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Ned Lamont
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

February 15, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I write to express my strong support for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' (CSCU) plan to merge the state's 12 community colleges into a single accredited institution known as Connecticut State Community College (CT State). The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) has recognized that student success is linked to the system's ability to sustain itself financially and provide access and opportunity to Connecticut residents. The community colleges are an important state asset, but they must operate more efficiently and have better outcomes for Connecticut residents, businesses, and communities. The success of this merger is critical to us all.

The CSCU administration has worked with my office as it puts CT State on a path to fiscal sustainability by sharing services to eliminate duplicative functions and investing in the supports students need to succeed. In my last budget, I provided resources to support the Guided Pathways initiative to ensure improved outcomes from the college system and will continue to work with CSCU and the legislature to identify other potential funding to support the success of this merger.

In addition, the move to CT State aligns with Governor's Workforce Council Strategic Plan. The regional approach has already begun to leverage resources and expertise across campuses to respond to the needs of businesses throughout the state in a more coordinated, nimble, and efficient manner. In particular, we have seen success as the colleges, through the CT State regional workforce officers, helped to quickly provide training services to those impacted by the pandemic.

I applaud President Cheng, Interim President Rooke, Chair Fleury, and the BOR for this thoughtful and innovative approach, and I urge the Commission's support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ned Lamont".

Ned Lamont
Governor



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye
Commissioner

February 11, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

Over the last several years, the Office of Early Childhood has partnered with the CSCU system office and its twelve community colleges to enhance early childhood education programs and expand the colleges' Lab Schools that serve young children. These programs provide an invaluable asset to the state. Our success has been possible because of systemwide leadership and a consistent vision and set of priorities, as well as consistent operating procedures across campuses. Working with CT State as a single entity will maximize our efforts to engage campus leaders, childcare staff and early childhood faculty and students.

As one of the state's primary agencies serving low-income families, we welcome the opportunity to have a streamlined approach to working with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education with 12 campus that offer customized access in every corner of the state.

As a former State Senator and chair of both the Appropriations Committee and the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, I am well aware of the fiscal challenges facing the community colleges and their underperformance on completion, retention, and recruitment efforts compared to their New England peer institutions. This is despite the years of hard work by dedicated faculty, staff and administrators. I am also well aware of the difficulty in making a structural change of this magnitude. I believe the community college consolidation will also allow the colleges to stabilize and focus on its mission with renewed energy. Through CT State Community College, I am confident we can sustain and grow programs in early childhood education and explore other partnerships for the benefit of young children in our state.

Sincerely,

Beth Bye
Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

February 7, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

Over the last five years, our agency has partnered with the CSCU system office and its twelve community colleges to establish SNAP Employment and Training programs at each campus. These programs provide an invaluable opportunity to SNAP recipients, allowing them to access high demand programs that result in a livable wage. Assistance includes coverage of tuition and funding for other supports, such as childcare, transportation, books, testing fees, etc. While we have been successful in rolling out programs, the lack of a consistent vision and set of priorities, as well as disparate operating procedures across campuses, has delayed our progress. We support CSCU's substantive change proposal because we believe it presents an opportunity to ensure equity across the state by providing equal opportunity for SNAP recipients. It will also allow us to scale the SNAP Employment and training program more efficiently and explore other partnerships for the benefit of CSCU's students.

As one of the state's primary agencies serving low-income families, we welcome the opportunity to have a streamlined approach to working with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education with 12 campus that offer customized access in every corner of the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deidre S. Gifford".

Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH
Senior Advisor to the Governor for Health and Human Services
Commissioner, CT Department of Social Services

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



February 15, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President
New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and NECHE Commissioners,

As the state's K-12 education system works to establish a better alignment with the community colleges to enable students to more easily achieve academic success and viable careers, the merger of the 12 community colleges into one Connecticut State Community College is a proactive approach.

The Connecticut State Community College (CT State) will make it easier to align academic, counseling, and career supports across Connecticut. In particular, the focus on reforms in English and mathematics will help to ensure high school graduates can more easily transition to higher education without losing time to degree. In addition, dual-enrollment programs, which the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is working to expand throughout all districts, will be more easily established and grown under this plan. This consolidation and alignment will help ensure that regardless of which district in Connecticut a student graduates from, the classes, programs, employer connections, and investments found at the community colleges are equitable.

Deliberate and connected pathways from high schools to community college can only be accomplished through sustainable partnerships. The changes brought about by this merger will enhance the collaboration between the CSDE, CT State, and school districts to equitably support the higher education of students in our state. I encourage your support of the community college merger and look forward to working together to benefit the students of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charlene M. Russell-Tucker".

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education



February 11, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

As Connecticut's 12 community colleges prepare to become one CT State Community College, we reaffirm that the strategic goals of the merger to enhance career pathways, accelerate post-secondary success and build an equitable system of access, achievement and holistic advisement across the state will do no less than transform the impact of higher education.

We are witnessing the creation of Connecticut's largest public higher education system, with a "Students First" vision for helping all to not only choose a viable career path but get the support needed to persist and complete their academic goals. The adoption of Guided Pathways – an approach that increases retention through planning, connection and delivery of supports – is already bearing fruit at the CT Community College campuses as it has in 16 other states across the country. At Northwestern CT Community College alone, there has been a 50% increase in retention of students who attended in Fall 2021 and registered for Spring 2022 classes.

Such impact on retention and completion will not only benefit the students and our colleges, but businesses as well. Imagine the impact on employers to know that they can rely upon pipelines of talent from a potential pool of just over 32,000 candidates who are rooted in our communities and entering the workforce in a timely, coordinated way. Adding to that, the continued flexibility to customize programs "just-in-time" on a statewide, regional or campus basis through Workforce Development and Continuing Education presents the potential to grow our business and plan for the future.

Being a small state of 169 towns is one of the defining qualities of Connecticut. Our 12 individual community college campuses share that pride and the role they play in their communities. That pride can be sustained while also achieving a level of equity and access that so far has been only aspirational. The Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) and the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC) share in CT State's commitment to equity and inclusion that holds that no campus or its students should be expected to function with fewer resources because of the geographic, socio-economic or racial make-up of its population.

Likewise, no campus or system can grow under the constant weight of financial instability. Neither long-term investments nor innovation can be fostered without sound financial footing. The merger of the 12 individual colleges, introduction of shared services and streamlined administration will ultimately stabilize community college finances. At the same time, allowing for systemwide approaches to increase enrollment, bolster retention and completion, and partner with the likes of OWS and others on revenue-generating and alternative funding initiatives will benefit all.

CT State's goals to address achievement gaps, increase equity and prioritize access align with the strategic goals of OWS and the GWC's mission and are featured prominently in the GWC Workforce Strategic Plan 2020. Credit degree and certificate programs feed into four-year programs and non-credit, short-term workforce programs create skilled candidates who meet employer demand.

A prime example is this collaboration that brought Amazon Web Services and Google certifications for IT fields to the community colleges in 2021. These industry-recognized credentials are in-demand by employers in Connecticut and beyond. The ability to integrate into statewide curricula and workforce development scheduling that CT State will enable is the key to the success of this initiative.



