau, Old Westbury, Stony Brook, and Suffolk.

Campus Autonomy Versus System Control

The decisive issues in New Jersey were the relationship between the governor and the chancellor and the delicate balance between campus autonomy and system control. Faced with charges of excessive regulation and coercion, the Board of Higher Education in that state found itself isolated and consequently weakened. One campus executive complained that "the board emphasized . . . compliance with its authority rather than generating a shared vision and a plan for higher education statewide."

Nominally, the New York Board of Regents is the closest corresponding governance body in this state to the New Jersey Board of Higher Education. Regarding system and campus higher education issues, however, SUNY's system administration and Board of Trustees carry out many functions similar to those formerly performed by the now-defunct New Jersey Board.

How has governance in the SUNY system fared?

❖ *System Vision*

To the system's credit, the drafting and pursuit of the goals described in *SUNY 2000: A Vision for the New Century* represent a major unifying achievement. Campus and system executives, the University Faculty Senate, and staff all participated in setting the five overarching goals for the university: maintaining access, building undergraduate excellence, strengthening graduate edu-

cation and research, meeting state needs, and improving management and accountability. Equally important, SUNY 2000 phase II has begun to integrate the missions of individual campuses with the five goals of the system.

❖ *Campus Flexibility*

With the vision well defined, SUNY system administrators appear to be moving toward greater decentralization and increased campus autonomy within the system. This movement was confirmed by the recognition that campus leadership knew best how to absorb the $200 million budget cuts of the late '80s and early '90s. The system administration has put its money (or lack of it) where much of its strength is — directly on the campuses. Under the 1985 flexibility legislation and the 1993 revisions, campuses now have wide discretion in transferring funds, procuring contracts, and determining the number of positions to support with available funds. Furthermore, they have demonstrated responsibility, wisdom, and restraint with the additional authority the Legislature granted to SUNY.

Flexibility has helped the university to sort out what can best be done on the campuses, where learning takes place and services are delivered. Control of the educational processes by distant system executives or state government officials leads to delays, cost inefficiencies, and overall lower productivity. Flexibility has also focussed attention on the crucial and necessary functions that system administrators play, from handling construction budgets, purchasing, accounting, and legal issues, coordinating legislative advocacy efforts, providing guidance on academic policy and operation of university-wide significance, and meeting state needs and mandates to setting a high-principled vision.

Yet, the goals of SUNY 2000 are already pressing the limits of this expanded flexibility. Entirely new environments for health care, economic development, and financial management have created opportunities and challenges that were not even conceived of when the flexibility legislation was introduced in

1985. The campuses need more flexibility to explore entrepreneurial activities with minimum required state and system charges. SUNY's hospitals and health science centers are also in need of flexibility that would allow them to compete effectively in the current health care environment. In addition, flexibility in the areas of academic offerings, educational technology, and enrollment planning needs to be further examined.

❖ ***Access Versus Quality***

An important analogue to the campus autonomy issue rages in the debate whether to maintain access or preserve quality in lean economic times. SUNY Trustees and system administrators bear the responsibility of upholding the university's founding principle of access to all New Yorkers. In 1784 when the New York Board of Regents was established to oversee all elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education in the state, postsecondary education was only selectively available. During the following two centuries higher education was decidedly elitist and private. SUNY's establishment in 1948 provided access where little was available to many less fortunate citizens in the more restrictive, more expensive private institutions.

Is open access viable in the very real battleground of bareboned budgets? Can we promise access to a quality education? When budget cuts in SUNY occurred, campus administrators and faculty did well to preserve the quality of their academic offerings and the integrity of their institutions with the guidance of SUNY system administrators and the use of flexibility prerogatives. Indeed, campus administrators and faculty knew what had to be done to protect quality, without which access is meaningless. In all this, the faculty voice was critical to the process of balancing quality and access at both campus and system levels.

❖ ***Harmony Versus Competitive Environment***

A related issue also fuels the system versus campus autonomy debate. System administrators strive for harmony among member institutions, at least within campus types. Some campus administrators and faculty, on the other hand, believe their own

institutions are more attractive to prospective students, and they lobby for tuition and enrollment policies based on market forces. For these administrators and faculty, the system, by encouraging equality among campuses, restricts individual campus development. Other campus administrators and faculty argue that competition has its price, some of which they are unwilling to pay. In a market-driven, "free for all" environment, they claim, attention to state needs and priorities will suffer. As market forces and flexibility contribute to differentiation among campuses, I believe we can at the same time help to maintain our focus on state needs, if there is a coherent faculty voice at the campus and system levels.

Role of the University-Wide Faculty Voice

The University Faculty Senate is designated in the Board of Trustees policies as "the official agency through which the university faculty engages in the governance of the university. The Senate shall be concerned with effective educational policies and other professional matters within the university" [Article VII, Title A, §2].

This article legally vests the University Faculty Senate with the authority to participate in university governance. Beyond this, there also exists an established mechanism for submitting formal faculty resolutions on university-wide issues to the chancellor and Trustees.

Faculty are by tradition used to operating in a collegial and participatory environment. This mode of participation is evident in their classrooms, committees, and professional associations. The model for university faculty governance is "participatory," which contrasts with the Trustees' "corporate" model. Board policies are legitimized by legal statutes that place the ultimate governance decisions in the hands of the Trustees. This is not to say that faculty lack substantive authority or influence. To the contrary, although faculty play an advisory role in system governance, in effect they share power since important policy decisions usually cannot be implemented without their approval.

Trustees and, to a lesser extent, system administrators are at a distance from the local atmosphere of a campus, and campus faculty rarely meet with system executives. The University Faculty Senate is positioned to bridge this gap and has provided important opportunities for Trustees, system administrators, and faculty to meet on a campus and share their perspectives on critical issues.

The Future

The next two years will be crucial for public higher education in New York. Legislators have spent last year's budget surplus on 1994 election year items. Little remains for discretionary use and growth. Storm clouds have already begun to gather on the horizon. Many predict a bleak budget for 1995. Now is the time for faculty, campus and system administrators, and Trustees to come together to agree on programs and strategies.

We have already started in this effort. For the past three years the chancellor has hosted the fall assembly of the University Faculty Senate at State University Plaza, where his staff is readily accessible. This year Frederic V. Salerno, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, will address the faculty. He will discuss the impact of technology on teaching and learning. Interim Chancellor Joseph C. Burke and Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Management William H. Anslow now meet with the leadership of the University Faculty Senate to discuss budget initiatives early in the planning stages. All this attests to the value of faculty voice at the system level.

During the first half of this century, the single campus entity, with its own board, president, and faculty, was the rule. In the last fifty years, university systems have proliferated and power has shifted from the campus to the system level. Do the events in New Jersey signal a return to earlier ways? Will local control, weaker system guidance, and more governmental power be the new order of the day for higher education?

What options are open to the new SUNY chancellor? The chancellor's choices will determine in large part the future configuration of system governance in the university. My preference is for a strong SUNY federation, which incorporates campus integrity *and* system leadership. With increased flexibility and a strong faculty voice, we should continue to refine what can be done best on the campuses and at the system level. The campuses will benefit from additional flexibility to explore more creative delivery of educational services. At the same time the system administration must articulate a sense of common purpose regarding the higher education needs of each and every citizen in the state. The system must continue to be a strong advocate for the availability of higher education opportunities for all New Yorkers.

In the political sphere, we should preserve the vital relations that exist between SUNY and the Executive and Legislature. In any event, we must not take the route of the folks over in Jersey.

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Production: Office of University Relations
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