MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents
FROM: Robert Haelen, Vice Chancellor Office for Capital Facilities
DATE: March 23, 2017
RE: Construction Notification to Improve Safety

The Student Assembly recently passed a resolution seeking to institutionalize a policy of timely notification of campus construction projects in order to assist students with visual and mobility impairments in navigating around temporary construction barriers and detours impacting paths of travel. While no particular incident precipitated the Student Assembly’s action, it is prudent to remind staff of the importance of providing notification through various means, including in a manner that is accessible to the visually impaired, in order to reach the greatest possible audience.

Therefore, as we start to see the warmer weather, and construction takes an upswing on many campuses, it is important to pay particular attention to the significant changes in accessible pathways or other temporary impairments and inconveniences created by capital projects. Certainly it is an exciting time, as these projects are necessary to maintain and enhance our facilities to support our academic and social missions. However, the impacts created by this good work must also be taken into careful consideration, particularly as it affects persons with disabilities.

I ask that you direct the appropriate campus staff to review how such changes are communicated to the campus community and members of the public who may use our facilities. Management of all construction projects includes notifying potentially impacted communities about any necessary temporary or permanent changes and ensuring that appropriate steps are taken to keep the site safe through the use of measures such as signage, fencing, and alternate pathways. Campuses should consider making announcements of changes using a variety of methods, including newsletters, college websites, social media, and community meetings. The goal should be to reach those who may be adversely impacted by the changes associated with the construction projects. Advance notification of upcoming construction, as well as reminders during construction, can enhance awareness and safety. Timely notification allows persons with disabilities an opportunity to plan for alternative routes, or to request accommodations to deal with the construction related changes.

Campuses are urged to review their construction notification procedures, and to closely consider the manner, method and frequency of such communication to all impacted community members. Special consideration should be given to assure clear notifications
are provided to those with disabilities who may be disproportionately challenged by such changes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Att: SUNY SA RESOLUTION 1617-48

Cc:
Campus Business Officers
Chancellor's Cabinet
Campus Facilities Managers
Campus PIO's
Marc J. Cohen, President of Student Assembly, SUNY
Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, SUNY
RESOLUTION 1617-48

TO: Members of the Executive Committee
FROM: Katherine G. Holmok, Agriculture, Technology, & Statutory Schools Representative
DATE: October 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Mandatory Notice of Construction

Action Requested

Request that the State University of New York call upon all 64 SUNY colleges to institute notices of upcoming construction that are accessible to all students.

Resolution

I recommend that the Student Assembly of the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNY SA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York, with its 64 institutions, is fully committed to the well-being and safety of its students; and

Whereas there is a SUNY-wide effort to increase transparency and accessibility; and

Whereas reconfigurations of physical space can create barriers and safety concerns for people living with disabilities; and

Whereas there is a need to inform students, particularly students with visual impairments and/or physical disabilities, of upcoming construction that may affect them adversely; and

Whereas all SUNY campuses are responsible for providing reasonable accommodations in regards to accessibility to all students; therefore be it

Resolved that mandatory construction notice be established for all 29 state-operated SUNY colleges in order to inform students of upcoming construction projects in a timely manner; and be it further

Resolved that construction announcements be disseminated by each respective campus in a way that is accessible to their student body, including the visually impaired; and be it further
Resolved that the local Boards of Trustees of the 30 community colleges operating under the program of the State University, as well as the Boards of Trustees of the statutory colleges of the State University as defined by Articles 115 and 123 of New York State Education Law, are strongly encouraged to consider mandating similar construction notices as outlined within this resolution; and finally, be it

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York shall forward copies of this Resolution to the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Chancellor Zimpher, University Faculty Senate, SUNY Campus Presidents, SUNY student governing bodies, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.