



**Search for the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges
The State University of New York System
Albany, New York**

THE SEARCH

The State University of New York (SUNY) system seeks a dynamic, engaging, and visionary leader with proven skills and dedication to serve as its next Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges. Recognized as the largest comprehensive university system in the United States, SUNY community colleges ensure open access to high-quality postsecondary education and contribute significantly to the development of an educated citizenry and skilled workforce. SUNY's next Vice Chancellor will develop and energize the community colleges around a forward-thinking vision for the system and will be deeply committed to the system's mission to "provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population."

The Vice Chancellor will be the senior leader within SUNY System Administration responsible for advancing the success of community colleges, working in close partnership with a range of internal and external stakeholders. SUNY's community colleges are extraordinary engines of upward mobility, providing pathways to four-year degrees and to immediate workforce and economic opportunity. Through a combination of credit-bearing degree programs and non-credit workforce programs, SUNY's 30 community colleges strive to meet the needs of diverse students, community partners, and regional employers. The next Vice Chancellor will have the opportunity to oversee the Office of Community Colleges which is responsible for advancing the success of community colleges, working in close partnership with a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Reporting to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor will serve as a key member of the Chancellor's Cabinet and a liaison to the SUNY Board of Trustees' Community Colleges Committee. The Vice Chancellor will support the Chancellor's key priorities, as well as provide strategic leadership and advocacy for SUNY community colleges. The Vice Chancellor will bring a strong, mission-driven vision for the community colleges and foster a culture of cooperation and continuous improvement across SUNY and within System Administration in support of advancing the Chancellor's [priority pillars](#). The Vice Chancellor will possess content knowledge of community college trends and experience with cross-sector partnerships to lead the identification, planning, and implementation of best practices at scale. They will also partner with the SUNY Impact Foundation to raise federal, state, philanthropic, and corporate funding to advance community college priorities and programming.

The State University of New York system has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next Vice Chancellor. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK SYSTEM

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.

Each college and university within SUNY is administered by a president who builds and manages their own administrative team in alignment with the general goals and policies of the SUNY system and its specific campus mission. SUNY reflects both the land-grant mission reborn and a reputation for embracing new thinking and brighter ideals. Providing quality education at an affordable price to New Yorkers and students from across the country and the world, SUNY remains committed to serving as the state's strongest economic and quality-of-life driver. SUNY is guided by its [mission](#) to "provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population."

Governance and Leadership

The Chancellor reports to an 18-member [Board of Trustees](#), 15 of whom are appointed by the Governor for a fixed term, by and with the consent of the New York State Senate. The president of the SUNY Student Assembly serves as the 16th voting trustee. In addition, the president of the SUNY University Faculty Senate and the president of the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges serve as *ex-officio*, non-voting members of the Board.

SUNY's community colleges are sponsored by a county or collection of local entities, and each has its own appointed Board of Trustees that help guide the academic and financial direction of the institution. However, each community college is also ultimately overseen by the greater SUNY Board of Trustees and receives funding from the State of New York, making them a collaborative effort between localities, SUNY, and the state.

SUNY Chancellor John B. King, Jr.

Dr. John B. King, Jr., joined The State University of New York as its 15th Chancellor in January 2023. Before being appointed SUNY Chancellor, King served as the president of the Education Trust, a national civil

rights nonprofit, and Professor of the Practice at the University of Maryland College Park. Prior to this, Chancellor King served in President Barack Obama's cabinet as the 10th U.S. Secretary of Education.

Under Chancellor King's leadership, SUNY has seen its largest operating aid increase in five decades, including double-digit percentage increases for every state-operated campus, the first operating aid increase for community colleges in nearly a decade, and dedicated recurring annual funding for expanding mental health services, services for students with disabilities, paid internships, and research, as well as addressing food insecurity.

Shared Governance

SUNY has three main shared governance bodies that interact with each other and the Board of Trustees: The University Faculty Senate, the Student Assembly, and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. There are also various other constituent groups that participate in the development of policies and/or in decision-making that affects SUNY or SUNY institutions, including the Association of Council Members & College Trustees (ACT), the New York Community College Trustees (NYCCT), and SUNY Voices.

