



**Office of Higher Education
Budget Presentation
Appropriations Committee
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

The Office of Higher Education is divided into three programmatic divisions – Academic Affairs, Finance and Human Resources and Programs and Student Services.

Division of Academic Affairs

The Division of Academic Affairs consists of three units. The first unit deals with the regulatory oversight of independent institutions of higher education and their related programs within the state. In addition, this unit serves as the state portal entity for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). This function allows us to approve state institutions to be members of SARA. Finally, this unit also has regulatory oversight of out-of-state institutions that are not members of SARA and wish to teach Connecticut students. The second unit authorizes private postsecondary occupational schools and their related programs to operate within the state. It also manages the Student Protection Account, which provides refunds for students who are unable to complete an approved course or unit of instruction at a school because of insolvency or cessation of operation of the school and did not receive a refund from the school. Finally, the third unit serves as the Connecticut State Approving Agency (SAA) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Under Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations, the SAA approves institutions and programs so eligible veterans, and veteran dependents can use their GI Bill educational benefits at that school.

Licensure, Accreditation, SARA, Out-of-State:

Connecticut has 22 approved independent institutions total and 18 public institutions. Thirty-three of our institutions participate in State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). We have 37 out of state institutions that are approved to offer online instruction to Connecticut students.

With regards to licensing and accrediting academic programs. P.A. 19-26, allows certain non-profit, private institutions of higher education to be exempt from the OHE program approval process. Among the exempt institutions, there were 65 programs approved without undergoing the approval process. Among the 65 programs, 6 were a certificate program, 3 was an associate

degree program, 21 were bachelor's degree programs, 11 graduate certificates, and 24 were master's degree programs.

For the non-exempt institutions, which are still required to go through the OHE's program approval process, 15 programs (3 Master's Degrees, 1 MD, and 11 Graduate Certificate programs) were licensed and 1 program (Bachelor's degree) was accredited. In addition, the Office approved the licensure of 2 programs at out of state institutions licensed to operate in Connecticut.

The proposals for new academic programs spanned a variety of fields, including nursing, data science, STEM and e-sports and gaming. At the institutional level, OHE reviewed and licensed 1 institution and re-accredited another institution.

Private Occupational School Authorization:

Currently there are 96 approved postsecondary private occupational schools in Connecticut. During the 2019-20 fiscal year, the Office of Higher Education approved four new occupational schools, re-approved 12 existing schools, investigated 5 formal complaints, and worked with ten schools that closed in compliance with state statutes. There were no changes to our hospital-based schools for FY20.

Carrying out its oversight of hairdresser and barber schools, the agency approved five new schools, and re-approved six existing schools, investigated four formal complaint and closed three schools in compliance with state statutes.

Connecticut State Approving Agency

As the Connecticut State Approving Agency (SAA) for veterans' education benefits, the Office of Higher Education processed 51 initial, revised and updated approval actions for institutions and training facilities eligible to enroll veterans; conducted 15 inspection visits, one technical assistance visit, and 17 compliance survey visits to schools, colleges and training facilities; and provided information to active duty service members and veterans regarding their educational benefits during seven outreach activities. The SAA conducted 94 technical assistance activities for schools and training facilities regarding approvals, compliance survey visits, certification questions and GI Bill® inquiries. Staff approved 964 programs and disapproved 118 programs for degree- and non-degree-granting institutions and training organizations at approved facilities; and participated in the 2022 Veterans Stand Down and National Association of State Approving Agencies Mid-Winter Training and Business Meeting.

Division of Finance and Human Resources

Finance and Human Resources Division manages the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship, John J. Justice, and the Minority Teacher Incentive Programs and provides administrative, computer technology, and financial direction to the agency. This division is also responsible for grant

administration (GEAR UP funding, Roberta Willis and ARPA) and data collection and evaluation. The division is also OHE's representative for the P20WIN and the 2GEN initiatives.

	<u>RWSP Appropriation</u>	<u>RWSP Need-Based</u>	<u>RWSP Need-Merit</u>
FY 2018	\$35,345,804	\$25,270,119	\$10,872,908
FY 2019	\$33,388,637	\$23,084,941	\$10,304,418
FY 2020	\$33,388,637	\$23,140,602	\$10,148,035
FY 2021	\$33,388,637	\$23,576,977	\$10,148,035
FY 2022	\$33,388,637	\$24,173,591	\$10,510,111

