




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Betty A. Rosa, Chancellor 

SUBJECT: Appointment of Interim Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York

DATE: December 9, 2019

AUTHORIZATION(S):

Issue for Decision

Will the Board of Regents approve the appointment of Shannon Tahoe to the position of Interim Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York?

Reason for Consideration

Elizabeth R. Berlin, formerly the Executive Deputy Commissioner, and Interim Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York, resigned effective November 16, 2019. Shannon Tahoe has been serving in the role of Acting Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York since that date. I am recommending we appoint Shannon Tahoe as Interim Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York in order to provide continued leadership within the Department.

Ms. Tahoe has extensive knowledge of, experience with and commitment to the important work of the Department. Since September 2006, Ms. Tahoe has served in various capacities in this Department, including Deputy Counsel, Assistant Counsel for Legislation and as a Senior Attorney. In October 2019, she was appointed Acting Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs. In November 2019 she was then appointed Acting Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York and now in December 2019, she has been permanently appointed as Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs. ¹

¹ Mr. Baldwin will serve as Acting Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs during this time until a permanent Commissioner is appointed. At which time, Ms. Tahoe will return to her role as Counsel and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs.

Ms. Tahoe has consistently provided sound legal advice and counsel to the Board of Regents, Commissioner and Department staff on critical policy matters and key initiatives. She is intimately familiar with all aspects of the work of the Department, having managed the day-to-day operations of the Office of Counsel as Deputy Counsel and now Acting Counsel. Ms. Tahoe has also been directly responsible for oversight of the Department's legislative and regulatory initiatives and has handled some of the Department's most significant litigation. Through her thirteen-plus years of service to the Department Ms. Tahoe has established close working relationships with the Board of Regents, former Commissioners and the Deputies in the Department. During her tenure, Ms. Tahoe has also assisted with the successful management of a broad array of critical Departmental functions and responsibilities, including those of the Department's Office of Management Services, Office of the Professions, Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services, Office of Cultural Education, Office of Performance and Improvement and Management Services, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and the Department's Chief Privacy Officer, as well as the Offices of Communications, Human Resources, Education Finance, and Governmental Relations. Ms. Tahoe holds a Juris Doctorate degree from Syracuse University and Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rochester.

I am confident that Ms. Tahoe will continue to successfully manage the Department's critical functions and responsibilities in this temporary interim role while the Board of Regents continues its search for a permanent Commissioner.

Proposed Handling

This recommendation will come before the full Board of Regents at its Executive Session for discussion at the December 9, 2019 Regents meeting and then come before the full Board for final action December 9, 2019.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approves the appointment of Ms. Shannon Tahoe to the Interim Commissioner.

Timetable for Implementation

If the Board of Regents approves the recommendation, the appointment will be effective and she will start in the position December 10, 2019.

VOTED, that the Board of Regents approve the appointment of Shannon Tahoe to Interim Commissioner and President of the University of the State of New York effective December 10, 2019.