

November 1, 2013

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

In accordance with Section 170 of the Executive Law, this is our 90-day response showing the actions taken to address the recommendations contained in the State Comptroller's Audit Report on Selected Employee Travel Expenses, State University of New York at Binghamton (2012-S-127). Our specific comments to the recommendations follow.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that travelers obtain prior written approval from the finance office to exceed the federal per diem rates for the county of lodging.

Response:

We agree that prior and written approval should be obtained. Following the recommendations of this audit, the Business Office now requires a supervisory review and signature on the "Request and Authorization for Travel" form for lodging expenses that exceed the federal per diem rates. This form must be completed prior to the traveler taking the trip and must include evidence on the attempt to seek lodging at the allowable rate.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that employees comply with the Travel Manual and University guidelines for travel advances, including provisions to: 1) account for and reconcile each travel, and 2) limit the travel advance amount to what can be reasonably estimated to be the traveler's expected business expenses.

Response:

The majority of the travel advances exceptions found during this audit relate to Athletics travel. Athletics travel is different from typical travel due to the unpredictability of travel requirements and the number of travelers, meaning there is a need for additional procedures and controls outside the University's standard travel policies. These exceptions to standard policies are consistently monitored by University staff. Our top priority for Athletics travel is the health and safety of University athletes and coaches, and our procedures allow us to ensure these priorities are met.

After the findings of this audit, we intend to be more diligent regarding the timely collection of advances; however, the written campus policy of reconciling travel advances within 10 business days appears to be an unreasonable time frame. Therefore, we have reassessed our policies and procedures for reconciling

travel advances to 20 days in order to ensure they are practical for Campus usage. For team travel, we will still need the flexibility to provide multiple advances even if the traveler already has an advance outstanding. We do agree that there were a limited number of advances that were not reconciled within 20 business days and we will take steps to correct that in the future or deny the traveler future advances.

In addition, we will be more diligent regarding the repayment of these advances and the amount advanced as it pertains to how Binghamton University calculates the team travel advance amount based on the number of players and coaches on the trip, the travel destination's food per-diem, and the number of days that travel will occur.

Governor Cuomo, Binghamton University would be pleased to further discuss our responses to the issues raised in the final audit report with you or your staff. Overall, I consider the State University of New York at Binghamton University's performance on this audit to be excellent. Our University appreciates the assistance of the OSC auditors and we are implementing the recommendations they provided. We are confident that taking these measures will strengthen Binghamton University's internal controls while mitigating risk and improving the organization's operational efficiency and effectiveness. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concerns at 607-777-2131.

Sincerely,



Harvey G. Stenger
President

Copy: Chancellor Nancy Zimpher
Vice President James VanVoorst
Mr. Michael Abbott
Mr. John Cordi
Mr. S. Mark Hall
Ms. Melissa Little
Mr. Jeffrey Marks

Note: The same letter and enclosure were also sent directly to the following individuals in accordance with Section 170 of the Executive Law:

Lieutenant Governor Duffy
Senator Skelos
Comptroller DiNapoli
Senator Krueger
Senator DeFrancisco
Senator Steward Cousins

Mr. Silver
Mr. Morelle
Mr. Kolb
Mr. Oaks
Mr. Megna
Ms. Zarezki
Mr. Farrell