**Presentation to the Board of Regents**

**December 2020**

# ADVISORY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

# Advisory Council Members

- New York State Disability Services Council
- State University of New York (SUNY)
- City University of New York (CUNY)
- Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
- Association of Proprietary Colleges
- New York City Department of Education, District 75
- ACCES State Rehabilitation Council
- Learning Disability Association
- Regional Bilingual Education Resources Network

- Student Advocates
- Community Inclusion & Development Alliance
- INCLUEnyc
- Starbridge
- Resource Center for Independent Living
- Disability Rights New York
- Office of Mental Health
- New York State Commission for the Blind
- Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
- Licensed Private Career Schools
- State Education Department (ACCES, Higher Education and P12 Special Education)

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# Student Voices Video

**Amhat**

Digital Accessibility

Universal Design

**Shelby**

Challenges of Transitioning between Colleges

Social Isolation and Mental Health needs of Students during COVID

**Ketrina**

Peer mentors as champions

Remote learning can work with the right accommodations

**Andrew**

Online learning during COVID can be stressful

It should be tailored to the diverse learning styles of students

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# Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

- 861,956 Postsecondary Students in NYS

- 77,476 Postsecondary Students with Disabilities
  *(This number is likely higher due to under reporting)*

- Dropout rates for postsecondary students with disabilities are substantially higher than students without disabilities

- Graduation rates are lower than their peers

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# Impact of COVID 19 on Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

- Transition from in-person to online learning
- Loss of reasonable accommodations provided in the classroom
- Lack of coursework in accessible formats
- Limited training of faculty and students on the use of technology
- Increased isolation, anxiety and stress
- Non-academic challenges related to unemployment, housing and food insecurity, and family illness

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# Recommendations





The Advisory Council has made recommendations in 3 areas:

Technology and Digital Accessibility

Peer Mentoring

Consistency Across Postsecondary Sectors
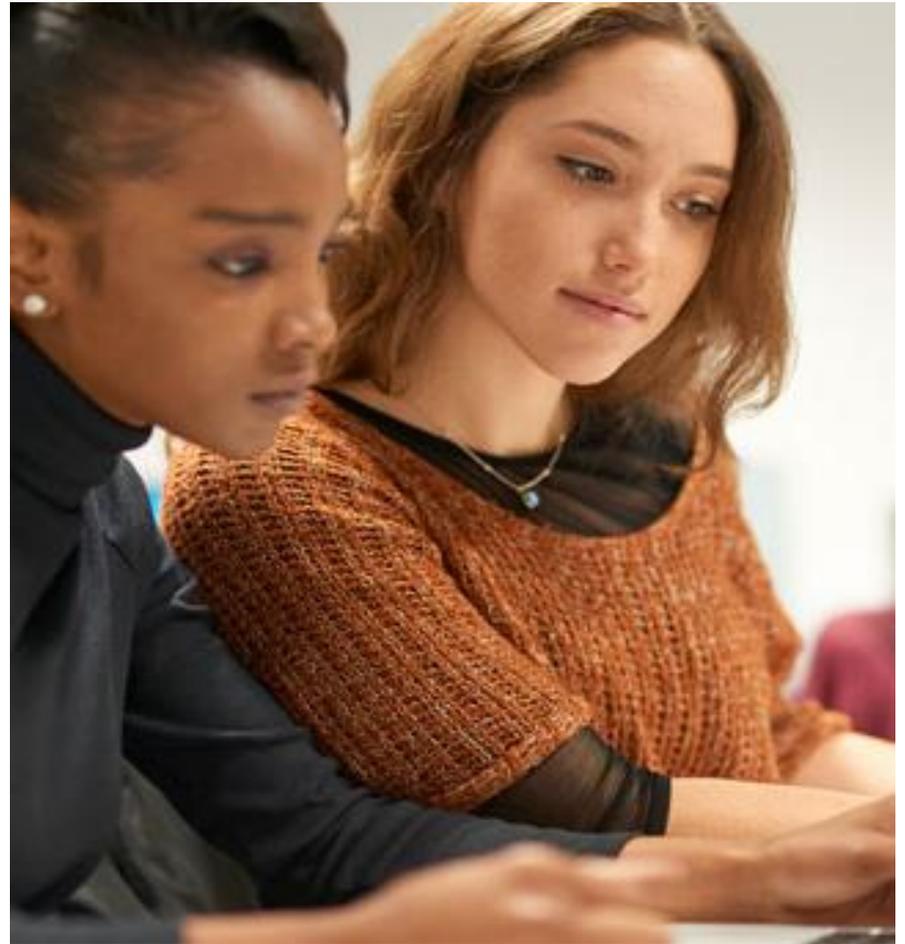
# Technology and Digital Accessibility

Recommendations:

- **Provide technology training to professors and students with disabilities** that includes IT support and technical assistance for in-person and remote learning.

- **Encourage postsecondary institutions to utilize universal design to provide support to students with disabilities**. Offer flexibility in the way students with disabilities access material, engage with it and show their knowledge. Examples include providing textbooks in audio and video formats or allowing oral presentations or group projects instead of written exams.

- **Encourage bulk purchasing of technology to decrease costs** for secondary and postsecondary institutions.

