



## **MEDIA KIT**

The State University of New York  
Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher

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## Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor

On June 1, 2009, Nancy Zimpher became the 12th Chancellor of The State University of New York by unanimous vote of the SUNY Board of Trustees. With more than 465,000 students, SUNY is the nation's largest comprehensive system of higher education.

A dynamic and nationally recognized leader, Chancellor Zimpher is known as an effective agent of change in education. She started her career as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in the Ozarks and has never lost her passion for providing accessible, quality education for every student.

Chancellor Zimpher began her work at SUNY with a statewide tour of SUNY's 64 campuses, which became the first phase of a systemwide strategic planning process. This plan, called The Power of SUNY, was launched in April 2010, with the central goal of harnessing SUNY's potential to drive economic revitalization and create a better future for every community across New York.

As The Power of SUNY is put into action, the Chancellor is leading a diverse set of new initiatives at SUNY in several key areas, including research and innovation, energy, health care, global affairs, and the education pipeline. She has also been a vocal advocate for groundbreaking legislative reforms that ensure SUNY can continue to provide broad access to higher education in an environment of declining state support, while maximizing its impact as an engine of economic development.

A former chair of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Dr. Zimpher now leads the national Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and co-chairs a national blue-ribbon panel on transforming teacher preparation. She serves on the board of CEOs for Cities, is a member of the Business-Higher Education Forum, and the Board of Governors of the New York Academy of Sciences.

Prior to coming to SUNY, Dr. Zimpher served as president of the University of Cincinnati, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and executive dean of the Professional Colleges and dean of the College of Education at The Ohio State University.

She has authored or co-authored numerous books, monographs, and academic journal articles on teacher education, urban education, academic leadership, and school/university partnerships.

Chancellor Zimpher holds a bachelor's degree in English Education and Speech, a master's degree in English Literature, and a Ph.D. in Teacher Education and Higher Education Administration, all from The Ohio State University.







# SUNY

## Did you know...?

1. SUNY is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, educating more than **467,000** students in more than **7,500** degree and certificate programs on **64** campuses.
2. SUNY's total economic impact on the state is estimated at \$27.5 billion.
3. At just \$4970, **SUNY's tuition** is among the **lowest in the nation** for four-year institutions.
4. 93% of New Yorkers live within 15 miles of a SUNY campus or teaching center, 97% within 20 miles, and virtually 100% within 30 miles.
5. One in three high school graduates in New York State chooses SUNY.
6. SUNY's community colleges provide workforce training for more than **240,000** New Yorkers *each year*.
7. SUNY **educates more teachers** than any other institution in New York State—about 5000 each year.
8. SUNY's research portfolio is valued at **\$1.2 billion**.
9. In 2009, SUNY inventions generated **55 U.S. patents** and \$13.2 million in royalties and led to the creation of **70 start-up companies**.
10. SUNY's strategic plan – ***The Power of SUNY*** – is all about revitalizing the state's economy and enhancing the quality of life in our communities.



# Fast Facts 2011

<b>Campuses</b>	64	<b>EOP Graduation Rate (2003-Cohort) 6-year</b>	54.1%	<b>Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)</b>	
<b>Total Enrollment (Headcount)</b>	467,845	<b>SUNY's capture rate of NYS high school graduates</b>	40%	Total Recipients	165,718
Undergraduate Enrollment	426,314	<b>Campus Proximity - The % of NYS population that lives within:</b>		State Operated	81,872 (\$185.6 million)
Graduate Enrollment	41,531	5 miles of a SUNY campus –	50%	Community Colleges	83,846 (\$128.7 million)
State Operated Enrollment	221,686	15 miles of a SUNY campus –	93%	<b>Undergraduate Tuition &amp; Fees</b>	
University Centers	85,977	20 miles of a SUNY campus –	97%	State Operated	
Other Doctoral	14,473	30 miles of a SUNY campus –	99.8%	In-State Tuition	\$4,970
Comprehensive Colleges	92,943			Out-of-State Tuition	\$13,380
Technology Colleges	28,293	<b>SAT Scores (Averages)</b>		Mandatory Fees	\$1,235 (Average)
Community College Enrollment	246,159	State Operated	1158	Community Colleges	
<b>Gender (Preliminary)</b>		University Centers	1213	In-State Tuition	\$3,757 (Average)
Female	255,369 (54.6%)	Comprehensive Colleges	1104	Out-of-State Tuition	\$7,266 (Average)
Male	212,476 (45.4%)	U.S. Average	1017	Mandatory Fees	\$462 (Average)
<b>Student Diversity (Preliminary)</b>		NYS Average	983	<b>Graduate Tuition &amp; Fees</b>	
Minority Enrollment:	98,945 (21.4%)	<b>SUNY Learning Network Enrollment</b>		State Operated	
Black Non-Hispanic:	41,721 (8.9%)	AY 06-07	102,223	In-State Tuition:	\$8,370
Hispanic:	31,807 (6.8%)	AY 95-96	119	Out-of-State Tuition:	\$13,780
Asian/Pacific Islander:	21,027 (4.5%)	<b>Graduation Rates</b>		Mandatory Fees:	\$921 (Average)
American Native:	2,402 (0.5%)	6-Year SUNY	62.3%	<b>Sponsored Research (Research Foundation)</b>	
Multi-Racial:	1,988 (0.4%)	National Public Universities	55.0%	FY 2010	\$1 billion
<b>SUNY Employees (Headcount)</b>	88,024	National Private Universities	65.3%	FY 2000	\$463.877 million
Faculty:	33,455 (47.1% full-time)	5-Year SUNY	59.5%	10-Year Growth of approximately	115.6%
State Operated:	18,663 (60.3% full-time)	National Public Universities	49.1%	Projects (active)	7,314
Community Colleges:	14,790 (30.4% full-time)	National Private Universities	62.8%	Research Employees	17,103
Non-Faculty:	54,569 (73.3% full-time)	4-Year SUNY	44.8%	Patents	59 secured; 162 applications
State Operated:	42,231 (75.5% full-time)	National Public Universities	29.2%	Royalties from Inventions	\$11 million
Community Colleges:	11,779 (65.08% full-time)	National Private Universities	52.1%	Invention Disclosures	235
System Administration:	272	<b>Baccalaureate – 89% of students entering in fall 2003 had a successful educational outcome (i.e., graduate, transfer, or continue to be enrolled)</b>		Licenses	48
University-Wide Programs:	289	<b>Academic Program Counts</b>		Start-up Companies	70
<b>International &amp; Out-of-State Students</b>		Total	7,342	<b>Philanthropy (FY 2005-06)</b>	\$303.5 million
Out-of-State		Undergraduate	5,295	<b>Price Indexes vs. Core Budget Growth (2000-01 to 2009-10)</b>	
State Operated	12,339 (5.6%)	Graduate	2,047	SUNY Core Budget Growth (per student)	18.2%
Community Colleges	5,642 (2.4%)	<b>Degrees Granted</b>		Consumer Price Index	23.8%
International		Total Degrees and Other Formal Awards (1949 to 2008-09)	3,024,217	Higher Education Price Index	35.0%
State Operated	15,389 (6.9%)	2008-09 Academic Year Total	81,789	<b>Fiscal Information (projected 2010-11)</b>	
Community Colleges	3,444 (1.4%)	Undergraduate	68,151	All Funds Budget	\$11.1 billion
<b>Enrollment Trends (5-Year Growth 13.3%)</b>		4-year	35,544	State Operated	\$8.8 billion
AY 2010-11 (Headcount)	468,000	2-year & Certificate	32,607	Community Colleges	\$2.3 billion
AY 2005-06 (Headcount)	413,000	Graduate	13,638	Total State Support	\$3.3 billion (includes hospital subsidy of \$128 million)
<b>Educational Opportunity Program</b>		<b>Alumni</b>		Core Instructional (State Operated)	\$2.3 billion
Enrollment	10,031	Total Alumni	2,589,335 (est.)	State Support	\$1.2 billion
State Operated	7,851	Alumni/Current NYS Residents	2,105,129 (est.)	Tuition	\$1.1 billion
Community Colleges	2,180	<b>Continuing Education Enrollments</b>		<b>Economic Impact</b>	
Student Diversity		Total Registrations (AY 2008-09)	1,731,776	For every state dollar received, SUNY generates \$8 in total spending in NYS. The 2008-09 all-funds budget of \$10.571 billion, which includes \$3.442 billion in state support, equals an estimated \$27.5 billion total economic impact.	
African-American	4,102	(of these 667,760 supported business & industry training)		Estimate amounts for the 2009-10 all-funds budget of \$10.968 billion includes \$3.554 billion in state support, bringing the estimated total economic impact to \$28.4 billion.	
Hispanic	2,754	Instructional Activities (courses)	102,643		
Caucasian	2,086	(21,041 for business & industry)			
Asian/Pacific Islander	994				
Native American	59				
Multi-Racial	36				



