Testimony

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Regents Statewide Plan for Higher Education, 2012 – 2020

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1:00 to 1:30 pm

The City University of New York Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue (between 34th and 35th Streets)
Ninth Floor, Room 9206
New York, New York

I am so very pleased to testify today on behalf of New York's Independent Sector of higher education on the *Regents Statewide Plan for Higher Education, 2012-2020.*

cIcu represents the public policy interests of 111 private college and universities.

New York's Independent Sector is the largest higher education sector in the State of New York and in the world.

It is vital that the Regents, State Education Department and all sectors of higher education in our state address the future with integrity and foresight. And as we look forward, we must continue to build upon our accomplishments, diversity, capacity, and our many and varied strengths.

The Regents' master planning effort represents an ongoing commitment from all of higher education to reflect upon our higher education system. The mission of a higher education system is to raise knowledge, skill, and opportunity for all people. Our Independent Sector's priorities are consistent with the Regents' five identified priorities. As we looked at those priorities, canvassed our members, and reviewed their individual institutional master plans, recurring themes emerged:

First: Fund Students First — Students are New York's future business, community, and government leaders. Investing in student financial support today is essential for New York's workforce and society.

Second: Keep Graduates in New York State — Annually, New York State's colleges and universities enroll more than 1.2 million students: approximately three in four are New York State residents. It is critical that we develop strategies to retain more students once they graduate, particularly in upstate New York.

Third: Support Community Partnerships — Colleges and universities enhance community life, promote economic opportunity, improve health and safety, and ensure quality education. They play a significant role as anchor tenants in their respective regions.

Fourth: Improve Equity and Provide Outreach — New York must continue to be a leader in providing quality education and ensuring access to diverse learning environments to help meet the needs of all our students.

Fifth: Ensure College Readiness — High levels of educational capital provide the foundation of a state's economic development and the preferred quality of life for its residents. We need to focus on improving P-20 relationships to boost student success from the earliest years, into high school, and through postsecondary study to degree completion.

I will now turn to some salient facts about New York's Independent Sector of higher education. Our independent colleges and universities:

- Enroll 486,040 students including 297,816 New York State residents. Enrollment at independent colleges and universities grew 22% from 1990 to 2008.
- Award 52% of the baccalaureate degrees, 71% of the master's degrees, and 79% of the doctoral and first professional degrees earned in the state.
- Educate thousands of low- and moderate-income state residents. One in three New Yorkers (27%) enrolled full-time at an independent college comes from a family that earns less than $40,000 annually; one in nine has a family income below $20,000 (11%), a percentage that is comparable to SUNY.
- Serve the most Black and Hispanic students who earn their bachelor's degrees in New York State. Four in ten Black and Hispanic undergraduate students enroll at four-year independent colleges and universities.
- Provide more than $3.7 billion in institutionally funded financial aid.

In framing the Statewide Plan for Higher Education 2012-2020, the Regents identified five broad priorities, which I want to address in turn:

I. Strengthen Connections Between the Higher Education and P-12 Functions of the University of the State of New York

P-12 – Higher Education Alliances

- Increasingly, independent colleges and universities are focused on forging, strengthening, and expanding alliances with elementary and secondary schools in all areas of the state, including our state's highest-risk and hard-to-staff schools.
- cIcu has been enhancing its outreach to students in many creative ways. This year we held our fifth annual Latino College Fair at one of our New York City campuses. More than 60 of our independent colleges and universities were represented, and 1,400 students and family members participated and received information on college preparation and financial aid.

Early Awareness

- Not only must we look at what we can do to help students graduate from college, but we must also reach deeper within the pipeline to help high-school and even middle-school students to succeed.
- One primary reason for the high drop-out rate is that students see little connection between school and their futures. The connection between school and actual careers must begin early and be reinforced over time with periodic reviews of progress and goals.
- The scope of early college awareness initiatives at independent colleges and universities is wide and the number of such programs is increasing. For example, the STEP, Liberty Partnership, federal GEAR UP and Upward Bound programs address

a need to level the playing field by providing meaningful opportunity to underrepresented middle- and high-school students.

- For nearly 35 years, cIcu has recognized the importance of the elementary, middle, high school, college connection and has worked extensively on early awareness and outreach initiatives. Current cIcu outreach efforts to middle schools, in partnership with Independent Sector campuses in Western New York, have brought the "Colleges2Kids – Kids2College" program to middle schools in urban and rural districts.

Collaborating with Secondary Schools to Further Prepare for STEM Fields

- We must also focus our efforts to prepare students for success in the STEM fields.
- Independent colleges and universities are working with schools in predominately low-income districts to provide a science and math-based, hands-on, after-school curriculum to students, beginning in the third grade and continuing through high school.

Earning College Credit in Secondary Schools

- Finally, many formal and informal programs offered by independent colleges and universities provide opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to enroll in college courses and earn college credits while still enrolled in high school.

