I. The Power of SUNY: Past, Present and Future

Let me begin “at the beginning!” On February 11 of ’09, I accepted the charge given by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York, as SUNY’s 12th Chancellor, to move this great university system to global distinction. This, I said, could never be done by any one person; it would take myriad conversations and a magnitude of commitment to move us forward. This we are doing; and this is the Power of SUNY.

I want to thank our outstanding Student Trustee, Melody Mercedes, for her iconic representation of what matters most to SUNY – and that’s our student body, currently standing at 464,981.

Those voices include not only our student body and our entire SUNY family of distinguished faculty and committed staff, but also the millions of New Yorkers who live and work in close proximity to our 64 campuses. It is on your behalf that I have the privilege of sharing our strategic plan for 2010 and beyond, which we call: The Power of SUNY.

SUNY was created in large part because of a critical need to educate the huge infusion of baby boomers and recipients of the GI Bill – for many, the first of their families to attend college.

SUNY was also a response to the widespread racial and ethnic discrimination that had long restricted access to higher education in New York.

Governor Nelson Rockefeller believed that the people of New York deserved a state university that reflected their talents and ambitions, and called SUNY his crowning achievement.

Yet another milestone in public higher education helps define SUNY’s full potential today— the Land Grant Act of 1862. This act committed universities to focus their research on contemporary problems, on extension services that brought the university to the people, and with a high degree of accessibility. Reimagining Lincoln’s dream of a university without boundaries offers a new way forward for public higher education. I believe our scope, scale and distributed network provide a unique canvas upon which to draw SUNY as the new land grant model – which will be transformative in the 21st century.

Since Rockefeller’s time …we’ve seen the erosion of New York’s manufacturing economy … replaced by a service and knowledge economy. We’ve experienced an increasingly global marketplace that has flattened our world. We also face the very real threat of climate change … and a widening and unacceptable gap in income and educational attainment. And the global recession has hit New York State hard … with a fiscal crisis that has jeopardized vital programs and services. SUNY alone has been hit with nearly half a billion dollars in cuts.

That’s the economic backdrop of these times. But that’s also why THIS is SUNY’s moment: and SUNY’s greatest potential has emerged:

That the State University of New York can and will be THE key driver of economic revitalization and enhanced quality of life across New York.

This is the Big Idea that has framed our process – and guided the development of our strategies for reaching this ambitious goal.

It also reflects the growing role higher education is playing in the economic development of many states — like Georgia … North Carolina … Nebraska. But New York has something none of those states have: We have SUNY.

II. WHY SUNY?

A. To Learn, To Search, To Serve
At the heart of everything we do at SUNY are three imperatives that form the foundation of our work: To learn ....to search ....to serve. This mission anchors us to our history, and supports our vision for the future.

B. Core Values
Flowing from this mission is a renewed commitment to a set of core values that are embedded in our plan: Students are at the heart of all we do. In our communities, learning goes both ways— SUNY is both teacher and student. Diversity makes us stronger and smarter, enriches our lives, invigorates our conversations and widens our perspective. Integrity and collegiality are the bedrock of our enterprise. And collaboration makes our expertise more powerful.

C. Bragging Rights and Reasons to Believe
We also have decades of achievements under our belt – and evidence that SUNY has the goods to deliver on our ambitious goals. We are not supplicants crying out for support. We are towers of strength, visible throughout the state.

Our numbers convey our capacity:
- 64 campuses
- 465,000 students
- 3 million degrees conferred
- 1.7 million people enrolled in continuing education and workforce training
- And 7,669 degree programs

Whatever one’s vocational aspiration or intellectual pursuit, you can find it at SUNY. A program of the highest quality at a reasonable cost; our tuition is among the most affordable in the nation. And that’s why 1 in 3 high school graduates in New York chooses SUNY – and why we also draw thousands of students from across the nation and around the world.

And people are clamoring for what we offer: this year we hit a high-water mark in our enrollment -- 25,000 more students than last year.

We also contribute greatly to the wellness of our people -- treating over 1 million patients annually.

And we are a major employer – with 88,000 people on our payroll – as well as a major purchaser of goods and services. In all, SUNY’s impact on New York’s economy is conservatively estimated at $27.5 billion annually.

D. SUNY: A Category of One
In many respects, SUNY is in a category of “one,” which characterizes our “systemness.” Quite simply, it’s SUNY’s scale, its geographic reach, and the power, the breadth, and the diversity of our system – 64 individual institutions – each one a distinct and unique learning environment – but all working collectively toward common goals.