Total RWSP Recipients					
	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
CC	4,202	4,372	3,414	3,751	3,398
CSU	3,155	2,918	3,063	3,339	3,259
UConn	1,910	1,909	2,109	2,083	2,139
Independents	1,976	1,828	1,798	1,774	1,684
Ind. - Nationals	63	66	71	68	73
Total RWSP Aid Dollars Awarded					
	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
CC	\$10,158,099	\$9,883,835	\$7,732,732	\$8,233,173	\$8,512,805
CSU	\$10,439,034	\$9,122,312	\$9,611,403	\$9,112,645	\$9,395,362
UConn	\$8,806,719	\$8,860,691	\$9,610,619	\$9,338,847	\$9,696,511
Independents	\$5,199,991	\$5,100,386	\$5,376,133	\$5,278,960	\$5,221,068
Ind. - Nationals	\$275,886	\$201,032	\$311,113	\$307,030	\$335,332
Average RWSP Student Award					
	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
CC	\$2,417	\$2,261	\$2,265	\$2,192	\$2,505
CSU	\$3,309	\$3,126	\$3,138	\$2,729	\$2,883
UConn	\$4,611	\$4,642	\$4,557	\$4,483	\$4,533
Independents	\$2,632	\$2,790	\$3,048	\$2,976	\$3,100
Ind. - Nationals	\$4,379	\$3,046	\$4,382	\$4,515	\$4,594

In line with the State's overall IT strategy to streamline business applications, OHE went live with a new financial aid software processing system known as CT Scholars. CT Scholars is a cloud-based system which allows students and institutions of higher education to access information and process state aid in a real-time on-line environment. This is a fantastic

upgrade for OHE because it offers a very secure, easy to use system for those students who are seeking to advance their education.

As mentioned earlier, OHE is a smaller agency with approximately 25 employees who primarily support regulatory oversight of post-secondary education, scholarship administration and other post-secondary initiatives such as the Minority Advancement Program and the Alternative Route to Certification.

OHE has tackled challenges that are common to many state agencies, like updating antiquated data management systems and shifting to a paperless workplace. The division will continue to innovate and strengthen its processes within the appropriated budget.

Programs and Student Services

The Division has three large programs within its portfolio – the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC), the Minority Advancement Program (MAP) and the National Service initiative (AmeriCorps). The ARC program is a condensed training program created to prepare candidates for the classroom over the course of nine months and is designed to support adult learning styles. Enrolled students complete a rigorous, intensive series of classes that include Core sessions and Methods classes. Two types of classes provide both general and specific learning opportunities that are vital to become an educator - with the general classes taught in a large group Core presentations and content specific principles covered in smaller Methods classes. Students must also complete an 8-week (40 day) practicum in a Connecticut Public School as part of the program. The ARC program has been offered since 1988 and has produced more than 5,000 teachers. The certifications currently offered are Grades PreK-12: Family Consumer Science, Music Education and Technology Education; Grades K-12: World Languages and Secondary Education, Grades 7-12: Business Education, English, Math, and Sciences. Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs) are utilized for ARC students to have a full-time position opportunity in the classroom (as a long-term substitute in the subject area of certification) while also meeting the program and state requirements for certification. To help with the current teacher shortage in CT, ARC is offering current students a \$500 tuition reimbursement incentive to secure a DSAP position while meeting program requirements by graduation.

Program improvements through the pandemic included Accessibility, Foundations Curriculum, Methods Design, and the Saturday Seminars. ARC moved to a hybrid model with online classes two evenings per week and in-person classes two Saturdays per month. This allowed more accessibility for candidates working in a school or other capacity during the day, candidates who need to obtain childcare, and candidates who lived across the state. It also allowed the program to teach and model technology resources through virtual instruction. In addition, ARC increased the number of Microteach assessments per year on a progression scale. This provided for additional observation assessments and candidate evaluations. ARC's 2021-2022 program prepared 87 adults in business education, English language arts, family and consumer sciences, mathematics, music, sciences, technology education and world languages (Arabic,

Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish). In June 2022, 20% of the 2021-2022 graduating class were from minority groups and 41% held master's and/or Ph.D. credentials.

In 1983, the State of Connecticut established the Minority Advancement Program (MAP), administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE). MAP and its programs have provided academic support services to thousands of Connecticut's underachieving minority middle, high school, and undergraduate college students since its inception. Underachieving minority students often have limited resources and are underserved, limiting their academic achievement. MAP supports educational equity by providing much-needed resources and improving academic achievement among minority students. The program's efforts help to increase the equity and diversity of students attending and graduating from Connecticut's colleges and universities.

On a competitive basis, MAP funding is open to all Connecticut institutions of higher education, both public and private. Upon issuing a request for proposals, an OHE panel assesses the proposals based on rationale and program design, mainly focusing on the proposed impact on retention and graduation rates and demonstrated institutional capacity and support. Once applicants are selected, the Office of Higher Education staff provides oversight and program monitoring for compliance. In addition, the Office of Higher Education continuously evaluates grantee activities to assess program efficacy and supports grantees by providing feedback and best practices for improving program design. The MAP program is in year two of a three-year grant cycle.

The Office of Higher Education awards MAP funds to colleges and universities through the Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program (ConnCAP) and PASS competitive grant programs. MAP supports educational access and opportunity for underachieving minority middle, high school, and undergraduate college students. ConnCAP is the principal strategy of the Office of Higher Education to develop linkages with public school systems targeted by the office to provide motivation and skills development for middle school or high school underachievers so that they become prepared to successfully acquire a college education. An underachiever is also defined as someone unlikely to achieve his or her academic potential without programmatic intervention due to circumstances other than his or her current level of academic achievement. Nine IHEs and one nonprofit organization conducted ConnCAP programs during the 2021 – 2022 grant year enrolling 1300 students. The nine IHE grantees were Goodwin University, Manchester Community College, Quinnipiac University, Southern Connecticut State University, University of Connecticut- Avery Point, University of Connecticut- Stamford, University of Connecticut- Storrs, University of Connecticut-Waterbury, Western Connecticut State University, and The Athlife Foundation.