The GWC Workforce Strategic Plan describes our vision that: “Every Connecticut resident has access to a meaningful career pathway and the support needed to fulfill their aspirations. Every business in Connecticut has access to a skilled workforce.” We believe that CT State will help make this vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelli-Marie Vallieres".

Kelli-Marie Vallieres, PhD
Vice Chair, Governor’s Workforce Council
Chief Workforce Officer, CT Office of Workforce Strategy

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Argosh".

Mark Argosh
Chair, Governor’s Workforce Council
Executive Director, Social Venture Partners CT



CITY OF NEW BRITAIN

EST. 1871

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE HONORABLE ERIN E. STEWART

WWW.NEWBRITAINCT.GOV

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

February 14, 2022

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I write today in strong support of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) plan to merge their twelve community colleges into a single accredited institution, known as CT State Community College. The merger will not only help to better meet the needs of students and local New Britain businesses, but will help bring 150 jobs to our downtown core.

Our city is already home to Central Connecticut State University and Charter Oak State College, and I am thrilled that we will be welcoming the headquarters of CT State to our downtown. Economic development has been one of my top priorities as Mayor. Hosting CT State's headquarters in downtown New Britain is not only going to bring much needed jobs to our city, but it will increase foot traffic and expand on the redevelopment momentum we have built here in recent years.

New Britain has a rich history of being a manufacturing center in Connecticut, earning us the nickname of the "Hardware City." We are proud to be home to so many manufacturers, from large corporations like Stanley Black and Decker to all the small supply chain machine shops that keep our city running. With manufacturing being an important part of our city's history, it is crucial that the state is able to train and educate the workforce to fill these vital jobs. I'm excited that CT State Community College will be able to help better coordinate our advanced manufacturing centers across the state to meet the needs of our small and large employers.

New Britain sits within a 30-minute drive to four community colleges, which means our students often take classes at multiple colleges through their academic career. The merger of CT State Community College means that our students know that their credits, financial aid, and records will follow them wherever they pursue their degree. Additionally, the ability to access courses (including virtually) at any campus, means more New Britain students will have access to the courses they need, when they need them, helping them graduate on-time.

I strongly support the merger of Connecticut's community colleges for all of these reasons and more, and I urge the Commission to endorse their proposal as well.

Sincerely,

Erin E. Stewart
Mayor of New Britain

February 4, 2022

RE: State of Connecticut, Support for One College

Dear Dr. Schall,

My name is Jim Wilkinson, I've served as a faculty member here at Asuntuck for 19 years teaching Business and Economics including teaching in the Department of Corrections, and articulating courses taken in the College Careers Pathway programs with local High Schools. Prior to that, I served corporate America with a 20 year career at MassMutual Financial Group and serving my country in the United State Air Force. I also proudly serve as the Veteran's advisor here at Asnuntuck. I have experienced and evaluated the testimony from my colleagues opposing the One College Concept of the Community Colleges, and I've heard legislators say they only hear from opponents on this. With this in mind, I want to take the opportunity as a faculty member who is actually doing the work and serving on the Curriculum Alignment Committee to tell you why I support the concept.

Primarily, my reasons are student focused. The One College System will look at it from my existing students' perspective. Serving on committees for our transfer and articulation pathways programs for Connecticut and Massachusetts Colleges has given me insight to student courses that will fit in careers and college transfer possibilities for our students. Having seen saw firsthand all the barriers to students' career choices and transferring courses between community colleges and four year programs. I serve on advisory boards and Boards of Directors that has afforded me insight for career choices for students. For my students, I've seen the challenges they face transferring their business degrees to AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) schools in our area like UHart, CCSU or UCONN, Western New England University and UMASS, where each community college has a different sets classes and programs and graduation requirements for the same degree.

Second, I've seen too many students forced to wait a semester or two to complete their degree or certificate because the courses they needed were not offered when they needed them. Many colleges have classes only offered one semester a year at a particular college. At the same time, we may have that same course offered at another community college with open seats. We have to stream line the process for our students to get the courses they need for completion, and the One College will have one course catalogue where students can access the classes they need anywhere in the state.

I want to assure you that the overall development and coordination of aligned curriculum has relied on content area experts like myself putting their expertise into a student centric process. My colleagues who have joined me in working on the Curriculum Alignment Committee are doing so because we have all seen firsthand the barriers we put in student's paths, with a great opportunity to fix it.



ASNUNTUCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

170 Elm Street Enfield, CT 06082 860.253.3000 Fax 860.253.3007

Many of our community colleges (including Asnuntuck) lay in the MA-CT Knowledge Corridor stretching from Massachusetts into Connecticut. For my business students, parts of the merger like better access to courses and support services across the state, more robust advising, and statewide curriculum alignment that will open up career pathways and access to the business programs at the public and private four-year institutions in the Knowledge Corridor.

I am an educator with an unrelenting drive to succeed, and believe that One College and our team of educators will to drive student competitiveness in the future, build loyal and highly productive students and workers, and introduce and implement effective performance methodologies, focusing on continuous improvement.

Being passionate about serving our students and our community. I serve on advisory boards for local schools and municipalities, and I have advocated for our incarcerated students in Washington DC at Sen. Blumenthal's request. When I am passionate about something, there are no barriers to my need to promote it. That is why, despite the criticism I get from its opponents, I don't hesitate to express my support for the One College and its obvious benefits that will be a support for our students.

Thank you for your time, and your service to our college community. I'm available anytime if you'd like to meet with me to get a dedicated faculty member's perspective on the college merger.

Sincerely,

James E. Wilkinson

James E. Wilkinson
Professor, Economics and Business
Asnuntuck Community College
170 Elm Street
Enfield CT 06082

To the NECHE Commissioners:

2/6/22

I am a retired faculty member who served 34 years at Manchester Community College. About half of that time, I served as Department Chairperson for Hospitality and Culinary Arts. Some of my responsibilities as chairperson involved maintaining an accredited curriculum for our students, increasing the number of students served, and assisting students with transfers between colleges. If my duties had been supported by a merged college model, I feel students would have benefited significantly.

In the 1990's we participated in common course numbering, theoretically across the system. Subsequently, I organized meetings of my Hospitality colleagues over the years in an attempt to create program consistency; we had some success. During my time as chair MCC had the largest and only American Culinary Federation accredited program in the system, and we attracted many transfer students from the other community colleges. It was very disheartening to watch students become upset and anxious while I and my colleagues in the system tried to fit our courses into differing programs. Considerable efforts were spent on manipulating courses to transfer and meeting graduation requirements through credit by exam. We even made a procedure for culinary credit by portfolio for certain situations.

I believe if there were a merged college system backing our programs, we would have had more impact to reach potential students. I cannot even guess how many times a student came to my office saying, "I didn't even know this program was here!" 85 percent of my students enrolled due to word of mouth, what a disservice to those who didn't know someone who knew about community college programs. It is my hope that the "one college", with one catalog, can assist in reaching underserved students and promote our quality programs.

