

**AFT NJ State Federation, NJ State Conference of the American Association of
University Professors and HPAE:
Analysis and Response to the Kean Commission Task Force Report**

Executive Summary

The New Jersey Higher Education Task Force Report should be the beginning of a broad policy discussion on the future of higher education in the State.

As representatives of over 30,000 higher education faculty and staff, the AFT-NJ State Federation, the NJ Conference of the AAUP and the HPAE take exception to many of the conclusions of the Task Force Report.

- The Task Force Report is self-serving. It is written by presidents and board members for presidents and board members.
- The Task Force Report incomprehensively argues for both, more public support for higher education and, at the same time, less public accountability. It wants to eliminate tuition caps as a means of controlling the alarming increase in tuition costs.
- The Task Force Report dismisses as a myth the costs of duplicate and disparate programs and systems across institutions of higher education, while the State of New Jersey is going in exactly the opposite direction—streamlining and sharing services and systems to save costs.

In contrast to the Task Force Report, the AFT-NJ State Federation, NJ Conference of the AAUP and HPAE believe that:

- Publically supported higher education must be publically accountable. P.L. 2009, c. 308 (Senate 1609) needs to be enforced to assure accountability.
- The Commission on Higher education should be strengthened not eliminated, and that specific standards of accountability need to be established and enforced at each institution.
- The State must continue to promote a unified statewide system of public higher education and negotiations, and not an “every person for his/her-self” free-for-all recommended by the Task Force.
- Significant cost savings exist in utilization of uniform policies, standard systems, and shared services and resources throughout the Higher education system.
- Faculty, staff, students, and all affected communities must be participants in any discussions of higher education reorganization.

Recommendation:

The AFT-NJ State Federation, the NJ Conference of the AAUP and the HPAE urge the State Legislature to delay action on the Task Force recommendations and immediately conduct public hearings on the future, mission, funding, affordability, access, and governance of public higher education in the State of New Jersey.