



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie Concerned Over Future of Suny

PATTY RITCHIE August 11, 2011

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Wants Consultation With North Country On Plan

State Senator Patty Ritchie is calling on the chancellor and the State University of New York to commit to a transparent and open process of consultation with the North Country as it develops a plan to share services between SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam.

"SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton are two very distinct institutions that serve very different groups of students," Senator Ritchie said. "It is very important that SUNY works together to insure that it preserves the separate identity of these colleges so they can continue to serve our region."

"SUNY Canton provides technical training and offers students intensive career oriented programs that allow students to obtain one-year certificates, two year degrees and four year programs that helps ready them for jobs when they graduate," Senator Ritchie said. "SUNY Potsdam offers a traditional liberal arts program, teacher training and one of the top music schools in the nation. These are two very different campus cultures that should not be accidentally sacrificed for the sake of short term savings."

"We are lucky to have some of the top minds in the field of education here in Northern New York. SUNY Central needs to be consulting with them to develop an open and transparent

process to develop a viable plan for the future of these two institutions."

"I strongly support cost cutting, consolidating services, finding efficiencies and reducing redundancies in administrative overhead," Senator Ritchie said. "But there is a big difference between merging a vehicle fleet or a maintenance department compared to consolidating educational missions."

"An awful lot of parents, students, alumni, faculty and staff have an important stake in the outcome of what's being decided," Senator Ritchie said. "We need to take the coming year and develop a meaningful plan that preserves the identities of these two schools. It is imperative that SUNY looks closely at the performance and track record of these two administrations to insure that we take the best from each to insure that we preserve their records of innovation."

"I will not sit back and allow SUNY Canton's legacy of innovation to be sacrificed," Senator Ritchie said. "If I need to ask my fellow Senate Higher Education committee members to join me in hearings on the future of SUNY Canton and Potsdam, I will do so. Many of us are concerned by the lack of transparency, the lack of consultation with the college councils and the failure to involve our local faculties, staffs and community leaders to develop a meaningful long term plan for the future of our two educational treasures."