MEMORANDUM

June 29, 2020

To: Members of the Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Merryl H. Tisch, Chairman of the Board
Subject: Appointment of Special Service Commendation for Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor

Action Requested:

The proposed action honors Dr. Kristina M. Johnson’s distinguished service as Chancellor of The State University of New York.

Resolution

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

Whereas Dr. Kristina M. Johnson provided distinguished service as the Chancellor of The State University of New York from September 2017 to August 2020; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson led the system with a vision grounded in four central pillars: individualized learning, research and innovation, sustainability, and partnerships; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson advanced SUNY’s commitment to individual student success through initiatives such as SUNY Achieve, which expanded access to evidence-based academic supports, decreased by half the number of students requiring remediation before starting credit-bearing college coursework; and helped increase graduation rates at our two-year community colleges during her tenure; and
Whereas Chancellor Johnson spearheaded a new system-wide platform in SUNY Online that offers an excellent and affordable education for students, in a format that provides the flexibility to fit into both their schedules and learning needs; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson’s oversight of SUNY Open Educational Resources saved students $47 million in textbook costs; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson’s leadership successfully steered Governor Andrew Cuomo’s first-in-the-nation Excelsior Scholarships for students who come from households where the cost of tuition may pose formidable challenges to affordability and access to higher education; and

Whereas the diversity of SUNY’s faculty did not reflect the demographics of its students, Chancellor Johnson launched PRODiG—Promoting Recruitment Opportunities for Diversity and Inclusive Growth—with a goal of hiring 1,000 underrepresented minorities and women in STEM by 2030, and spearheaded the creation of PRODiG Fellows, a diverse, mentoring-intensive pipeline into faculty positions for late-ABDs and post-doctoral scholars within SUNY’s comprehensive liberal arts colleges; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson’s commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship dramatically increased SUNY’s annual research expenditures and expanded SUNY’s involvement in critical national research projects, such as the National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium, a collaboration between SUNY and the New York State Energy Research & Development, and the Electron-Ion Collider, which will be built at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, and managed by Stony Brook University and Battelle; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson’s longstanding personal commitment toward mitigating the effects of climate change resulted in a culture of sustainability across the SUNY system, and 400 clean energy and energy efficiency projects, including the Large Scale Renewable Energy project to purchase zero-carbon electricity for 20 campuses and system administration; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson worked closely with New York State’s Empire State Development to establish groundbreaking
collaborations with IBM, CREE, Applied Materials, and others that will result in next generation transformative technologies and $4.6 billion in research and development investment in New York State; and

Whereas Chancellor Johnson partnered with other philanthropic organizations to raise the first endowment dollars for the SUNY Impact Foundation, in order to support the most innovative ideas on individual campuses system-wide and to promote the creation of new scholarships and fellowships; and

Whereas Dr. Johnson has extensive experience in diverse fields, as illustrated by her background; now, therefore, be it:

Resolved that the Board of Trustees hereby expresses the deepest appreciation, the greatest gratitude, and the highest commendation to Dr. Kristina M. Johnson for her distinguished and dedicated service to The State University of New York.

Background

During her distinguished career, Dr. Kristina M. Johnson has been an entrepreneur, a government leader, an academic visionary, an engineer, and an inventor.

Prior to her arrival at SUNY, Dr. Johnson was co-founder and CEO of Cube Hydro Partners, LLC, a clean-energy infrastructure company focused on building and operating hydropower plants in North America. Dr. Johnson grew the company from one to 19 plants on 10 rivers in five eastern states—enough to power 150,000 homes with clean energy.

Under President Obama, Dr. Johnson served as Under Secretary of Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy, where she managed a $10.5 billion energy and environment portfolio, including an additional $37 billion in energy and environment investments from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Dr. Johnson also served as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Johns Hopkins University and Dean of the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University.

Dr. Johnson holds numerous academic awards, including the John Fritz Medal (2008), which is widely considered the highest award in engineering, and counts
Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and Orville Wright among its previous recipients.

Dr. Johnson is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Inventors. She was inducted into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame (2003) and the National Inventors Hall of Fame (2015). She received the Society of Women Engineers Lifetime Achievement Award (2004).

Dr. Johnson holds 118 U.S. and international patents, has published 149 referenced papers and proceedings. She is also a fellow of the Optical Society of America, International Electronics and Electrical Engineering (IEEE), the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Dr. Johnson received her B.S. with distinction, M.S. and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford University. She has received honorary degrees from University of Alabama at Huntsville; Tufts University; McGill University; Trinity College, Dublin; and National University of Ireland, Galway.