## The Power of SUNY: Strategic Plan 2010 and Beyond

*We believe New York State can be one of the most vital, resilient, and inclusive economies in the global marketplace. And we believe the 64 campuses of SUNY can make that ambition a reality. From 2010 forward, SUNY's priority is the economic revitalization of the State of New York and a better quality of life for all its citizens.*

### Six Big Ideas . . . Unlimited Potential

#### **SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century**

SUNY cultivates innovation and entrepreneurial thinking across its entire learning landscape, helping new and existing businesses innovate, prosper and grow.

#### **SUNY and the Seamless Education Pipeline**

SUNY sees education in New York State as a pipeline that spans from birth to retirement and applies evidence-based intervention strategies to close the gaps within the pipeline to generate greater student success.

#### **SUNY and a Healthier New York**

The health of New Yorkers is essential to the state's economic success and no other organization, public or private, can address New York's health care challenges as powerfully as SUNY.

#### **SUNY and an Energy-Smart New York**

SUNY's collective energy-smart knowledge, community partnerships, degree programs and system initiatives make it New York's renewable resource for attaining sustainability.

#### **SUNY and the Vibrant Community**

Strong communities are at the heart of economic revitalization and, with a presence in every community in New York State, SUNY faculty, staff and students are powerful catalysts of community partnerships and growth.

#### **SUNY and the World**

Together, the SUNY campuses comprise one of the most diverse learning communities in the world, making the system a hotbed for cultivating New York's competitiveness across the globe and a beacon for talent worldwide.

[www.suny.edu/powerofsuny](http://www.suny.edu/powerofsuny)





**N**ANCY L. ZIMPHER, the new chancellor of the State University of New York, is a woman with a plan. From 1998 to 2003, when she was chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, it was “The Milwaukee Idea.” From 2003 to May 2009, when she was president of the University of Cincinnati, it was “UC/21.”

And for much of this year, Dr. Zimpher has been crisscrossing New York State, PowerPoint engaged, promoting “The Power of SUNY,” with its pragmatic and somewhat buzzy bullet points — “SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century,” “SUNY and the Seamless Education Pipeline,” “SUNY and the World” — about the university as economic and community-building engine for tough times. Dr. Zimpher is somewhat famous in higher education as a tireless and creative marketer.

“I have to say that if you planted me on Mars, this is what I would try to do,” she said a few weeks back, after spending the morning touting “The Power of SUNY” to the staff of the Research Foundation, which administers more than \$1 billion in university research funds. She then swore in a new student representative to SUNY’s board of trustees, positively beaming when, without prodding, the student put her hand on the “Power of SUNY” brochure, in lieu of a Bible, in reciting her oath.

“My belief is that to move an organization forward you have to have a common, comprehensive and ambitious agenda,” Dr. Zimpher said. “It has to be aspirational. It has to move you. I think the full manifestation of SUNY is underexposed and underexploited. If people really knew and understood the difference these campuses make in their communities they would be amazed.”

But a funny — and absurdly unlikely — thing happened on Dr. Zimpher’s way to

revamping and rebranding SUNY, the unloved colossus that is the biggest comprehensive system of public higher education in the country. The empowerment legislation that was the companion piece for the plan — giving campuses greater autonomy, including the ability to set their own tuitions — became the pivotal, ferociously contested boulder in the road



**The Planner** Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, at the Albany campus.

in New York’s seemingly endless budget impasse (which at press time remained unresolved).

Of the two most powerful men in Albany, one, Gov. David A. Paterson, who proposed the legislation, insisted that it be part of a deal tied to the state’s 2010-11 budget. The other, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, was adamant that it never would be.

On one level, this has been a classic case of the warring duchies of Albany, of how an educational issue morphs into a political power struggle. But its issues are both distinctly national and parochial. On the one hand, it provides a condensed glimpse of many of the issues roiling public higher education nationally: access versus status, state control versus campus control, universities as centers of disinterested scholarship versus universities as economic engines, rising demand versus falling revenues. On the other, it is the latest and most conspicuous chapter in a battle over turf, money and, oh yes, education that began 62 years ago, when

New York State reluctantly approved a system that has gone on to become the accidental giant of American higher education.

**T**WO things define the State University of New York. It’s huge. And compared to its public peers, it’s weird.

The numbers suggest a system that’s borderline unmanageable — 64 campuses, 7,660 degree programs, 88,000 faculty members, 465,000 students, a \$10.7 billion budget, a campus within 20 miles of 97 percent of the state’s population. Many of its campuses are anchors of farflung small communities that only locals could find on a map — Fredonia, Delhi, Cobleskill, Potsdam. People know some campuses by reputation but not that they’re part of SUNY — Fashion Institute of

Technology in Manhattan, Maritime College in the Bronx, and the colleges of agriculture and life sciences, human ecology, veterinary medicine, and industrial and labor relations at Cornell. Four are ambitious university centers with a national reputation: Stony Brook, Buffalo, Binghamton and Albany. Thirty are community colleges.

