Whereas the State University of New York is committed to core values of broad-based access and opportunity and to the highest standards of academic excellence; and

Whereas the State University must demonstrate to its Board of Trustees, College Council members and the Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges, executive and legislative officials and the citizens of New York that its students are acquiring a knowledge base of sufficient depth and breadth and are fully prepared to meet the standards for advanced study, the qualifications of professional careers, and the needs of contemporary society; and

Whereas the State University is committed to the principle of accountability and regularly and publicly reports on a wide range of key academic outcomes and related data that are statistically consistent with those used by state and national peers, public and private, including, for example, retention and graduation rates, grade point averages, degree completion data and academic cohort analyses, teacher certification pass rates, undergraduate selectivity (including SAT and other admissions scores), and research expenditures; and

Whereas the State University Board of Trustees’ Resolution 98-241 establishing the University’s General Education Requirement instructed the Provost of the State University to work with the leadership and faculty of the University’s campuses to develop a means for assuring that demonstrable learning in specified General Education subjects is taking place; and

Whereas the Provost established, in the fall of 1999, an Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes as a broadly representative committee including faculty, the presidents of the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, senior campus academic leadership and administrative staff, and students from across the University, and charged it with the responsibility to make recommendations regarding a process for assessing student learning outcomes and intellectual growth in General Education and the Major; and

Whereas the State University has now developed a nationally and internationally recognized program of comprehensive academic assessment, based on principles of good practice put forward by the American Association of Higher Education, as well as a set of supplementary principles that are particularly suitable to the State University; and has implemented key aspects of this initiative beginning with:

Fall 2001: A campus-based process to review all undergraduate majors on a five- to seven-year cycle with external review, with initial reports beginning June 1, 2002;
Fall 2002: A campus-based process to assess the knowledge and skills areas and competencies of the State University General Education Requirement on all campuses, with initial reports beginning June 1, 2003; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Board of Trustees hereby endorses the Report of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and its core recommendation that the framework of the SUNY Assessment Initiative include:

- A University-wide process that will periodically assess, using common measures, State University students’ attainment in the general education learning outcomes in
Resolved that the Provost of the State University begin the process leading to implementation of University-wide assessment by meeting with faculty and campus leadership and representatives to develop the initial procedures and timeline to be followed as well as a formal Memorandum of Understanding, to be endorsed by faculty governance, which will address faculty concerns; and be it further

Resolved that, reflecting the broad diversity that exists among State University campuses and recognizing that our students have varying levels of academic preparation prior to entering the University, this Memorandum of Understanding provide for appropriate safeguards that will ensure that assessment results are used appropriately in support of improving the teaching and learning process; and be it further

Resolved that implementation of this effort reflect the following principles:

- A group of distinguished State University faculty, academic leaders and students—with support from System Administration (external consultants may also be utilized)—be formed in Fall 2003 to develop: assessment instrument(s) that shall measure actual student attainment of the general educational learning outcomes referenced above; the administrative procedures; and, the reporting protocol to be followed;
- This assessment shall be made at two different points in time so as to permit the determination of the growth in learning that has occurred (“value-added”);
- This academic assessment shall be accompanied by an assessment of the level of student engagement in academic activities that tends to result in higher levels of academic achievement;
- The implementation process should begin in Fall 2004 with a pilot stage— involving a number of campuses—which should be used to review the results and effectiveness of the effort as well as the validity and reliability of the measures and procedural matters;
- Full implementation system-wide should be in place no later than Fall 2006; and be it further

Resolved that the Provost shall regularly and publicly report on the implementation status of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, the results of our assessment efforts and the State University’s longitudinal progress towards academic excellence. The focus of the public report on value-added assessment shall be on the increment of intellectual growth that has taken place and shall include a rigorous, data-driven analysis of the link between academic outcomes data and the learning environment on State University campuses. Campus-specific assessment data shall be used by System Administration and campus academic leadership to improve the quality of undergraduate education; and be it further

Resolved that, in accordance with Section 6306(2) of the State Education Law, the State University Board of Trustees urges the boards of trustees of the community colleges operating under the program of the State University to adopt general education value-added assessment consistent with the aforementioned principles.