MEMORANDUM

September 25, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Designation of Thomas J. Schwarz as President Emeritus, State University College at Purchase

Action Requested

The proposed resolution appoints Thomas J. Schwarz to the title of President Emeritus, State University College at Purchase

Resolution

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

Whereas after serving as Interim President of State University College at Purchase in 2002, Thomas J. Schwarz was appointed the fifth president of Purchase College in 2003, and successfully served in that position until his retirement this past summer; and

Whereas upon his appointment, President Schwarz immediately worked to transform the campus academically, financially, and culturally; and

Whereas he oversaw the creation of the essential learning and advising centers and the coordination of student affairs with academic affairs into the Student Success Unit; and

Whereas under President Schwarz’s leadership Purchase College has seen retention rates for all classes steadily improve, the 4-year graduation rate increase from 31% to 57%, and the college’s 6-year graduation rate rise to 68%, above the national average; and
Whereas President Schwarz recognized that student success went beyond the classroom and academics, and created initiatives such as The Stood Student Center opening in 2003; the Loop Shuttle bus service providing off campus transportation for students to nearby White Plains and Port Chester with access to MetroNorth trains to New York City, and inter-collegiate athletics entering the NCAA Division III Conference; and

Whereas In 2007, President Schwarz was one of the original signatories on the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, reflecting his personal and lifelong commitment to sustainability and environmental conservation; and

Whereas President Schwarz spearheaded the transformation of the once austere central plaza and oversaw the environmentally sensitive and award-winning renovation, which has impacted every member of the campus community; and

Whereas the addition of recycling programs and the integration of these programs into courses of study, the achievement of LEED standards for all new and refurbished buildings, and the focus on water quality and energy conservation, all reflect President Schwarz’s commitment to sustainability and has earned the college a designation as one of the greenest colleges in the SUNY system; and

Whereas under President Schwarz’s leadership, the college secured over $400 million in capital construction and rehabilitation funds for academic and residential buildings which has led to the construction of new buildings and the revitalization of existing buildings including: Student Services, the Durst Humanities Building, the Neuberger Museum of Art, Alumni Village, Fort Awesome, the opening of the Center for Media, Film and Theatre, and the newest residence hall, Wayback; and

Whereas President Schwarz’s strategic thinking and quest for innovative ways to secure the financial future of Purchase College has led to the increase in the Purchase College Foundation-Charitable Entities’ investment portfolio from $35 million to $95 million over the past decade; and
Whereas in 2016, President Schwarz created the President’s Task Force on Diversity, Hiring and Mentoring which initiated an important dialogue and direction for campus governing bodies, and under his auspices, the campus received the SUNY Shared Governance Award in 2017; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that effective immediately, Thomas J. Schwarz be designated President Emeritus of the State University College at Purchase in recognition of his 17 years of distinguished service to Purchase College.