TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Elizabeth R. Berlin

SUBJECT: The Challenge of Electronic Records in New York's State Universities and Colleges

DATE: October 19, 2015

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Student matriculation, fee payments, course catalogs, online classes, communication between professors and students, compiling research data, managing physical facilities—virtually every function of the universities and colleges in New York are now entirely and only online or captured in electronic form. While providing incredible convenience, opportunities and accessibility for students and faculty, this creates a substantive challenge for management and preservation of documents in the State University System. It is critical to ensure the survival of the essential records of higher education over time, and their continued accessibility for former students, faculty, administration and researchers of New York's educational system. This discussion will focus on the challenges and efforts to develop a model system for electronic records programs in the State University of New York System.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, Section 57.05, requires the State Archives to ensure the management, preservation and accessibility of the records of state government agencies regardless of their physical form.

Background Information

The New York State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) and the State Archives received a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant to develop a model electronic records program for colleges and universities. To ensure the model program is grounded in actual practice, the State University College at Plattsburgh serving as the pilot campus for the entire State University of New York

(SUNY) system. SUNY Plattsburgh has a strong records management and archives program staffed by Debra Kimok, Special Collections Librarian, and Gina Doty, Records Manager.

The project team, consisting of staff from SUNY Plattsburgh and staff of the State Archives, developed and are currently using the tools to inventory permanent and archival electronic records created by 64 campus offices. Following the identification and analysis of these records systems, the Project Team will work together to create an electronic records program that can serve as a model across the state university system to ensure the survival and accessibility of essential evidence produced by the University.

John Diefenderfer, Project Archivist, will provide examples of the wide range of essential evidence created as "born digital" records and some of the special challenges in managing these records.