In a brand-name culture, SUNY is an awfully hard brand to define, especially when it’s still often thought of as an upstate phenomenon in a state whose center of gravity is south in New York City and its suburbs.

But another reason that SUNY has struggled to forge an identity is because that was the idea from the start. New York was the last of the populous states to form a university system. SUNY was not founded until 1948 and over the strenuous objections of the state’s powerful private colleges and universities. And it began with the stipulation that it would only “supplement” the private institutions and not compete with them. State legislators

established an unfriendly board of regents and imposed the nation's strictest regulations on what the university could do. An informal prohibition on raising private funds meant that New York's state universities for decades grew without the endowments that supported campuses elsewhere. No wonder that a study in 1960 called SUNY a "limping and apologetic enterprise."

Virtually alone in the country, there was (and still is) no flagship institution, no Madison, Berkeley or Austin to provide a network of loyal supporters for years to come, no beloved Buckeyes, Huskies or Gators to create a common wellspring of good will. (SUNY's most conspicuous attempt to play in that league — Binghamton's one trip to the N.C.A.A. Division I basketball tournament in 2009 — ended in scandal, with arrests of several players, accusations of preferential treatment for athletes and the implosion of the program.) Add in that the City University of New York was there to suck up all the energy and attention for public education in the most populous and influential part of the state, and SUNY has been climbing uphill since its inception.

It prospered in flush times under Nelson Rockefeller but has been under siege of late. State and SUNY leaders repeatedly debate its mission, including the question of whether it could be seen as a great university system without its own Berkeley or the University of Virginia.

Still, not many of the moments has been more challenging than this one.

Since 2000, SUNY has had five interim, acting or full chancellors. It faces a budget meltdown with no bottom in sight, having lost \$634 million in state support over the past three years. Those cuts come amid steadily growing demand for its services. Enrollment has increased by 25,000 over the past year, and even the downstate suburbanites who are most receptive to the appeal of private universities are taking long looks at the state's public ones as well.

It's true that on college message boards and in admissions buzz, SUNY doesn't get much love. "Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio all have excellent state flagships and are close to the

northeastern private colleges. Where did NY go wrong?" wrote one posting in March on the Web site College Confidential.

But almost all the SUNY campuses are seeing rising numbers of applicants as price and practicality loom larger than the perceived brand on the rear-window decal. Maybe in good times you didn't think twice about spending \$50,000 a year for Lehigh or Colgate instead of \$20,000 for comparable educations at Binghamton or Geneseo, but that has never been an option for people of limited means, and increasingly it's not an option for many of the affluent, either.

Enter "The Power of SUNY," the result of Dr. Zimpher's Hillary Clinton-style listening tour of all 64 campuses, an exhaustive series of meetings across the state and a 200-member task force.

To be honest, the strategic plan is more broad statements of intent than nuts and bolts. But the plan, and the legislation meant to help put it into effect, reflect both the problems of the moment and SUNY's historical challenges. To address the former, Dr. Zimpher's plan, to the chagrin of many of SUNY's professors, is more about building the state's economy than it is about the traditional educational missions of higher education. "There is a growing and welcome recognition that in a knowledge economy, institutions of higher education can — and must — be pivotal in generating growth and revitalizing communities," it begins.

There is talk of research but research translated into tangible, measurable results — more patents issued, more grants won, more jobs created. SUNY StartUP is a program to invite entrepreneurs onto campuses to act as mentors. SUNY-INC (Incent New Companies) is supposed to link researchers at different campuses and companies in a development chain designed to speed up the process from concept to commercialization. SUNY is supposed to bring doctors, nurses and teachers to underserved urban and rural neighborhoods, and create a wellness network to establish statewide health goals and programs in areas like obesity, smoking cessation and the prevention of chronic disease. It is supposed to do

groundbreaking research in renewable energy and work with the state's Smart Grid Consortium to drive down energy costs.

To Dr. Zimpher, who grew up on a small farm near the town of Gallipolis, Ohio, the daughter of educators, it's a powerful statement of what SUNY can do for New York and an inducement for state support.

"We don't really have an economic development plan for the State of New York, but if we did, it would look a lot like 'The Power of SUNY,'" she said.

Her supporters say this is absolutely the right time to enunciate a vision that defines SUNY. "New York north and west of Albany is a disaster area, even great cities like Rochester, so it's entirely appropriate to say the university has a mission beyond educating students," said Gerald Benjamin, a professor of political science at SUNY New Paltz. "It's very important to have a plan while you're struggling to keep the ship afloat, so your plan isn't simply to keep the ship afloat."

To many others, the plan has some good points but reflects a system in danger of forgetting its core mission of providing opportunity to students regardless of economic status. "The strategic plan doesn't talk about educational missions, it doesn't talk about affordability or accessibility, there's very little about undergraduate education and keeping it affordable and accessible," said Phillip H. Smith, president of the powerful United University Professions union, which represents more than 34,000 academic and professional faculty members. "It reflects an attempt to corporatize the university."

Those issues and many others came to a head this summer in the debate over the plan's companion piece, the clunky-sounding Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act, giving SUNY and CUNY greater control over tuition, purchasing and public-private partnerships. Governor Paterson wants tuition-setting taken out of the state budget process, where it's forever at the mercy of the state's fiscal gyrations and where tuition increases go to Albany and often stay there. Instead, different campuses would establish different tuitions, with caps and added financial aid

to cushion the blow to access.

To advocates, the effort to break the shackles that SUNY was born with has long been overdue. For the largest SUNY campus, the University at Buffalo, such self-determination is an essential part of its ambitious growth plan, "UB 2020," which local officials say would create thousands of jobs, expand the campus to downtown and foster new ventures with industry.

Samuel L. Stanley Jr., president of Stony Brook University, said increased revenue from the legislation could enable the hiring of 400 new faculty members over the next decade. And Stony Brook's most generous donor, the hedge fund manager James Simons, has made a pledge of as much as \$150 million, contingent on the passage of some form of the legislation.

But a prestigious flagship or a brand-name research university to some is a quasi-private school with unaffordable tuition to others. Critics in the union, the Assembly and the universities other than the largest research institutions see in this a new, tiered SUNY with higher tuition and campuses perceived to be better for those who can afford them and ones perceived as inferior for those who cannot.

