STATE OF NEW YORK

2286

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 16, 2025

Introduced by Sens. WEBB, BROUK, CLEARE, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a Black Leadership Institute within the State University of New York

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative intent. The State University of New York ("SUNY") has committed to becoming the most inclusive university system in the country, where all students, faculty, and staff feel welcome and supported. To meet this goal, SUNY must employ, in addition to faculty and staff, leaders at the highest levels who share common experiences and culture with those who comprise the fastest-growing segment of its student population: diverse students who will become the nation's next generation of leaders.

SUNY has seen a steady increase of Black students in recent years, reaching nearly 11 percent, or over 42,000 students, in the 2019-2020 academic year. While SUNY continues its efforts to ensure that campus leadership and faculty reflect the students they serve by hiring faculty who are more representative of the diverse student population at SUNY campuses, the diversity within executive leadership teams on many campuses can be expanded further with support from the legislature.

It is, therefore, the intention of the legislature to create a Black Leadership Institute ("the Institute") as an initiative for Black leaders in higher education with a mission to retain and grow from within SUNY a greater proportion of Black professionals at SUNY campuses. The Institute shall offer support and foster professional development for candidates for senior leadership roles on SUNY campuses, which will, in turn, create a more diverse SUNY culture that represents New York state and the SUNY student population.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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The legislature further intends that the Institute would be designed to open doors to executive-level positions and strengthen the University's pool of Black leaders. The Institute will identify, develop, and recruit, and ultimately support, retain, and foster the success of Black leaders across the SUNY system.

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 362 to read as follows:

§ 362. Black leadership institute. 1. Subject to an appropriation for this purpose, the chancellor of the state university of New York, in consultation with the board of trustees of the state university of New York, shall create a Black Leadership Institute within the state university of New York to foster the success of Black leaders at the university president and president's cabinet level. Such institute shall develop candidate identification and recruitment efforts, search committee training, professional development and individualized support measures for institute participants, professional assistance programming, services, research and resource identification activities, and any other programs deemed necessary to effectuate the intent of this institute.

2. The chancellor shall appoint an executive director and an eight member advisory council, to provide guidance and advice to further the development and growth of the institute. The director and the members of the advisory council shall serve for three-year terms, with the director and three advisory council members appointed in the first year of the institute's existence, three other members appointed in the second year, and two members appointed in the third year. The director and advisory council members may be reappointed at the end of each term in the manner of the original appointment. The director and advisory council shall receive no compensation for their work in conjunction with the institute.

3. In considering measures and programming for effectuating the purpose of the institute, the institute shall consider such factors as program cost-effectiveness; the ability of such programs to offer programmatically appropriate, long-term, training, and support services; the ability of such programs to enable individuals to participate in the institute to receive rewarding training, services, and supports; and current and projected employment data at campuses within the state university system.

4. The executive director shall prepare and present to the governor, the speaker of the assembly, and the majority leader of the senate at the beginning of each regular session of the legislature a separate report covering, in summary, and in detail, all phases of activity of the institute for the immediately preceding fiscal year.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the first of April next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.