



The Chancellor

January 23, 2012

Dr. B. Robert Kreiser
Associate Secretary
American Association of University Professors
1133 Nineteenth Street, NW - Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-3655

Dear Dr. Kreiser:

I write on behalf of Chairperson Benno Schmidt and myself in response to your January 12, 2012, letter regarding the "Pathways to Degree Completion" initiative. You reference concerns that are based upon information in your possession that came to you from both administration and faculty sources, although you state that you appreciate that we may have additional information that would contribute to your understanding of those concerns. Regrettably, you did not speak with me or any member of my senior staff prior to sending your letter. If you had checked with us, we would have been pleased to begin our discussion with you by bringing to your attention information about the unique mission and structure of The City University of New York and the statutory provisions of New York State Education Law, which provide a foundation for the Pathways initiative.

New York State Education Law, Section 6201, provides that CUNY "should be maintained as an independent system of higher education governed by its own board of trustees responsible for the governance, maintenance, and development of both senior and community college units of the city university. The university must remain responsive to the needs of its urban setting and maintain its close articulation between senior and community colleges. Where possible, governance and operation of senior and community colleges should be jointly conducted by similar procedures to maintain the university as an integrated system and to facilitate articulation between units." The law also provides that CUNY "be supported as an independent and integrated system of higher education on the assumption that the university will continue to maintain and expand its commitment to academic excellence and to the provision of equal access and opportunity for students, faculty and staff from all ethnic and racial groups and from both sexes."

There is no other system of public higher education in which a single board is responsible for 24 educational units, including community colleges, with the express obligation to maintain an integrated system and to facilitate close articulation among the various units, all located within the geographic borders of one highly populous and mobile municipality. Indeed, in many public university systems, such articulation has been the result of legislative mandates and/or regulations of a state commission, which often were promulgated with little or no input from the faculty of the affected colleges. I am not aware if the AAUP has investigated or commented on that widespread practice. At CUNY, the Pathways initiative was carried out with extensive faculty involvement, including but not limited to faculty governance organizations.

You also indicate in your letter that the Pathways initiative raises important issues for you and that you would welcome our comments. Please be assured that we will respond to your concerns in detail, including the reasons why, in our view, the reform of CUNY's dysfunctional transfer system, which necessarily included an overhaul of the general education requirements, was long overdue and could not be accomplished solely, or even primarily, through elected faculty bodies. Both Chairperson Schmidt and I have asked our senior staff to work with us in carefully addressing your points, and we will be pleased to do so in a fully responsive way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Goldstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Goldstein".

Matthew Goldstein

cc: Chairperson Benno Schmidt
Executive Vice Chancellor Alexandra W. Logue
Senior Vice Chancellor Frederick P. Schaffer
Dean Michelle J. Anderson
Professor Sandi E. Cooper
Professor Barbara Bowen
Professor David Linton
Professor Larry Gerber