Henry Steck, who teaches political science at SUNY Cortland and has written on SUNY's history, wrote to his colleagues during the height of the budget battles last month that if the legislation passed in its current form, "I believe we will face the end of SUNY as we know it." He added: "SUNY will move dramatically toward a 'privatized' university and SUNY will be (like UVa or UVt) 'public' more or less in name only in terms of its financial support. ... It would be as if we moved the cost of our K-12 public schools to the children and their families, with 'aid' for poor families."

What SUNY should be doing, many of these critics say, is fighting for adequate financing and affordable tuition, not looking for higher tuition and private sources that will inevitably sap resources from the public contributions while expecting something in return. "If we look at the public-private partnerships the university has entered into in the past, we see that not only have they not brought significant and continuing dollars into the university, but instead have caused a long-term drain

on university revenues and financial resources," said Dr. Smith, the union president. "My question is, Why is now any different than the past?"

That's a good question. And increasingly the answer seems to be: It's different because it's different. The way public higher education has traditionally been supported no longer seems to be working. Until 1963, SUNY had free tuition. Three

## The idea from the start was not to compete with private colleges.

decades ago, the state bore about 80 percent of the cost of running SUNY. Now it's more like 30 percent.

And it's not just SUNY. Books about public higher education these days have titles like "Saving Alma Mater: A Rescue Plan for America's Public Universities," by James C. Garland, and "Saving State U: Fixing Public Higher Education," by Nancy Folbre. Both argue that the economic trends buffeting public higher education will continue with state budgets under a long-term siege and other expenses — elementary and secondary education, health care, prisons — deemed more critical and less discretionary.

"The business model of higher education that has worked for a century isn't working anymore, and it needs to change," said Dr. Garland, a former colleague of Dr. Zimpher at Ohio State and the former president of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. "Is New York going to be able to meet the financial needs of future students? The answer is no. The money just isn't there. None of the forces depleting state resources are going away, and it's wishful thinking to think government can find the money to fund campuses at the level they once did."

So maybe the new face of SUNY was the scene at its headquarters in May. That was when Mike Russo, director of government relations and regulatory affairs for Globalfoundries, a leading semiconductor manufacturer, was meeting with SUNY

officials about the training and personnel needs of the \$4.3 billion plant under construction near Albany. The plant is expected to create 1,400 technology jobs in its first phase, with perhaps more to come. Mr. Russo says the company is working not just with nearby community colleges and the nanotechnology institute at SUNY Albany, but also with the chancellor's office to identify potential workers throughout the SUNY system.

"Educational institutions are very parochial by nature," he said. "They want to sell you their wares. It's the survival of the fittest. In order to change that you need more than a strategic plan; they're a dime a dozen. You need leadership that makes everyone feel they have a stake in it. And I tell you that's happened with SUNY over the past seven months."

**C**HANCES are SUNY will never be reducible to a single brand. It's too many things to too many people with too many competing interests: to be accessible and to be elite, to be intellectual centers and to be job creators, to serve their communities and to (belatedly) compete with private universities that are its neighbors.

Still, if there's no single beloved campus, for some the hope remains that SUNY can morph into something more than the sum of its parts, though it's not clear whether the more tiered system that autonomy seems to foster would help the system build a common identity or blur it further.

"A lot of us still want New Yorkers to think of SUNY as their university, a part of our patrimony, like Ole Miss or the Texas Aggies," Dr. Steck said.

But then patrimony and the tug of the heart may be luxuries in the current Darwinian educational world. So despite the bruising battles this year, Dr. Zimpher is betting that in hard times, SUNY can find the identity its founders were half-heartedly groping toward six decades ago. "We are the growth engine for New York," she said. "We will yield a return on that investment and eventually enhance the taxpayers' ability to grow ourselves out of this deficit. Cut the engine loose, and let it do what it will for New York." ■

albany-otsego regional chamber of commerce

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"The Power of SUNY" strategic plan aims to  
revitalize New York's economy

Dr. Hilary Zingales, chancellor of the State University of New York

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advocating for business

Dr. Nancy Zimpher, SUNY Chancellor, discusses economic revitalization through New York's state budget through "The Power of SUNY"

# SUNY outlook

"The Power of SUNY" strategic plan aims to revitalize New York's economy

In her first year as chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY), Dr. Nancy Zimpher has visited all 64 campuses within the SUNY system, participated in 10 statewide conversations and symposia, and developed a new strategic plan that will serve as the roadmap for SUNY for the next five years and guide its development for the next decade.

That strategic plan, titled "The Power of SUNY," incorporates six forward-looking, interdependent areas of opportunity and challenge, or "Big Ideas," in which SUNY can serve as the driving force behind New York state's economic revitalization to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

"If we can fuel economic revitalization of the state — and this is so aligned with chambers of commerce — the revenue base will grow," she said. "If we generate revenue and retain more of our graduates to live and work in New York, the state will be revitalized and return the favor by investing in SUNY. If good-to-great is the measure, SUNY is great, and I think we can be premier. 'The Power of SUNY' can take New York there and take SUNY there."

## Midwest charm

A native Midwesterner, Zimpler previously served as executive dean at Ohio State University, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and president of the University of Cincinnati before joining SUNY.

"I came here because I had an incredible experience at three distinguished universities and saw the opportunity to lead SUNY," she said. "We're the only system that has the comprehensive responsibility of five different types of institutions: community colleges, technical colleges, comprehensive baccalaureate colleges, research universities and medical schools. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I was absolutely convinced by the SUNY board of trustees that this system wanted and needed new leadership and had a pretty clear idea of what the new leader was supposed to do."

Although she didn't officially begin serving as chancellor until June 1, 2009, she had the opportunity to meet with historians and former chancellors two months earlier during a 60th anniversary celebration of SUNY, and the visit proved formative.

"I spent three days on the University at Albany campus, and it was just a gold mine," she said. "It provided a very solid foundation for what the vision was when SUNY was created, when Governor Nelson Rockefeller was leading the design and building of these campuses. He said this was his crowning achievement, and my goal is to ensure that this vision comes out."

## Whirlwind tour

Upon assuming the role of SUNY chancellor, Zimpler proposed visiting all of its 64 campuses — a daunting task, compared to the institutions where she previously served.

"In Cincinnati or Milwaukee, you could do that on a golf cart in a day," she quipped. "SUNY is not quite the same, but we set our minds to it and designed a plan that got us around to all 64 campuses from June 1 to Labor Day. It took 95 days, and we traveled 7,500 miles, spending a half-day or more at each campus."

As she listened to school officials and took notes, she began to see patterns emerging among



SUNY's campuses as a whole. "It became clear to me that this was the initial phase of a strategic plan," she said. "SUNY could do no better and hold no higher vision than to focus its work on the economic revitalization of the state of New York."

This first round of campus visits yielded a working hypothesis, which built upon the strategic plan of each of SUNY's campuses while incorporating them into one, unified plan for the State University system.

"We are the State University of New York, and we need to fashion our plan in such a way that we could put it to rest on the economic revitalization process for New York," Zimpler said. "We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for the citizenry of New York. SUNY has this array of academics, engineers, philosophers, artists and performers, and we need to combine the economic realities of jobs and creating prospective employees with the richness of living the good life."

SUNY leaders went back out on the road last fall with a group of 200 representative constituents, including students, faculty, alumni, community leaders, board of trustees members, local media, chambers of commerce and elected officials to test the hypothesis that SUNY truly could be an economic engine for New York state.

"We broke that big idea into component parts we could realize as the strategies that build a plan, and we juggled topics as we learned more," Zimpler said. "After eight trips, we were able to lift this big idea of economic revitalization through the gateway of being better citizens."

The strategic plan was accessible online, and SUNY leaders sought feedback from interested parties, using social media to include as many individuals as possible in the process. "Strategic planning is not rocket science, there's a method to it," Zimpler said. "The way I like to do it is with an inclusive and engaging process. It's a means to a very productive end and gives people a sense of ownership of the plan."

## "Power" sharing

Ultimately, the strategic plan was crafted into "The Power of SUNY," which fulfills the three

We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for the citizenry of New York. We need to combine the economic realities of jobs and creating prospective employees with the richness of living the good life.

imperatives on the SUNY seal — “To Learn, To Search, To Serve” — while building upon SUNY’s core values of student-centeredness, community engagement, diversity, integrity and collaboration.

“The Power of SUNY” was launched in April, marking Zimpler’s third trip across the state in less than a year. “We started in New York City, then we went to Albany, over to Binghamton and Utica/Rome, then to Syracuse, Saratoga, came back to Purchase and Old Westbury, stopped at New Paltz and ended in Rochester and Buffalo,” she said, listing every destination, enclaves connected.

To revitalize the economy of New York and enhance the quality of life for its citizens, SUNY is committing its energy and resources to the realization of “Six Big Ideas,” which include:

- SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century
- SUNY and the Seamless Education Pipeline
- SUNY and a Healthier New York
- SUNY and an Energy-Smart New York
- SUNY and the Abruzzo Community
- SUNY and the World

The “Six Big Ideas” represent interdependent areas of opportunity and challenge where its been determined SUNY can make the biggest difference for the state of New York. Each “Big Idea” proposes three major initiatives whose progress can be measured over time, while also demonstrating how SUNY will advance its commitment to diversity.

The “Big Idea” of SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century, for example, aims to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking across the entire learning landscape, helping new and existing businesses survive, prosper and grow. Three initiatives proposed to fulfill the “Big Idea” of SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century are:

- SUNY StartUP, which will create programs that provide successful local entrepreneurs onto SUNY campuses to advise and serve as mentors for students and professors, who will, in turn, go out into their communities and put their fresh ideas and energy directly to work for local businesses.
- Developing strategies that draw in the full suite of investors including federal, state, private, venture capital and grant funding, while leveraging SUNY’s size and strength to become the go-to destination for critical basic and applied research in such areas as energy, health sciences and nanotechnology.
- SUNY-INC (Incubate New Companies), a development clinic that will promote and track concept through each development

stage, from design to manufacturing, marketing and job training, while aligning resources with their peers on other SUNY campuses and a broader public and private organizations across the state.

In terms of diversity, SUNY will play a powerful role in promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) studies among women and minorities all along the education pipeline and ensuring all students develop the logical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills they’ll need to become scientists, researchers, inventors and entrepreneurs.

### Empire State building

SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century is but one of six “Big Ideas” in SUNY’s strategic plan, and Zimpler believes the collective impact of the initiatives proposed in “The Power of SUNY” will be significant and state-wide.

“The underlying theme of The Power of SUNY is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” she said. “We’re not just 64 campuses, we must connect through a central theme, but the real payoff comes when we attach these themes to metrics and actually say what we, together with other partners, can do to foster the economic vitality of the state.”

Zimpler understands the importance of partnerships, particularly with chambers of commerce; in fact, prior to her arrival at SUNY, she served as chair of the board of directors of the Chautauqui USA Regional Chamber.

“The Power of SUNY” is an excellent way of talking about our commitment to New York, but The Power of SUNY is the power of partnerships,” she said. “I am a huge believer in the role of local and regional chambers, and I understand their role in the vitality of communities.”

Having addressed the state and visited each of SUNY’s 64 campuses, Zimpler is certain that “The Power of SUNY” will successfully chart a course for those campuses over the next five to 10 years.

“What I am confident of is that every April, we’ll produce a report card that actually reminds people what our goals were, who our partners are, what our metrics are, and how we’re doing,” she said. “SUNY has 464,961 students, with 66,000 employees and 2.4 million alumni. We are niches of those communities, and the place of each campus in those communities is really palpable.”

To read a complete version of “The Power of SUNY,” visit [www.ny.usdipass.org/farm](http://www.ny.usdipass.org/farm). ●

## Praise for plan

“The Power of SUNY” will guide the State University for years to come, and the presidents of several local SUNY institutions welcome the initiatives that this strategic plan proposes.



George Philip, president, University at Albany: “Chancellor Zimpler’s strategic plan is an outstanding blueprint for increasing the power of SUNY. The University at Albany is already deeply

involved in realizing many of the big ideas the chancellor identified. Our nano technology enterprise and our East Campus are examples of how the University at Albany fosters collaborations and economic growth.”



Dr. Donald P. Zingale, president, SUNY Cobleskill: “The common thread in The Power of SUNY” plan is a focus on SUNY’s proven, broad-based potential to revitalize New York’s economy now

and in the future. For SUNY Cobleskill, it helps to frame our own strategic imperatives.”



Dr. Drew Malatuk, president, Hudson Valley Community College: “The Power of SUNY” harnesses the strengths of the State University system as a whole to revitalize New York’s economy and

improve the quality of life in our communities. The plan fits hand in glove with Hudson Valley’s commitment to preparing students for a 21st century workforce and economy.”



Dr. Quentin Bullock, president, Schenectady County Community College: “The Power of SUNY” is an exceptional plan. Schenectady County Community College is excited about the opportu-

nities afforded in the plan and playing an integral role in achieving the Plan’s goals. We look forward to being a responsive, affordable and innovative institution of higher learning where the students at the center of our enterprise and the quality of teaching and learning is paramount.”

# THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education

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## Shaping SUNY Into a Whole Greater Than Its Parts

by Eric Kelderman • April 18, 2010

### Albany, N.Y.

Nancy L. Zimpher admits to being infatuated with self-help books, especially those about corporate leadership. As chancellor of the State University of New York, she may need all the help she can get as she tests her own management theories in an effort to bolster the image and quality of the nation's largest system of public higher education.

