


**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** John Delano, Senate Chair

**FROM:** George M. Philip, President 

**DATE:** August 27, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Disapproval of Charter amendments 0809-08, 0809-09, 0809-13 & 0809-15

Upon careful review and consideration, I am not inclined to approve the charter amendments adopted by the University Senate and forwarded to me for approval:

- 0809-08 Amendment Regarding Eligibility to Chair Senate Councils and Committees
- 0809-09 Clarifying Amendment on "Graduate Courses" (Section X.4.6)
- 0809-13 Amendment to Ensure Better Consultation
- 0809-15 Amendment to Create New Charter Section XI: IRCUAP

In my view, each of these proposals fosters divisiveness among the various constituent groups that necessarily comprise shared governance of the University. Such divisiveness bodes poorly for our collective efforts moving forward.

As a group, these proposals would move us away from the spirit of shared governance that characterizes an effective university, and away from the framework for effective campus governance outlined in the Policies of the State University of New York Board of Trustees and the University at Albany Faculty Bylaws, and embodied in the Chancellor's Statement on Governance.

The proposed charter amendments appear to circumscribe the rights of some members of the Faculty, constrain the avenues through which the Faculty might pursue University goals, impinge upon the authority vested in me as the Chief Administrative Officer of the University under the Policies of the Board of Trustees, and, overall, codify a system in which division and distrust prevail.

In recognition of the particular history of this institution, and the challenges of shared governance, I prefer to work to establish a different tone, and advance a more collaborative model for my administration. Consequently, and with all due respect to the actions of the University Senate, I call for a collaborative conversation about how best to achieve a fair, inclusive, effective, and collegial model of shared governance. I will ask Professor Eric Lifshin, as the incoming chair of the University Senate Governance Council, to initiate this dialogue, and to begin a review of the existing Faculty By-Laws with respect to their consistency with the provisions of the Board of Trustees and with the principles of best practice of shared governance.