II. Strengthen Connections of Higher Education with Other Functions of The University of the State of New York

- As part of its Master Plan, the Regents asked higher education leaders to consider how colleges and universities, as one component of the system, work with other parts of the whole to bring to bear "unmatched resources in people, information, facilities, technology, artifacts, and relationships to face educational issues of the twenty-first century."
- Amid the diverse functions of the University of the State of New York, higher education is unique. There are no substitutes for the education it provides, research it conducts, its world-renowned quality and value, or its skill at fostering mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Our Independent Sector's Master Plan describes the partnerships and collaborations that independent colleges and universities have with the other parts of the University of the State of New York, emphasizes the importance of the baccalaureate degree as the first step toward advanced education, and provides detailed examples of how our Independent Sector encourages students to pursue graduate-level education and the licensed professions that are so important to the other parts of the system.

III. Strengthen Connections between Higher Education and Other Parts of the State's Social and Economic Structure

- As the draft Master Plan states, "In recent years, higher education has been viewed as an engine for economic development." Higher Education is clearly one of New York's greatest assets.

- In our sector alone, independent colleges and universities generate over $63.2 billion in annual economic activity in New York State, and we employ 373,800 New Yorkers with a payroll of $23.1 billion.
- In upstate New York, our economic impact annually is $22.8 billion with total employment of over 160,000.
- Downstate, our economic impact annually is $40.4 billion with total employment of over 210,000.
- Our economy is in a slow recovery from the Great Recession and unemployment is still high. What we are finding, however, is that we provide stability for those communities in which we are located.
- As we continue down the path of economic recovery, we must continue to look toward the future needs of our workforce and ensure that New York will have enough human capital to meet its workforce needs. This is why New York State needs to incentivize employers to support internship and co-op programs to help encourage students to stay in New York.
- The following are some ideas that could be employed:
    - Provide state tax credits for businesses that develop partnerships with colleges and universities and hire student employees;
    - Implement some type of loan forgiveness program for students who graduate from college in New York State and remain employed in the state after graduation.
    - Finally, we must continue to maintain valuable partnerships with local businesses, non-profits, and other groups that include on-site training and mentoring.

IV. Improve Access, Quality and Performance in Higher Education

Independent colleges and universities remain flexible to meet the needs of all students. **For example**:

- Many independent colleges and universities are providing more online courses, as well as classes in the evening and on weekends, to accommodate adult learners.
- While funding for TAP and Pell has remained relatively flat, private colleges and universities have increased institutional funds for financial aid to needy students, expending $3.7 billion annually.
- To prepare our Independent Sector's Master Plan, we surveyed our membership on various topics, and according to that survey, 49% of respondents offer remedial courses. Those colleges and universities concentrate on increasing proficiencies in math, English (reading and writing), and study skills.
- Similar to changes we are seeing in private businesses, colleges and universities are working to balance operating costs with maintaining and enhancing quality. Cost-control initiatives include reducing energy consumption, generating energy savings, improving technology, adjusting and consolidating healthcare programs, analyzing and changing general operations, and appropriately reallocating staff and benefits.
- The Independent Sector offers degrees ranging from certificate to associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees, preparing and equipping New Yorkers for in-demand jobs. Our institutions are also attuned to trends and future

employment predictions and are able to expand and adapt programs to effectively meet the needs of our students and the state.

In preparation for our sector's Master Plan, we also asked our members how the State Education Department could reduce regulations. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Several institutions identified difficulties in placing student teachers and in other areas, issues with reporting requirements for the opportunity programs, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS).
- Reports required for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) were identified as particularly cumbersome, since there are three significant annual reports. Also, institutions that offer HEOP programs are required to meet full need, while federal and state student aid has remained relatively flat. As costs increase, the only way for those institutions to meet full need is to increase institutional aid. Therefore, the institutional match continues to rise, while the administrative burden remains the same.
- Finally, several members suggested a more user-friendly State Education Department website and improvement in communication between the Department and institutions to reduce reporting requirements.

V. Address Out-of-State Institutions' Interest in Serving New Yorkers

Beneficial effect of streamlined Program Registration and Master Plan Amendment processes:

First of all, we are grateful to the Regents and the State Education Department for recent action in streamlining the Program Registration and Master Plan Amendment processes through the Office of College and University Evaluation (OCUE). It is our hope that as these processes are implemented, they will also be applied to the Office of the Professions (OP) so that a more predictable and efficient program approval process can be brought full circle. This accomplishment, while continuing to uphold New York's high standards for quality and excellence in college and university programs, will enable more new and innovative programs to be approved in New York.

Determining need for additional programs, particularly from out-of-state institutions:

In the draft *Regents Statewide Plan for Higher Education 2012-2020*, all sectors of higher education recommend that the Regents carefully consider statutory and regulatory requirements in determining the need for additional educational programs and facilities, and that the plans and facilities of existing New York State institutions of higher education be fully evaluated in those decisions.

On Online Education: in-state and out-of-state:

As the Regents consider their role in regulating purely online educational activity from other states — offered in New York by institutions regulated and/or based in other jurisdictions — we encourage full and comparable vetting against all of New York's institutional and programmatic standards, including appropriate licensure and accreditation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony at this hearing. Our Independent Sector of higher education in New York State is grateful to the Regents and to the State Education Department for an inclusive process leading to the *Regents Statewide Plan for Higher Education, 2012-2020*. We are looking forward to continuing to work with you in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.