MEMORANDUM

June 20, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

From: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy

Action Requested

The proposed resolution approves the State University of New York's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy.

Resolution

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

Whereas SUNY is the nation’s largest comprehensive system of public higher education, comprised of a growing number of students, faculty and staff with disabilities that may impact the ways in which they access and successfully use electronic information; and

Whereas essential information and services critical to student application and registration, academic course and program completion, employee hiring and evaluation, and more, are increasingly delivered via electronic means; and

Whereas Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) accessibility is directly tied to students’ ability to succeed in their academic programs, and is crucial for recruiting, retaining, and supporting students, faculty and staff with disabilities; and

Whereas by Resolution No. 2015-53, dated September 10, 2015, SUNY implemented a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy expressing its intent to become the most inclusive university system in the country; and

Whereas a University-wide EIT Accessibility Committee was formed by the University’s Provost to address evolving technical standards and expectations of oversight agencies aimed at improving access, equity, and inclusion for individuals with disabilities and the
ways in which they engage in online and technology-supported environments; and

Whereas the EIT Accessibility Committee prepared a Final Report and Recommendations to support campuses and System Administration in meeting accessibility requirements and establishing best practices for EIT compliance and inclusion; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the recommendations set forth in the Final Report and Recommendations (on file with the Office of the Secretary and summarized below) which comprise the SUNY EIT Accessibility Policy, be, and hereby are, approved for both SUNY State-operated campuses and community college colleges:

- The SUNY Chancellor will designate an EIT Accessibility Officer for System Administration no later than December 31, 2019 with responsibilities as outlined in the attached report;

- Each campus president will designate an EIT Accessibility Officer for their respective campus no later than December 31, 2019 with responsibilities as outlined in the attached report¹;

- System Administration and each campus will develop and adopt—via a consultative process that includes local faculty governance procedures—an EIT Accessibility Plan, to be developed no later than June 30, 2020, which includes, at a minimum, the key program elements described in the attached report;

- System Administration and each campus will use the standards created by the EIT Accessibility Committee as a baseline for EIT compliance and inclusion, and nothing shall preclude System Administration and each campus from adopting standards that are more inclusive than those created by the EIT Accessibility Committee;

¹ This shall not preclude campuses from sharing the services of an EIT Accessibility Officer. However, any proposal to share such services shall be subject to prior review and approval of the University Provost.
- EIT Accessibility Plans shall be modified and updated over time in response to evolving technology and new requirements, user feedback, and the regular review of outcomes and effectiveness; and, be it further

Resolved that the University Provost and Chief Information Officer are jointly charged with identifying shared services or System-wide procurement opportunities in support of this work; and, be it further

Resolved that the University Provost will establish a short-term implementation committee to support campus and System Administration development and implementation of their respective Accessibility Plans and to develop a model for assessing and evaluating policy implementation; and, be it further

Resolved the campus presidents will report annually to the Chancellor on their progress.

Background

SUNY has a rich history dedicated to public access and diversity. Access to education for all is a fundamental principle codified in SUNY’s statutory mission and amplified in its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. The recommendations contained in the EIT Accessibility Committee’s final report recognizes and builds on the long-standing work of SUNY campuses to serve individuals with disabilities and meet evolving technology access standards. This policy is responsive to expectations of courts and oversight agencies aimed at improving access, equity, and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

At SUNY, nearly 32,000 students reported a neurodevelopmental, sensory, physical, or intersystem disability; any of which could impact the ways in which they interact with electronic information (NYSED 2H-2 survey, 2018). The self-identification of employees with disabilities at SUNY has also increased. Additionally, there are likely more students and staff who have opted not to identify and others who, due to injury or life circumstance temporarily have a disability that impacts access to and navigation of electronic information resources.