Good morning. I’m Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor of the State University of New York.

I would like to thank Chairperson Deborah Glick and the committee members and other Assembly colleagues present today for creating an opportunity for dialogue on this absolutely vital issue of expanding opportunities through college access and success.

With 64 campuses, 468,000 students and more than 7,500 degree programs, the State University of New York is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the nation.

SUNY’s mission is grounded in its fundamental commitment to providing broad access to affordable, high-quality higher education. And so the topic you have chosen for today’s hearing is truly the context for all of our work.

Unfortunately, current statistics on student success are devastating. According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, if you look at 100 9th graders in New York:

57 graduate from high school four years later
41 immediately enter college
31 are still in college their sophomore year
And of the original 100 students, only 19 receive an associate’s degree in three years or a bachelor’s degree in six years

So this is what we’re up against. And we must work together to immediately address this challenge. At SUNY, we have a very holistic and inclusive view of our responsibility and capacity in this mission. We cannot separate higher education from the experience students have before and after college. Ensuring access and success is not only a matter of our responsibility to help create opportunities for individual students. It is also absolutely essential to the economic future of New York State.

Let me also give you two critical reasons why SUNY has a vested interest in reforming the system as a whole.
First, because many students arrive at our campuses unprepared for college work, and we spend over $53 million each year on remedial education.

Second, SUNY prepares more teachers than any other institution in New York State – about 5000 each year. So we train the teachers who teach the students who come to our campuses – and at the end of the day, we reap what we sow.

That’s why we are so focused on creating new interventions for the early stages of education and also on reforming our teacher preparation programs to make sure that we are providing New York with excellent teachers, particularly in our highest-need schools.

(Slide 3)
As many of you know, earlier this year, we launched a systemwide strategic plan, which we call The Power of SUNY. This plan is all about harnessing SUNY’s considerable assets to revitalize New York State’s economy and improve the quality of life in our communities.

(Slide 4)
Among the six strategic priorities in this plan is the repair of the education pipeline—and by that I mean the continuum of experiences going from birth through career. As the numbers clearly demonstrate, we have a lot of leaks along this pipeline, because a huge percentage of students are falling through the cracks, and not making it to the finish line.

Repairing the education pipeline is central to SUNY’s mission to be an economic engine for the state, because we believe, as David Leonhardt wrote last year in the New York Times, that “education is the lifeblood of economic growth.” Research confirms again and again that educational attainment is a key predictor of economic well-being.

The New York State Legislature has for decades invested in critical programs for educational access and completion—to create new pathways for success for New Yorkers.

Now you need to hear from the agencies and individuals responsible for implementing and overseeing those programs. You need to know whether it is a good investment of taxpayer dollars—and whether these expenditures are moving the dial on access and success. I’m pleased to say that we will give you a very positive report today on the impact of numerous programs with which SUNY is directly involved.
When we released *The Power of SUNY*, we made a promise to the people of this state that we would carry out this work in an absolutely transparent and accountable manner. That means measuring our progress based on metrics – a report card – chosen to show how we are doing as an institution of higher education AND as a driver of economic development.

Another important part of this reporting will be looking at how SUNY is stacking up in terms of diversity in all its dimensions. We’ve been actively engaged in this area for many years, and have made great progress, as you will hear in a minute. But we are committed to doing much more, which is why, when we release our first report card in May 2011, its centerpiece will be all about how we are doing on diversity, and how we’ll reach our goals moving forward.

As part of “Access2Success,” which is a national consortium of public higher education systems convened by the Education Trust and the National Association of System Heads, SUNY has pledged to cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by 2015.

To talk about the headway we have made in this and other initiatives around access and success, I am joined today by two colleagues:

David Lavallee, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Deputy for the Education Pipeline and Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges.

First, Provost Lavallee will address current statistics and trends in terms of graduation rates, the success of the Educational Opportunity Program, and SUNY’s innovative student transfer policies.

Second, Vice Chancellor Duncan-Poitier will describe SUNY’s plans to expand current initiatives and implement a broad array of new programs designed to create a seamless education pipeline that will maximize our impact, in conjunction with our partners in P-12 schools, the State Education Department, state agencies, business and industry and community-based organizations.

Now I’m going to turn it over to Provost Lavallee to provide a preliminary report card on SUNY’s current efforts on access and success, but first, we’d like to show you a brief clip
from the PBS NewsHour that showcases the success of the Educational Opportunity Program at Stony Brook University.

