



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

150 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608

Phone (609) 989-1100



NJASCU Opposes Re-Establishing the Position of Chancellor of Higher Education

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With the new governor and new personnel leading higher education policy in New Jersey, questions have been raised about the wisdom or folly of reinstating the position of the Chancellor of Higher Education and returning to higher education governance under a Department of Higher Education. NJASCU presidents at the NJASCU Symposium on Higher Education (October 26, 2017) weighed in unequivocally against such a change.

Dr. Harvey Kesselman, president of Stockton University, said “the public institutions all demonstrated how – without the chancellor system and with autonomy – they have thrived. Data show that the senior four-year public colleges and universities are strong, provide high-quality education, are accessible, serve a very diverse population, and are an economic engine for their respective regions of the state. They have kept tuition and fees down in spite of drastically reduced state operating support.”

Dr. George Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State University, began his statement on cost containment by debunking the mythology surrounding higher education governance structure of a chancellor, perceived by some as the good old days of higher education. “Under the system of the chancellor in New Jersey, the institutions were horribly restrained. When the schools were liberated from the chancellor structure, they thrived. It is naïve to think that the chancellor would be an advocate for higher education institutions. The chancellor only serves the governor.” He went on to criticize the existing state mandates that cost the public colleges money, and a chancellor system would only exacerbate those controls.

All the presidents at the Symposium (Dr. Kathleen Waldron of William Paterson University, Dr. Susan Cole of Montclair State University, Dr. Peter Mercer of Ramapo College of New Jersey, and Dr. Barbara Gitenstein of The College of New Jersey) echoed the above sentiments. They urged leadership in higher education and indicated the leadership should come from the Secretary of Higher Education, which is a cabinet position.

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