June 4, 2010

Mr. Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-0001

Dear Secretary Duncan,

On behalf of the 64 campuses of the State University of New York (SUNY), the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the nation, I am pleased to express my strong support for the multi-state consortium called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (“The Partnership”). SUNY would be pleased to work collaboratively with the K-12 education community in New York State and higher education colleagues in other Partnership states to develop high school assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics based on the new Common Core State Standards so that these assessments can serve as valid indicators of readiness for credit-bearing, college-level study. The promise of these new assessments to improve the college readiness of high school graduates and smooth their transition to college is perfectly aligned with SUNY’s strategic plan, which has the goal of creating a seamless education pipeline from cradle through career for students in New York State.

Although the diverse missions of higher education systems and institutions in the Partnership will determine the specific ways in which the new college-readiness assessments will be used, the State University of New York is committed to participating, as appropriate, in the Partnership’s design, development, and standard setting process with the goal of using the new assessments for placing students in credit-bearing courses. We are committed to working with the Partnership toward the shared goal of ensuring that students with college-ready scores on end-of-high-school assessments can enroll in credit-bearing courses without remediation.

The Partnership’s assessments have the potential to benefit tens of thousands of “direct matriculation students” per year in New York State, defined for the Partnership as freshmen who had graduated from high school in the prior two years entering public higher education in the state for the first time. In academic year 2008-09, the State University of New York enrolled a total of 80,660 direct matriculation students.
The State University of New York is prepared to participate, as appropriate, with the Partnership in the following next steps related to assessments:

- a collaborative and comprehensive effort by K-12 and higher education faculty and leaders across the Partnership on test design and development;
- a coordinated effort across the consortium to design and participate in validity studies and comparisons with current placement instruments to ensure that the assessments developed are an accurate measure of college readiness;
- a thorough, research-based process to establish common achievement standards on the new assessments that signal students' preparation for entry level, credit-bearing coursework; and
- use of the assessment, along with other placement requirements used by our campuses, as an indicator of students' readiness for placement in non-remedial, credit-bearing college-level coursework.

In addition, SUNY strongly supports an aligned P-20 education system that will help New York State’s students graduate from high school ready for college and careers by providing students, their parents and their teachers with clear and consistent information about what it means and what it takes to be ready for college. To supplement the assessment work, the University will work collaboratively, as appropriate, with New York State’s K-12 education community to improve student outreach, intervention, and academic preparation programs to ensure all students have the opportunity to make a successful transition to college.

Thank you for providing the students in New York State with the opportunity to benefit from the Partnership’s collaboration.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Zimpher
Chancellor

NLZ:zrr

cc: Dr. David K. Lavallee, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor
Ms. Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Chancellor’s Deputy for the Education Pipeline
Dr. Elizabeth Bringsjord, Associate Provost
Dr. Nancy Willie-Schiff, Assistant Provost
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<td>Name: David M. Steiner</td>
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<td>Title: Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York</td>
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| Name: Nancy L. Zimpher | Date: June 4, 2010 |
| Title: Chancellor, State University of New York |