MEMORANDUM

January 14, 2014

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor
SUBJECT: Master Plan Amendment for the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi

Action Requested

The proposed resolution authorizes the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi (SUNY Delhi) to confer the Master of Science (M.S.) degree, subject to approval by the New York State Board of Regents ("Regents").

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 the State University of New York at Delhi to offer the Master of Science degree in the discipline of the Health Professions; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor be, and hereby is, authorized to transmit this amendment to the Regents and the Governor for incorporation in the State University Master Plan.

Background

Approval of this resolution will authorize the State University of New York College of Technology at Delhi to confer the Master of Science (M.S.) degree, subject to the approval of the Regents. Degree authorization is necessary as the award represents the College’s first use of a Master of Science degree and the College’s first program at the graduate level in the discipline of the Health Professions.
The Master of Science degree is consistent with the mission of SUNY Delhi to provide flexible programs of study that lead to undergraduate and graduate degrees. Approval of the M.S. in Nursing – the College’s first proposed M.S. degree program – with a concentration in Nursing Education supports The Power of SUNY strategic goals by providing access to high-needs programs through innovative delivery strategies. The College’s proposed flexible, online M.S. in Nursing program will increase access to affordable graduate study in nursing.

In 2008, SUNY Delhi established an R.N. to B.S.N. completion program which earned full accreditation from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) in 2010. The M.S. in Nursing is a logical extension of that program; it will expand the College’s capacity to meet the well-documented need within the state for nurses with advanced degrees to serve as nurse educators and in other leadership positions. The M.S. program is designed for full- and part-time online study to accommodate the needs of adult learners. Enrollment is projected to start with 40 students in the first year, growing to 180 within five years.

The 42 credit M.S. curriculum is modeled on the 2011 Essentials of Master’s Education in Nursing delineated by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). After completing 21 core credits, students will complete 21 credits in the specialization of education. The proposed M.S. curriculum was positively reviewed by a panel of external evaluators who determined there to be sufficient need for such a program.

SUNY Delhi offers a robust online course management system and extensive learning resources and supports. The College presently enrolls over 750 students in its full accredited online BSN program and delivers online courses to over 1,000 registrants in its online summer sessions. Applicants to the M.S. program must hold a bachelor’s degree in nursing as well as an unencumbered Registered Nurse (R.N.) license. The program will give preference to candidates residing within New York State, as well as those who demonstrate strong academic and professional preparation. In support of SUNY and Healthier New York, the College will vigorously recruit students from across the state, especially urban centers, thereby servicing working registered nurses who seek further education and career advancement.

The proposed program embraces SUNY’s commitment to the Educational Pipeline through its focus on preparing much needed nursing educators who can help train the next generation of nurses. Nursing programs across New York State and the rest of the U.S. have had to turn students away because of the lack of qualified faculty. According to the Center for Health Workforce Studies (2011), 48% of nursing programs in 2010 in New York State reported they turned away or wait listed qualified applicants. It is estimated that more than 2,500 qualified applicants were turned away from New York State’s nursing programs. Twenty-
two percent of the responding programs indicated that lack of qualified faculty was the reason for turning away applicants.

According to a Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions released by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in 2012, a total of 1,088 full-time and 693 part-time faculty vacancies were identified in a survey of 603 nursing schools with baccalaureate and/or graduate programs across the country. Besides the current vacancies, schools cited the need to create an additional 104 faculty positions to accommodate student demand. The data show a national nurse faculty vacancy rate of 7.7%. Most of the vacancies (58.0%) were faculty positions requiring or preferring a doctoral degree with 32.4% of the vacant positions requiring a master’s degree. A major reason precluding schools of nursing from hiring additional full-time faculty is that qualified applicants are unavailable in the school’s geographic region. Given the acute need for nurse educators, New York’s public institutions of higher education must offer new and expanded programs that will complement one another. Delhi’s proposed M.S. in Nursing will help address this critical need.

A SUNY financial review of the proposed program indicates that the SUNY Delhi has sufficient financial and institutional resources to ensure quality. As one of SUNY’s leading online nursing education providers, the College has the technical expertise to deliver the program. Delhi’s School of Nursing retains a highly qualified dean and well-credentialed faculty with experience at the graduate level. The School of Nursing retains full-time academic and technical support staff and is viewed as a model of quality online delivery and technical support. The College plans to hire additional faculty and staff to support the proposed program. The external review panel commended the quality and design of courses reviewed, and strongly recommends approval of the proposed M.S. in Nursing program at SUNY Delhi.