

# SUNY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PHASE ONE ACTION PLAN

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION





If America's public colleges and universities are going to be true democratic engines of opportunity and social mobility, then their student body and graduates should at least mirror the racial and ethnic demographics of the state in which they reside.

**Public institutions should reduce—rather than exacerbate—race-based inequalities and advance the public interest** by ensuring all Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, are able to seek and earn a college degree.

— **Broken Mirrors Report, the Education Trust (March 2019)**



You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.

— Shirley Chisholm

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**SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
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I.

# INTRO- DUCTION

## I. Introduction

The State University of New York (SUNY) has long been a standard-bearer in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. During his 2021 State of the University System address, Chancellor Jim Malatras noted that SUNY's commitment to diversity and inclusion was foundational to its original mission. SUNY's Mission Statement begins as follows:

The mission of the state university system shall be to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, **with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population** in a complete range of academic, professional, and vocational postsecondary programs including such additional activities in pursuit of these objectives as are necessary or customary.<sup>1</sup>

SUNY's founders were acutely aware of the pervasive discrimination that existed at the time of SUNY's creation and seized the moment to lead by building an institution not only committed to academic excellence but accessible to all New Yorkers regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or class.

In the 73 years since its founding, SUNY has strived to stay true to that mission by meeting the moment of the times. SUNY's challenge today is to continue to lead in this effort, inspired by the courage and progressiveness of its founders, to provide New Yorkers with a diverse, equitable, and inclusive system of public higher education.

Today, despite our progress and our important mission, we must continue to work toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive system. In 2015, the Board of Trustees took a major step forward by adopting a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, requiring all campuses to create strategic plans to close equity gaps across the system. Specifically, the Board required:

- A Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) be appointed for every campus, reporting to the campus President or Provost. The CDO would be a member of the senior administration who works with all campus offices to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices.
- All CDOs collaborate as a Systemwide network to inform, support, and implement system initiatives.
- Comprehensive strategic diversity plans be developed for campuses and SUNY's administrative headquarters. Campus plans would address student recruitment, retention, and completion strategies; administrative, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention strategies; and include an evaluation/assessment component.
- Annual reporting on policy progress that is tied to the leadership evaluation process.
- Added emphasis on using leadership search firms that have demonstrated that they value diversity.
- Customized cultural competency training for SUNY and campus staff.
- Dedicated faculty researchers in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion to support the SUNY Chief Diversity Officer network and evaluate the policy for effectiveness and continuous improvement.



Unanimous adoption of the policy was an important recognition by SUNY’s Trustees that our colleges and universities would have to redouble their efforts to make diversity, equity, and inclusion a central part of their core operation.

Racism and discrimination still exist, even within the walls of the academy. For example, we’ve recently experienced racial incidents on our campuses such as a doll with a noose around its neck found in a work supply area on one of SUNY’s campuses<sup>2</sup>, as well as a social media post in which a student on one of SUNY’s upstate campuses threatened a lynching.<sup>3</sup> Our challenges are brought into sharper view given a spate of recent troubling events from the deaths of Mr. George Floyd, Mr. Ahmaud Arbery, and Ms. Breonna Taylor, among others, to increasing anti-Semitism across the country<sup>4</sup> and to violence against members of the LGBTQIA Community.<sup>5</sup>

As many of our students, faculty, and staff have forcefully articulated, as an institution we can do better—not just on our broader diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, but by rooting out racism and discrimination. The events of the past several months have reanimated a long-simmering national discourse on racial justice and racial equity in this country, especially on college campuses and universities. SUNY students, faculty, and staff have called for real and meaningful change in the aftermath of the historic moments in our nation’s history. It is our obligation to not only give voice to our students, faculty, and staff, but to take action. But, this is an ongoing effort. As Dr. Ibram X. Kendi states, “The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it — and then dismantle it.”<sup>6</sup>

“It is our obligation to not only give voice to our students, faculty, and staff, but to take action. But, this is an ongoing effort. As Dr. Ibram X. Kendi states, “The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it — and then dismantle it.”

In recognition of this fact, at the September 2020 SUNY Board of Trustees meeting, Chancellor Maltras—in one of his first actions as Chancellor—announced that SUNY would convene stakeholders from across the system and develop a Systemwide action plan to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, known as SUNY’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

SUNY must be at the forefront of building a more inclusive society by collectively confronting discrimination, racism, harassment, and the marginalization of groups and individuals in our society. To that end, Chancellor Maltras directed that the plan examines racial disparities within SUNY and seeks to understand how these disparities impact the experiences of students, faculty, staff, and communities, and then provide solutions to the problems. The Chancellor requested that the plan at least include:

- An assessment of racial equity gaps
- Faculty-driven curriculum development toward racial equity
- Review of the chief diversity officer’s role on every campus
- How SUNY can increase diversity in hiring
- How to increase college credits from prior learning and transfer credit
- Improving campus life for the broad diversity of all SUNY students

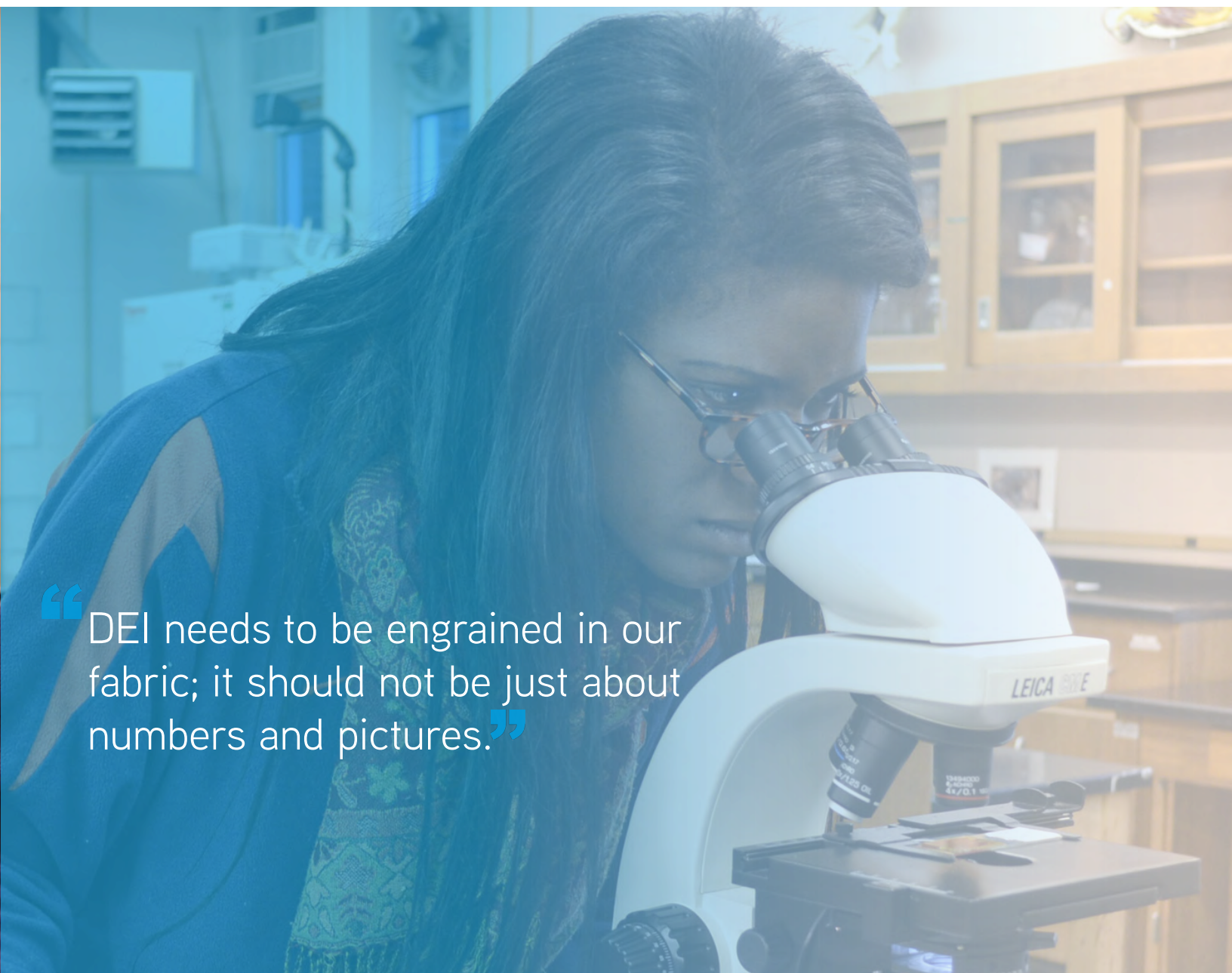
Over the past four months, seven working groups were formed to focus on specific areas of concern (e.g., increasing diversity, improving campus climate, and reviewing the role of campus CDOs) and tasked by the Chancellor to provide recommendations for actions. The working groups then reported their findings and recommendations to SUNY’s CDO and the Chisholm Center for Equity Studies. Details of the working groups are listed in Appendix A.



The working groups met with numerous SUNY stakeholders, including student groups, PRODiG Faculty, faculty of color, representatives from the SUNY Student Voices Action Committee and Student Assembly, campus police chiefs, and faculty and professional staff nominated by the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. The result of this process is an action plan that consists of immediate recommendations and a plan to move forward to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in other areas.

SUNY system received thoughtful and engaged comments, which suggest community members are serious about these efforts and are expecting actionable results. As one respondent wrote, “DEI needs to be engrained in our fabric; it should not be just about numbers and pictures.”

There is much more work to be done, and building a diverse and inclusive system of higher education takes ongoing effort. That is why this is a phase one plan. Striving for diversity, equity, and inclusion requires continuous effort. One report will not solve the problem. But, as the famous New York author James Baldwin stated, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” Here at SUNY, we are facing these great challenges head-on.



“ DEI needs to be engrained in our fabric; it should not be just about numbers and pictures.” ”



**SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
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# ANALYSIS OF RACIAL EQUITY GAPS WITHIN SUNY

## II. Analysis of Racial Equity Gaps within SUNY

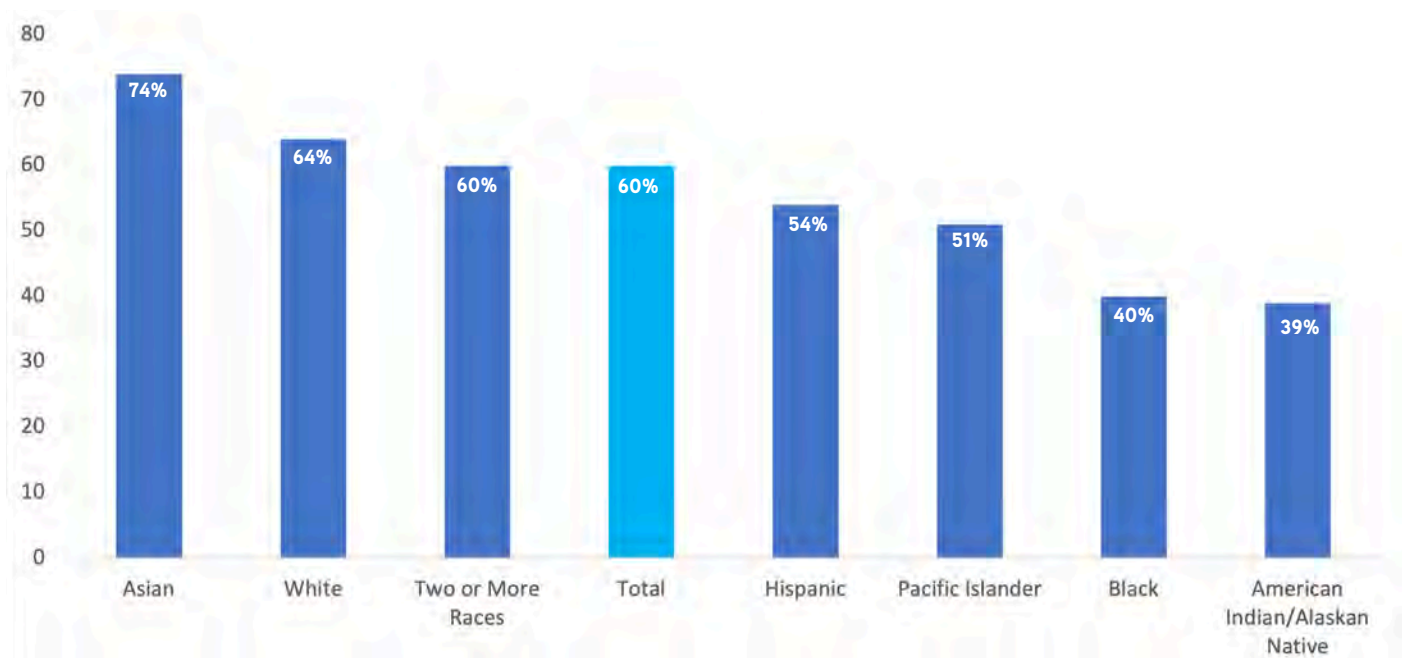
Chancellor Malatras asked for an analysis of existing racial equity gaps at SUNY in order to better determine the most significant problems and propose the most effective solutions. The scope of this report, therefore, includes equity disparities in areas such as enrollment rates, graduation rates, time to degree completion, term-to-term persistence, diversity of faculty and staff, and implementation of the Board of Trustees' 2015 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

### National Trends

Nationally, colleges and universities face many of the same challenges. A 2019 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) notes that while racial equity gaps are lessening, they are still very much present.<sup>7</sup> According to the NCES, between Fall 2000 and Fall 2016, growth in college enrollment rates among students of color<sup>8</sup> outpaced the enrollment rate for white students.<sup>9</sup> The percentage of Black students aged 18 to 24 who were enrolled in college grew from 31 percent to 36 percent, and the share of Hispanic/Latinx students grew from 22 percent to 39 percent. The percentage of white students aged 18 to 24 enrolled in college grew slightly from 39 percent to 42 percent. Indigenous students enrolled at 19 percent, about half the national rate.