The ConnCAP grant programs offer underprivileged students the opportunity to engage with IHEs in both summer and academic year programming to provide meaningful opportunities for students to increase their chances of graduating high school and improving college readiness. The summer programs offered at the 10 grantees averaged 5 weeks, with some offering

residential components to their instruction. The average attendance at the summer instructional sessions was 37 students. During the fall instructional session, the IHEs offered programming for an average of 13 weeks, with attendance averaging 61 students. The spring instructional session was the same average length, 13 weeks, and an average attendance of 62 students.

Twelve colleges and universities implemented Promoting Academic Student Success Program (PASS) programs during the 2021 – 2022 grant year enrolling 620 students, representing a 17% growth from the 2020 – 2021 grant year. The twelve grantees were Capital Community College, Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Gateway Community College, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College, Middlesex Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Southern Connecticut State University, Tunxis Community College, University of Connecticut Storrs, and Western Connecticut State University.

During the 2021 – 2022 grant year, the twelve IHEs in the PASS program enrolled a total of 620 students who were on academic probation. 32% of students across the twelve IHE PASS programs were removed from academic probation. Each IHE has designed its program independently following the guidelines for the PASS grant defined in the Memorandum of Agreement and with the supervision and assistance of the Connecticut Office of Higher Education MAP team. Three of the twelve IHEs developed for-credit academic courses designed explicitly for PASS students and their unique needs.

Trend data from the IHEs participating in the PASS grant indicate that students engaged in the PASS program for two consecutive semesters show more remarkable improvement in GPA and removal from academic probation over students in the PASS program for one semester. High participation in one-on-one sessions and workshops correlates to improved academic standing. Integrating workshop strategies and academic skills into the one-on-one sessions also improved GPA and removed students from academic probation. It is important to note that GPAs are often difficult to raise, and most students do not come off academic probation in a single term.

Multiple IHEs indicated that the relationship between the PASS students and their PASS contact was indicated as the most impactful resource offered through the program. The concept of the relationship between advisor/counselor/mentor and students as the most impactful is supported in the work of Dr. RK Payne, who asserts that students that may come from poverty identify relationships as the most critical factor in educational retention and success (2012). Like the relationship between the advisor/counselor/mentor and students, several IHEs indicated that students identified with marketing and promotion from current or previous PASS students and their success in getting and staying off academic probation.

MAP campuses

Program Year	Number of IHEs	Students Served	Total Award
2020-2021			
<i>ConnCAP</i>	10	1300	\$1,893,540
<i>PASS</i>	10	940	\$1,410,000
<i>Totals</i>	20	2240	\$3,303,540
2021-2022			
<i>ConnCAP</i>	10	1300	\$1,893,540
<i>PASS</i>	13	930	\$930,000
<i>Totals</i>	23	2230	\$2,823,540
2022-2023			
<i>ConnCAP</i>	10	1520	\$1,402,180
<i>PASS</i>	9	715	\$715,000
<i>Totals</i>	19	2235	\$2,117,108

An extension of the agency's public service role is carried out by the Connecticut Commission on Community Service (Serve Connecticut) which is administered by the Office of Higher Education staff. The Commission is a governor-appointed entity that encourages engagement in service and volunteer efforts and provides oversight to Connecticut's AmeriCorps state programming. With federal funds, the Commission sponsors AmeriCorps, by awarding nonprofit agencies to respond to local needs. In exchange for a service year, AmeriCorps members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of up to \$6,495 that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994, more than 16,000 Connecticut residents have served approximately 23 million hours and earned education awards totaling more than \$58.4 million. Higher education institutions and other organizations in Connecticut have received more than \$16.5 million in education award payments since 1994.

Last year more than 2,100 Americans of all ages and backgrounds united to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and expand opportunity through national service in Connecticut. AmeriCorps invested more than \$10.6 million in federal funding to support cost-effective community solutions, working hand in hand with local partners to empower individuals to help communities tackle their toughest challenges. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in Connecticut are preparing today's students for tomorrow's jobs, helping communities and families impacted by COVID-19, reducing crime and reviving cities, connecting

veterans to services, fighting the opioid epidemic, helping seniors live independently, and rebuilding communities after disasters. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers served at more than 300 locations across Connecticut, including schools, food banks, homeless shelters, health clinics, youth centers, veterans' facilities, and other nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Through a unique public-private partnership, AmeriCorps and its partners generated more than \$2.9 million in outside resources from businesses, foundations, public agencies, and other sources in Connecticut in the last year. This local support strengthened community impact and increased the return on taxpayer dollars. In 2022, every state dollar invested in National Service, has yielded a \$28.88 return on investment.