Change is hard, I have seen a lot since 1984, and it wasn't always welcome by faculty. As we addressed the challenges, and grew with the times, it benefited our students. Becoming an alignment manager, I saw an opportunity to support our faculty in this process; I see my work today as a continuation of the long-ago common course numbering. It is amazing to see the faculty using a collaborative process within their discipline work groups, developing outstanding courses and aligned programs. I am pleased that alignment of our system is finally going to materialize.

I am honored to be part of the process.

Jayne Pearson
Professor Emeritus
CT State Community College Alignment Team

February 9, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of several criminal justice program coordinators (CJ PCs) within the CT Community College system, we would like to share our experience and perspective regarding the curriculum alignment process.

There are presently twelve community colleges, ten of which have criminal justice programs each with a designated program coordinator. In 2013, even prior to the consolidation announcement, the CJ PCs recognized the importance and need for an aligned system-wide criminal justice curriculum. We proactively met to share experiences, course outlines, syllabi, etc., formulating common program objectives and course outcomes. Unbeknownst to us, the work we started would serve as the foundational framework for the system's curriculum alignment initiative that was announced in 2018.

Over the last two years, the CJ PC work group has made enormous strides in the creation of two fully aligned degree programs: Criminal Justice, A.S. Degree and Criminology Studies, A.A. Degree. Our alignment proposal was submitted during the fall of 2020 and was one of the first programs to receive BOR approval in 2021. An outline that summarizes our work can be found at the conclusion of this letter.

The CJ PCs take pride in being a progressive minded and proactive workgroup. Even though we have finished our alignment work we will continue to fine tune our degree programs to ensure they meet the needs of our students and reflect our ever-changing society.

Respectfully Submitted:

Asnuntuck Community College:	Dr. Kobie Stewart
Capital Community College:	Professor Arthur Kureczka
Manchester Community College:	Dr. Kathryn Kleis
Middlesex Community College:	Professor Rebecca Rist-Brown
Northwestern Community College:	Professor Michael Emanuel
Tunxis Community College:	Professor Jessica Waterhouse

Summary of CJ PC Workgroup Report.

Background:

In January of 2020, members of the CJ PC group met with BOR alignment managers. The goal was to identify a path to complete the alignment work in a timely manner without conflicting with student obligations. Alignment work commenced in June of 2020.

Over the next 7 months the CJ PCs created a single Criminal Justice Program, a Criminology TAP Program, new course outlines, a certificate program, and many other curricula documents. In December 2020, the CJ PCs presented their report, which was ultimately approved by the Board of Regents (BOR).

Hubs of Expertise:

Within the new Criminal Justice Degree, eight areas of concentration were developed. These concentrations include law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, victimology, computer crimes investigations, criminal investigations, homeland security, law and legal and a general, non-specific concentration. The concentrations reflect student interests, faculty areas of expertise, and employment trends. Individual campuses were identified as “hubs” for the various concentrations based upon faculty expertise, current course offerings and campus resources.

Program Revision:

- Added a criminal justice specific diversity course requirement to the core requirements of the Criminal Justice Program (in addition to the FYE embedded diversity requirement). The courses under this requirement directly address specific diversity issues as they pertain to the criminal justice system and criminal justice professionals.
- Developed a Criminal Justice Course Chart that includes the course descriptions, learning objectives, and prerequisites for each course offering.
- Finalized a new consolidated Criminal Justice Associate of Science Degree Program with eight Concentration Areas.
 - Developed descriptions for areas of concentration, as well as outcomes, and a listing of courses that can be used to fulfill concentration requirements.
 - Outlined a four-semester CJ course sequencing guide.
 - Identified campuses as hubs for each of the concentrations. Geographic location, faculty expertise, campus resources and community partnerships already in existence helped to drive decision-making and designation of campuses.
- Revised the Criminology Studies, A.A. TAP Pathway Degree.
- Developed a side-by-side Comparison Chart for the new Criminal Justice A.S. Degree and the Criminology Studies A.A. TAP Degree.
- Revision of Homeland Security Certificate Program for employment with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

- Engaged in collaboration with Students First Consolidation Managers and other Students First Workgroups (Cybersecurity, Political Science, Psychology, Fire Science and Administration, and Sociology).

Individual Course Revision:

- 121 CJS Courses Reviewed:
 - 50 courses eliminated due to duplication, inactive status in the system, or no longer offered.
 - 71 course outlines were revised. Revisions included:
 - Ensured learning objectives were measurable and appropriately aligned with Bloom's taxonomy.
 - Reviewed program to ensure diversity, equity, and multiculturalism were clearly and appropriately reflected in course descriptions, objectives, and content.. Course objectives were revised to ensure measurable assessment of diversity-based outcomes.
 - Modernized instructional units to reflect current criminal justice trends.
 - Mindfully adopted prerequisites to foster student success.
 - Aligned curriculum with Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council Basic Training Academy (POST-C) curriculum to promote continuing education, where appropriate.
 - Revised course titles and numbers.
 - Formatted course outlines to new Students First template.
 - Adapted teaching modalities for distance learning.
 - Developed a holistic four-semester sequence that aligns with the Criminology Studies, A.A Transfer Pathway curriculum and the Criminal Justice A.S curriculum.
 - Developed a five-semester sequence that includes remedial English and math coursework for both the Criminology Studies A.A Transfer Pathway and the Criminal Justice A.S curriculum.
 - Developed and modified courses to fulfill eight new areas of concentration.
 - Tailored courses to support guided pathways and high school partnership programs.
 - Ensured that course outcomes aligned with program outcomes through curriculum mapping and review of assessment methods.
 - Developed four New Criminal Justice courses, 2 of which focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - CJS 152: Introduction to Digital Forensic Investigations
 - CJS 245: Diversity and Multiculturalism in Criminal Justice
 - CJS 247: Fair and Impartial Policing
 - CJS 248: Research Methods in Criminal Justice



February 10, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

I write in support of the positive curriculum advances I have witnessed as we move toward our consolidation as the Connecticut State Community College. As a member of the Academic and Student Affairs Consolidation Committee, I worked on a committee to develop the Program Consolidation Guidelines for Discipline Work Groups to realize the Students First vision of “a single, academically integrated College [that] will provide a consistent, high quality higher education across Connecticut and enable students to take courses on different campuses without concerns about course transfer or conflicting program requirements.” I subsequently contributed to the alignment of the Humanities courses, and I led the alignment of the English courses as well as the English Studies A.A. degree. Currently, I co-lead work on revision of our delivery of developmental and gateway English.

In my discipline of English, consolidation was the impetus behind long overdue work in course alignment. Review of current syllabi made clear the impressive curriculum that had already been developed at individual colleges but also the discrepancies among commonly numbered courses at all twelve colleges, discrepancies that could impact student learning experiences as well as assessment of these courses. A rigorous dialogue among colleagues who participated in alignment work allowed us to develop meaningful and measurable course outcomes reflective of current scholarship in our field and best instructional practices. At the same time, we maintained instructional autonomy for the delivery of these courses. Collaborating with alignment managers, our work was sent out for feedback to all English faculty, and that feedback allowed for constructive changes to meet faculty concerns. As consolidation moves forward, with effective oversight of scheduling, student options for upper-level literature and creative writing courses will be greatly expanded. More importantly, course outcomes now emphasize the importance of diverse voices, and courses in the literature of traditionally underrepresented people will now be available to all students. I am confident the diverse curriculum in place will lead to further course development within the one college.

