MEMORANDUM

September 18, 2013

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor

SUBJECT: SUNY Educator Preparation Programs and the New NY Education Reform Commission

Action Requested

The proposed resolution charges SUNY with implementing the recommendations of the New NY Education Reform Commission with respect to admissions requirements and clinical experiences in educator preparation programs.

Resolution

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

Whereas New York must recruit the highest caliber candidates into teaching and school leadership; and

Whereas New York’s students deserve the best and the brightest teachers and principals in every classroom and school. Research shows that teacher and principal quality are among the most important in-school factors affecting student achievement; and

Whereas the world’s best performing school systems often recruit teachers who ranked at the top of their high school and college classes upon graduation. In order to stay competitive and attract global industry, New York students should be similarly prepared by the top performing teachers from their graduation classes; and
Whereas New York State must continue to attract and recruit varied and diverse educator preparation candidates who will represent the many cultures and backgrounds of New York students within the public education system; and

Whereas Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s New NY Education Reform Commission recommended that New York’s educator preparation programs establish model, rigorous admissions requirements to raise the bar for new educators; and

Whereas SUNY is a recognized leader in educator preparation and has a proven record of innovation and commitment to quality teaching and learning; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that in order to further New York State’s goal of ensuring that future educators represent the highest achieving graduates of high quality preparation programs, the Chancellor will charge the SUNY Provost’s Office and campus leadership to develop a plan of action and to implement the recommendations of the New NY Education Reform Commission with regard to educator program admissions and clinical experience requirements, including the following:

1. SUNY will adopt a standard admissions requirement of a 3.0 GPA for entry into an educator preparation program at the undergraduate or graduate level or a rank in the top 30th percentile of the high school class for entry into an undergraduate educator preparation program as a freshman, effective no later than the 2015-16 academic year.

2. SUNY will adopt high quality entry assessments, such as the GRE for graduate programs, the SAT/ACT for undergraduate programs, or other recognized college entrance assessments normed to the general college population, to ensure that candidates are academically competitive with all of their peers, regardless of their intended profession.

3. SUNY will publish, by campus, outcomes data of undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs that will facilitate program comparison, transparency, and accountability.
4. SUNY will continue to work with P-12 educators to ensure that sufficient high quality clinical teaching and leadership practices are provided, beginning early in educator preparation programs through the use of field experiences, simulations, or other clinically rich practices and that the total clinical practice component comprises at least 35 percent of total professional course credits by fall of 2015.

**Background**

Teacher and leader preparation has long been a core mission of the State University of New York, with eleven campuses having their origins as state teacher colleges. Today the number of four-year campuses offering teacher preparation stands at 17, with 12 also offering programs in educational leadership. SUNY’s reputation in the field continues to attract highly qualified students, with the last five years seeing increased admission qualifications as well as substantial growth in the number of under-represented minority students enrolled. SUNY currently prepares approximately 25 percent of New York State’s teachers.

Building on a tremendous legacy, SUNY continues to show leadership in teacher preparation through ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel (co-chaired by Chancellor Nancy Zimpher), *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*. Endorsed by educational leaders across the country, including U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, recommendations in this report have guided the SUNY Teacher and Leader Education Network (S-TEN) faculty development initiative, a project of SUNY educator preparation campus leaders in conjunction with community stakeholders, to implement New York’s Race-to-the Top agenda. Many of the recommendations from the NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel are also supported in the New NY Education Reform Commission report, *Putting Students First*, in which SUNY was represented by Chancellor Zimpher. Over the next year, S-TEN campuses will be implementing campus and regional projects, as well as developing regional Centers of Pedagogy and a statewide on-line resource center for educator preparation.

In addition to SUNY’s system-wide efforts, in 2011 and 2012 three SUNY campuses were awarded State Education Department grants to pilot clinically rich teacher preparation, a central theme in the NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel report. Individual grants for graduate-level pilot programs were awarded to the University at Albany and SUNY Oswego and for undergraduate-level pilot programs at SUNY Cortland and SUNY Oswego. Importantly, using clinically rich methods, these pilot programs focus on preparing teachers in high-need subject areas.
At their June 2013 meeting, the SUNY Deans and Directors of Teacher and Leader Education requested a reconvening of the Provost’s Advisory Council on Teacher Education for the purpose of addressing educational leadership (school building leader and teacher leader) issues but also to examine SUNY policy alignment with current thinking in educator preparation. Specific recommendations included defining a vision for clinical practice in SUNY educator preparation programs, preparing guidelines for clinical faculty, and considering ways to change schooling to more effectively prepare students for the future. This reconvening would provide an appropriate forum for developing plans to implement the recommendations outlined in *Putting Students First*, as well as additional recommendations found in *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*, and requirements of the newly formed Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) resulting from the consolidation of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The reconvened advisory council will be a collaborative effort of teacher and leader education faculty and staff and their educational partners.

This resolution is also based on the following language from the 2013-14 Enacted State Operations Budget, stating that: “a portion of the funds appropriated herein shall be used to implement a plan to improve educator effectiveness by: (1) increasing admissions requirements for all state university teacher preparation programs; and (2) upgrading the curriculum and requirements for these programs, which includes increasing opportunities for in-school experience to better prepare aspiring teachers to enter the classroom upon graduation.”