**[PBS video]**

**(Slide 7)**
**Current Success: Provost David Lavallee – Trends and Statistics**

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the remarkable results SUNY now achieves and the potential we have to help even more students, particularly minority and low-income students, achieve a high quality college education.

As in the case you just saw of Stony Brook, several other SUNY campuses have been recognized by the Education Trust and the American Association of State Colleges as national examples of success in graduating under-represented minority students at or above the rates of other students.

Here are our current results:

**(Slide 8)**
First, our SUNY-wide graduation rates are much higher than national averages.

Not only do we graduate students considerably above the national average within SUNY itself, but we prepare students for successful transfer to other colleges and universities as well, producing very impressive success rates. [Please note that the graduation rate for associates degrees does not include their graduation with a bachelor’s degree from a SUNY campus, which would add substantial percentage points.]

**(Slide 9)**
In addition, our transfer students are very successful, graduating not only well above national rates, but even above the students who enroll directly in our four-year campuses. It is important to recognize that our transfer students are a higher proportion minority and low income than the students who enroll directly. The probability of starting at a community college and graduating with a bachelor’s degree is high at SUNY.

How have we have been able to achieve this result? First, they have received excellent preparation for further study at their community college and, secondly, we feel that strong transfer policies are critical. We are devoting ourselves to continually improving the match between community college and four-year college academic programs.
• Since 1974 SUNY guarantees admission of all SUNY and CUNY A.A. and A.S. degree recipients to a 4-year campus within SUNY.

• Since 199 SUNY has guaranteed transfer of 30 credits of general education throughout SUNY, but we found that it was very difficult to fit ten different GE courses into our A.S. degree programs and. This year, we made it easier for these students to complete the GE requirement while maintaining high quality.

• Beginning next month, at the start of the spring 2011 semester SUNY will now guarantee courses in the major that our bachelor’s degree students typically take in their 1st two years.

• Since at least 5 courses (15-20 credits) are guaranteed in the major, SUNY transfer students in A.A. or A.S. programs will generally have at least 45 credits guaranteed to directly map to their bachelor’s program – rarely the case in other states.

(Slide 10a and 10b)
We are very proud that our Black, Latino/Hispanic and low income students graduate at very nearly the same rates as other students

(Slide 11)
Our EOP programs are very successful – EOP students, who are not only from low income families but also, do not meet the minimum enrollment criteria of our four-year campuses which have become quite selective – graduate at rates similar to other SUNY students (chart).

(Slide 12)
A number of our campuses have invested their resources to build on the success of the EOP model to expand similar types of services to the much higher number of under-represented minority students who are regularly enrolled students – producing high graduation numbers for all.

The simplest, fastest way to erase the gap that does still exist between under-represented minority and low-income students and others would be to bring EOP enrollment back to its previous levels along with broader adoption of EOP best practices (as seen with the Stony Brook video), which does require additional resources.
(Slide 13)
We attracting a growing number of minority students, we do very well with all of students including minority students and we have the potential to greatly increase the number of under-represented minority graduates who will be critical to the future economic and social well-being of the state of New York.

Chancellor Zimpher: Thank you David, now we will turn to Vice Chancellor Johanna Duncan Poitier to give an overview of how SUNY is expanding its efforts with the Education Pipeline.

Expanding our reach: Vice Chancellor Johanna Duncan-Poitier - the Education Pipeline

Our strategic work to develop a seamless education pipeline is about systemic change in the way we do business to build a stronger foundation for the access and success of our students - as the Chancellor shared, regarding the current state of NY’s education pipeline, there must be more than 19, out of every 100- 9th graders graduating from college with a degree. The current state of affairs in NY is resulting in an unacceptable loss to families, our economy and our society by any measurement. Strengthening our education pipeline work is all about ACCESS AND SUCCESS for all students!

We are very proud of the successes our students have achieved in the many opportunity programs you have supported for decades–and we thank you for making that difference. David has just shared the results of just a sample of that good work. As the legislature and educators alike have discussed, though, we only reach a fraction of the students who need the support these programs provide.

The new SUNY leadership direction is a systemic, sustainable and evidence-based strategy that compliments the many opportunity programs that exist and goes beyond to build a foundation for real transformative education change, so:

(Slide 15)
More students will graduate from high school prepared to SUCCEED in college and the workforce.

