

Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee

OHE responses and requested materials from Thursday, March 4, 2021

1. Minority Advancement Program (MAP)

The Minority Advancement Program (MAP) meets two higher education goals in Connecticut – 1) to increase the retention and graduation rates of pre-college minority students and 2) to provide a bridge of academic support services to first-time, full-time freshman that helps them successfully navigate the college experience and graduate on time. Over the last four-year funding cycle, MAP provided funds on a competitive review basis to Connecticut colleges and universities to support activities that strengthen student readiness for college, as well as retention and graduation. Over that period, five Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program (ConnCAP) programs enrolled a total of 1,125 students from grades 8 to 12. There were 377 seniors that graduated and 365 (98%) of them went on to college in the Fall semester after graduation. Among the eight Connecticut College Access and Success (ConnCAS) programs, there were 1,380 students enrolled over the four-year grant cycle. Over two-thirds of enrolled students either remained in college or graduated; 116 ConnCAS students successfully completed college and graduated.

ConnCAP schools (5) – Central Connecticut State University, Naugatuck Valley Community College, University of Connecticut, University of Connecticut Health Center, and Western Connecticut State University. ConnCAS schools (7) – Eastern Connecticut State University, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Norwalk Community College, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Three Rivers Community College, University of Connecticut (Storrs), and University of Saint Joseph.

Promoting Academically Successful Students (PASS) is a new initiative of the Minority Advancement Program (MAP) to address those students of color who are placed on academic probation and need additional support to redress their academic standing. A successful student of the PASS program will develop sustainable college acumen skills to remain on track to graduation and be removed from academic probation. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 940 students participated in the program and 76% of the participants increased their GPAs from the previous semester.

PASS schools (10) – Capitol Community College, Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Gateway Community College, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Southern Connecticut State University, University of Connecticut (Storrs), and Western Connecticut State University.

MAP July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2021

INSTITUTION	UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE	AMOUNT	STUDENTS SERVED
Capital Community College	College	\$ 300,000	200

Central Connecticut State University	University	\$	300,000	200
Eastern Connecticut State University	University	\$	300,000	200
Gateway Community College	College	\$	300,000	200
Housatonic Community College	College	\$	240,000	160
Manchester Community College	College	\$	180,000	120
Naugatuck Valley Community College	College	\$	300,000	200
Southern Connecticut State University	University	\$	300,000	200
University of Connecticut, Storrs	University	\$	300,000	200
Western Connecticut State University	University	\$	300,000	200
TOTAL FUNDING		\$	2,820,000	

2. Alternative Route to Certification (ARC)

ARC has partnered with TEACH CT who offers support with the application process and a free trial subscription of **240 Tutoring** to candidates. This assists students with Praxis II study guides and practice tests for some of the content areas. Any candidates that have an account through TEACH and then apply to ARC can get up to \$100 reimbursement which they can use to offset the cost of the ARC application or Praxis exams. ARC also met with TEACH CT on recruiting strategies and they have been focusing social media recruiting towards minorities (they are able to target this demographic in their efforts). In addition, ARC promotes (virtually at this point) to paraprofessionals in many of the urban districts and via COLT (Connecticut Council of Language Teachers). Dr. Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer-SDE, passed along ARC program information to urban districts as well. ARC was recently notified that the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) were going to be offering minority students scholarships. ARC has had discussions with the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan

Authority (CHESLA) to offer financial assistance to minority candidates in ARC. ARC and CHESLA brainstormed ideas about long-term teaching incentives and urban teaching incentives. OHE is also exploring recruitment of college students participating in co-curricular activities as a means of significantly increasing recruitment of minority teachers. This program year 28% of ARC students are minority candidates (including Black, Hispanic, Asian, or two or more races).

3. Roberta Willis Scholarship Program

The following are scenarios for increasing funding for the RWSP:

For the Need-Merit component there are 3 possible scenarios. Scenarios 1 and 2 are based on removing the 30% cap on total allocated funds being allowed to go to funding Need-Merit students. This 30% cap is the primary reason we cannot award incoming first year students. All figures are based on the actual 2019-20 academic year expenditures. In that year we had a total of \$34,380,686 to make RWSP Need-Merit and Need-Based awards. That figure was comprised from the General Funds allotment of \$33,388,637 plus carry forward of \$992,049. In 2019-20 we awarded \$10,030,540 in Need-Merit funds to 2,089 students (not including 2,822 first year students) and \$23,581,784 in Need-Based funds to 9,206.

Scenario 1: Does away with the 30% cap and maintains the overall amount of \$34,380,686 from 2019-20 to award. The upside to this scenario is the state would be able to award ALL Need-Merit eligible students while keeping the overall funding level constant. The downside to this scenario is the colleges and universities would receive significantly less in Need-Based funds.