Despite these improvements in college access, students of color face challenges in completion. As Chart 1 illustrates, only 40 percent of Black students graduated from their first institution within six years, the lowest rate of all racial and ethnic groups except Native American students (39 percent). Slightly more than half of Hispanic/Latinx students—54 percent—graduated within six years of enrollment.<sup>10</sup> These rates stand in stark contrast to the six-year graduation rate of 64 percent for white students.

**Chart 1: National Six-Year Graduation Rate for Bachelor's Degree by Race: NCES Data 2010 Cohort**



## SUNY Enrollment

SUNY has experienced notable racial and ethnic shifts in student enrollment that largely mirror similar national trends, helping to make SUNY's student body more diverse. Over the past decade, the share of students of color has grown from 17.8 percent to 28.1 percent overall (Chart 2). The largest increase has been seen in the proportion of Hispanic/Latinx students, which has nearly doubled from 7.5 to 14.2 percent of total SUNY enrollment. Black student enrollment has increased from 8.9 percent to 10.7 percent, and Asian student enrollment has increased from 4.4 percent to 7.3 percent.

**Chart 2. Enrollment at SUNY by Race/ethnicity, Fall 2010 and Fall 2020<sup>11</sup>**



In comparison to the overall state population, SUNY enrollment for white students (54 percent) in Fall 2020 was in line with the state's population (55.1 percent) (Table 1). However, Black and Hispanic/Latinx students are underrepresented at SUNY compared to their share of the state's population. While 17.6 percent of the New Yorkers are Black, they represent only 10.7 percent of SUNY students in Fall 2019. The Hispanic/Latinx population is also underrepresented among SUNY students, accounting for 19.3 percent of the state's population and 14.2 percent of SUNY students.

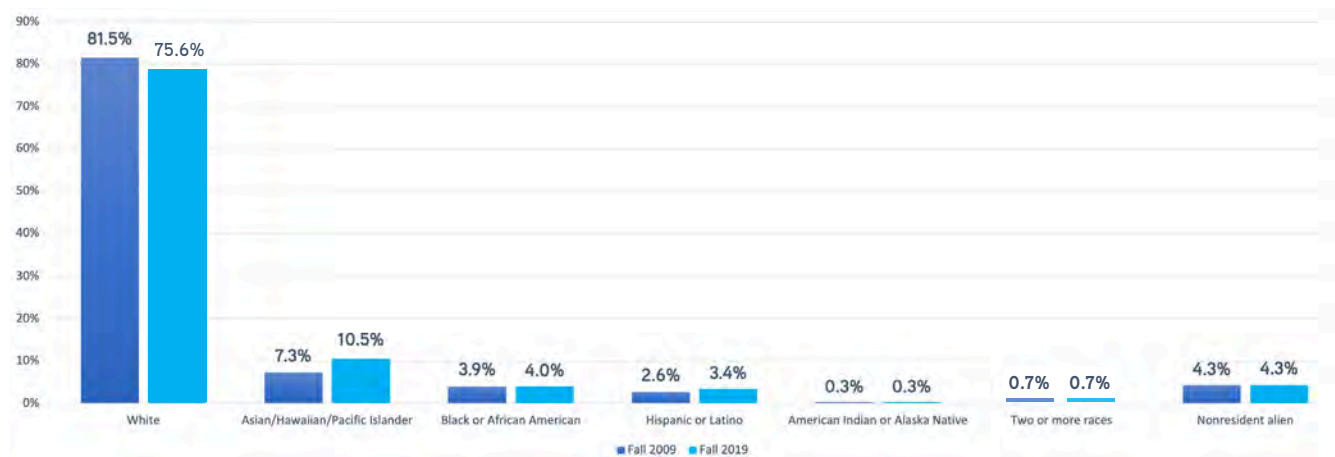
While SUNY has made progress over the past decade in diversifying its student body, there are still gains to be made to develop a student body that reflects the diversity of the state.

## Diversity of SUNY's Faculty and Staff

Several studies have documented the benefit of developing and maintaining a racially and ethnically diverse teaching corps.<sup>12</sup> However, while students of color increasingly comprise a larger share of postsecondary education, nationally, the racial and ethnic backgrounds of college faculty, staff, and administrators remain much less diverse than that of the student body.<sup>13</sup> The same is true at SUNY.

While Black students represent 10.7 percent of the overall student body, only four percent of the full-time faculty are Black. Likewise, while 14.2 percent of the student body is Hispanic/Latinx, only 3.4 percent of the faculty are Hispanic/Latinx. While the demographic make-up of the faculty has become more diverse over time, it still does not match the composition of the student body. As shown in Chart 3, in 2009, white individuals represented 81.5 percent of full-time faculty members, and this has decreased to 75.6 percent over the past decade. There have been marginal increases in the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx and Black full-time faculty. The largest percentage increase has occurred in Asian full-time faculty.

**Chart 3. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of SUNY Faculty 2009 to 2019<sup>14</sup>**

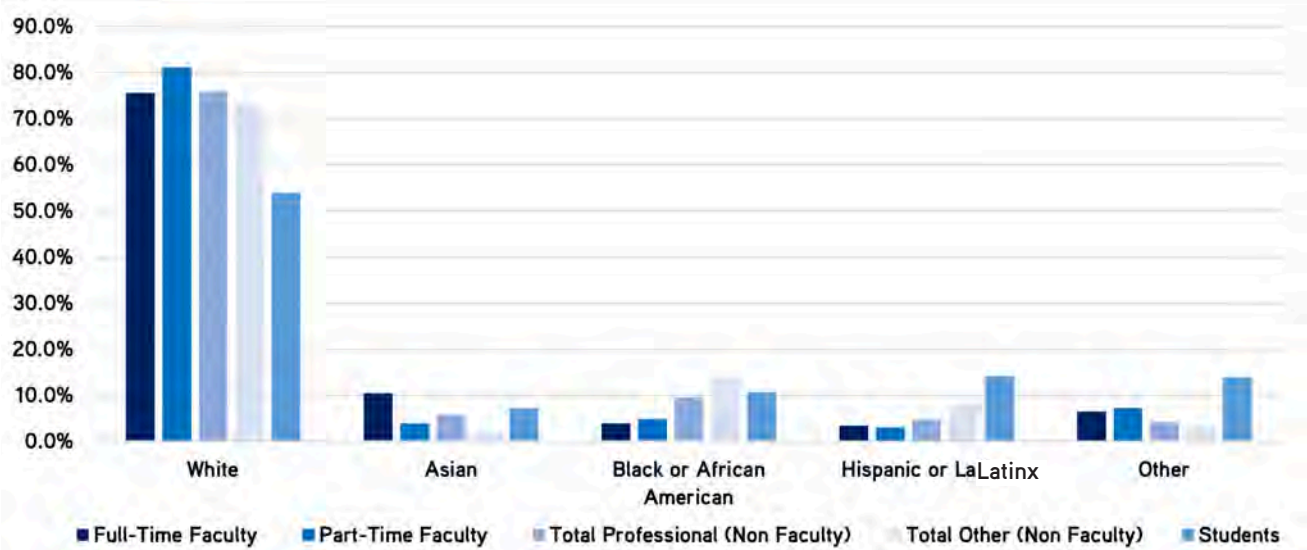


**Table 2. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of SUNY Employees (2019)<sup>15</sup>**

| Sector/<br>Campus/<br>Employee<br>Category <sup>3</sup> | Total<br>Percent | White | Asian | Black or<br>African<br>American | Hispanic<br>or Latinx | American<br>Indian or<br>Alaska<br>Native | Native<br>Hawaiian<br>or Other<br>Pacific<br>Islander | Two or<br>more<br>races | Nonresident<br>alien | Unknown |
|---|------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Full-Time<br>Faculty                                    | 100.0%           | 75.6% | 10.5% | 4.0%                            | 3.4%                  | 0.3%                                      | 0.1%  | 0.7%                    | 4.3%                 | 1.2%    |
| Part-Time<br>Faculty                                    | 100.0%           | 81.0% | 3.9%  | 4.9%                            | 3.0%                  | 0.3%                                      | 0.0%  | 0.5%                    | 1.6%                 | 4.8%    |
| Total<br>Professional<br>(Non-Faculty)                  | 100.0%           | 75.9% | 5.7%  | 9.5%                            | 4.6%                  | 0.3%                                      | 0.1%  | 0.8%                    | 1.5%                 | 1.5%    |
| Total Other<br>(Non-Faculty)                            | 100.0%           | 73.2% | 2.0%  | 13.7%                           | 8.0%                  | 0.4%                                      | 0.1%  | 0.6%                    | 0.4%                 | 1.6%    |

As demonstrated in Table 2, the most significant differences among underrepresented campus employees are between faculty and non-faculty positions. While Black individuals make up nearly 14 percent of the non-faculty positions on campus, which is more closely aligned with the population of New York State, they comprise only five percent of full-time faculty positions. The same is true for Hispanic/Latinx individuals, as they are eight percent of the non-faculty positions, but 3.4 percent of full-time faculty. Therefore, while students may see Black or Hispanic/Latinx individuals on campus, it is less likely that they will be their professors.

**Chart 4. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of SUNY Campus Faculty (2019)<sup>16</sup>**



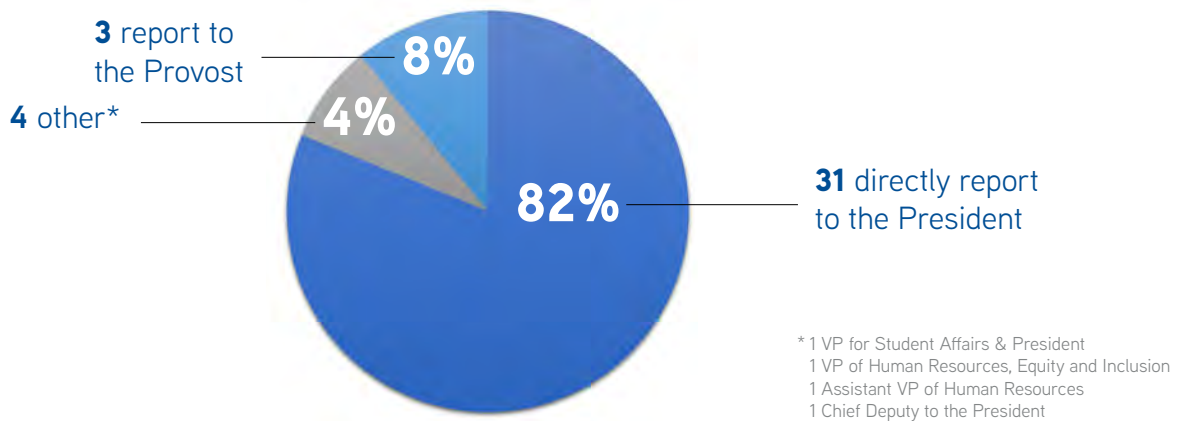
People of color represent less than a tenth of full-time faculty and part-time faculty. Representation of all groups is a challenge in academia. According to the National Science Foundation, Black and Hispanic/Latinx students earned 5.5 and 7.1 percent of PhDs in 2019. Native American and Alaskan Natives earned less than one percent of PhDs in the same year. The number of doctorates awarded nationally to Black and Hispanic candidates have grown by 34 and 48 percent, respectively, over the past decade.<sup>17</sup> Even if the faculty hired every year were demographically representative of the most recent class of doctorates, it will take years before the faculty will match the SUNY student body and New York State population as a whole. Addressing the underrepresentation of these groups will require aggressive recruitment and retention strategies. Another way to increase representation at the head of the classroom is to actively recruit a more diverse adjunct faculty. Currently, 81 percent of SUNY’s part-time faculty are white.

While persons of color represent only 15 percent of professional staff, the group includes more Black and Hispanic/Latinx employees. Professional staff include SUNY librarians, managers and directors overseeing student affairs, student support, career services, residential life, IT services, teaching and learning centers, and a host of other areas. SUNY’s nonprofessional workforce is the most representative, with 23 percent of employees from traditionally underrepresented groups. Diversifying employment is more challenging than diversifying enrollment. An undergraduate student body turns over every four to five years, meaning that the impact of efforts and initiatives to improve representation can be seen over a decade. The average SUNY employee has worked for the system for 12 years. The longer tenure of employees means it takes longer to see the effects of recruitment initiatives across this employment sector.

## Implementation of the 2015 Board of Trustee’s Chief Diversity Officer Requirement

As mentioned above, in 2015, the SUNY Board of Trustees created a policy requiring each campus to appoint a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). In the five years since the policy was adopted, it has been interpreted and implemented in vastly different ways. The reporting structure for CDOs varies across SUNY campuses, as does the number of other titles and ancillary responsibilities of the CDO, level of administrative and programmatic support, and commitment to professional development.

A work group led by a SUNY campus president and two campus CDOs was created for the purpose of reviewing the role of the CDOs. The working group analyzed data regarding the reporting lines of 38 different campus CDOs. The results were:



Who the CDO reports to is often dictated by the sector in which they serve. As Table 3 illustrates, the percentage of CDOs who directly report to the president is higher among the state-operated Campuses than that of the Community Colleges (86 percent versus 76 percent), albeit by total numbers, state-operated campuses are only slightly higher.

