OPEN ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE NEW YORK REGENTS EXTERNAL DEGREE

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The Regents External Degree Program of The University of the State of New York offers college degrees to anyone who can qualify. No classroom attendance is required. Since 1972 more than 16,000 people have enrolled in the Program and 5,000 have graduated. These external students range in age from 17 to 87 and they reside in every state in the nation. Regents External Degrees are available in the arts, sciences, business, and nursing; each may be earned entirely by examination — 548 have already done so — or by a combination of tests, study at accredited colleges, and approved courses sponsored by the military, government, and business. The University of the State of New York, created in 1784, is America’s oldest continuous educational agency. The University was established not to provide classroom instruction but to govern all education in New York, including elementary and secondary schools, museums, libraries, and 250 public and private colleges and universities. Faculty drawn from these institutions of higher education work with Regents’ staff in Albany to administer America’s first national examining university.

Das Regents External Degree Programm der Staatsuniversität von New York bietet jedem einen akademischen Grad, der sich qualifizieren kann. Anwesenheit im Hörsaal wird nicht verlangt. Seit 1972 haben sich mehr als 16.000 Menschen im Rahmen

In September 1975 Dorothy King, 41 years old, mother of 3, and head nurse of a maternity ward in Schenectady, New York was the featured speaker at the fifth commencement of The University of the State of New York (USNY). She had just earned a college degree by examination. In February 1976 Geoffrey Bagnall, a 28 year old Long Island policeman, received a baccalaureate degree in sociology from USNY, having earned a two year college degree six months earlier. Both of his degrees were awarded mainly on the basis of examinations.

In September 1976 Adrianne Baughns, 32 year old television news reporter from Hartford, Connecticut, satisfied the requirements for her baccalaureate degree from USNY through courses taken at two other universities. In Ms. Baughns’s graduating class was Walter J. Trepanowski, 45 year old employee of the marketing division of Trans World Airlines. Mr. Trepanowski earned a baccalaureate degree in business administration by a combination of classes and examinations.

King, Bagnall, Baughns, and Trepanowski are just four of the more than 5000 people who have earned college degrees from USNY through the Regents External Degree Program since 1972. They are typical of a new breed of students in American higher education who want a college program that recognizes learning wherever it takes place, and not only in the classroom. Older than the traditional college student, often with full-time work and family responsibilities but highly motivated and able to study independently, these people are unable to pursue their college studies under conventional arrangements. They prefer classes on weekends and evenings, study via television and correspondence, examina-