Dear Bot/Chancellor Rosenstone,

*Introduce yourself - college, years teaching, etc.*

I’m writing regarding the recommendations brought forward by the Task Force on Long Term Financial Sustainability. The proposed recommendations shift the focus from our students receiving an extraordinary education to promoting a business-like model that puts financial efficiencies first. Such an approach would truly create a crisis in our ability to carry out our mission of providing an extraordinary education that is accessible and affordable for all Minnesotans.

A commitment to an extraordinary education recognizes and respects the uniqueness and autonomy of our campuses and the economic and cultural vitality they contribute to the communities they serve. (*Provide examples of the unique way your campus serves your community.)* Streamlined curriculum and centralized services may be simpler, but their cost, in terms of lost opportunity and access, is incalculable.

A commitment to an extraordinary education recognizes how integral all faculty are to students’ ability to succeed and recognizes that faculty working conditions are student learning conditions. Efforts to divide and devalue our faculty destabilize our classrooms and colleges, and disrupt student learning. Our state’s commitment to a largely full time stable faculty who are best able to meet the needs of students, students who continue to come to our classrooms with an increasingly wide variety of needs and challenges, is and should remain a point of pride. Attempts to decrease the number of full time faculty and create a second class workforce by dividing full and part-time faculty must be rejected outright.

We have experienced challenges in the past, and, as individual colleges and a system, have emerged from those challenges by engaging in inclusive, respectful, fully transparent discussions that put students and our responsibility to provide an accessible, affordable extraordinary education at the center of any proposed solutions. We are always ready to engage in efforts to expand and improve access to the education and opportunities our students receive in our classrooms and throughout our campuses; however, these recommendations threaten to do just the opposite. The “education as a business” model that these recommendations reflect, by equating simplicity with efficiency, bigger with better, and sacrificing student needs for bottom line thinking, have proven to be fundamental failures and must be rejected. Therefore, I ask that you reject the proposed recommendations and commit to an inclusive, transparent process that puts students first.

Respectfully,

Gretchen Long, MSCF

Hennepin Technical College - Brooklyn Park

English Faculty