**Table 3. Reporting Structure of the Chief Diversity Officer**

| State-Op Status         | President |            | Provost  |           | Other    |            | Grand Total |             |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| State-operated Campuses | 18        | 86%        | 2        | 10%       | 1        | 5%         | 21          | 100%        |
| Community Colleges      | 13        | 76%        | 1        | 6%        | 3        | 18%        | 17          | 100%        |
| <b>Grand Total</b>      | <b>31</b> | <b>82%</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>8%</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>11%</b> | <b>38</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

In addition, the work group reviewed the workload and responsibilities of campus CDOs. They found that CDOs hold multiple roles on campus that could potentially dilute their overall effectiveness in enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Currently, only 40 percent of SUNY CDOs held that exclusive role at their campuses. Sixty percent of CDOs had multiple responsibilities and job titles including AP/AVP, Title IX coordinator, ADA compliance officer, dean of students, and director of Human Resources. CDOs with more than one job title are more prevalent in the community college sector (71 percent) than among the state-operated colleges (52 percent).

### Diversity in SUNY Curriculum

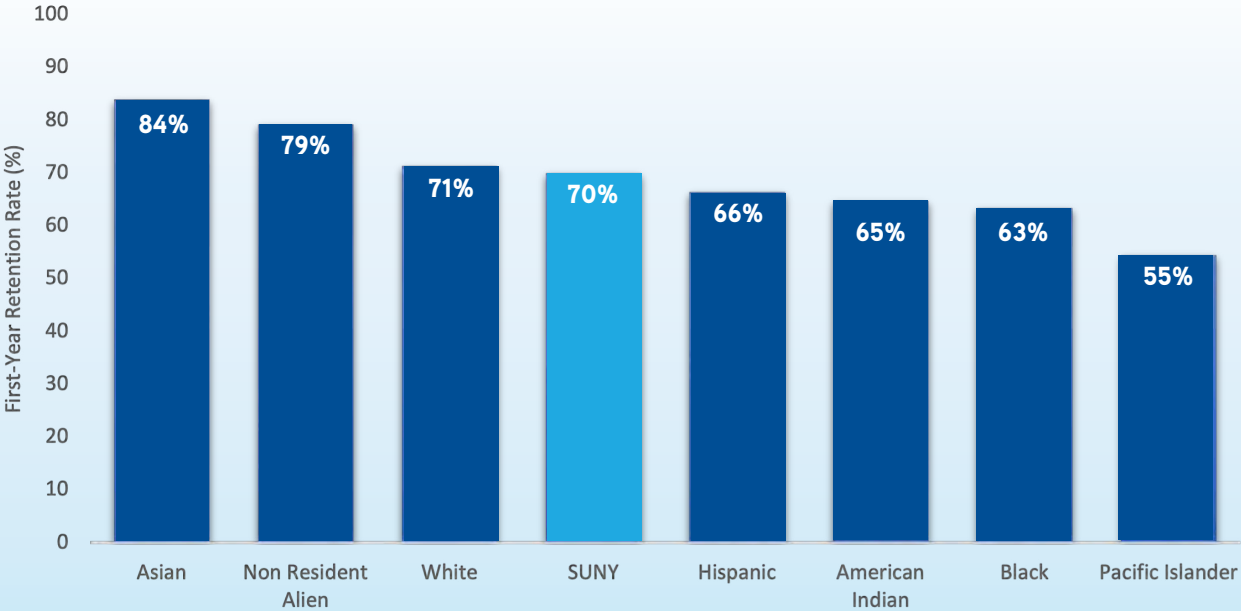
During the process, stakeholders urged SUNY to better incorporate understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion into campus curricula. Yet, a survey found 59 percent of SUNY campuses do not have a local diversity requirement.

The General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC)—the SUNY committee tasked with reviewing general education requirements for the system—was convened by the SUNY System Provost in December 2019 and charged with developing policy recommendations for SUNY’s general education requirements. As part of their charge, GEAC examined enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in campus curricula. During the process, representatives from shared governance—from community colleges and state-operated campuses—came together and in December 2020, the GEAC Subcommittee on Diversity presented their initial draft set of requirements for diversity in SUNY General Education, including proposed student learning outcomes. They found that overwhelming majorities within the SUNY community support building into the curriculum a requirement that students understand and can articulate diversity, equity, inclusion, antiracism, and social justice—and use that knowledge to develop an understanding based on differences.

### Student Retention at SUNY

Among SUNY students, there is a racial equity gap in student retention. SUNY retains students of color at a lower rate than their white peers. Overall, 70 percent of students who enrolled in a SUNY school in Fall 2019 re-enrolled at SUNY in Fall 2020 (Chart 5). Only white students, Asian students, and non-resident alien students had retention rates above the overall SUNY average. Moreover, less than two-thirds of Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students return to SUNY for a second year.

**Chart 5. First-Time, Full-Time Students (Fall 2019 Cohort as of Fall 2020)**

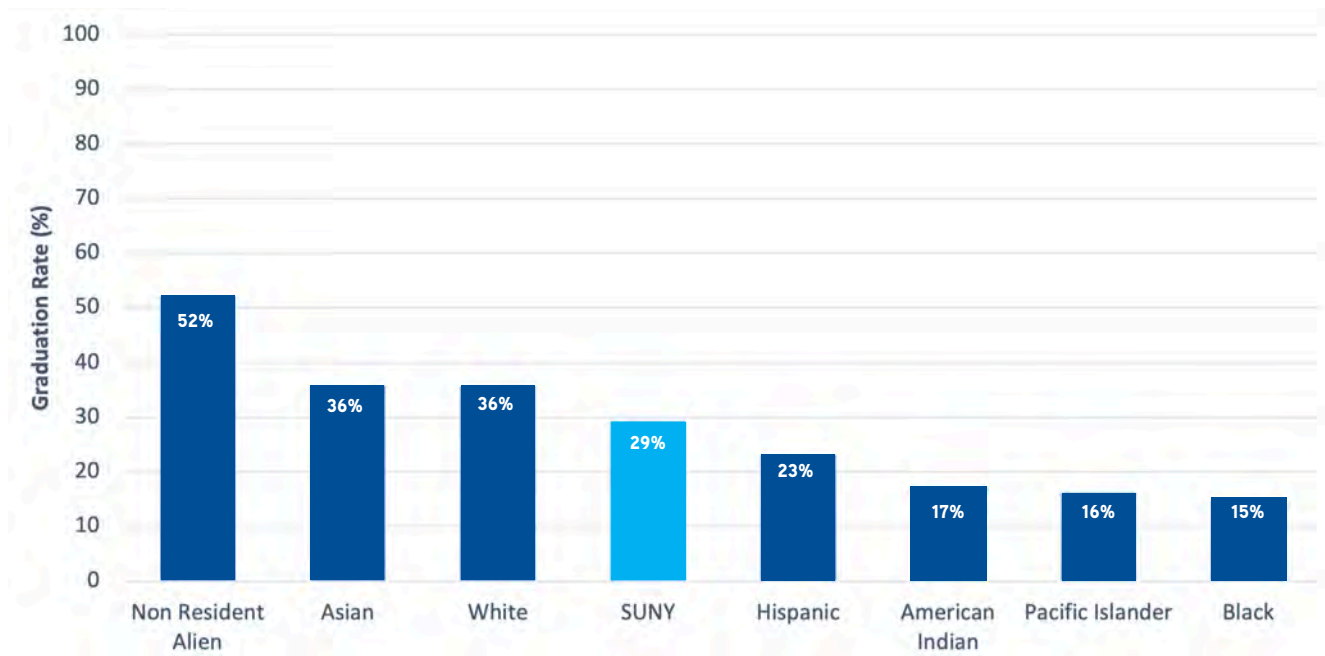




## Graduation Rates at SUNY

In addition to racial and ethnic disparities in first-year retention rates, there are disparities in graduation rates as well. Chart 6 shows graduation rates for students enrolled in two-year associate's programs. Over the past five years, while the three-year graduation rate for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students have largely remained steady, white students have seen graduation rates increase from 31.8 to 35.7 percent. This has widened the equity gap.

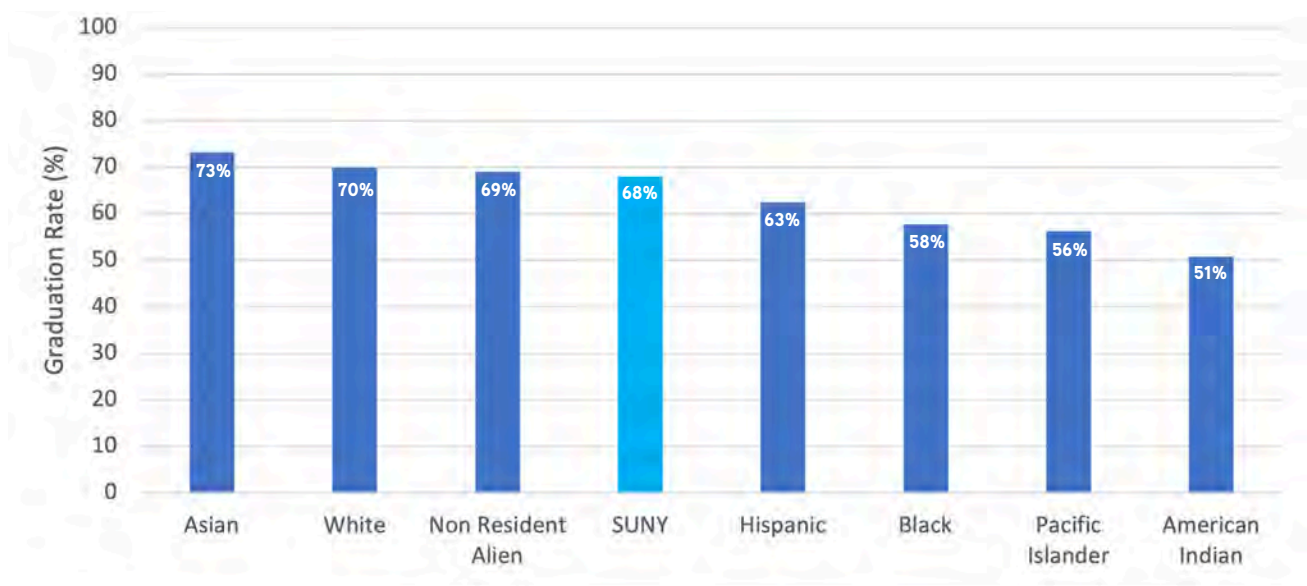
**Chart 6. Associate 3-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Cohorts by Race/Ethnicity<sup>17</sup>**



As is the case with retention rates, average graduation rates at SUNY for students pursuing associate's degrees that are white, Asian, and non-resident aliens are measurably higher than graduation rates for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, or Indigenous students. By 2020, 35.7 percent of white students had completed their associate's degree. Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous<sup>18</sup> students all have lower graduation rates than the SUNY average. By 2020, only one in five students in these groups had graduated within three years, compared to nearly 36 percent of white students. Black student graduation rates are less than half of the SUNY average.

Equity gaps are widening in baccalaureate graduation rates as well. Chart 7 shows that for the six-year graduation rates, the numbers for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students are both lower than for white or Asian students. Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students have a lower graduation rate than the SUNY average; the graduation rate for white students is 12 points higher than that of Black students and nearly seven points higher than that of Hispanic/Latinx students.

**Chart 7. SUNY Baccalaureate Six Year Degree Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Cohorts by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2014 cohort as of Fall 2020)<sup>19</sup>**



### **Disproportionate Effect of Students with Some College and No Degree and Prior Learning Credit**

While 70 percent of all new jobs created require some type of post-secondary credential,<sup>20</sup> according to the National Student Clearing House (2019), 36 million adults in this country have some college and no degree.<sup>21</sup> That means, of the 117 million adults with no college degree, almost one-third attempted college but do not have a credential to show for what they accomplished.

While 21 percent of Americans report having some college and/or no degree, the percentage is higher for underrepresented minorities—25 percent of Black respondents, 26 percent of Native American respondents, and 28 percent of Pacific Islanders are in this category.<sup>22</sup> This specific category often means that the individuals have incurred some college debt, but do not have an ensuing credential to potentially increase their earnings.

For students with some college but no degree, Black students have the largest gap in degree attainment (19 percent) and carry the highest student debt load.<sup>23</sup> The within group comparison data also indicate that among Hispanic/Latinx adults is the highest number of individuals with an education at the high school level or less with no college attempted (60 percent), with African American adults at the next highest level (45 percent).<sup>24</sup> White adults are at 33 percent, which means that only one in three white adults have not attempted or completed college, almost opposite that of Hispanic/Latinx adults. Within group comparisons of working adults show similar results, yet, continuously, adults are gaining valuable knowledge while working that can be evaluated for college credit.

### **Student Loans and Debt Burden**

Degree attainment is complicated by the rising student loan debt, particularly among students of color. Students of color face a different financial aid situation than their white peers, too. While a greater proportion of students of color receive grants—88 percent of Black students, 87 percent of Native American students, and 82 percent of Hispanic/Latinx students, compared to 74 percent of

white students—Black students are far more likely to incur student loans: 71 percent of full-time Black students received loans compared to 56 percent of their white peers.<sup>25</sup>

Students of color tend to have higher rates of borrowing than their white counterparts.<sup>26</sup> The net balance of the cost of attending college minus the amount of aid, loans, and family contribution is about 25 percent of income for middle-income families.<sup>27</sup> It is more than twice that for low-income families. This pushes the student to borrow private student loans with higher interest rates.

It is not particularly surprising that increased rates of borrowing then translates into increased indebtedness for students of color. A Brookings report found that on average, Black college graduates owe \$7,400 more than their white peers upon graduation.<sup>28</sup> Four years after graduation, Black graduates owed \$53,000 on average compared to the \$28,000 debt owed by white students. The financial stress of these increased levels of student debt can be seen in levels of default in repayment of these loans: Black and Hispanic/Latinx borrowers defaulted at rates of 7.6 percent and 5.7 percent respectively, considerably higher than white borrowers (2.4 percent).<sup>29</sup>

SUNY has become more diverse and representative of the great diversity of New York. Yet, as the analysis illustrates, we have serious racial and ethnic equity gaps yet to be overcome.





