



MEMORANDUM

To: CSCU Board of Regents

From: Terrence Cheng, CSCU Chancellor

cc: Jessica Paquette, Chief of Staff; Karen Buffkin, General Counsel; Cameron Liston, Chief Compliance Officer; Lloyd Blanchard, Interim Vice President for Admin. & CFO; Adam Joseph, Vice Chancellor for External Affairs

Date: January 28, 2025

Re: Recent Federal Executive Orders, Policies, and Directives

Background

Recent federal actions have introduced new requirements and directives that may significantly impact higher education institutions, including those within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system involving diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), immigration and federal funding.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

In the past week, multiple executive orders have been issued by the White House addressing DEIA policies, emphasizing alignment with federal civil rights laws. Additionally, a January 22nd memo from the Department of Labor (DOL) directed grant recipients to halt all activities related to DEI or DEIA initiatives.

The attached memo, previously shared with CSCU Presidents, provides additional information on matters specifically related to DEIA.

Federal Funding

In addition, the White House Office of Management and Budget sent a memo yesterday to federal agencies Monday, ordering a temporary pause to all grants and loans disbursed by the federal government effective at 5:00 p.m. today.

Currently, the full impact on higher education and the CSCU system remains uncertain. However, the memo specifies that "federal financial assistance" does not include assistance provided directly to individuals, nor does it affect Medicare or Social Security. Today, the Department of Education just issued a clarifying statement confirming that financial aid programs relied upon by many of our students are exempt from this freeze. That said, other grants received by our institutions may still be affected.

In addition, it has come to our attention that a federal judge temporarily blocked the administration from enacting the freeze until at least February 3rd, pending further review.



Immigration

Given the recent executive orders, policies, and directives related to immigration, General Counsel Karen Buffkin has updated the 2017 protocol to ensure clarity and alignment with current legal obligations. These updates aim to provide clear guidance to all relevant parties across the system, including police and security personnel, on how to respond appropriately to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement actions on our campuses. For your awareness, the updated guidance is attached.

Potential Impacts on CSCU

The federal actions outlined above are expected to impact federal funding compliance, grant management, and operational policies across the CSCU system. Ensuring compliance while maintaining our mission of access, opportunity, and equity for Connecticut residents remains our top priority.

System Coordination and Next Steps

To ensure a coordinated response, the System Office is:

- Convening standing internal meeting with System Office leadership to ensure alignment on the evolving situation.
- Convening a meeting with institutional presidents in the coming week to discuss the implications of current and potential actions and establish processes for planning and compliance.
- Monitoring federal developments closely and collaborating with stakeholders to adapt policies and ensure alignment with any new regulations.

CSCU is committed to navigating these changes thoughtfully and transparently, safeguarding access to federal resources, including Title IV funding, while continuing to meet Connecticut's educational and workforce needs. Our focus remains on ensuring that students have uninterrupted access to the support they need to achieve their educational goals.

We will keep monitoring the situation, collaborating with stakeholders, and providing updates to the Board as new information becomes available.

Should you have any immediate questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly.