M E M O R A N D U M

January 13, 2015

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

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

SUBJECT: SUNY Excels Performance System

Action Requested

The proposed resolution supports and endorses SUNY Excels as the University's performance system and key driver for the Power of SUNY strategic plan for the next five years. Henceforth, the plan will be known as the Power of SUNY 2020.

Resolution

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

Whereas SUNY believes that by acting as a system and by adopting evidence-based best practices, colleges and universities can operate at peak performance, and, by channeling our collective power, we will more effectively address our nation's most pervasive challenges; and

Whereas SUNY seeks to demonstrate our accountability and performance in a way that more effectively tells our story, with the goal of attracting increased external investment; and

Whereas to reinforce our commitment to continuous improvement, we depend on the engagement of leaders, faculty, staff, administration, and research services from all SUNY campuses and System Administration; and

Whereas the Power of SUNY sets system-level strategic goals consistent with the statutory mission of the State University of New York (per NYS Education Law, Article 8, Section 351); and

Whereas SUNY's Master Plan for 2012 and Beyond, *Delivering on Our Promise*, affirms SUNY's longstanding commitment to serving the citizens of New York State; and

Whereas Board of Trustees Resolution No. 2013-025, *Data Transparency and Reporting*, calls for enhanced quality of all SUNY schools by developing and implementing plans for the regular assessment and review of institutional effectiveness, academic programs, and general education that are consistent with the particular institution's mission and goals within the context of SUNY's mission and goals, and by developing a plan for data reporting; and

Whereas Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued Executive Order No. 95, *Using Technology to Promote Transparency, Improve Government Performance and Enhance Citizen Engagement*, requiring covered state entities to make certain data available to the public in the interest of transparency and efficiency, and SUNY has provided certain data for public dissemination on the New York State Open Data Website, thus demonstrating a continued commitment to achieving accountability; and

Whereas Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, in *Moving the New New York Forward*, acknowledges that New York has among the highest quality education in the world and calls for more affordable higher education across the State, specifically, by ensuring that students graduate on time; that State universities and colleges make a pledge to offer students targeted supports that have been proven to help them complete a college degree on time; that applied learning opportunities are brought closer to campuses via START-UP NY; that experiential learning become a graduation requirement; and that the financial burden on recent graduates is eased through the *Get on Your Feet Loan Forgiveness Program*; and

Whereas nationally, the majority of states have reconsidered longstanding enrollment-based funding models and instead are allocating or are contemplating allocating some amount of funding based on performance indicators that align with state goals and priorities; and

Whereas SUNY should align with national efforts and priorities, including those of the Student Achievement Measure (SAM), the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), and the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), as well as Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accreditation standards; and

Whereas the Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the National Association of System Heads, and others seek to transform the ability of higher educational systems to engage in continuous improvement and facilitate large-scale change by building their capacity to have collective impact on major national priorities; and

Whereas the Obama Administration recently unveiled its framework for a college ratings system, in which colleges and universities will be ranked based on affordability, how they support low-income students, and how their graduates fare in the job market; and

Whereas the Chancellor, over a two-year period, has implemented a systematic, deliberative, highly consultative process by conferring with SUNY's leadership, including members of the Board of Trustees, campus presidents and chief academic officers, faculty and student governance leaders, as well as representatives from SUNY-wide organizations in the development of the Power of SUNY 2020 and SUNY Excels; and

Whereas this consultative process has led to SUNY Excels' focus on the five identified priority areas: Access, Completion, Success, Inquiry, and Engagement; and

Whereas within these five priority areas, the system and campuses have developed a set of system-level metrics to track progress, which may evolve over time as data becomes available; and

Whereas campuses are encouraged to track both system- and campus-level metrics in more depth and/or report additional measures as is appropriate to their campus mission and strategic activities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the SUNY Board of Trustees authorizes the State University of New York to adopt SUNY Excels as its performance system; and, be it further

Resolved that SUNY will set system-level five-year targets and will regularly re-examine these goals as the system improves and data becomes available; and, be it further

Resolved that each SUNY campus, including the State-operated campuses, community colleges, and statutory colleges, will set performance targets in accordance with its unique campus mission, and performance will be evaluated in the context of that mission; and, be it further

Resolved that each SUNY campus will be responsible for timely and accurate data collection, submission, and reporting, and, where necessary, responsiveness to requested campus-level data that is not currently collected via normal centralized data submissions; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor, system senior staff, and campus leadership will work together to advocate for incremental funding from New York State to advance the major components of SUNY Excels and the Power of SUNY 2020; and, be it further

Resolved that SUNY will review existing University-wide allocation and leverage funding to align with SUNY Excels; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor and Provost will work with leadership, faculty, and others on SUNY campuses to implement this resolution, including the continued consultation with faculty and student governance, and shall report periodically to the Board of Trustees any additional steps that may be needed to ensure the successful implementation of this resolution.

Background

Across the nation, an ever-growing number of states are adopting performance funding systems. Per the National Council of State Legislatures, 25 states—Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Washington—have funding formulas in place that allocate some amount of funding based on performance indicators such as course completion, time to degree, transfer rates, the number of degrees awarded, or the number of low-income and minority graduates. Five states—Colorado, Georgia, Montana, South Dakota, and Virginia—are currently transitioning to some type of performance funding, meaning the legislature or governing board has approved a performance funding program and the details are currently being worked out.

Given SUNY's statutory mission and longstanding commitment to quality and accountability, SUNY seeks to establish a performance system that drives continuous improvement toward excellence at all levels—system, sector, campus, faculty, student, and staff. Moreover, SUNY believes that harnessing its systemness and adopting evidence-based best practices from collective impact partnerships, colleges and universities can operate at peak performance and move the dial on our most meaningful population-level challenges.

To that end, guiding principles for developing SUNY Excels include:

• Identify outcomes that are mission-critical, understandable, and widely inclusive;

• Select a reasonable number of measures that are easy to track on a regular basis while aligned with existing assessments;

• Build on existing data collection (Report Card);

• Maintain sensitivity to external conditions, as well as campus and sector distinctiveness;

• Drive continuous improvement; and

• Be ambitious and visionary.

In developing this framework, SUNY reviewed other states' performance management systems, examined national efforts such as the Student Achievement Measure (SAM), the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), and reviewed what SUNY already reports in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), in SUNY Fast Facts, and in the SUNY Report Card. Subsequently, a list of over

200 possible performance metrics was created—this was well beyond what could reasonably be measured. The average number of metrics tracked by states was seven, with the range from one (North Dakota) to 29 (Arizona).

After two years of a systematic, deliberative, highly consultative process, conferring with SUNY's leadership, including the Board of Trustees, Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, University Faculty Senate, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, Student Assembly, New York Community College Association of Presidents, New York Community College Trustees, Chief Enrollment Officers & Admissions Directors, the Diversity Task Force, Advancement Officers, Foundation Directors, and the Research Council, plus countless other discussions with governance groups, role-alike groups, board members, national association members, and subject matter experts, the list was refined to 28 measurement areas.

With this list, SUNY consulted Institutional Research professionals at System Administration and at campuses, and discussed measures with the Research Foundation and other data experts at SUNY to determine the ideal data collection, storage, and reporting of these metrics. Almost 90 percent of the data around the proposed metrics is currently collected and can be reported in SUNY Excels with minimal effort. There are several metrics with data that is difficult to collect or not fully collected for all campuses in a systematic way, but this data is expected to be more solid as SUNY's data collection, business practices, IT systems, and infrastructure evolve.

In December 2014, the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost convened a SUNY Excels Steering Committee comprised of Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, Finance/Administration, Vice Presidents for Research, IR/Strategic Planning, and Governance and System Administration expertise. The Steering Committee was charged with narrowing the list of metrics, providing advice on setting targets, and developing a communication/implementation strategy.

Through this inclusive process, SUNY has identified five priority areas that can be improved upon by channeling our collective power: Access, Completion, Success, Inquiry, and Engagement.

The list of system-level metrics (recognizing that these will evolve over time) includes the following:

- **Access** – NYS Citizens Served by SUNY; Full Student Enrollment Picture; Diversity; Capacity

- **Completion** – Completions; Student Achievement/Success; Graduation Rates; Time to Degree

- **Success** – SUNY Advantage (student access to and satisfaction with opportunities that promote post-completion success, such as applied

learning and hands-on research, multicultural experiences, academic advisement, and career counseling); Financial Literacy

- **Inquiry** – Total Sponsored Activity; Faculty and Student Scholarship, Discovery and Innovation; Inquiry embedded curricula/courses

- **Engagement** – START-UP New York and beyond jobs and businesses; Alumni/Philanthropic Support; Civic Engagement; Economic Impact

Note that while Diversity is explicitly identified as a metric in Access, we will be seeking out and tracking inclusive excellence across metrics in all five priority areas.

Using these metrics to define performance, SUNY will set system-level five-year targets and will re-examine these goals as the system improves and data becomes more readily available. Each campus will help support SUNY Excels and drive improvement by implementing SUNY Excels at their campus and setting campus-level targets. These targets will be set with the overall system-level goals of SUNY Excels within the context of campus and sector missions.

Importantly, SUNY Excels is not a measurement of one institution against another, but an institution against itself over time. Not every institution should be striving to do everything, but rather each institution should be doing what it excels at and what its mission aims to achieve. SUNY Excels is designed to enable and communicate each campus' strengths and, in turn, SUNY's strengths as a whole. Indeed, SUNY is already ahead of most national benchmarks and will continue to support each campus in being the best at what they do.

By showing progress as a system from year to year, SUNY demonstrates to the people of New York that there is value to investing in SUNY. We need to clearly articulate to SUNY's stakeholders all that we have accomplished: what we have done for our students, and what we have done for our communities. We want to position ourselves as leaders in the country and the world.

The term "systemness" is defined as "the coordination of multiple components that, when working together, create a network of activity that is more powerful than any action of individual parts on their own." By holding ourselves accountable with performance metrics identified collectively but implemented on each SUNY campus across the State, we achieve systemness and harness SUNY's ability to improve the lives of every New Yorker in more meaningful and impactful ways than ever before. In essence, we harness the Power of SUNY.