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# 25-POINT ACTION PLAN RECOMMEN- DATIONS

### III. 25-Point Action Plan Recommendations

The picture painted in the previous section is clear: There is a stark difference in the demographic make-up of SUNY students, faculty and staff, and degree attainment. Although the average six-year graduation rate of SUNY is nearing 70 percent for bachelor’s degrees, that number is far lower for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students on SUNY campuses and programs. The students and faculty both have a higher percentage of people who identify as white than the population of New York State. The analysis showed the real need to increase diversity in faculty and staff as well as engage in efforts to battle discrimination.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, SUNY engaged in an additional qualitative study to learn more about what could be driving some of these differences. SUNY created seven working groups, which met throughout the winter to discuss findings, best practices, and advise on next steps. In addition, SUNY solicited feedback from students, faculty, staff, and others across the campus communities to provide feedback and ideas for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan. SUNY System received thoughtful and engaging comments that the following action steps were based on regarding the Chancellor’s call to create an Action Plan, and are grounded in recommendations from scholarly research, as well as the lived experiences of SUNY students and community members. However, this is a preliminary action plan, as this work must and will continue onward.

“With communities of color being hardest hit by health and economic impacts, these nonacademic barriers for students attempting to stay on track with their studies are magnified to devastating magnitudes.”

Harnessing the transformative power of diversity requires an inclusive and equitable climate. Without inclusion, diversity merely compositional—it’s just about the numbers. Many of the community feedback responses specifically identified diversity issues pertaining to students with disabilities (for instance, concern about mandatory attendance policies or requests for accommodations), issues facing the international student and faculty community, language diversity, and inclusivity and safety for students of all genders and orientations. SUNY is committed to ensuring equity and inclusivity for all students, however, the following recommendations seek to specifically address issues concerning racial equity.

The 25-point action plan that follows is designed to either create a more inclusive, representative SUNY, and to achieve equity in student success outcomes.

#### Part A. Close Student Academic Equity Gaps

As our analysis found, SUNY is still challenged with educational equity gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated existing inequalities. As one person shared through the feedback portal: “With communities of color being hardest hit by health and economic impacts, these nonacademic barriers for students attempting to stay on track with their studies are magnified to devastating magnitudes.”

While there are currently efforts underway to continue to recruit greater numbers of students of color and first-generation college students at SUNY, such as the “Big Dreams, Small Step” application support program, SUNY must remain dedicated to supporting these students once they arrive on campus or enroll in an academic program. Research regarding college diversity initiatives have found that successful reforms must be campus-wide and embraced by faculty.<sup>30</sup>

As the preceding analysis in Section II demonstrates, there are significant differences in the outcome data in regard to student success. While the number of bachelor's degrees that are awarded nationwide has increased almost 60 percent since the year 2000,<sup>31</sup> racial disparities in retention and completion still persist.<sup>32</sup> This has serious ramifications for individual students. Not completing college can put students in a precarious financial position as research suggests that students who take out college loans but do not graduate are three times as likely to default than borrowers who complete.<sup>33</sup> Defaulting on student loans can have disastrous effects on future financial stability through negative impacts on credit ranking, possible wage garnishment, and ineligibility for future aid programs.<sup>34</sup>

### **Recommendation A1. Strengthen and Expand Opportunity Programs**

In order to support students who may face additional barriers, SUNY has launched several initiatives to ensure that students' non-academic needs are being met—from initiating a grant program to provide refrigeration at food pantries for fresh produce and protein, to launching SUNY for All, which provides tuition-free courses for unemployed and underemployed New Yorkers.

SUNY has a rich legacy of successful Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP). Currently, 49 campuses offer EOP. The EOP has graduated more than 76,000 students to date with over 78 percent of the graduates continuing to live and work in New York. As of Fall 2020, EOP enrollment is 9,311 students. EOP students receive additional on-campus support and mentoring, as well as additional financial aid for non-tuition expenses (such as books and supplies). In addition, during the pandemic, the EOP was able to provide a laptop for every new EOP student.

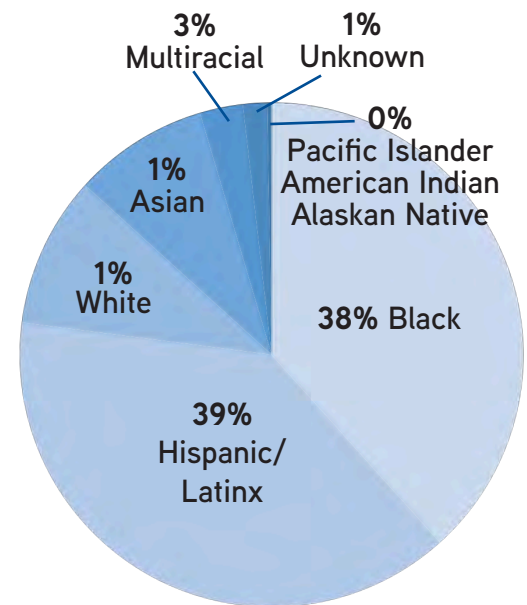
In February 2021, SUNY launched the first ever state-wide medical EOP program. The Pre-Medical Opportunity Program will provide academic support, mentorship, clinical exposure, assistance with MCAT preparation, academic coaching, and workshops to help create stronger pipelines to medical schools for individuals from a wider variety of backgrounds.

The EOP program is designed to directly address the access and achievement gaps for groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Program eligibility is determined by income and academic performance. Students must qualify as economically disadvantaged with household income less than 185 percent of the poverty level. The average family income for EOP students is \$21,300. Acceptance priority is given to students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, the program's enrollment is dominated by underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. EOP serves 10,000 students annually across 49 campuses. In Fall 2020, more than three quarters of all EOP students were from communities of color: Black (38 percent), Hispanic/Latinx (39 percent), and multiracial (3 percent) (Chart 8).

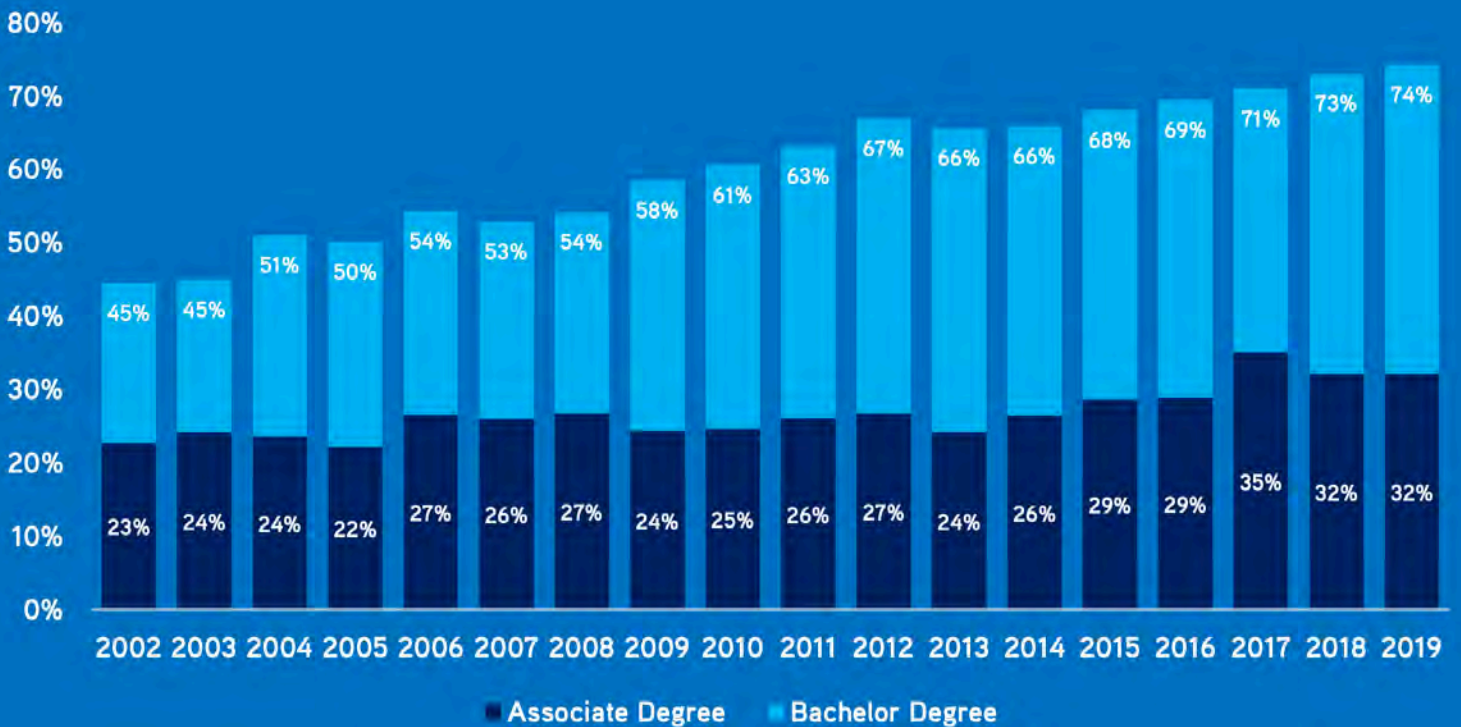
EOP offers academic, career, and counseling services along with tutoring and supplemental instruction. Students receive financial aid packages that assist with non-tuition expenses such as books and supplies. In academic year 2020, 99.79 percent of EOP students received a grant or other non-loan aid and an additional 67 percent received federal or personal loans. EOP students graduate with an average loan debt of \$25,000 (bachelor's) and \$16,000 (associate).

The EOP program has demonstrated considerable success in shrinking the achievement gap for participants. For the most recent year data is available, EOP students had a baccalaureate completion rate of 74.2 percent (within six years) and an associate completion rate of 32.1 percent (within three years). EOP completion rates are higher than the SUNY averages of 68.0 and 29.3 percent respectively. It is even more impressive when comparing them with the SUNY averages for Black and Hispanic/Latinx students. EOP success rate has increase dramatically over the past decade. Just a decade ago, completion rates were 58.49 percent for baccalaureate and 24.34 for associates. In total, EOP had over 76,000 alumni, 78 percent of who are living and working in New York.

**Chart 8. Educational Opportunity Program Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity<sup>35</sup>**



**Chart 9. Educational Opportunity Program, Completion Rates (2002-2019)<sup>36</sup>**



However, not every eligible student is included in EOP. Last year, SUNY could only serve a quarter of students applying to the program (received about 12,000 EOP applications for 3,000 EOP slots across all the campuses). One student suggested that SUNY “provide more accessible scholarships and grants to lower the barrier to entry amongst disadvantaged, lower-income students.” In addition, except for specific transfer students, students must apply for an EOP program upon first entry (i.e., when applying to college). One SUNY community member recommended that, “I would like to propose the establishment of an EOP training curriculum for high school guidance counselors, new EOP Directors and counselors/advisors as well as new admissions team members across NYS... I propose this because I feel our community needs a better understanding of what EOP is and the effectiveness of the program for economically and academically challenged students.”

In order to support students from lower-income backgrounds, we recommend SUNY continue to advocate the state provide additional resources and use any available funds within the SUNY system to expand EOPs so that more students can access these supports.

### **Recommendation A2. Expand Re-Enroll to Complete Programs to Close Persistent Equity Gaps**

Our analysis found that one of the largest equity gaps pertains to students who have some college, but no degree. Higher percentages of Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous students are in this category. SUNY has launched a successful Re-Enroll to Complete Program to urge more students withdrawing from SUNY with student loans to come back and finish their degrees.

This campaign includes pro-active outreach emails, encouraging student borrowers to return to college, offering them academic and financial support, and providing a list of options for re-enrolling, including attending college online. The Re-enroll to Complete Program brought back more than 2,500 students to classes last fall. To date, nearly 20,000 students have come back to SUNY to receive financial planning assistance and academic options with 2,170 now graduated as a result of Re-Enroll to Complete.

We recommend SUNY expand the Re-enroll to Complete Program to help address the equity gap for students who have started at a SUNY campus and then had to withdraw. Currently 83 percent (53 of 64 campuses) of SUNY’s campuses participate, including 80 percent (27) of community colleges. This successful project should be expanded to all SUNY campuses to try to ensure that students are able to graduate with a meaningful credential.