We encompass research universities, academic medical centers, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, agricultural and technical institutes, and an online learning network - learning environments for every kind of student. We bring together the best minds in education, industry, government, philanthropy; talents and commitment from our own great state and literally from around the world.

III. SIX BIG IDEAS
The Power of SUNY identifies six big ideas that flow out of our intention to be the economic engine for New York.

In each case – SUNY has skin in the game. We have on-the-ground programs and capacity. We have metrics to measure our progress. And, woven into each goal is our commitment to diversity and opportunity for all.

A. SUNY AND THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTURY

Consider our first Big Idea: SUNY and the Entrepreneurial Century.

Research and Innovation

Research and innovation have been a big part of SUNY’s world since its founding – but now we have to move aggressively to make sure our ideas reach the marketplace. We already bring in federal, state and private investment to the tune of $1.3 billion – with 10,000 research projects systemwide:

- Building a better search engine
- getting energy from trees
- relearning emotion after brain injury
- protecting water supplies
- and reducing power plant emissions

We’re at the forefront of the nanotech revolution—that’s why Global Foundries is building a $4 billion plant in the Capital Region, and why three campuses have created new programs to train clean room technicians.

SUNY will continue to be the “go-to” destination – Setting the Stage for growing our market share in research funding.

Entrepreneurship

Next, we’ll seed entrepreneurial thinking through a concept called SUNY STARTUP.

- Already our Professional Science Masters degree provides the skill set for advanced science and technology students to master skills in leadership, marketing, IT and public policy development, making them highly desirable recruits to both business and government.

- And by connecting our students and faculty with entrepreneurs-in-residence, we’ll be better at choosing bright ideas and shaping them into successful businesses.

Partnerships and Collaboration

And we’ll build on existing partnerships to maximize tech transfer, through a new concept called SUNY-INC. We have business incubators on campuses across the state – growing biomedical, clean energy, pharmaceutical, nanotech and other leading-edge technologies.

- SUNY’s Academic Health Centers alone have launched 122 companies.

- Our Centers for Advanced Technology accelerate tech transfer …

- Our engineering programs are leveraging their collective research and relationships with industry… And we’re working with our corporate partners on leading-edge wireless technology.

Our commitment to diversity? We will link more women and minorities to the science, math, engineering and technology fields to become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

2. SUNY AND THE SEAMLESS EDUCATION PIPELINE

Our second Big Idea guarantees that New Yorkers are prepared for college and career through SUNY and the Seamless Education Pipeline: quality early childhood education, success in elementary and secondary school,
entry into postsecondary education prepared for college work, and a seamless transition to career. Unfortunately – this pipeline is in desperate need of repair. Far too many young people drop out of high school, and too many teachers do too.

**TEACHER PREPARATION**

SUNY has the resources—and the responsibility—to strengthen this pipeline, especially since we prepare the teachers, who prepare the students, who enter our college campuses as freshmen.

We educate the largest number of teachers of any institution in the state – almost 5000 a year– so we have a big impact on what happens in our schools. Their challenges become our challenges. But their successes can increase our graduation rates and better educate the future workforce.

To meet increasing demands for highly effective teachers in underserved and high need urban and rural communities, we will create the **SUNY Urban-Rural Teacher Corps**. This fast-track, clinically-based and standards-driven program will help us place and retain more teachers in New York’s high-need communities.

**CRADLE-TO-CAREER SUCCESS**

But preparing a larger cohort of highly effective teachers also requires a community of commitment to educational excellence.

Already SUNY:
- partners with local schools
- helps lower the dropout rate
- studies “best practices”
- offers dual degree credit courses and is launching early college high schools …
- and of course – once students get through high school – a guaranteed SUNY transfer system and extensive on-line learning.

While communities work hard on the dropout problem, their efforts are not well coordinated.

We need to convene educators, business leaders, local foundations and community service agencies, to ensure that our interventions are data-driven, our outcomes are evidence-based, and our progress is publically measured and reported as we advance successful Cradle-to-Career collaboratives across New York.

**SUNY WORKS**

We must also leverage our commitment to New York’s workforce through a concept we call **SUNY WORKS**, taking cooperative education to scale across SUNY campuses. Co-op offers paid, credit-worthy, and full-time internships that produce work-savvy and debt-free graduates. Businesses that support co-op are also more likely to offer our graduates jobs, to stay and work in the state.