At a time when departments in the liberal arts are being downsized or eliminated, I am especially grateful that the value of such courses and programs is being recognized through this alignment work. Further, many of the faculty who collaborated on this work are excited by the possibility of expanded offerings on their campuses and are already discussing areas for growth in our discipline.



As an extension of this work, and as part of a separate initiative, I was invited to co-lead work in the redesign of our developmental curriculum with a focus on a corequisite model. Despite significant, positive changes made in our delivery of developmental education over the past ten years, our system wide KPIs indicate continued gaps in student success and completion of our gateway course, especially among minoritized groups. With the support of system leadership, we have been charged to design a success-focused and equity-minded curriculum that places all students in college-level English courses with corequisite support as needed. What is especially valuable about this work is that it is multi-dimensional in its planned implementation, with a vision including meaningful placement, comprehensive advising, and effective support services. Further, leadership has funded professional learning to prepare faculty as we transition to this new model. Although the work is in its initial stages of realization, based on the success experienced by other states that have implemented such a model, the work promises to meet its outcomes. Further, as someone who has taught our current Composition with corequisite support course for many years, and who has witnessed the success this model brings, I am eager to work on expanding it through this new initiative.

Both of these projects illustrate positive curricular changes that are being made to realize a one college structure focused on student needs and success. As a long-time faculty member, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this work, shaping the English curriculum for the Connecticut State Community College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James M. Gentile". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James M. Gentile, Ph.D.
Professor of English
Manchester Community College

**Dr. Merle W. Harris
71 Emily Way
West Hartford, CT 06107**

February 2, 2022

Dr. Lawrence Schall
Members, NECHE
New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive
Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803

Dear Dr. Schall and Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the Substantive Change Proposal being submitted by the Connecticut Board of Regents. I served on the Board of Regents for 10 years, completing my last term in December 2021. During those 10 years, I chaired the Board's Academic and Student Affairs Committee. This followed a 40-year career in Higher Education, including serving as President of Charter Oak State College and Interim President of Central Connecticut State University.

During my time on the Board, Connecticut higher education, as much of the nation, experienced serious challenges. The Board's strategic goals throughout my term included graduating more students with the knowledge and skills to achieve their life and career goals and maximizing access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable. The Board struggled determining how to best do this prior to approving the design of the proposal to consolidate the 12 Connecticut Community into a single institution. Every proposal discussed met with opposition and while these discussions occurred, fiscal threats to quality education continued and our Community College graduation rates remained lower than comparable peers.

Change is always difficult. I assure you as we moved forward with the single college proposal, we recognized this and listened to objections and recommendations from faculty and other constituents. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee had many lengthy presentations and discussions regarding academic policies for the single college. These major proposals included a plan for Guided Pathways, development of the Common General Education Core, the Process for Curriculum Alignment, and modifications to Developmental Education. Many modifications were made in response to specific concerns and recommendations.

A few of the changes that were made to the Alignment of Completion of Math and English (ACME) demonstrate how we took concerns seriously. First, we changed the final implementation timeline from 2023 to 2025 so there would be time to pilot the approach and make modifications before full implementations. In response to concerns that the state's free community college program (PACT) required students attend fulltime, making it difficult to add noncredit support commitments, the final policy remained silent on the topic of credit to allow maximum flexibility for design and not place additional burdens on students. The final policy also addressed concerns of the ESL Council regarding placement of ELL students directly into college-level math and English courses. These are just a few of the many modifications made to one policy in response to faculty recommendations and similar changes were made to other policies.

Although some faculty opted out to working on the development of the components of the Substantive Change Proposal, I assure you it reflects the thinking and work of faculty and others. The proposed consolidation will make it easier for students to navigate the system and among campuses. Importantly, additional student support has been built into the design. The consolidation should lead to increases in completion rates and a system that is fiscally strong and academically sound.

I urge your approval of the Substantive Change Proposal so the work can continue to create a system that will best serve students and the citizens of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Merle W. Harris", written over a horizontal line.

Merle W. Harris

February 11, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR APPROVAL OF CSCU SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Dear Dr. Schall,

I write to urge the Commission to support the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' (CSCU) substantive change proposal. For me, the reasoning is simple. Beyond its steadfast adherence to NECHE's standards for accreditation, this merger has always been about using nationally recognized best practices to improve student success and equity. In academia, the best-performing institutions are those that are willing to innovate as external conditions change. Connecticut's historical piecemeal approach to student success, where individual institutions took incremental steps, but systemic change was out of reach, yielded subpar results, with students of color falling disproportionately behind. It is not enough to try to protect and preserve the status quo.

The community college merger is the best way to ensure that needed reforms, among those reforms, most notably the Guided Pathways suite of policies, are done as a system, at scale, with all institutions sharing in the success. The Guided Pathways movement, helps more students to efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market, is foundational to the student success efforts in the CSCU system.

I was fortunate to spend years working toward the launch of CT State. It is a critical step that will put Connecticut in a position to be an academic innovator, where student success is at the center of every decision and will facilitate the fulfilling of the mission and commitment to the attainment of student learning outcomes in community colleges.

In short, empirical evidence shows that changes in institutional policies and practices increase student success, particularly for low income, first generation and students of color.

I ask the Commission to approve Connecticut's submission and allow CT State to move forward.

Sincerely,



Jane Gates, Ph.D. Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Emerita
Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

David L. Levinson, Ph.D.
70 Hawthorne Road
Waltham, MA 02451

February 4, 2022

Dear New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE):

I am writing to support the substantive change proposal submitted by the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) to merge the twelve currently separately accredited institutions into one accredited college – Connecticut State Community College. As the former president of Norwalk Community College, Vice President for Community Colleges, Interim President of Connecticut State, and former NEASC commissioner, I have a unique vantage point for rendering this assessment.

Connecticut's community colleges have never been equitably resourced. Given the existing funding formula, there is little reason as to why particular colleges are allotted certain resources and not others. Moreover, not all colleges have sufficient revenues to cover operating expenses. A majority of our community colleges stand at the precipice of insolvency, unable to comply with existing NECHE standards.

Educational opportunities are similarly inequitably distributed throughout the state. If a student wishes to enroll in courses or programs not offered at their home institution, she will need to go through a burdensome transfer process. A cursory examination of key performance indicators shows a significant racial gap in student achievement.

The creation of Connecticut State Community College promises and has already begun to rectify this situation. Upon admittance, students will have the opportunity to enroll in all programs at any location. Faculty will have unparalleled opportunities for professional development in that they will be grouped with disciplinary colleagues from throughout the state.

Another benefit of the merger will be that resources spent on what is typically viewed as “back-office” processing can be curtailed in favor of more student-facing expenditures. The exponential increase in guided pathway advisors is just one benefit already achieved under Connecticut State's Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA) division. Similarly, under EMSA's tutelage, mental health and other “wrap around” services critical for student success have flourished.

