



## **MEMORANDUM**

**November 15, 2017**

**TO: Members of the Board of Trustees**

**FROM: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor**

**SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment for the State University of New York  
Empire State College**

### **Action Requested**

The proposed resolution authorizes the State University of New York Empire State College to offer the Education Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Change in the disciplinary area of Education.

### **Resolution**

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Resolved that the State University of New York Master Plan be, and hereby is, amended to authorize the State University of New York Empire State College to offer the Education Doctorate degree in Education Leadership and Change in the disciplinary area of Education; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor be, and hereby is, authorized to transmit this amendment to the Board of Regents and the Governor for incorporation into the State University of New York Master Plan.

### **Background**

Approval of this resolution will authorize the State University of New York Empire State College to offer the Education Doctorate (Ed.D.) degree in Educational Leadership and Change. New York State Education Law § 237 and the regulations of the Commissioner of Education (Title 8 NYCRR §52.1 and Part 54) require that a master plan amendment be submitted and approved in order for an institution of higher education to offer its first program at a new level of study. The proposed Educational Leadership and Change program represents the college's first program at the doctoral level.

Empire State College's proposed Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Change will prepare mid-career practicing professionals to hold leadership positions in educational settings, social services and community organizations, and professional development divisions of government or corporate entities, where graduates serve as change agents. Currently, the college offers master's degrees in adult learning, learning and emerging technologies, teaching and learning, nursing education, and special education, all of which will serve as precursors to the proposed professional doctorate.

Consistent with its mission, Empire State College designed the professional doctorate specifically to provide "innovative, alternative and flexible" programming to adult students across New York State. The proposed program is consistent with its *Vision 2015* strategic plan, addressing the institution's commitment to being an "innovative learning organization," and supports the University's Open SUNY goal of growth in quality online degree programs. Open SUNY assessments had identified a gap in current SUNY offerings for professional doctoral programs that would be competitive with the flexible, but more expensive, offerings of for-profit, private not-for-profit, and out-of-state institutions. The proposed program also reflects the strategic vision for Empire State College's School for Graduate Studies, as outlined in its recent Graduate Academic Plan, that sets objectives for enrollment growth in professional doctorates that allow students to more seamlessly move forward from its master's level programs.

Empire State College faculty and administration have the expertise to design and deliver a high-quality and innovative professional doctorate in education. External reviewers noted the "strong research and publication records of the faculty" and "extensive service to the field," with some who are "nationally recognized for leadership in online learning, mentoring, and adult education." The development of the proposed professional doctorate was guided by the work of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate and grounded in the college's extensive experience in adult learning, nontraditional higher education, online instruction, and educator preparation.

The focus of the proposed program is unique among current SUNY offerings. Unlike the Doctor of Philosophy that prepares students for academic positions, the proposed Education Doctorate is designed around a scholar-practitioner model, which is built on the assumption of self-directed, collaborative learning among researchers, practitioners, educators, and students to produce scholar-practitioners. Scholar-practitioners are those who apply their scholarship to practice so that they can develop and create new knowledge to change their work and to lead change in the work of others. Students enrolled in the program will complete a common set of foundations, research, and core courses focused on leadership and change and then select from one of three tracks in the areas of teaching and learning, emerging technologies, or adult and higher education. The proposed program culminates in a practice-based dissertation.

The need for the proposed program is supported by an extensive assessment conducted by Eduventures (a nationally recognized leader that provides analyses to institutions of higher education regarding student demand in order to inform program development decisions). Their report highlighted demand for hybrid or online professional doctorate programs, particularly in education (educational administration and higher education administration) and healthcare fields. Eduventures further indicated that Empire State College could fill a niche with hybrid programs to differentiate itself from other SUNY campuses and online competitors. Other similar programs are out-of-state and primarily in the for-profit sector. On an annual basis, at least 1,000 New Yorkers engage in more expensive doctoral education options out-of-state for partially or fully online doctoral education. Current data from the National Bureau of Labor Statistics show that “employment of postsecondary education administrators is projected to grow nine percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations.” In its breakdown for New York State, projected employment opportunities for postsecondary administrators will grow by 14.3 percent through 2024, with 750 anticipated openings.

The proposed program is expected to enroll 15 students in its initial year and reach a total enrollment capacity of approximately 60 by year five. These projections are based on faculty capacity, existing retention rates for part time students, and an examination of enrollments at other flexible, adult-serving state and for-profit institutions that offer a similar professional doctorate.

For working professionals who want to progress beyond a master’s degree and expand their knowledge and opportunities for leadership within their profession, and for whom no public options exist for an online professional doctorate within New York, the proposed Education Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Change meets an important state need.

The proposed program has been carefully reviewed and was found to be sound from both an academic and financial perspective.