This Memorandum provides guidance regarding the implementation of the SUNY Board of Trustees’ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy (the “Policy”), adopted via Resolution 2015-53 on September 10, 2015.

The Policy is based on the recommendations of the SUNY Diversity Task Force, first envisioned in SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher’s 2014 State of the University address. The Diversity Task Force, led by SUNY Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Alexander N. Cartwright and SUNY Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Carlos N. Medina, was comprised of campus diversity and inclusion professionals as well as representatives from the University Faculty Senate, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and Student Assembly. Task Force recommendations were finalized after broad consultation with campus presidents and chief academic officers.

The Policy is consistent with SUNY’s creation as a higher education system to serve students turned away from private institutions because of race, ethnicity, and/or religion. It is consistent with SUNY’s statutory mission to provide the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population of New York State. The Policy aligns with SUNY’s performance management system, SUNY Excels.

Questions regarding this memorandum may be sent by email to: inclusion@suny.edu.

Attachment

Copy:  Chief Academic Officers, All Campuses
       Campus Chief Diversity Officers, All Campuses
       Campus Vice Presidents for Student Affairs, All Campuses
       Campus Vice Presidents for Business Affairs, All Campuses
       Campus Vice Presidents for Human Resources, All Campuses
       President, University Faculty Senate
       President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges
       President, Student Assembly
Key Components of the Board Policy

Diversity and Inclusion Goal:

The policy sets an explicit goal for SUNY to become the most inclusive system of higher education in the country:

“SUNY aspires to be the most inclusive State university system in the country. We will achieve this goal by: striving to ensure that the student population we serve and the administrative staff and faculty we employ are representative of the diversity of our state; recognizing the value of international experiences and interactions; and eliminating achievement gaps for minority and low income students. We will develop strategic diversity and inclusion action plans for system administration and at each campus that tangibly demonstrate SUNY’s commitment to the principles of inclusive excellence, wherein an institution only achieves excellence when it is inclusive. SUNY will identify diversity, equity and inclusion as essential aspects of system and campus planning and as indispensable characteristics of academic excellence and the ongoing experience of every member of the SUNY community.”

Guiding Principles:

The policy is informed by multiple guiding principles:

- Diversity and inclusiveness are integral components of the highest quality academic programs and the strongest campus climate. Diversity is essential to excellence in the university setting.

- SUNY’s statutory mission makes clear its responsibility to provide the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population of New York State.

- As detailed in the June 2015 Data Brief: Diversity Equity and Inclusion, SUNY has made important strides at System Administration and on its campuses to increase diversity and strengthen inclusiveness; however, challenges remain.

- This is the right time for a system-wide effort to address challenges, particularly in light of projected increases in the diversity of New York’s high school population and the expected increases in the number of new hires across SUNY due to a growing number of retirements.

- A multi-pronged approach to strengthening diversity and inclusion is essential for a system of SUNY’s stature. SUNY’s approach must employ best practices to attract diverse students, faculty, staff and administrative leaders, including efforts to strengthen the pipeline of diverse individuals with advanced credentials; ensure that services are in place to support retention (of faculty and students) and foster student completion at a rate that closes existing achievement gaps; and implement programs and strategies to establish a welcoming environment for all.

Notably, the policy applies to SUNY Campuses and SUNY’s System Administration headquarters. The Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer will support campus and System efforts to build systemic growth in diversity and inclusion in fulfillment of this policy.
Campus Action Items as Detailed in the Trustees’ Policy:

- Each campus will appoint a chief diversity officer ("CDO") by no later than August 15, 2017. The campus will provide the Chancellor with a plan for this appointment in March 2016.
  
  - This shall not preclude campuses from sharing the services of a chief diversity officer. However, any proposal to share such services shall be subject to prior review and approval of the Provost.
  
  - Such requests shall be submitted in writing to the Provost and transmitted via email to: provost@suny.edu. The Provost will issue a determination within 30 days.

- The Campus CDO will:
  
  - Be a senior member of the campus administration, reporting directly to the president or provost;
  
  - Work collaboratively with offices across campus including but not limited to, the offices of academic affairs, human resources, enrollment management, and admissions-to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion in such areas as the recruitment and retention of students and senior administrators, faculty and staff hires; and
  
  - Serve as part of a system-wide network of CDOs to support SUNY's overall diversity goals. The network will be convened by the SUNY System Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer for CDOs already in place no later than September 1, 2016.