Ironically, the establishment of CT State preceded the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing decline in student enrollment. Enrollment management tools recently implemented will improve student retention and allow for the target marketing of degree and certificate programs to underserved populations. CT State's infrastructure will enable a strategic, equitable deployment of resources to provide residents with unprecedented opportunities.

As my colleagues have demonstrated in their substantive change request, CT State has already achieved many of the hallmarks illustrative of a fully accredited institution. Fortunately,

NECHE has guided CT State's progress and will continue to do so as it becomes fully operational in Fall of 2023.

Please contact me if I can provide any additional evidence in support of the proposed substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David L. Levinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent.

David L. Levinson, Ph.D.

President Emeritus, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU)

February 11, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall,

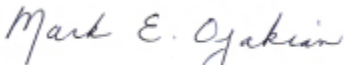
Over the past five years, the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system, and the community college teams have done tremendous work toward the merger of the state's 12 community colleges into the single Connecticut State Community College (CT State). Throughout the process, despite tremendous external challenges, the core pillars have remained the same: access, student success, and equity.

As the request in front of you today makes clear, the new CT State structure will make significant improvements on all three fronts. Just as importantly, it will do so while strictly adhering to the Commission's standards for accreditation.

I am hopeful that the Commission is ready to formally grant this request for a substantive change and allow the CT State team to fully stand up the single college before its launch in the fall of 2023.

I thank you for your partnership over the years, and I am excited for the future of CT State and the CSCU system at large.

Sincerely,



Mark Ojakian
Former President, CSCU

February 11, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall,

I hope that the Commission supports the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities' (CSCU) substantive change proposal. The faculty, staff, students, and public supporters have worked tirelessly since 2018 to make this change a reality. As someone who was personally involved in the work, I know the changes, the integration of different educational practices, and the striving for acceptance has been, at times, a difficult and divisive process. However, the reasons for the change, seamless student access, equity, and assurance of student success, are what inspired me to participate in the merger process.

The community colleges merger is, I believe, the best way to realize the full potential of the system for the students and citizens of Connecticut

The substantive change proposal was crafted to assure adherence to NECHE standards for accreditation. I am hopeful that the Commission will formally approve the proposal.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Bouffard, D.N.Sc, RN
Emerita, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs at Naugatuck Valley and Northwestern
Connecticut Community Colleges



CONNECTICUT STATE CONFERENCE OF NAACP BRANCHES

February 11, 2022

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New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

I write today to express my support for the Board of Regents for Higher Education's (BOR) request for a substantive change and for the creation of Connecticut State Community College (CT State). People of color are all too often left behind within our community college system. This hurts our communities, our families, and our state. The principles upon which CT State is founded are in line with the NAACP's core mission of advancing the educational and economic opportunities, and the health and well-being of the more than 16,000 Black or Hispanic/Latino students who attend Connecticut community colleges.

The difficult truth is that, despite a staff, faculty, and administration committed to the success of students, students of color continue to fall behind academically. In fact, before the pandemic, Connecticut had a 29-point attainment gap between white students and students of color, one of the highest such gaps in the United States. COVID-19 has only exacerbated those inequities, making the need for systemic action even more imperative.

CT State's adoption of the Guided Pathways suite of reforms demonstrates that an equitable, holistic approach can accelerate student success. Guided Pathways strives to increase retention through planning, connection and accessing support beyond academics. It is already yielding positive results. One of the first campuses to adopt this advising structure (Northwestern CT) has seen a 50% increase in retention of students who attended in Fall 2021 and registered for Spring 2022 classes. With students of color discontinuing their studies at a higher rate than their white counterparts, this has major equity considerations.

The other critically important foundational aspect of CT State is its commitment to maintaining access. It is no secret that, with declining enrollment, community college budgets are strained. However, the BOR has made clear that closing campuses is not an option at this time. Instead, it is merging resources in order to allow all campuses to continue to operate. With campuses in the heart of the state's most diverse cities – often as the only higher education option for students from those communities – we must do everything possible to ensure they continue to operate and thrive. And doing so while making the student experience easier to navigate, which is particularly important for first-generation students, is a positive step.

The NAACP has worked closely with Connecticut community colleges to help provide opportunities for the students we serve. We are optimistic that the launch of CT State gives the state its best opportunity to, finally, increase equity and maintain access in higher education. That is why the Connecticut State Conference NAACP in 2019 endorsed the plan, and it is why we support this request for a substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scot X. Esdaile', written in a cursive style.

Scot X. Esdaile
CT State Conference NAACP

NAACP National Board Member



The Jed Foundation

February 3, 2022

Mr. Larry Schall, Ph.D.
President, New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

In 2019 The JED Foundation (JED) partnered with Housatonic Community College (HCC) to implement its JED Campus program (JED Campus), a four-year program designed to guide institutions of higher education through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, programs, and policy development to support the emotional well-being of students. Shortly thereafter, JED began discussions with CSCU System Office about the possibility of implementing the program across the system, including Connecticut's eleven (11) other community colleges and four universities. In 2021, JED received a grant of \$350,000 to implement JED Campus at scale.

JED is working with the CSCU system to conduct a thorough self-assessment focused on policies and procedures, services and other supports that currently exist. A nationally recognized survey administered through the University of Michigan known as the "Healthy Minds Survey" will be administered at the beginning of the process and again at the end of the four years. A strategic plan will be developed to identify specific changes to programs, policies, and systems that will strengthen key measures of functioning while protecting student mental health. CSCU has identified student mental health as a major issue of organizational concern and a heightened priority as a result of challenges caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Working with Connecticut's twelve community colleges as a cohort will allow JED to maximize its impact. Development of communities of practice, policy development work groups and hosting regional and statewide convenings will make efficient use of resources and time and allow college faculty and staff to be supported in their efforts to serve students. These efforts are expected to impact over 100,000 community college students over the four-year project and many more in future years.

Based on growing need and proven outcomes, JED Campus is increasingly being implemented at the state system level, as is now the case in Georgia and Utah (Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington also have large cohorts of JED Campus schools). We look forward to our expanding work with Connecticut and believe that, working as a system, will enable Connecticut to move more quickly and efficiently toward sustainable change on behalf of students.

Sincerely,

Ethan Fields, M.S.Ed.
Director, Higher Education Program Outreach and Promotion
The Jed Foundation (JED)

PROTECTING EMOTIONAL HEALTH FOR TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS



February 7, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Chairs and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I write to share additional information and insights related to the partnership and systemwide services Achieving the Dream (ATD) has provided to Connecticut's community colleges as they move towards merging their twelve institutions into one.

For the past three years (2019-present), ATD has partnered with the faculty, staff, and administrators at Connecticut's community college campuses as well as system leaders in their work to design and build Connecticut State Community College (CT State) as a student-centered institution that holistically serves and supports the needs of all its students.