During the past decade, SUNY has been plagued by frequent turnover in leadership and hampered by limited cooperation among the system's 64 campuses, which are mired in competition for sparse resources and hamstrung by state regulations.

Like several previous chancellors, Ms. Zimpher has an ambitious goal: to unite the system's two-year colleges, regional universities, and major research institutions around a common set of goals. A strategic plan she unveiled this month seeks to redefine the role of the system, coordinate the focus of its campuses, and raise its profile both in New York and across the nation.

While the system's larger universities have little incentive to go along with the plans, several campus leaders say the depth of the state's economic and political crises may force them to cooperate to a new degree. And higher-education leaders who know the chancellor say her tenacity and ability to build consensus may help her succeed where others have failed.

Ms. Zimpher, 64, began teaching in a small schoolhouse in Missouri. But she learned about higher education working at large land-grant and urban universities and says she thrives on the size and complexity of the Empire State. She is invigorated by the challenges of the treacherous political landscape and of a diverse and sometimes unwieldy university system. "I know how to deal with big," she says.



Corey Wascinski for *The Chronicle*

### A System Adrift

From her office here, on the top floor of an ornate, Gothic tower, Ms. Zimpher can see the Hudson River to the east and the grand, gray-granite State Capitol to the northwest. It's a commanding view, but the office seems to have become a precarious perch. Recent chancellors haven't stayed in the post for long.

Since 2000, the system, which enrolls nearly 465,000 students,

has been led by two other chancellors, an interim chancellor, and an "officer in charge," who held the chancellor's authority after the most recent interim officer resigned. Ms. Zimpher began the job in June 2009, two years after the previous chancellor had stepped down.

The frequent changes at the top have come during a period when the state budget has been battered by two national recessions. New York lawmakers had to close a \$21-billion revenue shortfall, an amount equal to 38 percent of the budget, for the 2010 fiscal year, and the state projects a revenue gap of nearly 15 percent for the 2011 fiscal year, which began on April 1.

Gov. David A. Paterson's proposed budget would cut SUNY's funds by \$170-million, an amount that represents nearly a quarter of the cuts for all state agencies. Those cuts would come on top of more than \$400-million in reductions in state aid that the system had to absorb for the 2009-10 budget year.

A lack of money from the state has already contributed to the overall decline in New York's public colleges, according to a report from a gubernatorially appointed commission in 2008 that studied SUNY and the City University of New York.

Revenue shortages created a \$5-billion backlog in building maintenance at the state and city systems and forced campuses to compromise academic quality by hiring too

# Shaping SUNY Into a Whole Greater Than Its Parts (cont.)

many adjunct and part-time faculty members compared with tenure-track professors, the report said. The commission also estimated that the state had lost 27,000 research-related jobs and as much as \$2.2-billion in research grants and because of the declining quality of its public colleges.

Overregulation by the state has also hampered the system by limiting the constituent universities' abilities to earn and spend their money, the report said. For example, the universities are not allowed to lease their land, and they must go through "layers of micromanagement" for purchasing and contracts, the report said.

With all of its troubles, there is a sense that SUNY "has hit a wall," said Abraham M. Lackman, a former president of New York's Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities.

## A Problem Solver

Before she was hired as chancellor, Ms. Zimpher gained a reputation for toughness and determination during her presidencies at two other institutions, said Stephen J. Trachtenberg, president emeritus of George Washington University and a higher-education consultant who has advised Ms. Zimpher. "She's got a lot of grit," he said.

From 2003 until last year, she was president of the University of Cincinnati, where she fired the popular but controversial men's basketball coach, Bob Huggins. He had been arrested in 2004 on a drunken driving charge, and his players, who frequently had run-ins with the law, had abysmal graduation rates.

Despite an outcry from some local sports fans, Ms. Zimpher left Cincinnati with more than a few enthusiastic supporters. She is widely credited with helping to dig the university out of a \$260-million deficit, the result of a campus-renovation program carried out by her predecessor, said H.C. Buck Niehoff, a member of the university's Board of Trustees. But the hallmark of Ms. Zimpher's leadership at Cincinnati—and, before that, at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, from 1998 to 2003—was the development of an ambitious strategic plan. Two pillows embroidered by a friend with the titles of those plans, "UC 21" and the "Milwaukee Idea," sit in her office at SUNY.

Her plan at Cincinnati sought to enhance the university's academic reputation, research output, and profile within the state. E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State University, praised Ms. Zimpher for giving a mid-tier institution new prominence. "What she did for Cincinnati was stake out its place in the world," he said.

At both Cincinnati and Milwaukee, Ms. Zimpher engaged large groups of faculty members, students, and administrators to help form the framework of her strategic plans. And both of them represented efforts to reinvigorate urban universities that were sometimes thought of as secondary institutions within their states, a notion that steeled her resolve to succeed.

"Serving in an environment where you're not the designated hitter makes you work harder," she said.

For example, in order to set the Milwaukee campus apart from the flagship, in Madison, it joined with the state's two-year colleges to offer training programs, which no other institution in the University of Wisconsin system was interested in at the time, she said. "I had to fight the notion that the only game in town was Madison."

## The Next Plan

Ms. Zimpher is now determined to demonstrate her leadership on a statewide basis in New York, starting with the reshaping of the top-level administration at SUNY. She has created two key positions, a vice chancellor for international affairs and a chancellor's deputy for the education pipeline, reflecting her priorities for the future of the system.

And the chancellor's office will be moved from its spot on the 12th floor of the tower to the fourth floor, with the rest of Ms. Zimpher's executive committee. The move is symbolic but is also meant to facilitate better communication among top administrators.

Kenneth P. O'Brien, president of the SUNY University Faculty Senate, said the chancellor's staff choices had been well received. "She has assembled a team that has brought a competence across the board that we have been missing for a long time," he said.

Ms. Zimpher also sought out the views of people across the system by visiting each of the 64 campuses during 2009, her first year in office. The concerns she heard consistently, she said, made it clear that there was a need for a new strategic plan.

That plan, "The Power of SUNY," has eight themes, meant to focus academic programming on the system's strengths and turn SUNY into an indispensable economic engine in the state. Among those themes are creating new business opportunities through research, improving the education pipeline from secondary schools to colleges, improving health-care delivery and research within the state, and creating a more sustainable environment through energy conservation and research.

The plan's development was collaborative, involving hundreds of administrators, faculty members, and students. Now Ms. Zimpher is working to make sure that everyone follows the new strategy. Individual campuses must align their own strategic plans with the system's goals. Presidents will be evaluated based on how their campuses meet specific benchmarks. "We have to tether it to accountability," the chancellor said.