Shared governance at SUNY includes the structures and processes on campuses and at the system level through which administration, faculty, professional staff, governing boards, and students participate in the development of policies and in decisions that affect the whole institution. These shared governance systems are integral to SUNY's operations, and they were included in the implementation phase of the University's strategic plan. Carried out effectively, shared governance serves as the foundation for a sustainable system of higher education that is operating at its highest potential in service to each of these groups as well as its other stakeholders in government, businesses, and communities.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Office of Community Colleges supports the advancement of SUNY's 30 community colleges and their leadership, including community college presidents, faculty, trustees, key partners, and leaders in business and industry. The Office's major focus areas include student success initiatives, community college leadership support, including presidential searches, and education pipeline activities with all 64 campuses.

The Community Colleges team has raised over \$92 million in private and foundation funds to improve student outcomes, expand college readiness, and increase workforce development opportunities for community colleges and a growing number of state-operated campuses. The Vice Chancellor will have the opportunity to continue advancing the Office's mission that "SUNY Community Colleges ensure open access to high-quality postsecondary education and contribute significantly to the development of an educated citizenry and skilled workforce."

THE ROLE

Under the leadership of the next Vice Chancellor, SUNY has tremendous opportunities to make major advances in community college education. The Vice Chancellor will work in close partnership with the Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Success, the Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development and Upward Mobility, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and other members of the Chancellor's senior leadership team to advance the work of SUNY's community colleges, ensure coordination across system-wide initiatives and priorities, and support the governance work of the SUNY Board of Trustees. The Vice Chancellor will manage, support, and expand a complex portfolio of activities including the strategic alignment, integration, and coordination of community colleges academic, student support, research programs, and pipeline activities across multiple departments within SUNY System Administration. They will serve as the Chancellor's primary representative to community college presidents, senior leaders, local boards of trustees, and other community college stakeholders.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Vice Chancellor will be expected to address the following as priorities among the many issues a broad and diverse system faces:

Develop and articulate a unified vision for the community colleges of SUNY

The next Vice Chancellor will recognize the uniqueness of SUNY's component institutions and allow them to work in unison as they each demonstrate excellence in their own aspirations and missions. Attaining this vision will require a Vice Chancellor who is a change agent, thoughtful and open minded, who will work with the community college leaders across the system to mold and harmonize the resources and strengths of individual campuses to serve the citizenry well. SUNY will always strive to meet the goals that allow the system to provide a broad education to sustain the civic culture, enhance the skills needed in the workforce, and further both applied and basic knowledge that augment cultural and scientific knowledge. The vision will provide the community colleges of SUNY with a structure that allows it to have a powerful positive influence on the State of New York and its citizens.

Implement Governor Hochul's nation-leading Free Community College Initiative

The next vice chancellor will play a critical role in successfully implementing Governor Hochul's Free Community College Initiative by coordinating efforts across SUNY's community colleges, ensuring seamless program execution, and fostering collaboration with state agencies, industry partners, and community stakeholders. The vice chancellor will help drive the success of this transformative initiative, ensuring that SUNY's community colleges serve as engines of economic mobility and workforce readiness.

Introduce current, innovative practices to strengthen enrollment and retention

In the face of changing demographics and declining enrollment on some campuses, the Vice Chancellor will understand and define distinctive enrollment management and student success functions, not only to recruit students but to retain them through graduation. The Vice Chancellor will lead strategies targeted to adult learners – from enrollment to degree completion. The Vice Chancellor will resource and empower talented leaders to ensure the efficacy and impact of these endeavors. The Vice Chancellor will also partner with the Office of Executive Recruitment and Leadership Development on the community college presidential search process to help attract and retain top talent for our campuses.

Advocate for community college leadership while advancing SUNY's priority pillars

The Vice Chancellor will be a compelling advocate for the community colleges of the SUNY system, skillfully communicating their history of innovation, academic excellence, and forward-thinking programs. The increasing competition in the education space (particularly with the growing number of institutions offering online asynchronous learning options) calls for a leader who can clearly and compellingly articulate the value proposition of community colleges in the higher education landscape.

