

MEMORANDUM

June 14, 2018

To: Members of the Board of Trustees

From: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor

Subject: Extension of Tuition Benefit for Students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma

Action Requested

The proposed resolution authorizes the extension of resident tuition rates, first provided in the 2017/18 academic year, to the 2018/19 academic year for undergraduate and graduate students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma and who are attending a State-operated institution of the State University of New York. The proposed resolution also continues to encourage the boards of trustees of the 30 community colleges operating under the program of the State University of New York and the boards of trustees of the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred Ceramics, to take similar action.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas a substantial number of students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have been displaced as a consequence of Hurricanes Maria and Irma; and

Whereas the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has declared Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be disaster areas in accordance with Major Disaster Declarations 4335, 4336, 4339 and 4340; and

Whereas the infrastructures of these island communities have been substantially undermined by these hurricanes and continue to be in a state of disrepair; and

Whereas universities and higher education associations across the country have made and are continuing to make

efforts to assist students displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma in the most expeditious and humanitarian manner possible; and

Whereas under the leadership of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New York has played a principal role in the islands' recovery efforts by providing lifesaving supplies, expert personnel and critical repairs; and

Whereas the SUNY Maritime College and the University at Albany have partnered with the Governor by providing resources and personnel to aid the residents of these islands; and

Whereas in October 2017, SUNY Maritime President, Rear Admiral Michael Alfultis, dispatched the college's training ship, the Empire State VI, to aid with recovery efforts and is doing so again this summer with 500 cadets on board to participate in volunteer service work rebuilding homes; and

Whereas University at Albany President Havidan Rodriguez traveled to Puerto Rico with the Governor in April 2018 as part of multi-disciplinary tactical assessment team of labor, non-profit rebuilding, philanthropic and academic partners to help develop a near-term rebuilding roadmap to assist Puerto Rican communities in need; and

Whereas by Resolution 2017-46, adopted October 6, 2017, the Board of Trustees authorized the Chancellor, or designee, to amend the University's guidelines governing residency for tuition purposes to make undergraduate and graduate students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been displaced by either Hurricane Maria or Irma eligible for resident tuition rates for the 2017/18 academic year at SUNY State-operated institutions; and

Whereas the Board of Trustees wishes to extend for another academic year the benefit of resident tuition rates to students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma as a humanitarian response which acknowledges these students' *de facto* New York State residency status due to their inability to return home; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Chancellor or designee be, and hereby is, authorized to amend the University's guidelines governing residency for tuition purposes to make undergraduate and graduate students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been displaced by either Hurricane Maria or Irma eligible for resident tuition rates for the 2018/19 academic year at SUNY State-operated institutions; and, be it further

Resolved that the boards of trustees of the 30 community colleges operating under the program of the State University of New York, and the boards of trustees of the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred Ceramics, be, and hereby are, encouraged to take similar action or to otherwise provide assistance and support to facilitate the ability of these students to continue their academic studies at the State University of New York.

Background

The landfall of Hurricanes Maria and Irma in September 2017 had devastating consequences for residents of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In response to these disasters, the Board of Trustees extended resident tuition rates to students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who had been displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma. Because these students had been displaced and will be unable to maintain their home domicile in the impacted regions of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, it was appropriate to provide them with resident status under the SUNY Tuition Policy governing State-operated campuses for the 2017/18 academic year.

Approximately 35 students applied under this policy in the fall 2017 academic term. Fifty students did so in spring 2018. As the situation in these locations has not substantially improved since the adoption of the prior resolution, there is an anticipated, continuing need for this humanitarian effort.

Accordingly, this proposed resolution would authorize the Chancellor or designee to amend the University's guidelines governing residency for tuition purposes to classify the impacted group of students as residents who will be charged in-state tuition for the 2018/19 academic year. This resolution also encourages the boards of the community colleges and statutory colleges to take appropriate action to provide assistance and support to these students.