### **Recommendation A3. Develop a Robust Policy to Expand College Credit for Life and Work Experience**

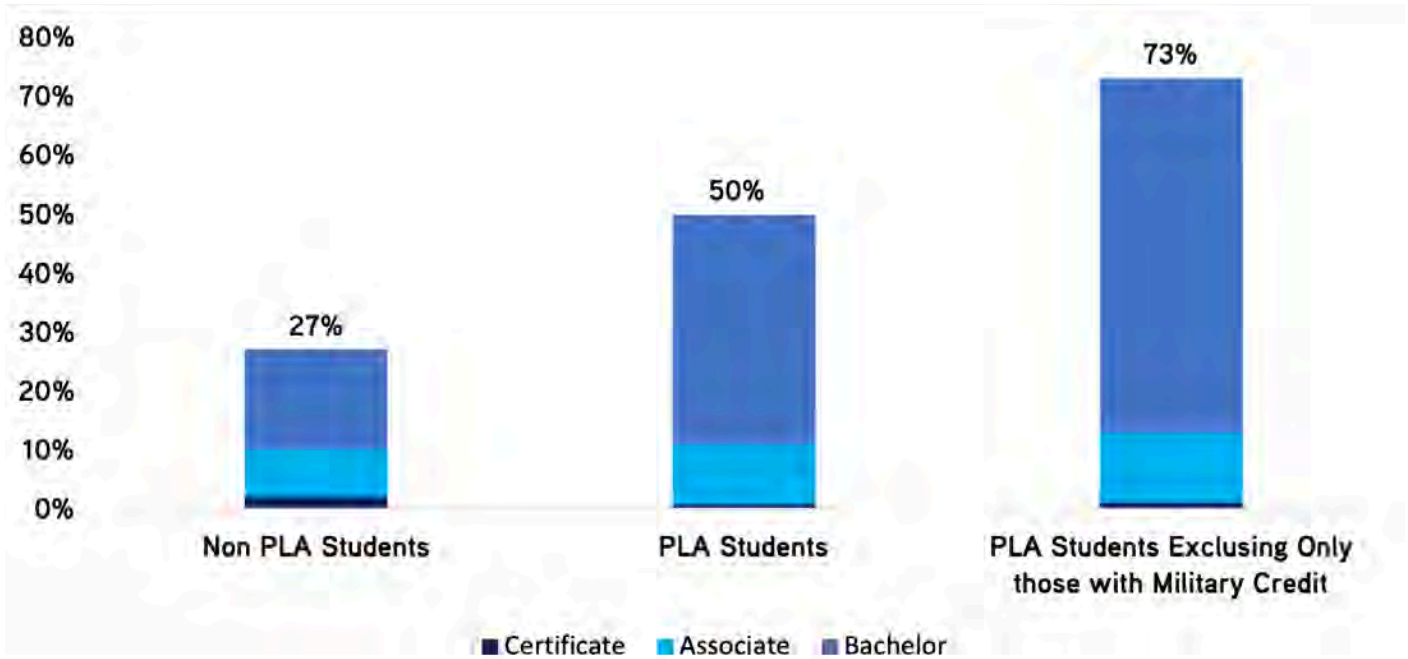
As previously discussed in Section II, adults with some college and no degree are disproportionately underrepresented minorities. One way to close this equity completion gap is through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). Individuals can acquire learning through work and experiences, some of which can be assessed—and be translated into credit—at a college or university level. The sources of learning can arise from employment, military training, civic activities, and volunteer service. It has the potential to significantly improve completion rates, lower the cost of a credential, and decrease time to degree completion. It has been demonstrated to disproportionately benefit students from underrepresented and low-income groups, as well as from military backgrounds.

Learning is continuous, but is only recognized when documented. A longitudinal study of 25,000



adult learners found that 49 percent of students who received prior learning credit ultimately earned a credential, compared to 27 percent of adult learners who earned a credential without PLA,<sup>37</sup> suggesting that students who receive PLA credit are nearly twice as likely to earn a credential in 7.5 years.

**Chart 10. Adult Students Credentials and PLA Credits (2011-2018)<sup>38</sup>**



However, access to PLA is not currently equitable. In the same longitudinal study, Black students were the least likely sub-group to have PLA credit, and higher-income (non-Pell grant recipients) were more likely to have PLA credit than lower-income peers.<sup>39</sup>

For this particular group of students, prior learning assessments can be an extraordinary powerful tool to recognize and honor not only their previous college credits, but any additional learning gleaned from work and life experience. In studies specifically of the pipeline between community colleges and bachelor's degree, research has found that not all credits transfer, and for those that do, they do not always count as credits towards one's major.<sup>40</sup> This is wasteful for both the student and the taxpayers, and it is disheartening for students to have to re-take courses in which they have already demonstrated competency.

Expanding PLA is an equity issue. A deeper look at the demographic data indicates that currently, white and Hispanic/Latinx students are more likely to engage in PLA than African American or Native American/Alaskan Native students, men are more likely to engage than women, and students with higher socioeconomic status (non-Pell Grant) than lower socioeconomic status (Pell Grant) students. A 2020 CAEL/WICHE study<sup>41</sup> showed that students who engage in PLA take on average 17 more credits at the institutions than their non-PLA counterparts. The study also shows a student earning 12 credits of PLA can accelerate degree completion by nine months for an associate degree and 14 months for a bachelor's degree. This is an advantage to underrepresented students who tend to have less familial financial support and those with lower socioeconomic status.<sup>42</sup> Engaging in PLA could significantly reduce the debt burden for students of color and from a lower socioeconomic status. In

order to continue to ensure equity, SUNY must become a national leader regarding the use of prior learning assessment. However, SUNY's current policy regarding prior learning assessments dates back to 1976. It allows campuses to assign credits for academic performance as demonstrated by:

- College-Level Examination Program (Subject Examinations) - Mean score obtained by persons from the standardization group who had earned a grade of C in a formal course;
- College Proficiency Examinations - Performance at a grade level of C; and
- Advanced Placement Program - A score of three or higher within the scale of five points used for this program.<sup>43</sup>

Colleges giving credit for demonstrated prior knowledge is not a novel concept—in fact, all SUNY schools grant college credit for a score of above a three on the Advanced Placement exam. It is not an innovation for students to demonstrate experience and knowledge on a certain topic and be awarded college credit for it—however, there remains a persistent issue of the opportunities students have to display their additional knowledge. In New York State in 2019, 48 percent of the AP exams that were undertaken were by white students, compared to only nine percent of exams taken by students who identify as Black.<sup>44</sup> Due to the current differing levels of access to advanced courses, granting prior learning credit for only experiences such as the advanced placement or international baccalaureate exams only exacerbates existing equity issues.

Since 1976, there have been many advances in the implementation of prior learning assessment that have demonstrated many additional ways to recognize and honor a student's prior learning and life and work experiences. These include:

- Standardized exams (e.g., CLEP exams through the College Board, DSST military exams through Prometric, etc.)
- Challenge or departmental exams
- Portfolio assessment
- Credit for military training (typically through American Council on Education, or ACE credit recommendations)
- Credit for corporate or other external training (typically through ACE or National College Credit Recommendation Service, or NCCRS credit recommendations)
- Institutional review of external training, licenses, or certifications
- High school exams (Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, "AP/IB")

Thus, expanding prior learning assessments and credit offerings to experiences beyond the AP, IB, or CLEP exams is important to advancing equity across the SUNY system. This is especially true for military students. PLA can have a significant impact on completion rates for active military and veteran students. By early 2012, both Indiana and Minnesota laws required public institutions to accept military credits.<sup>45</sup> By 2018, over 30 states had adopted similar policies. This is an equity issue as benefits under the G.I. Bill are time-limited, and prior learning assessment has been shown to reduce time towards degree, which lowers the cost of completion.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, upon recommendation from Middle States, the policy should be updated so that SUNY campuses include transparently on their website the campus policy towards prior learning assessments, such as the model policy shared by SUNY Empire.<sup>47</sup> In order to ensure that SUNY is able to continue to meet students where they are, is able to remain competitive, and to try to encourage

academic policies that reflect the system's values, we recommend SUNY update this policy in order to expand opportunities for all students.

#### **Recommendation A4. Expand Successful Programs to Support and Recognize Indigenous Learning Across SUNY System**

Native American and Indigenous students, faculty, and staff are the lowest percentage of minority populations on our SUNY campuses (about less than half of a percentage point of SUNY enrollment). This small sample size effect can often lead to any specific challenges being partially hidden. According to the National Center of Education Statistics, 19 percent of 18- to 24-year-old Native American students are enrolled in college compared to 41 percent of the overall U.S. population.<sup>48</sup> In addition, student success and completion is lower than the national average, as 41 percent of first-time, full-time Native American students attending four-year institutions beginning in 2012 graduated within six years, compared to 62 percent for all students.<sup>49</sup>

In 2019, the Native American College Fund published an equity initiative dedicated to college success for Native students. Some of those recommendations included: examine and expand curriculum to include Native languages, Native histories, Native cultures, and contemporary issues, as well as ensuring the use of indigenous teachings and learning practices.

In 2020, SUNY Empire began to provide college credit for Indigenous learning gained through work and life experience using its Prior Learning Assessment process, making it the first college in the nation to broadly recognize Indigenous learning — such as native languages or religion — as a pathway to college credit. In addition, SUNY Empire launched a Global Indigenous Knowledge certificate.

These initiatives can be brought to scale across the SUNY system, both through the increased use of prior learning (such as a student having fluency in a Native language despite not having taken high school or college courses in that language) and by ensuring the curriculum is inclusive.

Through the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, SUNY is currently reviewing the sustainability and impact of programs to recruit and retain Indigenous/Native American students across New York State. We recommend an advisory group be created to inventory existing programs and emulate successful models. Ultimately, the recommendations and efforts in reviewing sustainability and impact will likely include best practices not only for Native/Indigenous students, but faculty and staff as well.

### **Part B. Create a More Inclusive Culture at SUNY**

In order to increase student retention and completion, especially for students from underrepresented groups, SUNY had to examine what happens once the students arrive on campus—is there an inclusive culture? Do students feel they can and are they equipped to succeed in this place? Are there other students from similar backgrounds or life experiences that are succeeding here?

These are not merely rhetorical questions, as research has shown that they have significant impact on student success in college. In a study regarding the experiences of students, researchers found that

“a higher student perception of institutional commitment to diversity are associated with lower reports of discrimination and bias.”<sup>50</sup> A report from the United States Department of Education found that, “Too often, high school students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students feel that college is a place they do not belong. For students who decide to enroll in college, it is often an isolating experience where they do not feel accepted, welcomed, or well-treated.”<sup>51</sup>

Taking a holistic approach towards cultural competency, having safe and supportive spaces for students where they feel like they belong, and ensuring students have the environment and tangible needs met in order to succeed must be the goal of creating a more inclusive climate on every SUNY campus.

### **Recommendation B1. Develop a Model Diversity Training Program for Campuses**

Comments provided through the feedback from the SUNY community included calls to the creation and use of for strong, effective diversity training across the system. One respondent commented: “In order to honestly address racism, classism, ableism, sexism, and other bigotry and bias in our faculty, we must require strong diversity training for all faculty — not simply for those faculty who choose to attend.” Similarly, another respondent wrote, “There should be a mandatory comprehensive learning institute on DEI for faculty and staff that educates them on racial equity and literacy. If campuses are to increase DEI, then faculty and staff should be educated on the diversity and backgrounds of the students they are serving.”

These comments reflect frustration with the perceived bigotry, bias, and lack of understanding of communities of color by some faculty and staff. And, while diversity training is an important part of the solution, current research out of Harvard University reveals that mandatory diversity training — in isolation — has been ineffective.<sup>52</sup> The key to increasing the effectiveness of diversity training is scaffolding it with complementary measures that make it part of a wider program of change. Most impactful is engaging decision-makers in solving the problems themselves. This includes decision-makers closely examining their own campus data on climate, hiring, retention, pay, and promotion, and identifying problems and brainstorming solutions. It also includes engaging managers and directors in mentoring and sponsorship activities, and at all levels and sectors of college and university management, embedding structures that ensure the candid and robust discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges.

We recommend SUNY develop and create a model diversity training program for campuses that increases the effectiveness of existing diversity training. This model program will include mentoring and sponsorship programs, best practices in recruitment efforts, self-diagnosis through review of existing data, and vocal, visible affirmation of the importance of diversity from the highest levels of campus leadership.



Too often, high school students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students feel that college is a place they do not belong. For students who decide to enroll in college, it is often an isolating experience where they do not feel accepted, welcomed, or well-treated.



## **Recommendation B2. Conduct a SUNY-Wide Biennial Climate Survey**

Since 2015-16, SUNY has conducted a biennial climate survey of each campus regarding sexual harassment, including sexual violence, and students' knowledge of campus policies and procedures.<sup>53</sup> Campuses are able to use the findings from this survey in order to support appropriate responses and develop education programs. Since then, some campuses, such as the University at Albany, have conducted a Campus Diversity Climate survey that polled faculty, staff, and students regarding their experience and thoughts related to issues such as their satisfaction with campus diversity, discrimination experience, harassment experiences, and feeling of belonging.<sup>54</sup>

For questions regarding issues such as harassment or discrimination, climate surveys present an important tool for understanding the nature of a situation. This is partly because official statistics relating to racial bias incidents are often under-reported, and therefore, may not reveal the extent of any issues on a particular campus.<sup>55</sup> In addition, it is important to have the data on a campus-specific level. As recommended in a 2014 White House report, "Further, campus response, intervention, and prevention efforts will be more successful if they are tailored to the needs of each campus community."<sup>56</sup>

In order to better address climate issues related to equity and inclusion, we recommend SUNY implement a biennial Systemwide campus climate survey with common metrics to assess progress on equity and inclusion, and take appropriate action where needed. The survey should be a uniform instrument focusing on issues of race and equity and offered on all SUNY campuses. These data can then be utilized in inventorying persistent issues, identifying potential issues for each campus, and directing future diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

## **Recommendation B3. Review and Enhance SUNY's Mission Statement to Expressly Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

A mission statement is the primary vehicle through which an institution articulates its core organizing purpose. It grounds the vision and serves as a public declaration. SUNY, from its inception, framed its purpose through a mission statement that references the intent to provide educational services "with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population." SUNY has had demonstrated success in this regard, but, as discussed above, there remains much more work to be done to fully realize this intent.

We recommend SUNY engage in a mission review process to determine whether revised language could better articulate its goals by more explicitly and actively naming diversity, equity, and inclusion in a manner that extends the current language of access and representation. In doing so, a revised mission statement may provide a stronger core for the development, implementation, and assessment of anti-racist policies and practices across SUNY that lead to the needed gains discussed herein. SUNY's mission statement was statutorily created so any changes would need legislative and gubernatorial approval. Given the uncertainty of that process and outcome, we recommend SUNY at least develop of Systemwide statement of principles on diversity, equity, and inclusion to be a companion to the mission statement.

#### **Recommendation B4. Expand Programs Dedicated to the Social-Emotional and Academic Development of Students of Color**

We recommend SUNY replicate programs such as the Umoja program in California Community Colleges that support the success and degree completion underrepresented minorities at SUNY colleges through classes centered on their needs.

One such model could be the Black Male Initiative (BMI) at SUNY Empire State College, which was launched in 2009 to increase retention among the college's black male population in New York City through peer mentorship and rigorous academic support. The program has proven extremely effective, with a 95 percent retention rate among participants, compared to an average retention rate of 81 percent throughout the SUNY system.