**Our Diversity Commitment?** Close the achievement gap, extending full access to degree completion and full workforce engagement to low-income and underserved populations.

**3. SUNY AND A HEALTHIER NEW YORK**

Our next Big Idea tackles the health and wellbeing of the people of New York – taking on these challenges like no other entity can.

**THE RIGHT HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN THE RIGHT PLACES**
First, we must be able to get the right health care professionals to the right places. And we have the resources and capacity to make that happen.

- Our medical schools educate nearly 10,000 students each year and thousands more nurses and allied health professionals
- We train dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, midwives, physical therapists, epidemiologists, neuroscientists, paramedics, health educators ... You get the picture!

But we are confident that we can increase the supply of health care professionals with new educational pathways, paying more attention to underserved communities, and ensuring that providers stay to serve New York.

THE SUNY WELLNESS NETWORK

And through the SUNY Wellness Network, we will increase coordination and delivery of proven, cost-effective ways to improve our health system. This is an area where SUNY has a lot of boots on the ground:

- Extensive health and medical outreach programs – like homebound care, community health screenings, and school-based health care.
- Not to mention our senior programs in exercise and fitness; our telephone hotlines and health information services.

Through this network, we’ll convene our system wide knowledge and resources to meet challenges like obesity ... smoking cessation ... and the prevention of chronic illness. And we’ll track our results to help the nation learn from what we believe will become one of the largest wellness networks in the U.S.

Research/SUNY SCALE

Then, through SUNY SCALE, we’re going to leverage our expansive online data warehouse of evidence-based medicine – to reflect the highest and most current standards for treatment and delivery of health care – landing SUNY at the forefront of effective, outcome-based health care.

Our Diversity Commitment? Diversify the healthcare workforce and close the health gap between low-income, racial and ethnic minorities and majority populations.

4. SUNY AND AN ENERGY-SMART NEW YORK

Another Big Idea takes on the challenges of fossil fuel dependence and climate change.

Many of our initiatives in this field are already in the vanguard of research and discovery.

- We’re especially strong in renewables and energy storage systems.
- And SUNY is a founding member of the New York State Smart Grid Consortium – so through the SUNY SMART GRID we’ll make New York’s electricity grid cleaner, more efficient and more affordable.

We’ll coordinate our approach across the SUNY system, bringing together energy specialists from academia, industry and government to develop and commercialize new energy initiatives, and secure funding to fast-track our projects.

NEW YORK AS A GREEN INCUBATOR

Recall President Obama’s remarks at Hudson Valley Community College – “the nation that leads the clean energy economy will lead the global economy.”
SUNY and New York CAN lead the way – with an incomparable base of experts in academia and industry. SUNY has clean energy incubators – and state-of-the-art classrooms and labs to train the workforce in green technologies.

So we are off to a running start – but again – our scale and diversity will make us an unstoppable engine to grow the green economy.

LIVING SMART

SUNY is also one of the state’s largest energy consumers – so our actions have a big impact. Our idea of LIVING SMART has great potential for SUNY and New York.

It’s time to up the ante: we are setting a goal of cutting SUNY’s energy consumption by 30 percent in ten years… and shrinking our own carbon footprint - to show the world how a large-scale system can turn the tide on energy use and sustainability practices.

Our 465,000 students are also a potential critical mass of green thinkers and doers – and by living and learning on campuses focused on environmental sustainability – they’ll take those best practices with them to their careers and communities.

Our Diversity Commitment? Ensure that all populations live in clean and healthy neighborhoods.

5. SUNY AND THE VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Our next Big Idea turns to our campus communities. SUNY is already deeply embedded in the communities where we live and work.

CITIZEN SUNY

And SUNY has a long tradition of volunteerism and service learning.

- We’re recognized for community engagement on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll…
- We sponsor alternative Spring Break programs centered around community service projects…
- And we recently formed the SUNY Retiree Service Corps as another way for our extended family to reach out and make a difference.

We’re going to learn from these examples and create a Center for Citizen SUNY – a clearinghouse for all SUNY campuses and communities to take service learning and volunteerism to scale.

SUNY COMMUNITY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

We’ll also create the SUNY Community Exchange Program for students to crisscross other SUNY campuses … and we’ll encourage faculty to engage in “reverse internships” in local businesses and community organizations.

We think this kind of cross-fertilization among campuses and within our communities will deepen the educational experience AND create tremendous mutual benefits for SUNY and people around the state.

