MEMORANDUM

January 28, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor
SUBJECT: Naming an Academic and Workforce Development Facility at the State University of New York Maritime College

Action Requested

The proposed resolution approves the December 2, 2020 action taken by the State University of New York Maritime College Council to establish and name “The William Austen Marine Education and Seamanship Center.”

Resolution

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

Resolved that the action taken by the State University of New York Maritime College Council, establishing and naming “The William Austen Marine Education and Seamanship Center,” be, and hereby is, approved.

Background

The proposed resolution approves the December 2, 2020 action of the State University of New York Maritime College (Maritime College) Council, establishing and naming “The William Austen Marine Education and Seamanship Center (The Austen Center).”

The Council’s action recognizes what is the largest individual gift ever made to Maritime College, a $1 million donation by alumnus Mr. William Austen ('80). The Austen Center will be housed in a new waterfront building on which Maritime College will break ground in fall 2020; construction was made possible by Mr. Austin’s gift, grant funding, SUNY and state investment.

The unique academic and workforce development facility will elevate Maritime College’s deck license offerings and Marine Environmental Sciences Program by adding a wet laboratory that will pump seawater directly from the East River into tanks where students can conduct water quality analytics and observe organisms and aquatic systems. The environmentally-friendly facility will also include classroom space for seamanship training classes, workforce development, and mariner education classes.

Mr. Austin is a founding member of the SUNY Maritime Foundation, Inc. and successful business leader. He served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Bemis Corporation, a Wisconsin-based packaging manufacturer with annual sales of over $4 billion, from 2014 to 2019, and held a series of leadership positions over a twenty-year career at General Electric.