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SUNY Board of Trustees Appoints Valerie Dent as Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges

Part of Ongoing Emphasis on Further Strengthening SUNY's Excellent Community Colleges as Engines of Student Success and Upward Mobility

New York, NY – The SUNY Board of Trustees today appointed Valerie P. Dent as the permanent Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges at SUNY System Administration. Dent, who is currently SUNY's Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Deputy for Student Success, has served as Interim Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges since September 2024 and has built strong relationships with community college leaders, represented the SUNY Board of Trustees and SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr., and advised the Chancellor on all matters relating to the success of community colleges – including leading System-wide implementation of Governor Kathy Hochul's SUNY Reconnect initiative.

"Valerie Dent is a proven leader who will help implement Governor Hochul's SUNY Reconnect program, and will support community colleges throughout the state to ensure they are ready to empower incoming students," **said SUNY Chancellor King**. "From highlighting SUNY Reconnect and visiting campuses throughout the state, to providing additional funding for community colleges, to appointing Valerie Dent as Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, SUNY is demonstrating that we will work tirelessly to set our community colleges, and the thousands of New York students who rely on them, up for success. I look forward to working closely with Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges Valerie Dent to support New York adult learners and ensure that SUNY remains on the move."

SUNY Trustee Robert Duffy, Chair of the Community Colleges Committee, said, "We are very committed to growing SUNY community colleges and their sustainability, and with Governor Hochul's SUNY Reconnect program for adult learners in high-demand fields, our state's community colleges are more essential than ever. Vice Chancellor Valerie Dent will work closely with community college presidents, faculty, and other stakeholders to help leverage the investments SUNY has made, and continues to make, in supporting our state's students and the incoming inaugural SUNY Reconnect learners."

SUNY Trustee Candice Vacin, President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, said, "Throughout her time at SUNY, Valerie Dent has demonstrated her deep commitment to public higher education, and her strong grasp of what is needed to ensure community colleges are able to succeed. We look forward to working with Valerie as she steps up and into this well-earned new role as Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges. Together, we will help ensure that all of SUNY's community colleges will meet this moment and provide adult learners seeking degrees in high-demand fields, and all of our students, with the world-class education they deserve."

Dr. Kristin Young, President of New York Community College Association of Presidents and SUNY Orange President, said, "As president of NYCCAP, I've had the great joy of working closely with Valerie and seeing her leadership, passion for SUNY, and commitment to students. She has held several vital roles for System Administration and has greatly contributed to SUNY's success every step of the way. She helped steer our entire system through COVID and expanded SUNY's commitment to diversity. Over the last year, as interim vice chancellor for community colleges, she has truly demonstrated her appreciation for the community college mission. She understands that our colleges are elevating our

students and enhancing our communities. I look forward to working more closely with her and hope she'll be in this role for many years to come."

During today's meeting of the SUNY Board of Trustees, Vice Chancellor Dent updated the Board on actions to support community colleges statewide and promote the SUNY Reconnect program, Governor Hochul's free community college initiative for adult learners, ages 25-55, who don't already have a college degree and who are pursuing an associate degree in a high-demand field. These efforts build on the SUNY Board's allocation last month of additional funding to support the Governor's initiative and measures to ensure continued excellent campus leadership.

Chancellor King launched the SUNY Reconnect Tour and has been visiting community colleges throughout the state to help highlight this historic initiative, spearheaded by the Governor, which will help empower students and grow the state's workforce. The visits to schools including Dutchess Community College, SUNY Jefferson, SUNY Schenectady, Suffolk County Community College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College have included roundtable discussions with students, faculty, local officials, and stakeholders, as well as visits to facilities and programs unique to each campus.

The SUNY Reconnect Tour will continue throughout the summer and into the Fall as students enroll and begin classes. SUNY community colleges throughout the state are holding informational sessions and recruitment events, and a list of upcoming events is available here.

About Valerie P. Dent

Prior to her appointment, Valerie P. Dent served as Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Deputy for Student Success for SUNY System Administration. In that role, she was responsible for providing senior leadership and guidance to the newly formed and wide-ranging student success portfolio, which includes enrollment management, university life and opportunity programs, prison education, transfer initiatives, the Center for Professional Development, and the creation and expansion of evidence-based workforce and degree-completion programs. Dent has served as Interim Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges since September 2024, and earlier served as SUNY's Interim Chief Diversity Officer.

Prior to joining SUNY, Dent served as first deputy commissioner of the NYS Division of Human Rights. She has also held a variety of public and private sector leadership roles, including at IBM; the law firm of Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander, and Ferdon; Grand Central Partnership; Bryant Park Restoration Corporation; 34th Street Partnership; and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone.

Dent is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, from which she holds a degree in economics, and Columbia University School of Law, where she earned her J.D.

About SUNY Reconnect

To support the launch of SUNY Reconnect, SUNY has:

- Allocated \$4 million to community colleges to support SUNY Reconnect programmatic implementation through advising, enrollment, outreach, award of credit for prior learning, and other student services, supports, and campus operations.
- Provided an additional \$1 million to cover equipment, materials, supplies, and other one-time needs to increase student enrollment capacity in high-demand programs that are part of SUNY Reconnect.
- Announced \$1.1 million in grant funding for the SUNY Adult Learner Leadership Initiative to help community colleges increase access and ensure degree completion for adult learners.

SUNY Reconnect will fund degrees in high-demand fields including:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Artificial Intelligence
- Cybersecurity
- Engineering

- Technology
- Nursing and allied health fields
- Green and renewable energy
- Pathways to Teaching in shortage areas

About The State University of New York

The State University of New York is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, and more than 95 percent of all New Yorkers live within 30 miles of any one of SUNY's 64 colleges and universities. Across the system, SUNY has four academic health centers, five hospitals, four medical schools, two dental schools, a law school, the country's oldest school of maritime, the state's only college of optometry, and manages one US Department of Energy National Laboratory. In total, SUNY serves about 1.4 million students amongst its entire portfolio of credit- and non-credit-bearing courses and programs, continuing education, and community outreach programs. SUNY oversees nearly a quarter of academic research in New York. Research expenditures system-wide are nearly \$1.16 billion in fiscal year 2024, including significant contributions from students and faculty. There are more than three million SUNY alumni worldwide, and one in three New Yorkers with a college degree is a SUNY alum. To learn more about how SUNY creates opportunities, visit www.suny.edu.