



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

www.suny.edu

MEMORANDUM

September 12, 2023

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. John B. King, Jr., Chancellor

SUBJECT: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in SUNY Admissions

Action Requested

The proposed resolution advances admissions initiatives to continue to further SUNY's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across the System.

Resolution

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

Whereas the State University of New York was established 75 years ago "to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs..."; and

Whereas as part of its agenda for excellence, the SUNY Board of Trustees has consistently advanced diversity across the System, including by establishing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the Board of Trustees; by appointing a Chief Diversity Officer for the SUNY System; and by adopting a general education requirement that all students be exposed to course content in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; and

Whereas the United States Supreme Court's recent decision on race-conscious admissions undermines the nation's progress toward greater equity and civil rights, and underscores the vital

role of public systems of higher education in delivering student success and upward mobility for students who have been and remain under-served or under-represented in our country's colleges and universities; and

Whereas in response to this ruling, the United States Departments of Education and Justice released guidance documents in August 2023 reaffirming that “institutions of higher education may continue... considering the full range of circumstances a student has faced in achieving their accomplishments, including financial means and broader socioeconomic status; information about the applicant's neighborhood and high school; and experiences of adversity, including racial discrimination” and that “institutions may direct outreach and recruitment efforts toward schools and school districts that serve predominantly students of color and students of limited financial means”; and

Whereas the guidance documents also indicate that institutions of higher education may consider “participation in service or community organizations” in their holistic admissions review as a factor that shaped an applicant's lived experience, recognizing that such experiences like service in AmeriCorps create meaningful, sustained, and authentic opportunities for development and contributions to others; now therefore be it

Resolved that the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York declares that every New Yorker has a place at SUNY; and be it further

Resolved that the State University of New York reaffirms our commitment to provide opportunity and excellence for students of all backgrounds and that our pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion, within the law, will always be integral to ensuring that SUNY is the best statewide public system of higher education in the country; and be it further

Resolved that, to further these objectives and SUNY's founding principles, State-operated and community college campuses are hereby directed to incorporate strategic outreach and recruiting, in concert with legally permissible measures that jointly advance both excellence and diversity – including but not limited to consideration of Pell eligibility status, school and geographic

adversity, veteran status, AmeriCorps alumni status, and status as a student whose parents did not graduate from college (“first-generation students”)– for purposes of holistic admissions decisions, scholarships and financial aid funding, and pipeline and pathway programming initiatives, as applicable to undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, as well as, per the Court’s decision, “an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise”; and be it further

Resolved that State-operated campuses that invite Early Action and/or Early Decision applications are hereby directed to take additional steps to increase the share of Pell-eligible students, students from schools or geographies with high adversity levels, veterans, AmeriCorps alumni, and first-generation students who are included in Early Action and Early Decision applicant pools, such as through outreach activities and the use of financial aid, and that SUNY System Administration shall produce a study on best practices to support campuses in implementation; and be it further

Resolved that for the purposes of graduate programs and undergraduate transfer, each campus shall consider recruitment, outreach, and pipeline programs incorporating students graduating or transferring from a Historically Black College or University, Hispanic-serving institution, Tribal College or University, Alaska Native-serving institution or Native Hawaiian-serving institution, Predominantly Black Institution, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, or Native American-serving nontribal institution; and be it further

Resolved that campuses shall take all necessary and appropriate steps to maximize participation in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), which has a proven track record of improving student outcomes and for which eligibility factors include a student’s socioeconomic status and do not include race; and be it further

Resolved that the State University of New York shall continue to accelerate other important efforts to ensure a diverse and successful student body, including through enrollment outreach to high school students in schools or neighborhoods with high levels of adversity and concentrations of students from low-income

backgrounds across New York State; ensuring a sense of belonging and inclusivity on campuses; and providing greater support to improve retention, completion, and truly seamless transfer opportunities for students to advance throughout the SUNY System; and be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor shall issue guidance, provide tools, gauge campus progress, and conduct campus trainings as needed to implement this resolution.

Background

Following the June 2023 Supreme Court decision on race-conscious admissions practices, SUNY has been steadfast in our resolve to provide access, opportunity, and success for all.

This resolution advances SUNY's commitment to embody and embrace the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion within this new legal landscape, and to continue to actively welcome all students seeking to pursue learning and advancement through public higher education.

