



The State University
of New York

Office of the Chancellor

State University Plaza
Albany, New York 12246

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MEMORANDUM

March 28, 2012

To: Members of the Board of Trustees

From: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor

**Subject: Establishment of the State University of New York (SUNY)
Distinguished Academy**

Action Requested

The proposed resolution creates the SUNY Distinguished Academy with membership of all active faculty who hold a Distinguished rank by virtue of their appointment by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Resolution

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

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

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

Whereas the SUNY Board of Trustees and Chancellor Zimpher have extended SUNY's highest tribute to the Community Colleges in recognition of the extraordinary contributions and achievements of faculty in this sector; and

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

To Learn
To Search
To Serve

the Power of 

Resolved that the Chancellor is directed to establish a SUNY Distinguished Academy with membership of all active Distinguished faculty that have been so appointed by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Resolved that the SUNY Distinguished Academy will strive to honor the accomplishments of all Distinguished faculty.

Resolved that the Chancellor, following the Distinguished faculty established policies and procedures, will develop appropriate ways for all Distinguished faculty to help raise or ensure academic excellence within the State University.

Background

The rank of Distinguished Professor was created by Board resolution in 1963 with the first faculty member promoted to the rank in 1964. Since then 921 faculty have been so honored with 425 still active within the State University. Past recipients have included Nobel laureates (Robert Furchgott; 1988) and winners of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation (Esther Takeuchi; 2009) and even a Distinguished Librarian (Constantia Constantinou; 2011) who, as a Fulbright Scholar in the country of Cyprus, accomplished what no other scholar or librarian has been able to do since 1974 by bringing the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot academic communities closer through overcoming ethnic and political conflicts.

There are four distinct Distinguished faculty ranks:

- Appointment to the rank of **Distinguished Professor** is conferred upon individuals who have achieved national or international prominence and a distinguished reputation within a chosen field. This distinction is attained through significant contributions to the research literature or through artistic performance or achievement in the case of the arts.
- The **Distinguished Teaching Professorship** recognizes and honors mastery of teaching. For this prestigious tribute to be conferred, candidates must have demonstrated consistently superior mastery of teaching, outstanding service to students and commitment to their ongoing intellectual growth, scholarship and professional growth, and adherence to rigorous academic standards and requirements.
- The **Distinguished Service Professorship** honors and recognizes extraordinary service. Candidates must have demonstrated substantial distinguished service not only at the campus and the State University, but also at the community, regional and State levels. Further, many

candidates for appointment have rendered influential service contributing at the national and international levels.

- 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 by providing access to information, sharing or networking information resources, and fostering information literacy. The Distinguished Librarian rank honors and promotes the achievement of personal excellence, groundbreaking professional progress, and wide-ranging benefit to the academic community.

It was the intent of the Board of Trustees that appointment to Distinguished rank carries with it an extraordinary responsibility. Distinguished Professors are expected to offer lectures and seminars for students and scholars on other campuses of the University, or other appropriate presentations the individual might bring to them. Distinguished Service Professors are expected to function as role models and devote appropriate service to University-wide activities, both ceremonial and professional, on campuses other than their own. Distinguished Teaching Professors are expected to devote a considerable proportion of their time to curricular reform and to the improvement of instruction on the home campus. Distinguished Librarians are expected to provide service to the State University, both ceremonial and professional, on campuses other than their own when requested to do so by the Chancellor.

The Distinguished Academy, which will be governed by the Chancellor and a board representing all those with a Distinguished rank, will strive to ensure all such faculty carry, over and above their campus responsibility, a responsibility to the State University as a whole.