MEMORANDUM

November 20, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Appointment of a Distinguished Librarian

Action Requested

The proposed resolution appoints Ms. Elaine Wells to the rank of Distinguished Librarian at the State University of New York College of Optometry.

Resolution

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

Whereas the Board of Trustees has proudly established a historic tradition of acknowledging and honoring extraordinary faculty achievement through appointment to the Distinguished Faculty Rank; and

Whereas the appointment to the Distinguished Faculty Rank at the State-operated campuses is both a system-wide distinction and a promotion in rank; and

Whereas the Board of Trustees has the authority to bestow system-wide distinctions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the faculty member listed below be, and hereby is, promoted to the rank of Distinguished Librarian at the State-operated campus indicated, effective November 20, 2019:

Ms. Elaine Wells, State University of New York College of Optometry
Background

The Distinguished Librarian is a prestigious tenured University rank that is awarded to librarians whose contributions have been transformational in creating a new information environment within the institution by providing access to information, sharing or networking information resources, and fostering information literacy. In extending its distinguished ranks to the library faculty, the State University of New York recognizes the accomplishments of all its faculty. It also assumes national leadership within higher education by becoming the first university system to so encourage and foster the full potential of the faculty status of librarians. The Distinguished Librarian rank honors and promotes the achievement of personal excellence, groundbreaking professional progress, and wide-ranging benefit to the academic community. The pathways to the rank are diverse.

To be eligible for nomination, a faculty member must have held the rank of full Librarian (or full Professor with direct library responsibilities at a community college) for five years, and at least three years of full-time service at the nominating institution within the State University of New York.

A brief summary of the accomplishments of the candidate is set forth below:

**Elaine Wells** – Ms. Wells, the Library Director at the College of Optometry, has provided transformational leadership to the College’s library, creating one of the largest vision science collections in the world; executing a full library renovation; and implementing innovations such as SUNYOptSearch, Patron Driven Acquisitions, and a new library service platform. She has regularly secured grant funding to invest in emerging technologies and electronic formats. Ms. Wells has provided valuable service to the National Library of Medicine’s MeSH taxonomy, the American Liver Association, and the National Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry. Since 1997, she has held multiple offices in the Association of Vision Science Librarians. The NY/NJ Chapter of the Medical Library Association has acknowledged her work with two Outstanding Contribution awards and a Distinguished Service award. A recipient of the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Faculty Service, Ms. Wells has also received the Chair’s Great Work Award, the highest award given by Rutgers University School of Library and Information Science. Ms. Wells is a Distinguished Member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals Medical Library Association.

A copy of the nominating letter from the campus president is attached. The complete dossier is available in the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor.

Attachments
12 September 2019

State University Provost
State University of New York System Administration
State University Plaza, 353 Broadway Room S525
Albany, New York 12246-2915

To the Distinguished Librarian Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I support and am submitting the nomination of Elaine Wells, MA, MLS, AHIP (Distinguished), Library Director at the State University of New York College of Optometry for promotion to the rank of Distinguished Librarian. The campus nomination process was consistent with the Policies and Procedures for Distinguished Ranks with a Local Selection Committee composed of academic leadership established by the Faculty Executive Committee with my concurrence.

Elaine Wells was recruited to the College as a Reference Librarian in 1997 and promoted to Library Director two years later. During her time at the College, Ms. Wells has provided transformational leadership in her role as Library Director and served as a valuable member of our faculty and the College Community. I have frequently turned to Elaine to chair committees that require steady leadership as she brings a deliberative and inclusive style to that role. Beyond active service to the College, Elaine is highly engaged in our teaching programs effectively providing important instruction to our students and, in the process, she has been a significant resource for our faculty as they develop teaching and learning strategies for their courses.

As would be expected of a nominee for Distinguished Librarian, Elaine has a history of accomplishment both within and outside of the College. Examples include:

- Initiated, planned, and executed a full library renovation; a complex project with multiple moving parts requiring a strategic assessment of student, faculty and alumni needs within the context of current and emerging information technologies;

- Regularly secured grants in order to supplement the collection development budget enabling the library to not only manage the collection but to also provide more opportunities to invest in emerging technologies and electronic formats;

- As a reflection of the Library’s national prominence as a vision science library, created a comprehensive source of vision websites, distributed from the library’s “EyeSites” webpage;
- Fostered a collaborative environment, encouraging innovation in order to keep up with the rapidly changing library ecosystem which led to the development of new initiatives and services such as SUNYOptSearch, Patron Driven Acquisitions, and the current migration to the next generation Library Service Platform, Alma;

- Served in leadership positions locally, regionally and nationally with 1) the NY/NJ Chapter of the Medical Library Association, 2) The Association of Vision Science Librarians, and 3) SUNY Council of Library Directors;

- Periodically, recognized for her expertise and contributions externally, most recently receiving an Award for Outstanding Contributions by a Member, MLA – NY/NJ Chapter (2018);

- Received the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Service, SUNY, 2001.

While Elaine Wells is an exceptional Librarian, she is also an extraordinary colleague and member of both the College Community and the community of her peers. She is open, collaborative and, most importantly, raises the entire college community up through her efforts.

On behalf of the entire SUNY College of Optometry community, I strongly endorse Ms. Elaine Wells’ nomination for promotion to the rank of Distinguished Librarian of the State University of New York.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

David A. Heath, OD, EdM.
President