\$34,380,686 Total RWSP Appropriation + Carryforward

- \$23,581,784 Need-Merit for ALL eligible students

- 10,798,902 Need-Based funds

Scenario 2: Does away with the 30% cap but increases the amount of Need-Merit funds awarded by the amount that would have been necessary to fund ALL Need-Merit eligible students from the 2019-20 academic year. The additional amount needed to award All Need-Merit eligible students from 2019-20 would have been \$13,551,244 which is the 2,822 first year students times the average Need-Merit award amount of \$4,802. The upside to this scenario is that the state would be able to award ALL Need-Merit eligible students while maintaining the Need-Based funding level for the colleges and universities at the 2019-20 level of approximately \$24,000,000. The downside to this scenario is the state would have to allot an additional \$13,551,244 from the General Fund to the Need-Merit program.

\$47,931,930 Total RWSP Appropriation

- \$23,581,784 Need-Merit for All eligible students

- \$24,000,000 Need-Based funds

Scenario 3: Maintains the 30% cap on Need-Merit funds. This would mean increasing the allotment from the General Fund to \$77,500,000 in order to have enough Need-Merit funds for All eligible students. The

upside of this scenario is that ALL eligible Need-Merit students would be funded and the colleges and universities would receive significantly more in Need-Based funds. The downside of this scenario would be the state would have to increase the current allotment from the General Fund by nearly 130% and probably providing the colleges and universities with more Need-Based funds than they could award.

\$77,500,000 Total RWSP Appropriation

X 30

\$23,250,000 Need-Merit for All eligible students

\$54,250,000 Need-Based funds.

In addition to the above scenarios, aimed at allowing the state to award All eligible Need-Merit students, I was asked to calculate how much would be need to allow all students eligible for Need-Based to be awarded. During the 2019-20 academic year the colleges and universities were able to award a total of \$23,581,784 to 9,206 students for an average award of \$2,562. However, this left 42,996 students, who were eligible for Need-Based awards, un-awarded. Therefore, the state would need to provide an additional \$110,137,126 in Need-Based funds to award all eligible students. I have not factored that amount into the above 3 scenarios.

4. Minority Teacher Incentive Grant Program (MTIP)

The Minority Teacher Incentive Grant Program provides up to \$5,000 a year for the final two years of full-time study to minority undergraduates enrolled in a Connecticut teacher preparation program. The program also provides eligible students with up to \$2,500 in yearly stipends for up to four years of teaching in a Connecticut public elementary or secondary school.

To qualify, students must be a full-time college junior or senior of African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American or Native American heritage; be nominated by an Education Dean (or appropriate official) at the participating college they're attending; and begin teaching in a Connecticut public school within 16 months of graduation to receive the annual stipend.

Participating colleges include Albertus Magnus College, Central CT State University, Eastern CT State University, Fairfield University, Quinnipiac University, Sacred Heart University, Southern CT State University, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, University of St. Joseph, and Western CT State University.

Finally, the most recent funding level of \$570,134 for the MTIP program was sufficient to award all applicants, returning students and teachers in FY20. See the following as a breakdown:

47 new applicants at \$5,000 per award = \$235,000

16 returning students at \$5,000 per award = \$80,000

32 teacher stipends at \$2,500 per award = \$80,000

	<u>MTIP Appropriation</u>
FY 2016	\$432,640
FY 2017	\$337,369
FY 2018	\$355,704
FY 2019	\$320,134
FY 2020	\$570,134

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
New Nominees	59	48	57	71	47
New Awardees	14*	36*	19*	22*	47
Renewal Students	41	8	17	16	16
First-Time Teachers	14	13	4	8	11
Renewal Teachers	33	30	26	25	21

However, the amount need for each year is dependent on the number of applications we receive in a given year. If the state is able to dramatically increase the number of minority students entering teaching programs in college, we would need an increase in funding.

5. Open Education Resources (OER)

In 2019, \$100,000 in state funding was appropriated to the Office of Higher Education’s personal services budget line to fund the establishment and administration of an Open Educational Resources program within the state of Connecticut. **Other than the naming of the members of the OER Council Coordinator and members - who oversee the program, the Office of Higher Education has held no other role within the OER program other than to support the program administratively.** In other words, OHE is a pass-through agency for payment of program expenses and none of the OER funding was used for OHE’s administrative purposes. It is our understanding that continued funding support the OER program was not included in the Governor’s proposed 2021-2023 budget as simply a cost savings measure but the lack of appropriated state dollars does NOT dissolve the program. PA 19-177 Section 147 authorizes the council to use available appropriations and ***to identify funds for the program*** – so when state dollars are not provided, the council is fully authorized to seek funds from outside sources to support the program.

The OER Council recently submitted a progress report to the Legislature’s Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee that details activities and expenses. (see attached.)

6. Office of Higher Education personnel

In response to a question about our current headcount, we are currently allowed 27 employees and we have 24 positions filled. Two staff members will be retiring within the next year – we anticipate filling those positions. The office organizational chart was included within our original agency submission.