- Each campus will develop and implement strategic diversity and inclusion plans to achieve SUNY’s inclusion goal that will be submitted to the Provost for review by November 1, 2016. The policy defines the following criteria for campus plans:
  
  - Campus plans will build on existing efforts and include:
    
    ➢ Campus commitments for diversity and inclusion;
    
    ➢ Campus principles guiding the development and implementation of the diversity and inclusion plan;
    
    ➢ A student recruitment strategy that includes programs and activities that will enable the campus to enroll a student population that is increasingly representative of the diversity of its primary service region and the State as a whole;
    
    ➢ A student retention and completion strategy wherein the campus strives to increase the rate of completion for all students and close any gaps in the completion rates of students from any group when compared with the average campus completion rate...
and to address the challenges of students in transition (such as transfer, stop-out, international student acclimation);

- An administrative, faculty and staff recruitment and retention strategy that continues to improve campus efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the following areas:
  - Recruitment, development of the prospect pool, and hiring decision-making for campus leadership, faculty and staff. Plans should address the unique challenges of dual career couple relocation and ensure that selected candidates can articulate a commitment to diversity and inclusion;
  - Implementation of best-practice mentoring plans and strategies tailored to the needs of diverse campus groups of faculty and staff;
  - With support from System Administration, the introduction or expansion of cultural competency programming as a central aspect of the orientation program for new employees and as a regular program for all continuing employees; and
  - Campuses will inquire about a search firm's success in assuring diverse candidate pools. In those instances where the campus is considered a Federal Contractor, the campus will require that the search firm provide it with information about the diversity of the search firm's staff and its success rate in placing diverse candidates prior to entering into a contract with such firm.

- An evaluation component to ensure that the campus is meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments and that activities designed within the overall plan are achieving their intended outcomes. The evaluation system should be aligned to the campus planning and resource allocation processes to ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans.

The SUNY System Office of the Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer has developed a Campus Guide for Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Plan Development to assist campuses in conceptualizing diversity and inclusion goals in the creation of required campus diversity plans.

**Key Campus Deadlines and Implementation Notes**

- Campus presidents will report the status of their plans relative to CDO appointments to the Chancellor, no later than March 2016.

  This report may be communicated via a memorandum to the Chancellor to be submitted via email to: chancellor@suny.edu.

  If the campus president has already appointed a CDO, the memorandum should address how the portfolio and reporting relationship of the individual aligns with the policy.
If the campus president is in the process of searching for a CDO, the memorandum should summarize the hiring plan that will ensure that the appointment is made no later than August 2017. This could include the position advertisement, job description, and a summary of where the job posting will be placed.

Note that if a group of campuses proposes to share a Chief Diversity Officer, a joint memorandum detailing the proposal, signed by each president, should first be sent to the System Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for approval as noted above to: provost@suny.edu.

- Presidents shall act on the appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer no later than August 2017.

- Campus presidents will submit their strategic diversity plans for review by the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, no later than November 1, 2016.

Plans should be collaboratively developed in accordance with the Campus Guide for Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Plan Development and submitted for review to: inclusion@suny.edu. The plan should be reviewed as part of any relevant shared governance process/procedure.

In those instances where a campus already has a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in place, the CDO may lead this collaborative effort. In those instances where a CDO has not been appointed, the President or their designee should be so appointed.

The Provost and CDO will conduct an iterative review of the plan which may involve reaching out to the campus to ask questions or request additional information.

That review will be completed no later than January 30, 2017.

After the initial review of campus plans, presidents will annually report on their progress in implementing their plans and this policy as part of the Performance Improvement Plan reporting process.

It is anticipated that best practices found in campus plans will be highlighted in the annual diversity data brief that is required to be prepared by SUNY System Administration.

**System Administration Action Items as Detailed in the Trustees’ Policy:**

- System Administration will appoint a chief diversity officer ("CDO") by no later than August 15, 2017.

- The System CDO will:
  - Be a senior member of System Administration;
  - Work collaboratively with offices across System Administration-including but not limited to, the offices of academic affairs, human resources and enrollment
management and student success, to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion; and

- Support the system-wide network of campus CDOs in collaboration with the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor to realize System Administration's goal of becoming the most inclusive system of higher education in the country.

- System Administration will develop and implement a strategic diversity and inclusion plan to achieve SUNY's inclusion goal for submission to the Chancellor for review by November 1, 2016. The policy defines the following criteria for the System plan:

  - The System Administration plan will build on existing efforts and include:
    
    - System Administration commitments for diversity and inclusion;
    - System Administration principles guiding the development and implementation of the diversity and inclusion plan;
    - An administrative, faculty and staff recruitment and retention strategy that continuously improves efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the following areas:
      
      - Recruitment, hiring prospect pool development and hiring decision-making. Special attention is encouraged for the plan to address the unique challenges of dual career couple relocation;
      
      - System Administration will inquire about a search firm's success in assuring diverse candidate pools;
      
      - Implementation of best-practice mentoring plans and strategies tailored to the needs of diverse campus groups of faculty and staff; and
      
      - Introduce cultural competency programming as a central aspect of the orientation program for new employees and as a regular program for all continuing employees.

