

SUNY Chancellor highlights progress in her final 'State of the University' address

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ALBANY - Delivering her eighth and final State of the University Address in Albany, SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher today highlighted progress made by SUNY in the last decade. Picking up at the beginning of her SUNY tenure in 2009, Zimpher praised the system's accomplishments in college access, inclusion, seamless transfer, degree completion and affordability; and announced the creation of two new SUNY entities to keep the university system moving forward.

The SUNY Impact Foundation will enable SUNY - for the first time in its history - to seek private sector investment in system-wide initiatives, with a primary focus on SUNY's Completion Agenda. The SUNY Center for Systems Change will ensure that the university system continues to be "the best at getting better."

"No one else does what SUNY can do," Zimpher said. "No one else matches our reach or strength or potential to educate more people and to educate them better...to be New York's best economic engine...to push the boundaries of research and innovation...and to always figure out how to improve. This is who we are. This is the SUNY brand."

Drawing on themes from previous addresses, Zimpher attributed SUNY's progress and national leadership to the university system's capacity to working as a system to collectively increase access, completion, and success for students.

"People always ask me how I do it - how do I run 64 campuses? And I respond, 'I don't do it. We do it,'" she said. "It is our collective work - hard work - that has made our university system more ready, more productive, cohesive, and adaptable. We are more prepared than ever to take on the challenges and changes we will face in the years to come. SUNY is not a command and control environment. A chancellor can have a big idea or six, but you have to make your case to the Board. And you need to win the support of presidents and shared governance groups if you want to get anywhere. You need to get the governor and the legislature and the people of New York behind you."

Introducing the chancellor, Marc Cohen, president of the SUNY Student Assembly, said, "Shared governance is not a tag line for Chancellor Zimpher, it's the guiding principle on which she leads her administration. On behalf of my 600,000 colleagues across our incredible system, I want to thank the Chancellor for bringing the State University of New York to new heights, and including students every step of the way."

In welcoming remarks, SUNY Board of Trustees Chairman H. Carl McCall highlighted ground-breaking SUNY policy achieved throughout their tenure together, including Seamless Transfer; SUNY Smart Track; Sexual Assault Reporting and Prevention; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Move the Box; and more.

New items announced during Zimpher's address include:

- SUNY Impact Foundation: SUNY has created the SUNY Impact Foundation to en-

able the system to actively seek private sector investment and public-private partnerships to fund the scale up of programs proven to maintain SUNY's affordability, support college completion, and prepare students for success in both college and career. The Foundation differs from existing campus foundations in that it will serve system-wide efforts that affect multiple, or all, campuses.

- **SUNY Center for Systems Change: SUNY will create a new center to study the concepts of systemness and continuous improvement, ensuring that SUNY continues to “be the best at getting better” while also providing a national model for education systems as well as those used in government, community, and business. The center will take a disciplined, data-driven approach to policy and practice on each campus and in service to the university system as a whole. The Institute will be a part of an expanded Rockefeller Institute of Government.**
- **Re-enroll To Complete:** Based on the success of a 17-campus pilot program led by SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Smart Track Re-Enroll to Complete is designed to reach recently withdrawn student loan borrowers to get them back to campus to complete their degree, and avoid the greatest known predictor of student loan default - early

separation from college. This year, 29 SUNY campuses will participate. An invitation for bidders was posted last week to begin the vendor selection process.

- **FAFSA Outreach:** About 62 percent of graduating high school students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid process, which summarizes their eligibility for aid. Following Governor Cuomo's announcement of tuition-free college and the launch of a new SUNY Smart Track website to increase financial aid awareness among high school students, SUNY and SEFCU will partner on a state-wide push to “move the FAFSA completion dial to 100 percent,” engaging parents across New York through informational sessions and direct support.
- **Patent Policy:** In support of research and discovery by faculty and students across the university system, SUNY recently modernized its patent policy so that more of the revenue generated by its patents would be returned to campuses and maximum flexibility would be in place to grow university-industry partnerships.

A complete transcript of Chancellor Zimpher's address is available online, at www.suny.edu/sou.