SUNY Cortland Multicultural Male Initiative (MMI) is another successful model. The MMI was established to improve access, retention, and graduation rates of men of color (African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native) by providing academic support, professional development, and mentoring. The program aims to support the college and career success of men of color by utilizing a holistic approach to promote brotherhood and community through cultural awareness and identity development.

Additionally, Upstate Medical has a Mentors in Healthcare (MiH) program. The MiH program was created to provide students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds (African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx).

We recommend that SUNY replicate successful models at individual campuses throughout the entire system.

#### **Recommendation B5. Expand Clubs and Other Formal Student Organizations for Students of Color**

One way to improve the student experience is through clubs and other formal organizations. Black, Hispanic, and other underrepresented student clubs are mission critical to SUNY campuses. Black, Hispanic, and other underrepresented student clubs should be conceived and designed with the full integration of students of color from the diaspora. The purpose of the programs and activities should be designed to elevate and broaden conversations to the full student body in an effort to ensure that they are not operating in isolation.

The creation of new student organizations must be driven by students themselves; however, many students may not know how to navigate the creation of a formally recognized organization on a campus. We recommend SUNY's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work with campuses to provide awareness of potential on campus funding and the tools to assist students who wish to expand and support Black, Hispanic, and other Underrepresented student clubs and organizations.

#### **Recommendation B6. Create a System-Wide Research Institute on Racial Equity**

Research centers attract exceptional faculty and graduate students, strengthen the research reputation of universities and expand their ability to respond to complex interdisciplinary topics and issues. The SUNY Black Faculty Staff Collective recommended a Systemwide research institute centered on issues of racial equity with a focus particularly on African American Studies that would enhance

SUNY's ability to attract, develop and retain Black faculty. Through the expertise it attracts, such an institute would also expand the ability of campuses to develop practical solutions to racial inequities on their campuses, including more inclusive campus climates.

Currently, faculty teaching in racial/ethnic studies departments across SUNY have no central support outside of their campuses. Many of the departments they teach in are small and struggle for validity and acceptance on their individual campuses. Yet these faculty members provide inordinate support to, and mentoring of, students of colors on their campuses. They are among the first persons called upon to serve on committees and intervene with students when racial incidents occur on their campuses.

We recommend a reconceptualized Shirley Chisholm Center for Equity Studies to be a Systemwide resource to provide greater opportunities to support Black Faculty and graduate students and facilitate greater racial equity and more inclusive campuses. Then Empire State College President Malatras created the Chisholm Center but it would have a more meaningful impact at the system level. Faculty from across SUNY campuses could affiliate with the center to collaborate on research, or pursue their own research with the input and support of colleagues with similar interests. Graduate students could attend summer programs that provide mentoring toward the goal of attaining faculty positions, thereby providing a pipeline for faculty that builds upon the infrastructure of SUNY's PRODiG Faculty and (grad/post-grad) Fellows Initiatives. In addition, the institute could sponsor academic conferences, lectures and fora on a wide variety of topics related to the Black Experience.

### **Recommendation B7. Create a Permanent Process to Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Board of Trustees Level**

As Frederick Douglass stated, "Is there if no struggle, there is no progress." As part of SUNY's commitment to removing barriers and establishing true equity across all campuses, our work will continue because there is always work to be done. One action plan will not end racism on or increase diversity on college campuses. It is an ongoing iterative process. Important to ensuring these recommendations and others "stick" we recommend that there be a permanent process put in place at the Board of Trustees—the central policymaking authority at SUNY—to continue to support this important work.

## **Part C.**

### **Embed Racial Equity into Curriculum and Toward Racial Equity**

Following the Chancellor's announcement of the development of the Systemwide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan, a working group was created to gather feedback from various stakeholder groups to initiate discussions about how curricula can decrease racial equity gaps and increase racial literacy. As an initial step, the group was apprised of ongoing work on SUNY General Education (now in Phase II of a three-phased review and revision), and baseline information was gathered to identify relevant academic program offerings in criminal justice, along with key stakeholder groups and campus contacts (see analysis section above).

The group interviewed and surveyed (via written survey) executive committee members of various faculty and student groups, including chief academic officers, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, University Faculty Senate and the Student Assembly; representative campus criminal justice program coordinators; campus race/ethnic studies coordinators from the various sectors; and the Black Faculty Staff executive committee.

“To truly promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, a robust curriculum that mirrors the institution’s honest and profound intent to educate students... and to make room at the table for everyone, can only be achieved by learning the histories of the presence of students from diverse backgrounds.”

Students and community members shared very thoughtful responses regarding curriculum. One respondent wrote, “To truly promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, a robust curriculum that mirrors the institution’s honest and profound intent to educate students... and to make room at the table for everyone, can only be achieved by learning the histories of the presence of students from diverse backgrounds.” Another suggested that the SUNY General Education Studies subject area named “Other World Civilizations” be renamed, as there is only this world and the current name is centered on whiteness. Another suggested that SUNY students and faculty be specifically incentivized to study Black or Hispanic/Latinx scholars whose work has been suppressed in higher education so far.

Initial progress has been made and there appears to be much support for general education work underway in these initiatives. But, the work is not complete.

### **Recommendation C1. Incorporate Diversity in General Education Requirements**

Initially created in 1998, SUNY general education requirements need review and updating to support the needs of 21st-century students. Through a shared governance process, planning for the revision was begun in 2017. Phase I research, led by faculty governance, resulted in White and Green Papers — two foundational documents that performed an environmental scan and raised key questions and considerations for the Phase II, policy development.

As part of the Action Plan process, we created a Curriculum Development group tasked with gathering and providing feedback on the draft GEAC diversity recommendations. GEAC was informed of the general scope and purpose of this work. GEAC will make the final recommendations to the SUNY Provost after a full review of the general education framework (including diversity) by the broader SUNY community. The action plan’s findings were supportive of the work of GEAC. The timeline for GEAC’s work calls for Board of Trustee formal consideration of the new SUNY General Education framework by June 2021, followed by Phase III implementation in AY 2021-22.

Key findings from the survey, which included chief academic officers; CDOs; PRODiG faculty; program coordinators from selected programs, including Black Studies, Latin American Studies, and Ethnic Studies; and Criminal Justice program coordinators include:

- The majority of respondents believed that a diversity category should be included in SUNY General Education Requirements (83 percent).
- A slight majority of respondents thought that the diversity category should be both a knowledge category (satisfied by a course) and a competency (54 percent).
- If choosing between competency and category, competency is favored (19 percent to 13 percent).
- A majority thought that diversity should be required of all students, rather than optional (87 percent).

We recommend SUNY take these results into consideration and, in concert with the GEAC, include a diversity category in the general education requirements.



## **Recommendation C2. Update Criminal Justice Curriculum**

Reforms in law enforcement training are a key element of combatting systemic racism in the criminal justice system. To that end, the one goal of our process was to review and recommend possible revisions to SUNY Criminal Justice programs to ensure that students entering into law enforcement receive instruction in the historical use of race in shaping the contours of law enforcement, and the present-day structural bias that exists within law enforcement. Two working groups were tasked with this review: the Curriculum Development Group Policing and the Policing, Law Enforcement, and Incarceration Group.

A survey by the working groups found a majority of respondents supported including systemic racism content within Criminal Justice programs (81 percent). A course (52 percent) was preferred to a certificate (29 percent).

As a result, we recommend SUNY work to adopt a process to update and enhance the current criminal justice curriculum including:

- Not simply creating one course because it will not adequately address the issues, yet it may take some time to effectively establish a “competency” requirement.
- Developing a complementary approach using the core general education curriculum to achieve a broader impact at the campus level, and map and infuse within criminal justice programs a type of “competency” requirement. This type of implementation may provide the most time-effective approach.
- Review current programs to determine ‘best in class’ programs with systemic racism as a mandatory course towards the degree requirements. Revisions should proceed with quick program review via the State Education Department and SUNY.
- Examine “isms” that are part of curriculum review for program, as well as other areas studies of criminology and associated interdisciplinary programs.
- Closely examine faculty selected to teach courses related to the “isms,” with a focus on inclusive pedagogy.
- Perform a curriculum review of criminal justice and criminology content in disciplinary programs (annual review of program/accreditation).
- Examine a variety of criminal justice internship roles (i.e., cyber security, public defenders, assist district attorney, etc.) across systems and majors.

In the process of review by the working groups, concerns were raised that requiring a course can easily lead to a “checked box” reaction, rather than a more meaningful and transformative impact. These efforts will ensure that that students training for careers in law enforcement are aware of the history of racial bias within policing and understand structural racism in the context of present-day law enforcement.

## **Recommendation C3. Develop a Process to Share Best Practices or Best in Class in Embedding Racial Equity into Curriculum**

A key part of embedding racial equity into curriculum involves the sharing of practices and the examination of our approaches to matters of policy and practice that impact curriculum. It is important to consider items of direct impact, such as course syllabi, as well as items of indirect impact vital to students’ curricular experiences, such as supports for student recruitment and retention as well as approaches to hiring faculty and staff. There are two recommendations to address this.

First, we recommend SUNY work towards establishing a regularized series focused on cross-campus sharing of approaches to curriculum that center on anti-racism. Second, in recognition of the decentralized structure of the academic enterprise and the responsibility of faculty for the curriculum, we recommend SUNY work with the Faculty Council for Community Colleges and University Faculty Senate to develop and distribute an equity framework to be used reflexively during the development, implementation, and assessment of policies and practices related to curriculum.

## Part D.

### Strengthening Institutional Role of the Chief Diversity Officer's Role on Every Campus

In 2014, SUNY convened a task force to guide the development of policies to increase diversity among students, faculty, and staff, as well as to ensure a supportive, welcoming environment for every member of the SUNY family at both the system and campus levels.

The work of the task force culminated in a resolution aimed at creating infrastructure on every campus to support ongoing, continuous monitoring and addressing of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues on our campuses. The SUNY Board of Trustees adopted the resolution on September 10, 2015, and it became the 2015 SUNY Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, Document No. 7809.

The policy created a bold new, first-in-the-nation infrastructure for supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion by requiring that each of SUNY's colleges and universities, and SUNY System Administration have a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). Specifically, regarding the campus CDO, the policy states that 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;
- 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 Systemwide network of CDOs to support SUNY's overall diversity goals.

#### **Recommendation D1. Conduct a System-Wide Audit of the Impact and Effectiveness of the Chief Diversity Officer Role on Every Campus**

In order to strengthen the institutional role of the CDO and ensure that the position complies with the requirements and expectations of the 2015 Board Of Trustees Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, we recommend SUNY should immediately audit the titles, reporting structure, roles, and responsibilities of every CDO across the SUNY system, and report the results to the Board of Trustees. This audit should entail meetings with each campus CDO, as well as their president and potentially other cabinet members. The audit should include a Systemwide review of personnel changes within the role of the CDO.

This audit will help the System and the Board of Trustees understand how the CDO position has evolved since 2015. Once asked to focus almost exclusively on compliance, programming, and training, many CDOs are now charged with strategically partnering with leadership to manage risk and shape

campus culture and priorities. On the basis of this audit, a larger conversation should ensue regarding adequate support of CDOs, including budgets, administrative and programmatic support, training, and professional development.

### **Recommendation D2. Update Policy that CDOs Must Be a Direct Report to Presidents at Every Campus**

According to the 2015 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, each campus is required to appoint a campus CDO who will, “be a senior member of the campus administration, reporting directly to the president or provost.”<sup>57</sup> As raised in Section II, the variation in CDO reporting lines, titles, and responsibilities across the campuses could hamper the ability of the CDO to be the strategic senior leader and change agent of institutional culture contemplated by the 2015 Board of Trustees policy.

In order to ensure that the role is more than symbolic, particular attention must be paid to the placement of the CDO in the organizational structure. In 2020, the publication *Inside Higher Education* published a piece stating that, “The chief diversity officer ought to sit at the president’s table... The high-ranking job title, at the very least, indicates to internal and external stakeholders the authority and control that is necessary for CDOs to be efficacious leaders.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the *Harvard Business Review* stated that, “The CDO should report directly to the CEO or to the head of HR with a dotted line to the CEO... [they] must have a seat at the senior leadership table if you want to see meaningful change.”<sup>59</sup>

In order to ensure that the CDO is able to fulfill their role and help lead meaningful change, we recommend the Board update the policy to state that the CDO should report directly to the college president.

### **Recommendation D3. CDOs Must Have Sufficient Resources to Carry Out Their Roles and Responsibilities**

In order to be effective as senior members of the campus administration charged with managing risk and shaping campus culture and priorities, we recommend campus CDOs have the resources necessary to carry out that role.

Similarly, to the need to have the CDO report directly to the campus president, this role must be able to be completed by the individual, and not be a title “in name only.” For that to happen, the CDO must have sufficient resources. Those resources should include adequate administrative and programmatic support. In the same way that other campus senior leaders’ budget and plan, the CDO should have the same opportunity.

### **Recommendation D4. Any Hiring or Change in Employment Status of a CDO Should Be Reported to the System Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The CDO should be a senior leader on campus, but this person may change over time, as personnel are hired, separate from the campus, or change roles.

In order to centrally support the work of campus CDOs through a Systemwide network of campus CDOs as contemplated by the 2015 Board of Trustees policy, we recommend the System Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) be made aware of hires, leaves, separations, and other changes in the employment status of campus CDOs.

