

April 1, 2016

Mr. Michael Solomon, CPA
Audit Manager
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
59 Maiden Lane, 21st Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Administration of Fellowship Leaves
Report 2015-F-5

Dear Mr. Solomon:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above-captioned follow-up audit report. We are very pleased that of the six recommendations contained in the report of the initial audit, the auditors determined four of those to have been fully implemented. The following, therefore, is our response to the auditors' determination that the remaining two recommendations were less than fully implemented:

1) Recommendation—Partially Implemented

Follow up on all returning fellowship leave grantees in a timely manner to ensure they prepare and submit the required activity summaries to evidence the activities performed while on leave, and to provide accountability as to the benefits that are to be obtained from such. Provide guidance on the proper preparation of activity summaries.

University Response

The Chief Academic Officers of the campuses will be reminded in writing that faculty members who are awarded Fellowship Leaves must submit to their department chairperson, within (30) days from the expiration of the leave, a written summary of their activities during the leave. The Chief Academic Officers at each campus will also be informed that they are expected to monitor compliance with this requirement and take appropriate action as necessary, which may include guidance letters, preclusion from future fellowship grants, or referral for disciplinary action, all depending on the severity of the delay.

2) Recommendation—Not Implemented

Enhance CUNY policies to address potential measures to be taken by CUNY when fellowship grantees do not comply with fellowship requirements, such as the possible recovery of salaries paid while on fellowship, and non-CUNY income earned by grantees while on fellowship.

University Response

Consistent with the response above, it will be incumbent upon the Chief Academic Officers at each campus to monitor compliance with all of the requirements and conditions of a leave grant. The University will communicate this oversight requirement to the campuses in a written instrument. As we have indicated before, the University is committed to taking all appropriate actions to redress willful, material noncompliance with the requirements and conditions of a leave grant. Such actions may include the preferring of disciplinary charges against policy violators, consistent with the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement between the University and its faculty union. With respect to the possible recovery of “non-CUNY income” earned while on leave, we would just note that CUNY fellowship leave policy does not place an absolute bar on a grantee’s involvement in remunerative activities while on leave, but such activities must have been approved in advance and must be integral to the purpose for which the leave was granted.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to respond to the follow-up audit report. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Gordon Taylor

University Executive Director of
Internal Audit and Management Services

cc: Chancellor James B. Milliken
Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Vita C. Rabinowitz
Executive Vice Chancellor and COO Allan H. Dobrin
Vice Chancellor Matthew J. Sapienza
Vice Chancellor Gloriana B. Waters
Vice Chancellor Pamela S. Silverblatt