This work has included:

Institutional Capacity and Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessments

ATD supported the twelve campuses in administering the Institutional Capacity and Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessments with a facilitated World Café with each campus to discuss the results. Leveraging this foundational work, the campuses developed action plans to build capacity to scale the implementation of Guided Pathways, monitor progress and use data to foster continuous improvement. Given the rapid changes forced upon campuses to meet student needs during the pandemic, ATD also facilitated COVID-19 reflection sessions to identify effective strategies to inform future work and build adaptive capacity for ongoing change and improvement.

Holistic Student Support Services

ATD provided coaching and technical assistance to the Holistic Student Support Redesign (HSSR) Guided Pathways working group as they developed policy and practice recommendations to improve equitable educational and workforce outcomes. This work was codified into board policy for CT State.

Equity

ATD provided coaching, professional learning opportunities, and technical assistance as state-wide teams worked to examine and redesign structures, processes, and attitudes that have resulted in institutional performance gaps for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Indigenous, and other historically underserved populations. ATD facilitated all-campus book



talks based on *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*, full day professional development sessions for each region focused on building equity-minded campuses, and supported faculty, staff, and administrators as they developed, and signed, an equity definition, statement, and pillars to guide CT State's future work around equity.

Teaching and Learning Capacity Building

ATD provided training and professional learning sessions to support the implementation of evidence-based high-impact practices, including culturally responsive and affirming teaching, equitizing the syllabus, curriculum analysis using CUEs Equity Scorecard and Document Review tools, and the application of excellence in teaching and learning using frameworks and resources contained in the Achieving the Dream Teaching and Learning Toolkit.

Data and Evaluation to Support a Culture of Inquiry and Evidence

ATD supported system leaders in identifying and defining the key performance indicators to include in the statewide dashboards, leveraging participation in the Postsecondary Data Partnership, to advance equity and monitor the impact of pathways on metrics predictive of completion. When equity gaps were discovered, ATD facilitated sense-making sessions to determine why gaps exist and identify the policies, programs and practices that were creating barriers or accelerating student success. ATD also provided training in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) framework to support the team gathering data to inform the enrollment management plan.

Customized Coaching

ATD provided targeted coaching support to tackle key systemwide and college challenges and help the campuses build the readiness and capacity to advance identified student success and equity goals.

Achieving the Dream looks forward to continuing to partner with CT State to support the faculty, staff, and administrators at the campuses and in the system-office in their institutional transformation journey to achieve equitable educational and workforce outcomes and catalyze economically vibrant communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen A. Stout
President and CEO
Achieving the Dream



February 7, 2022

To the New England Commission of Higher Education,

We, the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, write in support of the merger of Connecticut's 12 state community colleges into one unified higher education system, the Connecticut State Community College. Working as one state college system will enable the Connecticut State Community College to innovate in ways that centralize and promote equity, increase student success, and, ultimately, will improve the lives of over 60,000 students annually.

The Dana Center firmly believes that working systemically and at scale is powerful and very effective. Over the past few years, faculty, advisors, administrators, and leaders from across Connecticut have collaborated in crafting and enacting essential policies that will enable Connecticut State Community College to implement guided pathways, mathematics pathways, and corequisite support courses at scale. The structures necessary to support these frameworks can be achieved through the planned merger of the colleges to ensure equitable design and implementation.

The Dana Center has been honored to support the faculty and administrators charged with leading and doing the hard work of designing modern math pathways, creating aligned corequisite support courses, and developing infrastructure to support these frameworks. In collaboration with the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Student Success Center, the Dana Center has worked alongside the proposed Connecticut State Community College leaders and faculty in:

- Making the case for guided pathways, math pathways, and corequisite support courses;
- Conducting policy scans and supporting policy development;
- Providing critical thought partnership;
- Prioritizing equity at every stage of work;
- Connecting leaders and faculty to relevant research;
- Connecting leaders and faculty to the field; and
- Providing professional learning and technical assistance to design and implement modern math pathways and aligned corequisite courses.

This work has not been easy, but it would have been virtually impossible without the structures in place to work with every campus united as one. Working as a single, aligned, and coherent system has allowed the proposed Connecticut State Community College to move this work forward in a faster, more streamlined, and more impactful way.

Connecticut State Community College is positioning itself as a national leader in guided pathways by advancing modern math pathways that align to students' career and life needs. For too long, traditional entry-level college mathematics programs have failed to serve students well because they comprise disconnected courses whose content is misaligned to students' career and life needs. Minoritized students are disproportionately impacted by multi-semester development sequences, which underestimate the capability of students to learn mathematics and delay students' engagement with college-level coursework required for their degree programs.

As the work to design and implement math pathways at scale continues at Connecticut State Community College, it will allow all students, and especially minoritized students, to be more successful. We at the Dana Center believe this is possible because of Connecticut State Community College's ability to work cohesively and coherently across their entire system. Had this work only been attempted on one campus, the potential impact would have been far diminished.

Please accept this letter of strong support for the excellent work of Connecticut educators and mathematics leaders in coming together as one to support all of their students. We applaud the aligned innovations that Connecticut State Community College has already undertaken and look forward to working together as they officially become one system of higher education, devoted to the success of the students of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Dana Center
The University of Texas at Austin

The Charles A. Dana Center has worked for over 30 years to design, support, and implement modern mathematics education across classrooms, institutions, systems, and states to improve equitable access and increase success for all students. The Center is led by Dr. Uri Treisman, a University Distinguished Teaching Professor and professor of mathematics and public affairs at The University of Texas at Austin.



Chairs and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I am delighted to share this letter of support for the scaled student success and equity work occurring through Connecticut State Community College (CT State) within Connecticut's community colleges. JFF has worked closely with the colleges as well as the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system, including its Success Center – a member of the national Student Success Center Network managed by JFF – for close to a decade.

Since 2018, we've worked closely with Connecticut to support the design and implementation of proven student success models for CT State. This work builds upon our longstanding relationship supporting Connecticut's efforts to increase postsecondary success. Over the past four years, JFF has supported Connecticut community colleges by providing systemwide support for the scaled development and launch of their guided pathways policies and practices. Through our partnership, Connecticut has deeply studied the work of the Community College Research Center, the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, the Dana Center at UT Austin, and other thought and research leaders in higher education. Connecticut has taken this knowledge and directly applied it to the structure and the policies of CT State. We are excited to see the results for the students of Connecticut. Additionally, through our work with Connecticut, we have gained significant insights into how the planned single college model can demonstrably impact equity, student success, and workforce readiness.

In this unified structure and approach, JFF has been able to provide CT State with direct access to support, resources, and/or technical assistance from national partners, including:

- JFF
- The Dana Center at UT Austin
- Achieving the Dream
- The National Center for Inquiry and Improvement
- Dr. Christine Harrington, NJCU
- The Ada Center
- New America
- National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
- The Aspen Institute
- The National Student Clearinghouse

Unlocking support to CT State for:

- Design and development of math pathways and corequisite course structures
- Policy development
- Case making and student-centered advocacy

- Holistic advising and wraparound supports
- Increased data capacity; and
- Professional learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators on course and instructional design methodologies, accelerated term models, career and transfer readiness, change management, and leadership development.