She also has formed a committee to assess the system's program and enrollment needs to eliminate "mission creep" on individual campuses by eliminating or consolidating academic programs that are not cost-effective or necessary to the mission. Some programs could also be expanded if

## Shaping SUNY Into a Whole Greater Than Its Parts (cont.)

it is warranted, Ms. Zimpher added.

The campus presidents, however, especially at the system's top research universities, are wary of changes that would diminish their authority. No plan can be a "one size fits all" formula, said Samuel L. Stanley, president of the Stony Brook campus. It is one of the two public universities in New York that belong to the Association of American Universities, a select group of 64 research institutions in North America. SUNY's University at Buffalo is the other.

"We're very interested in keeping the system moving forward, but my primary responsibility is moving Stony Brook forward," he said. "We do want some degree of autonomy."

Ms. Zimpher acknowledged that the presidents may not be so willing to go along with any specific program cuts. "What they think is this turf problem, this mission creep is something that needs to be solved, and what they assume is that it will be solved in their favor," she said.

Despite criticism that SUNY is inefficient, with too many campuses, Ms. Zimpher said closing institutions is not on her agenda. But she said she may consider consolidating the administrations of some campuses to save money.

### Political Challenges

SUNY's size and scope are among the factors that have made it difficult to govern. No other public system of higher education in the nation encompasses as wide a range of institutions, from two-year technical colleges to research universities. The state's population, the third-largest in the country, includes the wealth and prestige of Manhattan as well as the extreme poverty and isolation in its upstate region, which has been steadily losing people and industry for decades.

Another major governance challenge for SUNY is the state's political and regulatory climate. The state government has been in a nearly constant state of turmoil since 2006. And the layers of red tape for higher education are thicker here than in nearly any other state. For example, when students at SUNY's four-year colleges pay their tuition, the money first goes to Albany, where state lawmakers must agree to send it back to the campuses.

Ms. Zimpher has already begun an effort to unravel some of the bureaucracy. Through meetings between her top financial aide and the governor's budget director, Governor Paterson was persuaded to propose changes that she and other SUNY officials wanted in the 2011 fiscal year.

In light of probable budget cuts, Ms. Zimpher said, the measures would give the state universities opportunities to save money and earn more revenue by allowing SUNY to set higher tuition on some campuses. The governor's proposal would also take tuition out of the state's budget, pre-

venting lawmakers from putting the money back into state coffers, and instead give control of it to the universities.

"Tuition should go to campuses, not to close budget gaps," Ms. Zimpher said during a recent meeting with State Sen. Suzi Oppenheimer, a Democrat and chairwoman of the chamber's Standing Committee on Education, and several of her staff members. "We're the only state in the country where the tuition goes to the state and then the Legislature decides what it will give back. You might as well call it a tax on students."

The senator said she would try to advance pieces of the regulatory changes, but the prospects are uncertain at best. The state budget is three weeks overdue, and Governor Paterson, who had previously pressed for the changes, is beset by controversy and has dropped his re-election plans.

Working with the politically powerful unions that represent faculty and staff members at SUNY is another complication for Ms. Zimpher.

Phillip H. Smith, president of the United University Professions, the nation's largest higher education union and one that represents 56 percent of the nearly 57,000 employees on SUNY's four-year campuses, said the chancellor is "naïve" to argue for regulatory freedom rather than fight harder for increased appropriations. Since the regulatory changes are controversial, he said, the system could end up without those and without more money as well.

The union is also concerned that the public-private partnerships that would be allowed under the proposed regulatory changes would operate with nonunion staff members and be exempt from the collective-bargaining process.

Ms. Zimpher said she was surprised by Mr. Smith's strong reaction, especially after her extensive discussions with the union about the need to present a unified front to lawmakers. Like the union, Ms. Zimpher said, her goal is to retain and eventually increase the number of faculty members in the system.

Several SUNY presidents and national higher-education leaders said it was clear that without a systemwide approach to both the regulatory changes and the strategic goals, all of the institutions will suffer.

Ms. Zimpher is bringing the disparate campus leaders together by making sure that individual campuses will not flourish unless the entire system flourishes, said Mr. Trachtenberg. "They're all in the same boat."

Mr. O'Brien, of the Faculty Senate, said politicians, too, must recognize the need to redefine the relationship between the system and the state. And he trusts in Ms. Zimpher's ability to develop consensus and think strategically.

"This chancellor," he said, "is the absolute best hope we've got."



# SUNY's New Mission: Chancellor refocuses university on jobs, jobs, jobs

By The Post-Standard Editorial Board  
Tuesday, February 1, 2011

Syracuse, NY -- Sandwiched between Gov. Andrew Cuomo's State of the State and President Obama's State of the Union was a speech you didn't hear much about — Chancellor Nancy Zimpher's State of SUNY address.

Zimpher presides over the nation's largest public university system. The State University of New York has 64 campuses, 88,000 employees, 468,000 students, 7,669 degree programs and an economic impact of \$27.5 billion.

SUNY touches all of the state, with a campus within 30 miles of every New Yorker, according to the chancellor. That includes Central New York, where SUNY's imprint ranges from Upstate Medical University and the College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, to four-year colleges at Oswego and Cortland, to community and technical colleges here and in surrounding counties. SUNY's influence multiplies with the thousands of graduates it pumps back into the workforce each year, not least of which are the 5,000 teachers who lay the foundation for the success of the next generation of New Yorkers.

While the colleges themselves are engines of economic activity — employing local people, buying from local vendors, putting up new buildings even as private-sector construction lags — Zimpher believes SUNY can do more to lift New York state's economy out of the doldrums.

"We estimate SUNY has the capacity to create nearly 20,000 construction and construction industry jobs and another 20,000 spinoff jobs through partnerships," she said in her speech.



Stephen D. Cannerelli/The Post-Standard

Nancy Zimpher became chancellor of The State University of New York in June 2009. Shortly thereafter she began a "listening tour" of all 64 campuses that brought her to SUNY Oswego in July 2009.

How? Zimpher was light on the details. She did say the university system must do a better job of turning academic research into real products — technology transfer, in academic lingo — and she called on the state Legislature to loosen the rules governing public-private partnerships. That's a reasonable request in light of the potential of such partnerships to create new revenues and new jobs. Until legislators get around to doing so, Cuomo's executive branch offices responsible for vetting such contracts should do

whatever they can to expedite the process.

SUNY needs new revenue streams to fill the gaps left by declining government support. With the state at least \$10 billion in the red, the budget Cuomo unveils today will have to cut into muscle and bone. It's unlikely SUNY will be spared.

Zimpher isn't waiting for the ax to fall. SUNY is making moves to consolidate back-office operations of the 64 campuses to save money. She put institutions on notice that in 2012 they'll start competing for state funding based on their performance in such critical areas as research spending, degrees that match workforce needs and graduation rates. And she's tapping SUNY's 3 million alumni for donations to double fundraising in support of the university's mission.

