



**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Campus Presidents

**From:** Deborah F. Stanley, Interim Chancellor

**Re:** SUNY Women in Technology Announcement

**Date:** July 1, 2022

**CC:** Chief Academic Officers  
Chief Diversity Officers  
Chief Information Officers  
Offices of Student Affairs  
Chief Human Resource Officers

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I am pleased to announce the creation of a new affinity program for SUNY: the SUNY Women in Technology (WIT) program. An expansion of the SUNY CCIO Women in Technology Committee, SUNY WIT will be an inclusive and diverse organization designed to attract, empower, support, and retain a more gender-diverse IT-related workforce and student population, connecting women-identifying students and employees with their allies across technology-oriented SUNY offices while highlighting the breadth of professional opportunities within the IT industry.

A 2019 Educause report shows that women reportedly make up only 38% of the overall higher education IT workforce and leave the tech field at a 45% higher rate than men; we can and must improve on these numbers at SUNY if we are to become a leader in attaining equity within both the IT field and higher education. The SUNY WIT program will strategically leverage existing services and resources to highlight the critical need to improve the status of women in technology-related fields and engage the IT communities in proactive efforts to advance the social justice and equity goals of SUNY.

SUNY WIT membership will be open at no charge to all interested employees across all gender identities, with potential membership opportunities for all students at the campus chapter level. SUNY WIT, once underway, will provide support, encouragement, technical and interpersonal skill development, mentoring, and leadership opportunities to reinforce SUNY student and employee recruitment and retention efforts. The program's system home will be in the SUNY ODEI Office, but the true impact of this work will be felt at each campus or region with a chapter. The chapter model facilitates focused programming that is responsive to the specific needs and interests of local WIT members while promoting local leadership development alongside systemwide opportunities and support.

The SUNY WIT Founders group, which has been working since January to create governance and chapter charter documents, is currently led by former Dean and CIO Holly Heller-Ross at SUNY Plattsburgh along with several campus CIOs, library leaders, and SUNY System Administration staff. The SUNY CPD has already conducted surveys and is developing a Women in Technology webinar series for Fall 2022, while SUNY ITEC has also created a SUNY WIT listserv to help launch a connection strategy.

Many details are still in progress, but I hope you stay tuned to the SUNY WIT program's exciting developments.

Please share with others on your campus. You may contact Holly Heller-Ross at [hellerhb@plattsburgh.edu](mailto:hellerhb@plattsburgh.edu) for more information.