Connecticut continues to be a strong partner to JFF and leader in our networks as we work to improve equity, access, success, career readiness, and economic mobility for community college students. JFF recognizes the potential and transformational impact a merged college can have on credential attainment, employment, and racial justice for Connecticut residents. We look forward to our continued partnership with CT State as we strive towards our overarching goal of economic advancement for all.

Best,



Stacey Clawson, PhD
Associate Vice President
Jobs for the Future



NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

45 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02111-1305 • Phone 617.357.9620 • Fax 617.338.1577 • www.nebhe.org

Office of the President

February 11, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

I write to express support for the proposal to merge Connecticut's twelve community colleges into a single accredited institution as CT State Community College (CT State). For over 60 years, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) has sought to support innovation, engage conversation, and drive change by working with New England's public and independent higher education stakeholders, as well as with government and business.

CT State is being established to address the internal challenges and systemic barriers that limit the success of the colleges while at the same time helping to make the system a better partner to institutions across the region. A singly accredited community college with an aligned curriculum means that public and independent institutions will not have to negotiate twelve separate articulation agreements to support transferability. Similarly, there will be no confusion about which courses will transfer or if courses from multiple campuses will be accepted. This holds promise for a better and more affordable student experience, as well as for more collaborative working relationships with other higher education institutions.

CSCU and the community colleges are key partners with NEBHE in working to meet the region's workforce and economic development goals, working in close coordination with the Governor's Workforce Council and the Office of Workforce Strategy. The merger of the colleges makes that work more seamless for students and for entities such as ours that collaborate with the system.

Such efforts align well with the regional platform on which NEBHE develops and executes collaborative, multistate projects and programs that maximize cost savings, expand resource efficiency, promote innovation, support policy adoption and forge cross-state alignment and integration.

NEBHE looks forward to working with CT State Community College to improve student outcomes in Connecticut and across our region. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael K. Thomas".

Michael K. Thomas
President and CEO

February 9, 2022

Dr. Larry Schall, President
New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall:

I am writing to support the proposal by Connecticut's community colleges for accreditation as a single statewide institution.

Over the past few years, I and other CCRC colleagues have been invited to speak at multiple gatherings of teams from Connecticut community college about research we and others have conducted on improving student outcomes. During that time, we have observed efforts by most of the colleges to implement research-based reforms including as guided pathways, co-requisite English and math remediation, and more robust program onboarding.

More recently, we have been consulted on several occasions by faculty, staff and administrators from across the college who have been working to design and plan adoption of student success strategies on these same research-based models across the emerging statewide institution. We believe that, with these plans and the new statewide governance structure being put in place, leaders of the new system will be able to accelerate adoption across all Connecticut community colleges campuses of reforms now being implemented separately by individual institutions.

I therefore urge you and your colleagues at NECHE to move forward with accrediting the new statewide Connecticut Community College.

Sincerely,



Davis Jenkins, Ph.D.
Senior Research Scholar
Community College Research Center
Research Professor of Education and Social Policy
Teachers College Columbia University



71 Raymond Road
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 678-0005
www.theccic.org

February 11, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

As chair of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I write to you today to express our support for the proposal to merge the state's twelve community colleges into a single accredited institution as CT State Community College (CT State). A single merged college will help students and institutions across the state by providing broader access to post-secondary training and improved transferability.

CCIC is the association that represents fifteen accredited nonprofit independent colleges and universities in Connecticut. CCIC serves its member institutions through government relations, public policy development, research analysis, communications and coordinated member services. The presidents of each member institution compose the CCIC Board. CCIC institutions have been strong partners the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system in meeting the needs of Connecticut's students.

Albertus Magnus College

Connecticut College

Fairfield University

Goodwin University

Mitchell College

Quinnipiac University

Rensselaer at Hartford

Sacred Heart University

Trinity College

University of Bridgeport

University of Hartford

University of New Haven

University of Saint Joseph

Wesleyan University

Yale University

CCIC partnered with CSCU to launch the Independent College Transfer Guarantee in the fall of 2021. The Guarantee seeks to make transferring to a four-year independent college simpler, by ensuring acceptance at a participating independent nonprofit four-year institution for students graduating from a community college with an associate degree with a minimum GPA. The Guarantee promotes equity, opportunity and access in higher education. A singly accredited community college with a single course catalogue should allow the Guarantee to grow further by simplifying the process for students and institutions.

The community colleges are a key partner for CCIC institutions in helping to meet the state's workforce and economic development goals, working in close coordination with the Governor's Workforce Council, the Office of Workforce Strategy, and the Department of Economic and Community Development. With the three regional workforce officers in place, we have already seen the benefits of the merger in

improved coordination amongst the colleges and CCIC institutions as they partner on state and federal grants to bring more education and training resources to our communities.

On behalf of the CCIC institutions, we support the creation of CT State Community College as a means to build a strong higher education ecosystem in our state and urge the Commission's endorsement of the substantive change proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rhona Free". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rhona" being more prominent than the last name "Free".

Rhona Free
President, University of Saint Joseph and
Chair of the Board of Directors, CCIC

February 16, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

The University of Connecticut is pleased to partner with the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) in meeting the needs of Connecticut's students and the workforce development of our state. As the state's flagship research university, we want to ensure that we support students in their goal of obtaining a UConn degree. We share a goal with CSCU in ensuring that all students who transfer from Connecticut community colleges to UConn have a positive experience.

We are fully aware of the proposal to merge the state's twelve community colleges into a single accredited institution as CT State Community College (CT State). As this proposal moves forward, we are committed to working closely with CSCU to continue to build seamless pathways for all students to meet their educational goals. The community colleges are a key partner for us in helping to meet the state's workforce and economic development goals and UConn is partnering on state and federal grants with CSCU and the future CT State Community College to bring more education and training resources to our communities.

As we continue our collaboration across the higher education system in our state, we will continue to work closely with CSCU in transferability of classes for Connecticut students between institutions.

Sincerely,



Radenka Maric, Ph.D.
Interim President
University of Connecticut



GE APPLIANCES
a Haier company

Appliance Park
Louisville, KY 40225

geappliances.com

February 11, 2022

Larry Schall, Ph.D., President
New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and Commissioners:

As CEO of GE Appliances, I am keenly aware of the current and future workforce needs of my industry and the important role community colleges play in providing educated and well-trained employees who fill a wide range of positions. It is for this reason that we have been working with Terrence Cheng, President of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), to engage current students in both credit and non-credit bearing workforce and professional development opportunities. CSCU students having been working with my team to launch CoCreate Stamford. CoCreate will bring small appliances manufacturing back to Connecticut, feature an innovative community makerspace, provide hands-on educational opportunities for students, and offer unique brand and product experiences for consumers looking for inspiration in the kitchen and home space.

Right now we are working with approximately a dozen students from three different CSCU community college campuses. But it is my understanding, that with the creation of CT State Community College, the 12 campuses across the state will be unified by curriculum, which will allow companies like mine to recruit even more deeply into the system, with more fluidity and flexibility for the students to engage in initiatives such as CoCreate and more.