  - An evaluation component that ensures that System Administration is:

    - meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments;
    - activities designed within the plan are achieving their intended outcomes;
    - that System Administration is providing appropriate resources and guidance to campuses to assist them in meeting University commitments and SUNY's overarching goal of being recognized as the most inclusive system of higher education in the country; and
The evaluation system should be aligned to System Administration planning and resource allocation processes to ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans.

The Policy assigns further responsibility to SUNY System Administration to support campuses in meeting policy objectives:

- System Administration will develop the tools to provide cultural competency training across System Administration and to campus senior leadership teams, faculty and staff;
- System Administration will implement a Campus Climate Report Card to evaluate System Administration and campus efforts to attain the goals of their respective diversity and inclusion plans;
- Questions on surveys administered or procured by the System Administration Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics will be reviewed to ensure that questions are free from bias and provide necessary information to support diversity goals;
- System Administration will begin a system-wide initiative to meet the challenges associated with dual-career couple relocation that will include identification of best practices related to cluster hiring;
- System Administration will examine the feasibility of a cross-campus mentoring network for faculty and staff within the SUNY system, in consultation with faculty governance, which will be piloted as a resource for diverse faculty and staff and later expanded; and
- The University Provost and System Administration CDO will convene faculty researchers in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion as well as program evaluation to work with the System Administration Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics to support the SUNY Network of CDOs and develop an evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy for the purposes of ongoing improvement.

The Policy assigns further responsibility to SUNY System Administration for oversight of policy implementation as follows:

- The SUNY Diversity Task Force shall be reconstituted as a standing Diversity Advisory Committee to support campuses during the implementation of this policy and make additional recommendations, where appropriate;
- The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor and System Administration Chief Diversity Officer shall be responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy, including distributing additional guidance and resource materials to campuses, assessing progress, and reporting back to the Board of Trustees, and shall be required
to provide an annual updated data brief on diversity, equity and inclusion, including a summary of campus annual reports, which will be shared with the Governor and New York State Legislature;

- System Administration will be charged with the development of an evaluation component that ensures that it is meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments to campuses as entailed within the policy. The evaluation system should be aligned to System Administration planning and resource allocation processes to ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans; and

- Diversity and Inclusion initiatives will be monitored to ensure that the goals are achievable and that System Administration is providing appropriate resources and guidance to campuses to assist them in meeting University commitments and SUNY’s overarching goal.

**Key System Deadlines:**

- It is acknowledged that the System currently has in place a Chief Diversity Officer reporting to the Provost. The Chief Diversity Office was promoted to the rank of Vice Chancellor in February 2016 in accordance with this policy.

- The System Administration CDO will lead the collaborative development of a System strategic diversity plan review by the Chancellor, no later than November 1, 2016.

- The System plan should be collaboratively developed in accordance with the *Campus Guide for Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Plan Development* where appropriate.

- The System CDO will present a plan for implementing the following to SUNY campus presidents and provosts no later than September 1, 2016.
  - Cultural competency training;
  - Campus Climate Report Card;
  - Review of System administered surveys;
  - Launch of a study on dual-career couple relocation;
  - Feasibility study of a cross-campus mentoring network for faculty and staff;
  - Convening of faculty researchers in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion;
  - The establishment of the Diversity Advisory Committee.

- It is anticipated that the Provost and Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer will utilize the Diversity Advisory Board as a resource in carrying out the responsibilities described below. The Diversity Advisory Board is to be in place no later than July 1, 2015:
- Distribution of additional guidance and resource materials to campuses, assessing progress, and reporting back to the Board of Trustees; and

- Annually updating the data brief on diversity, equity and inclusion to include a summary of campus annual reports provided as part of their Performance Improvement Plan, which will be shared with the Governor and New York State Legislature.

- Creation of an evaluation process for the policy as a whole that ensures that is meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments to campuses as entailed within the policy.

  ➢ The evaluation system should be aligned to System Administration planning and resource allocation processes to ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans; and

  ➢ The evaluation system will include a process for ensuing that System Administration is providing appropriate resources and guidance to campuses to assist them in meeting University commitments and SUNY’s overarching goal.

Alignment to Educational Objectives

This guidance to Presidents regarding the Board of Trustees Diversity Equity and Inclusion Policy, as adopted on September 10, 2015 (BOT Policy 2015-53) is grounded in SUNY’s long-standing commitment to equitable access, opportunity and success for the widest possible statewide population.

This guidance affords presidents the opportunity to review the multi-faceted policy expectations placed upon campuses and SUNY’s System Administration to drive effective and measurable growth in diversity and inclusion endeavors. This work is consistent with SUNY’s commitments under the SUNY Excels Performance System and its specific focus on access, completion, success, inquiry and engagement.