

## MEMORANDUM

March 23, 2017

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

**FROM: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor**

**SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment for Adirondack Community College**

### Action Requested

The proposed resolution authorizes Adirondack Community College to offer the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree in the disciplinary area of agriculture.

### Resolution

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

Resolved that the State University Master Plan be, and hereby is, amended to authorize Adirondack Community College to offer the Associate in Applied Science degree in the disciplinary area of agriculture; and be it further

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

### Background

Approval of this resolution will authorize the Chancellor to transmit to the Regents and the Governor a proposal for Adirondack Community College (SUNY Adirondack) to offer Associate in Applied Science degrees in the disciplinary area of agriculture. New York State Education Law §237 and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (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 a new program in a disciplinary area (HEGIS code) where it does not currently have a registered program. The proposed Agricultural Business A.A.S. program represents the College's first associate degree program to be offered in the discipline of agriculture.

SUNY Adirondack's proposed A.A.S. in Agricultural Business relates to the mission of the college by offering an instructional program to serve the large agribusiness sector of Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties, which are in the College's service area. It supports students interested in starting a small agribusiness (business activity in agriculture) or adding management expertise to grow an existing business in the field, promoting the entrepreneurial mindset. These aims are consistent with overall SUNY strategic goals as well as the 2007 Strategic Plan of Washington County, which includes "encouraging the development of agribusinesses and urban revitalization projects that will result in new opportunities for the local food production industry."

The program was carefully developed and reviewed at the campus level. In 2016, the College hired a New York City consulting firm for food-related enterprises, programs, and policies, to conduct a feasibility study focusing on food and agriculture in Washington County. The review found strong local support for the proposed program and continued growth of the "farm to table" movement. The study concluded that the proposed program would complement the College's thriving culinary arts degree.

The design of the program has benefitted from the input of additional external constituents, including Tompkins Cortland Community College, Kennebec Valley Community College (Maine), Bristol Community College (Massachusetts), and Green Mountain College (Vermont). The program was externally reviewed by faculty from Vermont Technical College and the University of New Hampshire. SUNY Adirondack faculty and administrators, in consultation with area businesses, determined that an agricultural business degree would meet regional needs. The program is supported by the SUNY Adirondack Advisory Board, which includes membership from Farm Credit East, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, USDA, American Farmland Trust, Grow NYC/Greenmarkets, Adirondack Harvest, Warren and Washington County Soil and water conservation districts, Agricultural Stewardship Association and established farmers in the region. Finally, faculty in the Business Division and Science Division worked closely with SUNY Cobleskill, the nearest Agricultural Technology institution, to ensure maximum credit transfer for students wanting to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

In its initial year, the Agricultural Business program is expected to attract 15 new full-time students, with a projection of 25 students by year three. Other students in the Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship degree and Culinary Arts degree can choose "AGR" coursework for elective credit. The program includes four new courses in biology and agriculture and a required internship. Internships and employment will be facilitated by a recently hired Coordinator for Career Connections. There will be five full-time and two part-time faculty, each with appropriate academic credentials and substantial professional experience. The College has the required facilities to support agricultural

coursework, including gardens, an orchard, farm fields, and agricultural equipment sufficient for the anticipated enrollment.

The Agricultural Business A.A.S. degree is an appropriate extension of SUNY Adirondack's academic offerings. It will support the region it serves by preparing those students in fields that can contribute to the area's health and economic development, and provide a pathway for those students who want to pursue further education in agriculture.