



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie Statement on Suny Canton

PATTY RITCHIE August 2, 2011

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The announcement today concerning SUNY Canton President Joe Kennedy's future with the college puts an end to the recent confusion, rumors and speculation over the central administration's plans for a well-respected leader and member of our community.

I am glad that President Kennedy will remain with the campus through the next academic year, which begins in just a few short weeks, to continue to guide the college, which has enjoyed extraordinary growth and success under his leadership.

Ever since news of these developments broke last week, I have been in contact with the college, community leaders and Chancellor Zimpher and her staff, as well as the Chair of the Senate's Higher Education Committee, on which I also serve, to find answers to which I believe the Canton, St. Lawrence County and North Country communities were entitled.

I still have many questions both about the way this situation was handled, as well as SUNY's plans for the future of the Canton college. I support efforts to consolidate and streamline government at every level, in order to save money and assure New Yorkers that their hard-earned tax and tuition dollars are being used to provide the maximum value and benefit.

At the same time, however, I believe it is critical to maintain SUNY Canton as an independent, forceful institution in this community, so that the gains that were made under President Kennedy's leadership can continue to grow and benefit our communities. I believe that this is a goal that is shared by most in the community, those involved in higher education, and my colleagues in the Senate.

I will be watching closely the developments over the next months as the leaders of the Canton and Potsdam colleges pursue their efforts at collaboration, and I will not hesitate to ask the tough questions that need to be asked, to make sure that in the end, our colleges are stronger and better than before.