On top of advocating for community college leadership, the Vice Chancellor will advance SUNY's four priority pillars of student success; research and scholarship; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and economic development and upward mobility. This would include developing strategies to reduce remediation and promote co-requisite, models, supporting the implementation of SUNY's [Transfer Task Force](#) action plan, as well as the [PRODiG+](#) faculty recruitment and support initiative.

Develop relationships with national higher education organizations and networks

The Vice Chancellor will possess extensive content knowledge of community college trends and experience with cross-sector partnerships to lead the identification, planning, and implementation of best practices at scale. As part of this work, the Vice Chancellor will cultivate and steward vital external relationships, partnerships, and collaborations across the state and nation to elevate the impact community colleges have on the region's workforce needs. The Vice Chancellor will also pursue opportunities to showcase SUNY's excellence at the national level, particularly when doing so aligns with opportunities to secure funding for new and ongoing community college initiatives.

Generate and steward financial resources

For SUNY community colleges to continue offering affordable, high-quality education to the community, the Vice Chancellor must work to ensure funding from a diversified range of sources. Building relationships with elected and appointed leaders at the municipal, county, and state levels to advocate for community colleges' economic needs will be key to continuing stability and success. Furthermore, they will work

closely with the SUNY Impact Foundation to advance a coherent, unified fundraising strategy to raise money through philanthropy, corporate sponsorships, business partnerships, foundation grants, and the system's alumni network.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Candidates for the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges should have an understanding of the complex nature of a large and decentralized organization, the political savvy to work with a range of public policy and governmental leaders, and an appreciation of the entire spectrum of higher education, including community colleges, technical and specialized colleges, comprehensive colleges, health science centers, and research universities. While no one candidate will possess all of them, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and attributes.

Professional Attributes and Experience:

- A vision for community colleges as engines of upward mobility.
- A strategic and visionary thinker with an in-depth knowledge of issues confronting higher education (and specifically community colleges) today and an ability to forecast and prepare for those to come.
- Strong leadership skills leading to the development and implementation of programs and initiatives designed to advance community college success.
- Deep understanding of national issues, trends, and forecasts on issues relating to community colleges and community college students.
- Experience working effectively with elected and appointed officials of all political persuasions, as well as local business leaders.
- A proven and impressive track record of establishing relationships and strategically collaborating with external organizations.
- A demonstrable commitment to, and track record of, accomplishments in equity, diversity, and inclusion; sensitivity and broad experience with diverse students, faculty, staff, and communities.
- The experience of building consensus among multiple constituencies with a wide range of priorities and the proven ability to lead by means of transparent communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- A demonstrated passion for and commitment to quality public higher education and the ability to create a presence for the university through communicating its outstanding academic quality.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively seek resources from corporate, foundation, and private donors, which in turn will support the goals of SUNY.
- Expertise in programmatic design, development, and implementation to improve enrollment and student outcomes.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively in large systems and with diverse groups to achieve desired outcomes.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Advanced degree or equivalent professional experience in a relevant field.
- 15+ years of demonstrated experience, with increasing levels of responsibility, in a position within higher education institutions with significant focus on community college initiatives and programs.
- Excellent verbal communication and interpersonal skills.
- Political astuteness; passion for working with the political and public policy leaders.
- Tact, diplomacy, and demonstrated ability to manage relationships.
- Record of successful experience in project management.
- Emotional Intelligence that brings the ability to understand and react with compassion and empathy to issues faced by the broad SUNY community.
- Ability to listen and learn from others.
- Approachable and relates well in a variety of interpersonal settings.
- A deep commitment to the multi-faceted mission of the State University of New York.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience working in a leadership role at a community college.
- National engagement on community college issues/priorities.

TO APPLY

The State University of New York system has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the search for the Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and curricula vitae with letters of interest should be sent electronically to the following:

Donna Cramer, Partner
Miguel Santiago, Senior Associate
Ryan Smillie, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/state-university-new-york-system/vice-chancellor-community-colleges>

Electronic submission of application materials is strongly preferred.

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