That mission has always been to provide an affordable and quality education to New Yorkers and students from outside the state's borders. Creating jobs is a welcome — and necessary — addition.

# U.S. News Getting It Wrong: Assess Teacher Programs Sensibly

Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, The State University of New York

February 14, 2011

National rankings of colleges and universities are of great use to prospective students and parents, and to the institutions themselves. They can provide valid and impartial measures of the overall education experience schools have to offer, as well as the effectiveness of their programs and the achievements of their students and alumni. To be sure, such rankings – especially when widely-publicized and distributed – can also influence, for good or ill, student enrollment, funding, grant allocations and more.

That's exactly why rankings must be compiled, evaluated and presented in a fair, accurate and responsible manner.

Last month, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) and U.S. News & World Report announced an ambitious undertaking: establishing a ranking of the nearly 1,400 teacher-preparation programs in place at colleges and universities across the country. I applaud their intentions to ensure that teachers and the programs we use to prepare them for the classroom are of the utmost quality. And I'm confident that SUNY campuses would fair very well in such a ranking if it were conducted sensibly.

However, the current methodology proposed by NCTQ and U.S. News & World Report will not get the job done. SUNY schools simply cannot participate in the survey until its flaws are rectified.

In a letter to U.S. News & World Report Editor Brian Kelly, I have, along with California State University Chancellor Charles B. Reed and University System of Maryland Chancellor William E. Kirwan, advised that the 98 campuses we represent will delay their participation in the NCTQ/U.S. News survey until our concerns are adequately addressed.

And we aren't the only ones raising a red flag. This week, officials from Association of American Universities institutions, the president and provost of Teachers College of Columbia University and 35 deans from some of the top research universities in the country all voiced similar concerns.

An accurate and fair survey would take advantage of the best minds at colleges and universities with a history of successful teacher preparation to develop and review survey design, employ the types of rigorous assessment

methods and standards that are already tried and true, and focus on the most critical factors that lead to success.

The current survey relies on input information – such as course syllabi and textbooks – instead of outcomes – such as teacher performance, skill in promoting student learning and persistence in the profession.

While NCTQ has apparently agreed to give schools an “incomplete” score instead of punishing those that choose not to participate by giving them a failing grade, they must go further. NCTQ must allow for legitimate corrections to evaluations by campuses and agree to not rank institutions that choose to withdraw from the survey. Right now, NCTQ doesn't allow mistakes to be corrected and it takes information from sources of questionable reliability.

Teacher education is one of the critical issues of our time. A teacher and a teacher educator by training, I began my career in a one-room schoolhouse in the foothills of the Ozarks. As a higher education administrator, I've spent years advocating for reforms to teacher education. I'm also deeply engaged in a robust national conversation on teacher preparation and have been for more than three decades. Teaching is my passion and preparing teachers the right way has been my life's work.

So I see the value in what these rankings aim to address. However, I also see a U.S. News methodology that is a certain recipe for failure and one that will do more harm than good in moving our country toward improving the training we provide for our teachers.

A useful evaluation of teacher education in this country cannot be done halfway. For this survey to move forward as it is currently configured -- and without participation from three of the nation's largest systems of public higher education -- would be a disservice to the students, parents and campuses that the rankings are meant to benefit.

There is great potential value in these new rankings, but not in their current format. An inaccurate and unfair assessment of teacher preparation would ultimately hurt our ability to produce quality teachers. NCTQ and U.S. News & World Report have a responsibility to get this right and it's clear that they're headed down the wrong path.

# Education Leaders Strive to Increase Academic Achievement

Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, The State University of New York

January 31, 2011

In his State of the Union address last week, President Obama issued a challenge: are we willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed? But I don't believe it's a question of will; it's a question of how.

Educators, civic leaders and government are already working – quite hard – to raise test scores and graduation rates. Collaboration is where we fail – rallying all stakeholders around a common effort to achieve these goals. The sad truth of this collective failure is that all of our individual efforts come up short. Despite our best intentions, the improvements needed to better educate our children and students remain out of reach.

Education must be seen as a continuum, from cradle to career – or, as the president said on Tuesday, "from the day they're born until the last job they take." We call this the Education Pipeline, and for the most part, educators in the U.S. have failed to own our mutual responsibility in maintaining it.

It is a myth that one person or group can fix education by themselves, no matter how visionary or passionate. Only by working together – public and private institutions of higher education, state education departments, school districts, elected officials, civic, philanthropic and corporate leaders – will we see results.

We must set aside traditional territorial finger-pointing and share expectations and evidence-based interventions. At the same time, we need the courage to hold each other accountable by evaluating our progress and, at regular intervals, present it in a transparent manner for all to see. And, given the state of our economy, the price tag of our efforts must be affordable.

This may sound like a fantasy – generating real, large-scale change at little to no cost – but it's already happening in places like Cincinnati, Houston and Richmond and will soon take shape in New York, Boston and other cities across the country. I'm talking about cradle-to-career networks – innovative regional partnerships where all involved are pursuing a mutual goal to effectively educate students at every level.

Next week, education and community leaders from across the country will convene in Washington DC to

launch these partnerships. This network will be modeled after Strive Together, which I helped create in 2006, and is currently doing remarkable work in public school districts in greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

The purpose of Strive is not solely to increase academic achievement, but to also increase kindergarten preparedness and college graduation rates. And we have been successful. At Cincinnati's public schools, 8th grade math scores have gone up 15 percent and college enrollment has increased by 10 percent. At Northern Kentucky University and the University of Cincinnati, graduation rates for students from the local urban area high schools have increased by 10 and 7 percent respectively. There have been additional improvements in the number of preschool children prepared for kindergarten, fourth-grade reading and math scores and high school graduation rates. Strive results have been so compelling that nine regions across the country have signed on to replicate or adapt the program.

That's exactly what we are doing here in New York. As the chancellor of the largest public institution of higher learning in the country, I believe it is SUNY's civic duty to step out of the traditional university role and answer this challenge. SUNY is establishing a series of systemic and sustainable regional education networks that will bring together partners who, like those in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, have signed on to strengthen the education pipeline from cradle to career.

We will begin in Albany by collaborating with the City School District, several of our regional SUNY campuses, local government and not-for-profit organizations like the Albany Education Family Alliance and the United Way. Simultaneously, SUNY will begin to develop collaborative programs in Buffalo, Brooklyn and in Harlem, where SUNY has engaged in a new neighborhood collaborative to turn-around four struggling public schools – impacting more than 2,000 students.

Someone has to take the lead on this critical national discussion, and I believe that higher education has a deep responsibility and great capacity to do just that.

So, yes, Mr. President – we are willing. But only together are we able.