



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Sen. Ritchie Hails Suny Decision on Shared College Presidents

PATTY RITCHIE September 20, 2011

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is hailing a decision by the State University's Board of Trustees today to hold off on merging the leadership of Canton and Potsdam colleges and, instead, take more time to find ways to achieve needed cost savings that won't threaten the North Country colleges' independence.

"I am gratified that the Board of Trustees has decided to back off a plan to impose a single presidency for the Canton and Potsdam colleges, and to take a longer look to see if the cost savings we all agree are needed can be achieved in other ways," Senator Ritchie said.

"This action means the future of leadership and of the colleges themselves is left squarely in the hands of the SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam communities—not Albany officials.

"I continue to believe that SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam each needs strong, independent leadership so that the colleges can continue to grow and provide the robust, quality higher education that students and families have come to value, and that have helped make these institutions such an important part of their host communities," Senator Ritchie said.

"An independent leader is essential to that growth and success, and I will continue to speak out and advocate for SUNY Canton's independence, and will continue to work with SUNY administrators, faculty, staff and leaders in the community to make sure that these two

colleges remain as vital and strong as they are today,” Senator Ritchie said.

Meeting in Albany, the Board of Trustees agreed to hold off on the merged presidencies at the two campuses, but directed the two colleges to work together to find other ways to achieve cost savings. The college Presidents were directed to report back in six months on how they will meet that goal.

Senator Ritchie has been outspoken on the need for maintaining separate campus leadership in order to preserve the individual schools’ unique identity. She has introduced legislation that would require SUNY to continue the practice of naming leaders to each of its 64 campuses, a tradition that is followed throughout the academic world with few exceptions.

A copy of the Board of Trustee’s order is attached.