- **Establish standards for remote and synchronous (live) instruction**. Post COVID19 educational options should include the choice of in-person learning, remote learning or both. Hybrid options should incorporate universal design to provide accessibility to all students.

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# Peer Mentoring

Recommendation:

- **Create peer mentoring programs** to support post-secondary students with disabilities.
  - Mentors could assist students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills.
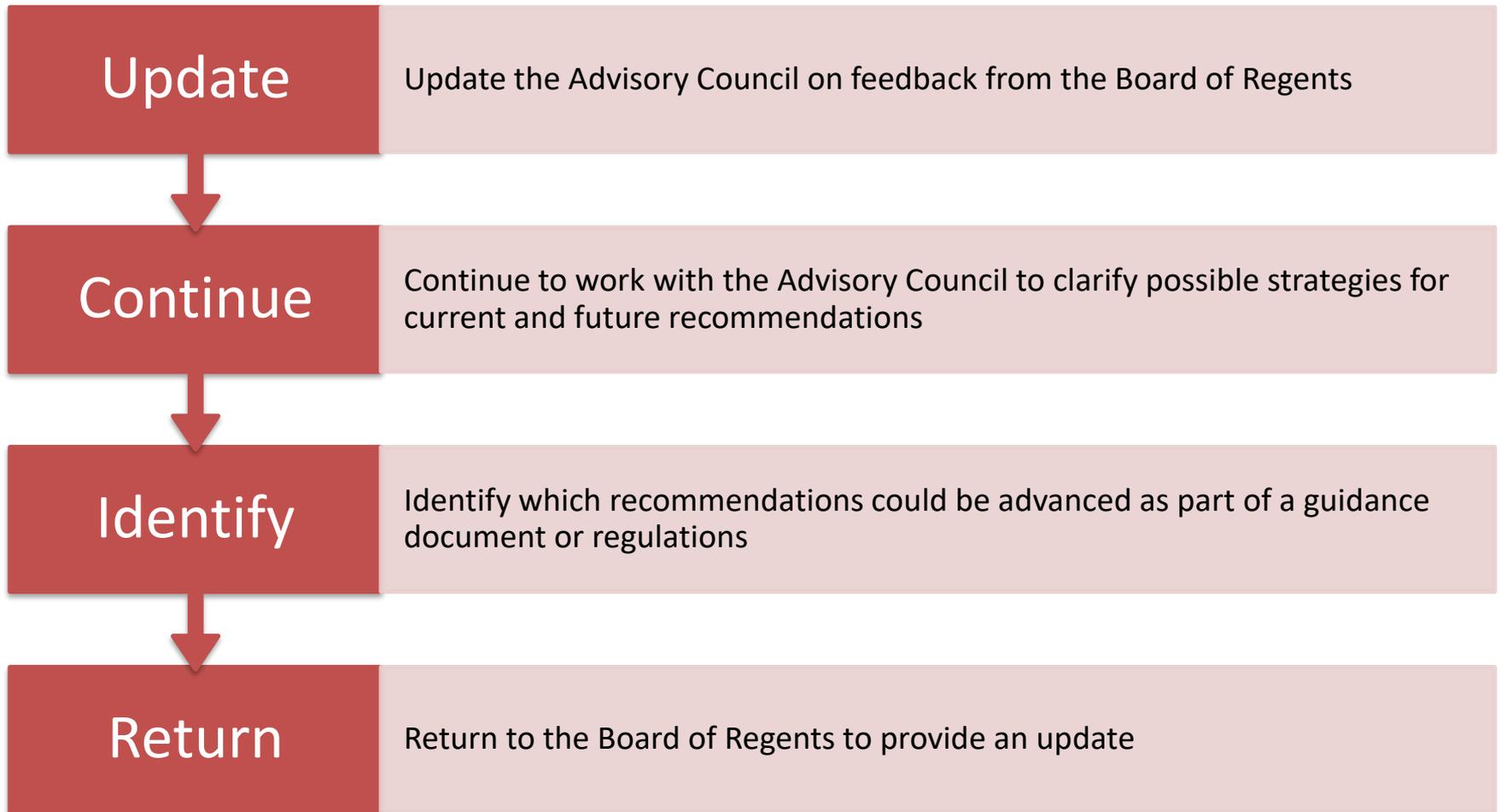
# Consistency Across Postsecondary Sectors

Recommendations:

- **Create consistency of supports and accommodations** across the various postsecondary education institutions.

- **Establish a seamless process that enables students with disabilities to easily transition** their reasonable accommodations from one postsecondary institution to another (i.e. community college to four-year college).
  - This would include the creation of standardized eligibility criteria and documentation requirements.

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# Advisory Council Next Steps

- Survey postsecondary institutions to identify current eligibility and documentation requirements for disability services and identify possible streamlining strategies.

- Review national practices identified by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to recommend strategies to improve the success of postsecondary students with disabilities.

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# Department Next Steps

**Update** — Update the Advisory Council on feedback from the Board of Regents

**Continue** — Continue to work with the Advisory Council to clarify possible strategies for current and future recommendations

**Identify** — Identify which recommendations could be advanced as part of a guidance document or regulations

**Return** — Return to the Board of Regents to provide an update

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# Thank You