SUNY: A RESOURCE FOR THE COMMUNITY
In many SUNY communities – we are the primary gateway to music, art, theater, and academic resources. We will add to this effort extensive cultural programming. And through the creation of the SUNY Passport, we’ll make the on-and off-campus resources of the entire SUNY system available to everyone at our 64 campuses, and their community affiliates.

Our Diversity Commitment? Expand our community services to ensure access for all.

6. SUNY AND THE WORLD

There’s one more Big Idea to share with you today – and this one takes on the world.

For SUNY to serve as an engine of economic revitalization, we must become a truly global educational system.

- Our campuses together make up one of the most diverse learning communities in the nation: across the system we have 18,000 international students from 160 nations.
- 5000 students each year participate in study abroad programs.
- And we have offices around the world from Uganda, Afghanistan, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon, to many ports in Southeast Asia and the Americas, to our relationships in Europe and Russia.

BUILDING OUR GLOBAL TALENT POOL

But to move our global participation to the next level – we’ll build our global talent pool to draw more international students to our campuses, and send more students abroad.

SUNY DIPLOMACY

SUNY already has longstanding and productive relationships with many foreign universities, governments and NGOs.

- SUNY was the first American university to establish programs in China after the normalization of relations in 1980.
- We were the first American public university to establish a system-led dual-degree Program, linking SUNY campuses with campuses in other countries.
- And we lead a global initiative to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt socially- and environmentally-responsible policies.

We’ll build on this foundation to deepen our diplomatic presence and facilitate global dialog -- and we’ll develop a systemwide map of our global relationships.

OPEN SUNY

SUNY has also been building excellent online international study programs through hybrid online and classroom instruction, and courses that are team-taught with our partners around the globe. Now, we’re going to create the country’s most extensive distance learning network, to connect students with faculty and peers throughout the world with what we call OPEN SUNY.

With all of these global initiatives – we will cultivate a culturally fluent, international mindset that will be felt across every field and campus in the SUNY system – and serve as a model for the nation, and the world.

Our Diversity Commitment? Create accessible and affordable international experiences for all populations SUNY.

IV. An Action Plan for the Future – Powered by SUNY
So there you have it – our six Big Ideas that will propel us toward our goal of driving economic revitalization in New York – and improving the quality of life in our communities.

We’ve worked very hard over the past 10 months to get to this point – but now it’s time to walk the talk.

And in the end, **accountability** is our watchword – and our bottom line – and we are riveted on delivering on our promises and reporting on our progress. As part of that commitment – we are literally taking this strategic plan on the road.

But we still need our license to drive: *The Public Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act*, is the enabling legislation for this Strategic Plan. As you know, this Act provides for SUNY oversight of our tuition policies; support for entrepreneurial partnerships and land use; and more efficient procurement practices. As such, we will certainly keep fighting for its passage, and for critical restoration of financial support for SUNY. I want to thank our students, presidents, our campus communities, alumni, chambers of commerce, members of the Legislature and others who have supported this critical advocacy effort.

By the end of the month, we may or may not have a state budget, but we WILL have completed our Launch Tour, and we will begin the implementation of our strategic plan. Working groups will transition into task forces. And we will be working across the system to align campus strategic plans with the Power of SUNY.

As we embark on this journey together, we know that we will face new challenges … and find new opportunities that are not yet imagined. But we will ultimately show how collective vision becomes collective action.

Together we can imagine:

- A New York that’s known around the world for its wealth of talent and diversity -- a New York with green communities powered by clean energy -- a New York where every child reaches the education finish line – and has access to a high-quality college education. **That’s the power of SUNY.**

- A New York where anyone can learn anything, anywhere, at any time -- a New York where people can get a job, change careers and adapt to new challenges and opportunities -- a New York with a wealth of new resources that will improve our health and wellness. **That’s the power of SUNY.**

- And A New York that taps into the talents of people from around the world – a New York that is a magnet for innovation AND a New York where every community is connected to the world’s largest network of higher education. **That’s the power of SUNY.**

So as Winston Churchill once said, “**This is not the end. It’s not even the beginning of the end. But it IS the end of the beginning.**”

Yes – we have a BIG job to do. But we have the talent. We have the energy. And we have a strong foundation for action. With this momentum pushing us forward … SUNY can and will be THE KEY DRIVER of New York’s economic revitalization … and a brighter future for every community.

Because together, WE are the Power of SUNY.

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