



## **MEMORANDUM**

**June 23, 2021**

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

**FROM: Dr. Jim Malatras, Chancellor**

**SUBJECT: Extension of Pandemic-Related Guidelines for Undergraduate Admissions**

### **Action Requested**

The proposed resolution authorizes the extension of pandemic-related guidelines for State-operated campus undergraduate admissions, suspending the requirement that students submit SAT and ACT exam scores through fall 2022 and spring 2023.

### **Resolution**

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

**Whereas** SUNY campuses utilize standardized exam scores such as the SAT and ACT as part of a holistic review of undergraduate student applications, along with grades, program of study, academic achievements, non-academic achievements, and other activities that allow for the evaluation of the potential success of a candidate for admission; and

**Whereas** administration of the SAT and ACT assessments has been cancelled, delayed, and/or substantially amended due to COVID-19 related building closures, social distancing requirements, and administrative difficulties in transitioning the exams to an online format; and

**Whereas** the SUNY has worked diligently to prioritize the health and safety of its students and to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on academic progress; and

**Whereas** in June 2020, SUNY announced, as part of emergency administrative actions taken in response to the pandemic, undergraduate admissions guidance temporarily suspending the requirement that students submit SAT and ACT exam scores for the 2021 academic year; and

**Whereas** following what for many students has been a challenging academic experience during the pandemic (spring 2020, the 2020-21 academic year) which continues to impact test preparation and availability; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved** that state-operated campuses are hereby authorized to extend suspension of the undergraduate admissions requirement that students submit SAT and ACT exam scores, through the fall 2022 academic year (fall 2022, summer 2022 and spring 2023); and be it further

**Resolved** that state-operated campuses will continue to utilize a holistic review of applicant potential to succeed in college including academic and non-academic achievements; and be it further

**Resolved** that study of the use and value of standardized assessments will continue, with support from the SUNY Rockefeller Institute of Government, and that information gleaned from the upcoming admissions cycles may further inform that work.

### **Background**

Inclusion of standardized assessments in the undergraduate admissions process continues to be impacted by COVID-19, with cancellations, delays, and administrative challenges in moving the assessments online. Further, there are concerns about the continuing impact of COVID-19 on students' ability to prepare for these exams. According to preliminary data compiled by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, 48 public universities and systems across the country have announced policies similar to what is being proposed today—including those in California (UC and Cal State), Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, CUNY, Pennsylvania, and Vermont. Additionally, 18 of New York State's largest private institutions, including Cornell University, have done the same. To the extent that temporarily suspending requirements around standardized exams influences application decisions, today's proposed action not only responds to current parent and student concerns, it better aligns SUNY campuses with institutional peers.

It is recommended that the current temporary suspension of the undergraduate admissions requirement to submit SAT and ACT scores be extended for fall 2022 and spring 2023 (students may still submit standardized test scores if available). Each SUNY campus will continue its longstanding commitment to a holistic review of student applications that includes grades, program of study, academic achievements, non-academic achievements, and other activities that allow for the evaluation of the potential success of a

candidate for admission. Any further recommended action will be informed by research from the Rockefeller Institute of Government.

