Community College Faculty Gain Seat on SUNY Board

ALBANY, NY - Community college faculty will now have a voice in the nation’s largest state university system, following legislation signed by New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo last month.

The president of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges will be sworn in today and serve as an ex-officio, non-voting trustee to the State University of New York’s board of trustees, increasing the size of the board from 17 to 18. Among its many responsibilities, the board regulates tuition and fees, appoints leadership within the SUNY system, and grants degrees.

Tina Good, president of the Faculty Council since 2009, praised SUNY and the state of New York for the change in board membership. In her new role as trustee, she hopes to offer the board a more complete vision of the campuses and the students they serve.

SUNY is unique in the nation in that its colleges, universities, and community colleges all fall under one system. Typically community colleges are part of a separate system, with their own chancellor and board of trustees.

“We are fortunate that as the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the nation, we can call 30 stellar community colleges our
own,” said SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher. “It is only appropriate, then, that the president of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges serve as a member of our board of trustees. We welcome Dr. Tina Good as she joins SUNY students and faculty of our state-operated campuses, bringing full circle our commitment to shared governance throughout the system.”

The change in board membership is a mark of SUNY’s commitment to shared governance, a system in which faculty, administrators, governing boards, and sometimes students and staff work jointly to develop policies and make decisions on matters of importance to the college or university.

Shared governance in higher education recognizes that faculty are uniquely qualified as experts in their fields to participate in decisions related to curriculum, academic standards, program development, degree requirements, and methods of instruction.

Good hopes SUNY will play a leadership role in national conversations about the mission of community colleges. “The federal government and many national organizations are seeking to more narrowly define the mission of community colleges, but conspicuously missing from those conversations are the curriculum experts. Missing from those conversations are the voices of community college faculty and faculty governance,” said Good. “SUNY and the state of New York lead the nation with deliberate and systematic inclusion of these voices in their decision-making processes.”

In 2006, the president of the Faculty Senate was added as an ex-officio, non-voting trustee. The Faculty Senate represents SUNY’s four-year schools.

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