## Part E

### Increase Diversity of Faculty and Staff at SUNY

The demographic make-up of SUNY faculty and staff was identified in the racial equity gap analysis. Over three-quarters of SUNY full-time faculty are white, compared to only 54 percent of students. This is consistent with the national average, where three-quarters of faculty were white compared to 55 percent of students according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.<sup>60</sup>

Having a faculty demographic makeup that matches the student body has a significant impact on student success. As one community member wrote in the feedback portal, “Having faculty who serve as models for our students is paramount.” The research supports this assertion. One study looking at public school districts found that, “Relying on a classroom fixed-effects strategy, we show that students assigned to a teacher with similar demographic characteristics experience positive benefits in terms of these academic perceptions and attitudes.”<sup>61</sup> Likewise, a study from the American Economic Review focused on community colleges found that, “We find that the performance gap in terms of class dropout rates and grade performance between white and underrepresented minority students falls by 20 to 50 percent when taught by an underrepresented minority instructor.”<sup>62</sup>

Research around practices to recruit diverse faculty has focused on the importance of a systemic approach and the institutionalization of policies and practices that promote diverse faculty hiring and retention.<sup>63</sup> SUNY must ensure a thoughtful and comprehensive suite of policies to see long-term strides in this arena.

#### **Recommendation E1. Expand the PRODiG Program to Better Serve SUNY’s Community Colleges**

PRODiG (Promoting Recruitment Opportunity Diversity Inclusion & Growth) is a signature faculty recruitment and retention program created in 2018. Since then, over 125 new faculty of color and/or women in STEM disciplines have been recruited into tenure-track faculty lines with support for their teaching and research, professional development, and mentoring. PRODiG conditions financial support to campuses (in the form of grants to support new faculty hires) upon campuses self-diagnosing barriers to diversity in their recruitment and retention policies and practices, and creating strategic plans outlining measurable goals for removing these barriers and making progress toward faculty recruitment, support, and retention goals.

In the first year of PRODiG’s implementation, 100 percent of SUNY’s doctoral degree-granting institutions and comprehensive liberal art colleges participated in PRODiG. However, SUNY’s community colleges have participated at far lower levels for several reasons, including these:

- The eligibility requirements for PRODiG faculty (a PhD or terminal degree) are not typically ones that community college faculty meet. Many have master’s or other degrees.
- Community colleges have fewer faculty hiring resources and are more challenged to find (and retain) faculty committed to, and effective at, teaching the student population served by community colleges.
- Community colleges rely upon adjunct faculty to meet teaching demands, however, candidates eligible for PRODiG must be hired into tenure-track lines.

PRODiG for community colleges requires engagement by key stakeholders in the community college sector, along with further evaluation of potential enhancements to the existing PRODiG program. Some of the questions that remain to be examined include: How can PRODiG better meet the needs

of the community colleges? What characteristics distinguish faculty committed to the community college student population from those who are unlikely to persist in the community college sector? We recommend SUNY expand the PRODiG program for community colleges so that faculty at the community college level are better able to reflect the student population, which is an important tool for advancing equity.

## **Recommendation E2. Establish a Black Leadership Academy**

SUNY has boldly committed to become the most inclusive university system in the country— where all students, faculty and staff feel welcome and supported. Importantly, SUNY understands that to truly meet its goals, the University must employ—in addition to faculty and staff—leaders at the highest levels who share common experiences and culture with those who comprise the fastest growing segment of its student population: diverse students who will become our next generation of diverse leaders.

SUNY has seen a steady increase of Black students in recent years, reaching nearly 11 percent, or over 42,000 students, in the 2019-2020 academic year. SUNY continues its efforts to ensure that campus leadership and faculty reflect the students they serve. While our presidents have become more reflective of the diversity of our students, and SUNY's PRODiG Initiative aims to make our faculty more representative, the executive leadership teams on many campuses do not represent the diversity of the student body.

We recommend SUNY create a Black Leadership Institute (BLI) as an initiative for Black leaders in higher education with a mission to retain and grow from within SUNY our Black professionals, offering support and fostering professional development, creating a more diverse SUNY culture that represents New York State and the students we serve.

The BLI would be designed to open doors to executive level positions and strengthen the University's pool of Black leaders. BLI will identify, develop, and recruit, and ultimately support, retain, and foster the success of Black leaders at the university president and president's cabinet level (provosts, vice presidents, chief financial officers, chief business officers, and the like).

The BLI will be a companion to the already successful SUNY Hispanic Leadership Institute (HLI), which was created in 2017 as a resource and initiative for Hispanic or Latinx leaders to offer the same support and professional development to retain our Hispanic/Latinx leaders. The HLI has graduated 32 SUNY leaders to date from the four-year-old program. The BLI will emulate this successful model to develop Black leaders in the University.

Under the guidance of an executive director and a distinguished Advisory Council, the Institute will offer fellowship programs for mid- to senior-level Black and African American managers and executives, and shorter-duration development opportunities for mid-level leaders, to provide opportunities for advancement to senior executive-level positions. Targeted programs and supports aimed at drawing and retaining high-quality Black and African American leaders to SUNY will include:

- Individualized Support: The Institute will develop individualized assessment and development programs for current or emerging Black leaders, to ensure their progress and success.
- Awareness and Education Activities: The Institute will sponsor lectures and events with leaders

across SUNY, including the SUNY Board of Trustees, to enhance their awareness, understanding, and knowledge around issues concerning Black leadership.

- Search Committee Training: The Institute will work with the SUNY CDO to develop guidelines and aids to ensure that search committees are trained and understand how to identify potential quality Black candidates.
- Candidate Identification: The Institute will work with the Advisory Board and a broader network of leaders around the country to help identify potential Black candidates for SUNY leadership positions.
- Resource and Research Activities: The Institute will serve as a resource for those requiring information regarding the challenges and opportunities for Black leaders in Higher Education in New York State and nationally, and will strive to undertake and sponsor research in the area of Black leadership development, retention, and success.

The BLI, much like the HLI, will provide a framework for selected candidates to gain the essential tools and leadership guidance to return and serve their SUNY campuses with more creativity and ideas. And, just like the HLI has successfully done, the Chancellor's goal for the BLI is to promote, retain, and develop SUNY's future leaders, creating a pathway to success for New York state at large. BLI and HLI will work together under a minority leadership umbrella to better prepare future leaders—some of whom will be Black, Hispanic/Latinx or Afro-Latinx—to collaborate effectively with other leaders from underrepresented minority groups.

### **Recommendation E3. Forge Partnerships Between Educational Opportunity Centers and University Police Departments to Recruit Campus Police Officers in Communities of Color**

Law enforcement officers on our SUNY Campuses play a vital role who protecting and serving the SUNY community. SUNY's University Police Departments are committed to diversifying their ranks and have taken positive strides towards this goal. University Police Departments have undergone additional trainings including harassment and discrimination prevention, crisis intervention, mental health first aid, implicit bias, and fair and impartial policing. In some instances, campus police departments have boldly voiced support for inclusive values. However, like faculty and other profession staff they do not reflect the diversity of our students.

In order to help ensure diversity, we recommend SUNY create partnerships between Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) and UPDs across SUNY to recruit law enforcement positions in Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities. Building upon the strong presence of EOCs across New York State, SUNY will scale up this successful pilot program and to reach out to underrepresented communities of color, provide them with the skills to navigate the civil service system, assist them with the application process, and provide an equal opportunity for them to compete for employment as university police officers. SUNY will charge campuses with similar challenges to create partnerships with their EOCs to publicize and provide free exam preparation classes, targeting Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities.

### **Recommendation E4. Form a Partnership with New York State Department of Civil Service to Remove Barriers to Applicants to Law Enforcement Positions**

There are myriad obstacles to diversifying the ranks of our SUNY Police Departments. Many of our campuses are located in non-metropolitan communities that lack diversity. Regardless of the location of the campus, the process of hiring university police officers is constrained by civil service

department requirements, deadlines and processes that are unfamiliar to many individuals in Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities. After they are successfully hired and professionally trained, Black and Hispanic/Latinx officers are often poached by nearby municipalities seeking to diversify their ranks and providing superior pay and benefits.<sup>64</sup>

At the core of the underrepresentation of officers of color within the ranks of university police are structural obstacles. Race-neutral policies and practices that govern testing dates, and how applicants are canvassed and subsequently interviewed have a disparate impact on applicants of color and pose barriers to the employment of qualified applicants. We recommend SUNY partner with the New York State Department of Civil Service to review the hiring process for university police and make recommendations for how to remove barriers to Black and Hispanic/Latinx applicants so that the university police assigned to our state-operated campuses as well as the municipal police who patrol our community colleges will better reflect the diversity of the students on our campuses.

### **Recommendation E5. Create a Public Safety Micro-Credential to Create Combine Education and Workforce Opportunities in Law Enforcement for Students of Color**

We recommend SUNY expand a public safety micro-credential through SUNY community colleges and the New York State Apprenticeship Program to create a more diverse pipeline to combine education and workforce opportunities in law enforcement for students of color. Dutchess Community College's (DCC) proposed Pathways to Policing program, which would provide high school seniors with access to college-credit courses in policing as well as employment in the security sector within their community, is a potential model to explore for replication. The program, proposed in DCC's application to the New York State Apprenticeship program, resulted from a collaboration between the City of Poughkeepsie, Poughkeepsie High School and DCC. The program seeks to attract Poughkeepsie high school seniors, who live in high poverty neighborhoods of the city, to take college coursework that would be delivered synchronously at high schools by DCC faculty. Completion of the courses would lead to a 6-credit Public Safety Micro-Credential and potential employment as a security guard within their own community. The program provides not only immediate employment opportunities but also an opportunity for a positive introduction to DCC. The six credits from the two courses comprising the micro-credential—CRJ 101 Introduction to Security Administration, and HED 134, First Aid, Safety and CPR—can be applied to DCC's Criminal Justice – Public and Private Security A.A.S. degree. Students completing the Public Safety Micro-Credential have a 6-credit head start in completing their associate degree. This is a program with high replication potential. Further, slight modifications to the micro-credential should also be explored which would allow it to stack toward an A.S. degree in Criminal Justice, which more easily transfers to the bachelor's degree in criminal justice, with established pathways to careers in law enforcement, corrections, probation, parole, rehabilitation, and industrial security.

## **Recommendation E6. Increase Diversity Within All Candidate Pools for Non-Faculty Campus Hiring**

Racial diversity is lacking within all campus employment sectors, including executive, managerial, non-faculty professional, service/maintenance, secretarial/clerical, technical/paraprofessional and other positions.

In order to further diversify these roles, recruitment and hiring practices must be expanded to ensure all open positions include diverse candidates for consideration before hiring decisions are made. We recommend SUNY System Administration create a set of hiring guidelines and priorities which will be which campuses will be directed to follow. Campuses will be required to conduct an annual assessment of hiring and submit a report of the levels of diversity in all employment sectors.

## **Recommendation E7. Expand Campus Participation in New York Higher Education Recruitment Consortia (HERCs)**

Higher education has many recruitment challenges to achieve the goal of diversifying its faculty and staff. One key barrier can be visibility and accessibility of opportunities that are available on a college campus. One key to successful recruitment is to identify the best platforms that provide access and visibility to many different, diverse, and talented candidates. In this world of digital job postings, institutions need to identify how best to share open positions and valuable information about campus culture. SUNY is a wide and diverse system that constantly needs to recruit talent at all levels. To be effective, we recommend all SUNY institutions expand the visibility of job opportunities. The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) could serve as a model. HERC is a national, nonprofit consortium working to advance equity and excellence in the higher education workforce. HERC's across the country serve over 700 higher education institutions, hospitals, labs, and affiliated employers united by a shared commitment to cultivating a talented workforce as diverse as the people they serve. HERC believes in an inclusive higher education workforce depends on systemic change best achieved through institutional collaboration, the development of innovative tools that can be shared and leveraged, and an engaged network of individuals committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Two HERCs currently serve colleges and universities in New York State, (1) the Upstate New York HERC (UNY HERC), serving the Upstate New York Region, including the Capital Saratoga, Central Leatherstocking, Finger Lakes, Chautauqua-Allegheny, Niagara Frontier, the Adirondacks, and Thousand Islands Regions, and (2) the Metro New York and Southern Connecticut Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) serving the Metro New York and Southern Connecticut Region. The University at Buffalo serves at the lead institution for the Upstate New York HERC.

In the last two years, 14 SUNY colleges and universities were members of the Upstate NY HERC, although half of the campuses did not renew in 2020-21. We recommend SUNY expand its footprint in these HERCs, so that our campuses may utilize them as an important tool in more inclusive hiring.







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# IV. MOVING FOR- WARD

## IV. Moving Forward

This Action Plan is an important step to closing equity gaps in SUNY. However, more work needs to be done. A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is an ongoing process—it is not a static moment captured in a report. For instance, the SUNY Chancellor is developing updated comprehensive naming guidelines. This presents the SUNY with a unique opportunity to review the names of existing buildings, spaces, and monuments with an eye toward social justice and eliminating names that will make our diverse student body feel excluded. Another issue that needs serious thought and discussion is the tenure process to ensure that all faculty—especially our diverse faculty—are duly considered for promotion. Finally, in recent years, SUNY campuses have experienced a rash of bigoted, hateful expressions that are legally protected by the First Amendment. Recent incidents include a doll hung from the neck by a noose that was discovered in a campus work area<sup>65</sup> and an illustration published in a student publication depicting a young black man with bulging eyes and exaggerated, large lips proudly walking through a decrepit neighborhood, clenching a diploma, and donning a graduation cap and gown in the school colors.<sup>66</sup> These are only a small fraction of the incidents of hateful, harmful expression that have occurred on SUNY campuses. Campuses are legally constrained in their ability to punish such expressions, even though their campus community values explicitly reject bigotry and hate. This is often referred to as the Free Speech vs. Inclusion “trade-off” on campuses because there seem to be no other options for public universities to clamp down on hateful expressions. SUNY should try another option by providing training for campuses in Restorative Justice Approaches to Hate Speech—an approach that brings together into constructive dialog persons who violate community values explicitly rejecting bigotry and hate by engaging with persons harmed by the violation.