(Slide 16)
More must be done when only 70 % of our state’s children are graduating from high school at all and fewer than 60% of them are graduating with a regent’s diploma –far fewer when we are speaking about black and Hispanic young men and women with fewer than half of them graduating with a regent’s diploma.
(Slide 17)
Of those who graduate from high school and come to our colleges, a quarter or more than half (in community colleges) come in need of remediation. If a student needs as many as three courses you can see their chances of persisting to their sophomore year diminishes significantly to about 50%. We at SUNY are totally rethinking remedial education and other strategies to support student degree completion including some funded by the Gates Foundation for example, Completion by Design and Complete College America. We need a new approach to developmental education and addressing this problem has never mattered more.

(Slide 18)
While the time we have for this testimony will not permit a detailed presentation, you will see from the powerpoint that we are leading a number of initiatives including:
- Leadership for 11 Early College High Schools– with over 2,700 students, in partnership with our 16 of our colleges. This provides students with an opportunity to have exposure early on to college, help them graduate from high school and pursue college as well as graduate;
- providing co-leadership for the Empire State STEM Network so we are focused on skills and competencies needed for careers in a global economy; and
- In partnership with the NYCDOE we are providing leadership to turn around some of the lowest performing schools in Harlem and many other ground breaking initiatives of this type.

In the time I have, I will highlight quickly three major education pipeline actions that are featured in our Strategic Plan. You will be hearing more about and certainly know will make a big difference –teaching, cradle to career networks and SUNY Works.

(Slide 19)
**Teaching** –SUNY prepares more teachers than any university in our state- or a quarter of NY's teacher workforce and thus we have a real responsibility to better prepare teachers who are working to graduate students who face so many challenges. We are developing an Urban/ Rural Teacher Corp that will provide clinical based teacher education for teachers who are working in our lowest performing schools. It is absolutely essential that our newest teachers who are being assigned to these schools are able to respond to the challenges we all know they face, that they are supported to become strong teachers and in turn have better student outcomes. As you may know, Chancellor Zimpher co-lead the National Blue Ribbon Task, sponsored by NCATE, to develop standards for the nation on clinical teacher education-so NY is well positioned for this better means of teacher preparation.
(Slide 20)
Cradle-to-Career Networks - Similarly, to impact education in a meaningful way we must embrace all of our many partners who are working towards the benefit of the same families - Because no one entity can do it alone we are maximizing the resources that are available and forging partnerships with educators, business, social service agencies, philanthropists, community and civic organizations together to focus on student’s success, academic completion and job readiness. Together all the partners at the same table-such networks are now being formed in Albany, Buffalo and Harlem.

(Slide 21)
And Lastly SUNY Works-, the Education Pipeline is not limited to K-12 but rather is about the entire spectrum of education from cradle to career. Thus we are working on a number of strategies to support the educational success of adults as well as younger students. One such strategy is co-op education- which we are calling SUNY works- for our adult students who have some college but never graduated. This provides them with paid, credit bearing work experiences and the necessary supports to ensure that students complete their degree and obtain high wage, high skill employment. The Lumina foundation, has just named SUNY to be one of 12 entities included in the nations Adult College Completion Network with significant financial support to achieve this with our colleges.

With a university system so large, with such focused leadership in this new Chancellor and its trustees, we have the ability to achieve transformative education reform with the substantial impact needed... Impact now, when a college degree is more essential than ever before.

Chancellor Zimpher: (Slide 22)
Thank you, David and Johanna. I wanted to close our testimony by emphasizing that SUNY is an integral part of the national conversation that is taking place on access and completion I represent SUNY in numerous leadership roles in this area -- from the National Governor's Association's Compete to Complete initiative, to the College Board's Advocacy and Policy Center Advisory Council, to the National Cradle to Career Network. We will continue to participate in this critical discussion nationally and here in New York, as your partners, to create and reach statewide goals for access and completion.

And I want to again thank Chairperson Glick for convening this hearing. I hope that we have left you with no doubt that SUNY is deeply dedicated to improving access and success. I can assure you that we will continue to leverage our resources to be your
strong partner in this effort and in the hard work you do across the board to create a better future for all New Yorkers.

Thank you all very much—we’d be happy to take your questions. (Last Slide) # # #