Overall, the work of the committees over the past several months urged that, on top of formal policies, SUNY create a culture of inclusivity and diversity throughout every level of the system. Moreover, campus leaders must implement and enforce diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in order to sustain meaningful change. On top of that, we’ve found a great enthusiasm that SUNY should continuously celebrate our diversity as a shared community to internal and external stakeholders.

In addition, the long-term and inequitable effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remain to be seen. Already, the data has shown that Black individuals are more likely to die than white individuals, even while making up a smaller percentage of the population.<sup>67</sup> The job losses that occurred during the pandemic were predominately held by women, specifically women of color.<sup>68</sup> The challenges posed by remote learning in K-12 schools were felt most harshly but high-needs communities and communities of color.<sup>69</sup> All of these factors combined will likely exacerbate existing inequalities within SUNY and all systems of education. Thus, we must work harder to address them.

This report is the first step towards a more equitable SUNY. The report takes an analytical lens to existing data about enrollment, the faculty, and student success outcomes by racial and ethnic subgroup, to have an accurate understanding of the current reality our students and faculty face. Then, we combine the analytical understanding, as well feedback from stakeholders and relevant, research to develop proactive, practical recommendations to take action in the areas where SUNY can, and must do, better to serve students representative of the State of New York.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Part A. Close Student Academic Equity Gaps**

**Recommendation A1.** Strengthen and Expand Opportunity Programs

**Recommendation A2.** Expand Re-Enroll to Complete Programs to Close Persistent Equity Gaps

**Recommendation A3.** Develop a Robust Policy to Expand College Credit for Life and Work Experience

**Recommendation A4.** Expand Successful Programs to Support and Recognize Indigenous Learning Across SUNY System

### **Part B. Create a More Inclusive Culture at SUNY**

**Recommendation B1.** Develop a Model Diversity Training Program for Campuses

**Recommendation B2.** Conduct a SUNY-Wide Biennial Climate Survey

**Recommendation B3.** Review and Enhance SUNY's Mission Statement to Expressly Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Recommendation B4.** Expand Programs Dedicated to the Social- Emotional and Academic Development of Students of Color

**Recommendation B5.** Expand Clubs and Other Formal Student Organizations for Students of Color

**Recommendation B6.** Create a System-Wide Research Institute on Racial Equity

**Recommendation B7.** Create a Permanent Process to Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Board of Trustees Level

### **Part C. Embed Racial Equity into Curriculum and Toward Racial Equity**

**Recommendation C1.** Incorporate Diversity in General Education Requirements

**Recommendation C2.** Update Criminal Justice Curriculum

**Recommendation C3.** Develop a Process to Share Best Practices or Best in Class in Embedding Racial Equity into Curriculum

### **Part D. Strengthening Institutional Role of the Chief Diversity Officer's Role on Every Campus**

**Recommendation D1.** Conduct a System-Wide Audit of the Impact and Effectiveness of the Chief Diversity Officer Role on Every Campus

**Recommendation D2.** Update Policy that CDOs Must Should Be a Direct Report to Presidents at Every Campus

**Recommendation D3.** CDOs Must Have Sufficient Resources to Carry Out Their Roles and Responsibilities

**Recommendation D4.** Any Hiring or Change in Employment Status of a CDO Should Be Reported to the System Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## **Part E. Increase Diversity of Faculty and Staff at SUNY**

**Recommendation E1.** Expand the PRODiG Program to Better Serve SUNY's Community Colleges

**Recommendation E2.** Establish a Black Leadership Academy

**Recommendation E3.** Forge Partnerships Between Educations Opportunity Centers and University Police Departments to Recruit Campus Police Officers in Communities of Color

**Recommendation E4.** Form a Partnership with New York State Department of Civil Service to Remove Barriers to Applicants to Law Enforcement Positions

**Recommendation E5.** Create a Public Safety Micro-Credential to Create Combine Education and Workforce Opportunities in Law Enforcement for Students of Color

**Recommendation E6.** Increase Diversity Within All Candidate Pools for Non-Faculty Campus Hiring

**Recommendation E7.** Expand Campus Participation in New York Higher Education Recruitment Consortia (HERCs)

### **Special Thanks**

Many individuals from across SUNY contributed to the writing of this Action Plan including,

- Brian Backstrom, Director of Education Policy Studies, Rockefeller Institute Government
- Beth Berlin, Chief Operating Officer, SUNY System Admin
- Dr. Elizabeth Bringsjord, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Vice Provost
- Dr. LaTasha Brown, Program Manager, Shirley Chisholm Center for Equity Studies
- Trevor Coleman, Director of Communications, SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Valerie Dent, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Campus Operations, SUNY System Admin
- David Cantaffa, Assoc. Provost, Academic Programs, Planning, and Assessment, SUNY System Admin
- Teresa Foster, Assoc. Provost for Institutional Research and Data Analytics
- Jamie Frank, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Policy, SUNY System Admin
- Marianne Hassan, Chief of Staff to the Provost, SUNY System Admin
- Meaghan Laraway, Administrative Assistant, SUNY Office of DE&I
- Teresa A. Miller, Sr. Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and System Chief Diversity Officer, SUNY System Admin
- Dr. F. Shadi Shahedipour-Sandvik, Provost-in-Charge, SUNY System Admin
- Dr. Laura Schultz, Executive Director of Research, Rockefeller Institute of Government

Special thanks also to the individuals who contributed their time, effort, and passion by serving on one of the subcommittees. Those individuals can be found at Appendix B.



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V.

# APPEN- DICES

## V. Appendices

### Appendix A. Working Group Process

A separate working group was created and charged with developing strategies for increasing diversity in faculty, professional staff, campus senior leadership, and college council membership. One of the key outcomes of the working group was to develop an outline for the creation of criminal justice internships for Underrepresented Minority students as a pipeline to UPD employment. This outline will be further refined and developed for potential adoption and implementation.

The ongoing work under Phase II will include focus on other areas that must be examined and addressed to increase diversity among employees, including barriers that exist in the hiring of campus executive leadership, professional staff, and college counsel leadership.

Another working group was established to focus on understanding issues related to the improvement of the campus climate across all 64 SUNY campuses. The working group identified 35 stakeholders from each sector including undergraduate students, graduate students, tenure-track faculty, tenured faculty, retired faculty, vice presidents of Student Affairs and Residence Life directors, representing 21 different SUNY Campuses across all four sectors. Out of these conversations, over 15 hours of qualitative data was gathered.

The group identified the following priorities:

1. Immediately develop and implement an annual, Systemwide climate survey that will be administered through the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
2. Create an Alumni Outreach campaign to further identify and engage SUNY alumni.
3. Create an inclusion initiative to address the inequitable treatment of students of color in some communities surrounding SUNY campuses: Embracing SUNY" Inclusion Initiative in Partnership with Open to all.

Led by campus business officers, this initiative will engage businesses who do commerce with SUNY's 64 campuses, and who provide goods and services to SUNY students, in pledging to uphold the values of inclusion that the SUNY System was founded upon. This initiative changes the culture of the communities surrounding our campuses by (1) drawing upon local, and often long-held, relationships with businesses in the communities surrounding our campuses, and (2) leveraging the economic impact of SUNY campuses in those communities, particularly in upstate towns where the diversity of our students sharply contrasts to the demographics of the communities surrounding our campuses.

With advisement from, and **in collaboration with Open To All**, a national non-discrimination campaign dedicated to educating and recruiting businesses to adopt inclusive values in the treatment of their customers and employees, SUNY campus business officers **in partnership with the New York State Business Council** will solicit pledges from local businesses to honor SUNY's inclusive values, in exchange for endorsement as members of the "SUNY Inclusive Business" coalition. Campus CDOs will support campus business officers by providing diversity, equity, and inclusion training, and training on advocating for inclusion, with the assistance of materials provided by Open To All. Business officers will, in turn, leverage their commercial relationships with local businesses to advocate for inclusive

practices in providing goods and services to students. Businesses who sign onto the “Embracing SUNY” pledge will be given a window cling for their storefronts (where applicable) that visibly represents their membership into the “SUNY Inclusive Business” coalition. These window clings will serve as notice to SUNY students and the broader community that in patronizing these businesses, they can expect to be treated with welcome and respect, consistent with SUNY’s values.

This initiative goes beyond SUNY’s MWBE (supplier diversity) program to train campus business and procurement offices themselves in diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices, and involve them in advocating for inclusion. It also engages local businesses in inclusive practices when providing goods and services to SUNY students.

SUNY Trustee Stan Litow leveraged his connections with the Ralph Lauren Corporation (RLC) to bring the company’s diversity and inclusion leadership together with SUNY’s CDO to create a partnership by which the RLC plans to help SUNY train its campus executive leadership teams on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The company has very successfully reinvented its business model to incorporate diversity and inclusion awareness at all levels of its business operations. SUNY continues to work with RLC to roll out a business leaders’ DE&I training for higher education executives.



## **Appendix B. Committees and Names Formed for Development of Plan**

### **Curriculum Development**

- Chair Duncan Quarless – Provost and Sr. Vice President of Academic Affairs, SUNY Old Westbury
- Chair Katy Heyning – Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, The College at Brockport
- Fred Hildebrand – Associate Provost, SUNY System
- Dan Knox – Assistant Provost for Academic Planning and Student Success, SUNY System
- Barbara Morris – Associate Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, SUNY System
- Dr. La Tasha Brown, Program Manager, Shirley Chisholm Center for Equity Studies

### **Improving Campus Climate**

- Chair John Graham – Student Advocate and Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, SUNY System
- Don Christian – President, SUNY New Paltz
- Bob Haelen – Sr. Vice Chancellor for Capital Facilities, SUNY Construction Fund
- Barbara Ricotta – Vice President for Student Life, University at Buffalo
- Kendra Cadogan – Associate in Policy and Program Evaluation, SUNY System
- Johanna Kendrick-Holmes – Director of NYC Special Events and Programs, SUNY System

### **Role of the CDO**

- Chair Kristin Esterberg – President, SUNY Potsdam
- Chair Judi Brown Clarke – Chief Diversity Officer, Stony Brook University
- Chair Christina Vargas – Chief Diversity Officer, Suffolk County Community College
- Tanhena Pacheco-Dunn – Chief Diversity Officer, SUNY New Paltz
- Emily Hamilton-Honey – Co-Chief Diversity Officer, SUNY Canton
- Meaghan Laraway, Executive Assistant, SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

### **Increasing Diversity**

- Chair Mark Coldren – Chief Human Resources Officer, University at Buffalo
- Kimberly Bobb – Supplier Diversity Program Manager, SUNY System
- Juliana Hernandez-Commisso – Director of Local Government and Legislative Affairs, SUNY System
- Jim Jarvis – Associate Counsel, University at Buffalo

### **Assessment of Racial Equity Gaps**

- Chair Jermaine Williams – President, Nassau Community College
- Chair Cheryl Hamilton – Deputy Student Advocate and Executive Director for EOP Programs, SUNY System
- Teresa Foster, SUNY Assoc. Provost for Institutional Research and Data Analytics
- Joe Skrivanek – Distinguished Professor, Purchase College
- Ruirui Sun – Associate in Assessment and Data Analytics, SUNY System

## **Prior Learning Assessment**

- Chair Beth Berlin, SUNY Chief Operating Officer
- Dr. La Tasha Brown, Program Manager, Shirley Chisholm Center for Equity Studies
- Elizabeth Carrature – Associate in Research & Program Development, SUNY System

## **Policing, Law Enforcement, & Incarceration**

- Chair Karen Clinton Jones – Binghamton University
- Chair Karen Clinton Jones – Chief Diversity Officer, Binghamton University
- Chair Mark Montgomery – Chief Diversity Officer, SUNY Poly
- Craig Wright – Chief Diversity Officer, Nassau Community College
- Tom Gais – Director, Rockefeller Institute of Government
- Frank Lawrence – Interim Commissioner for University Police
- Dan Vasile – Chief of Police, The College at Brockport
- Josh Sticht – Deputy Chief of Police, University at Buffalo
- Breea Willingham – Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, SUNY Plattsburgh
- Kendra Cadogan – Associate in Policy and Program Evaluation, SUNY System
- Johanna Kendrick-Holmes – Director of NYC Special Events and Programs, SUNY System
- Frank Lawrence – University Police
- Dan Vasile – The College at Brockport
- Josh Sticht – University at Buffalo
- Breea Willingham – SUNY Plattsburgh
- Kendra Cadogan – SUNY System
- Johanna Kendrick-Holmes – SUNY System

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Urban CNY News. "Suspected Racial Incident Reported at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Upstate University Police Investigate." November 23, 2019.

<https://www.urbancny.com/suspected-racial-incident-reported-at-suny-upstate-medical-university-police-investigate/>

<sup>3</sup> Hirsch, Zack. North Country Public Radio. "Plattsburgh, Keene struggle with aftershocks of racist joke." March 8, 2018.

<https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/35769/201838/plattsburgh-keene-struggle-with-aftershocks-of-racist-joke>

<sup>4</sup> Diaz, Johnny. The New York Times. "Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged in 2019, Report Says" May 12, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/us/antisemitic-report-incidents.html>

<sup>5</sup> Grace Hauck, "Anti-LGBT hate crimes are on rising, the FBI says. But it gets worse." USA Today. (July 1, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Kendi, I. X. (2019). "How to be an antiracist." First Edition. New York: One World.

<sup>7</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. Indicator 20: Undergraduate Enrollment. February 2020.

[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator\\_REB.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_REB.asp)

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<sup>9</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. Indicator 19: College Participation Rates. February 2019.

[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator\\_REA.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_REA.asp)

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<sup>20</sup> Blumenstyk, Goldie. The Chronicle of Higher Education. "By 2020, They Said, 2 Out of 3 Jobs Would Need More Than a High-School Diploma. Were They Right?" January 22, 2020. <https://www.chronicle.com/newsletter/theedge/2020-01-22#:~:text=For%202027%2C%20the%20center%20will,%20economy%2C%E2%80%9D%20Smith%20said>

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