I am originally from Connecticut and understand the importance of higher education and its ability to evolve and provide opportunities for our students across the state. I think this merger of the community colleges makes sense not only for students, but for the development and training of our future and current workforce.

CT State will be uniquely positioned to prepare large numbers of Connecticut students from all walks of life for jobs, help businesses grow, and push our economy to thrive. The ability to work with an organization that can educate students across the state with a single unified curriculum is a great asset and allows us to be nimble in response to our future workforce needs.

I am happy to support this consolidation and I look forward to our future collaborations with CT State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Nolan".

Kevin Nolan, CEO
GE Appliances



February 11, 2022

Dr. Larry Schall, President
New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Dr. Schall and Commissioners:

As the President of the Central CT Chambers of Commerce, I am keenly aware of the workforce needs of my region and the importance that the community colleges play in providing educated and trained employees in a wide range of positions. Connecticut's 12 community colleges – which serve more than 67,000 credit and non-credit students each year, the majority of whom are people of color and/or from low-income families – are uniquely positioned to prepare large numbers of Connecticut students from all walks of life for in-demand jobs that help businesses to grow and our economy to thrive.

For many years, Connecticut's community college leaders have shared their efforts to improve student outcomes with our chamber members and reviewed the objectives of the restructuring of the 12 community colleges into a single institution – CT State Community College. These actions will put Connecticut's community college system on solid financial footing while improving student outcomes. Streamlining processes and procedures and centralizing back-office functions will allow resources to be reallocated to provide greater student supports at the campus level.

The consolidation of the 12 community colleges into CT State is clearly necessary to ensure the financial viability of the 12 campuses that our member businesses rely on for their future workforce. The consolidation will provide another important benefit for employers; the alignment of the 12 different colleges' curricula into one catalog will create common learning outcomes that apply across all campuses, preventing dissimilar versions of the same program at different campuses and giving businesses confidence that they know what they are getting when they hire a CT State graduate.

On behalf of our member businesses, I am happy to support this consolidation and I look forward to our future collaborations with CT State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Cynthia A. Bombard'.

Cynthia Bombard
President/CEO

Executive Suites, 440 North Main Street, Bristol, CT 06010 • Telephone (860) 584-4718 • Fax (860) 254-7191

Website: www.CentralCTChambers.org • Email: info@CentralCTChambers.org

Serving the communities of Bristol – Burlington – Farmington – Plymouth/Terryville – Wolcott – and BEYOND!



February 15, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear NECHE Commissioners:

I am pleased to reiterate the Connecticut Workforce Development Council's (CWDC) support for the restructuring of Connecticut's 12 community colleges into a single institution (CT State Community College) with a single accreditation, and for the adoption of the Guided Pathways student success framework across the 12 CT State campuses.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system and the state's 12 community colleges are among the best, longest-standing, and most important partners of the five Connecticut regional workforce development boards (WDBs) that comprise the CWDC. The community colleges have long been the WDBs' primary training partner, offering a wide variety of short- and long-term certificates and degree programs that prepare our American Job Center customers for quality jobs while responding to the talent needs of employers across a range of industries. In recent years, this partnership has produced a short-term, employer-designed, demand-driven workforce training model that has earned national recognition for meeting high-volume employer needs and preparing inexperienced workers for quality jobs and serves as the prototype for Connecticut's \$70 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) CareerConneCT program. The WDBs and community colleges have also collaborated on a long list of successful federal grant projects over the past several years.

The CWDC continues to unequivocally support the many goals of the community college merger and Guided Pathways implementation that we described in a letter we sent to NECHE in support of the merger in June 2020. These goals include increasing graduation and completion rates; reducing academic outcome disparities for students from historically underserved populations; increasing resources for addressing barriers to retention, completion, and employment; delivering more demand-driven programming (often through partnerships with the workforce boards); aligning curriculum across campuses and facilitating transfer and articulation; and scaling effective practices across the state.

Fundamentally, the creation of CT State and simultaneous adoption of Guided Pathways – a holistic approach to redesigning the student experience from initial enrollment through the completion of a credential and into employment or further education – will stabilize the colleges' financial outlook while equitably improving student outcomes. Streamlining processes and procedures and centralizing back-office functions will allow resources to be reallocated to provide greater student supports at the campus level.

On behalf of Connecticut's five workforce development boards, the CWDC is pleased to endorse the community college consolidation and the important goals that it promises to achieve for our students, jobseekers, employers, and state economy. We look forward to a strong and productive partnership with CT State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Villano".

Bill Villano
Chair, Connecticut Workforce Development Council



February 11, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

CT State is good for the health and well-being of Connecticut.

Annual demand for new healthcare workers in Connecticut exceeds 7,000, with major shortages in nursing, nursing assistants, skilled technician roles, and long-term and home health care. The health care sector consistently has far more job openings than any other industry. I believe that CT State Community College will help address this demand because of its statewide scale and simultaneous ability to serve our communities. As one of the state's largest employers, we welcome the opportunity to have a streamlined approach to working with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education with 12 campuses that offer customized access in every corner of the state.


We will continue to build partnerships to create a highly skilled and well-educated workforce, while at the same time working strategically with CT State to plan for and respond to opportunities and challenges. The Nursing and Allied Health programs at the campuses have long been an important source of hiring for Trinity Health. As the pandemic illustrated, the resiliency of the healthcare system is wholly dependent on its skilled workforce. We cannot meet the lingering challenges of COVID 19 or be prepared for the future without skilled workers.

CT State's credit degree and certificate programs will continue to feed into four-year nursing programs and advanced degree programs, while the Workforce Development and Continuing Education programs produce skilled candidates who meet our immediate need for sterile processing technicians, certified nurse aides, pharmacy technicians and more.

As Connecticut's 12 community colleges prepare to become one CT State Community College with 12 locations, we affirm that having a single, statewide institution with consistent offerings and aligned curricula will be critical in meeting Connecticut's health care workforce needs.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact me at stuart.rosenberg@trinityhealthofne.org or by phone at 860-684-8101.

Sincerely,


Stuart E. Rosenberg
President



New England Spring & Metalstamping Association

February 11, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

CT State is good for business and workforce development.

According to CBIA's *2021 Connecticut Manufacturing Report*, 88% of Connecticut manufacturers report difficulty finding and/or retaining workers, with skills shortages cited as the main reason for difficulty finding workers; 41% of manufacturers call the labor shortage their main obstacle to growth. CT State Community College promises to help Connecticut manufacturers address the skills shortages that limit their growth and Connecticut's economic vitality.

Having a single, statewide institution with consistent offerings and aligned curricula will help to meet Connecticut's manufacturing workforce needs. We believe that CT State Community College will help address this demand because of its statewide scale and simultaneous ability to serve our communities. As one of the state's largest employers, we welcome the opportunity to have a streamlined approach to working with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education with 12 campus that offer customized access in every corner of the state.

We will continue to build partnerships to prepare a highly skilled and well-educated workforce, while at the same time work strategically with CT State to plan for and respond to opportunities and challenges. The Connecticut community colleges have been a critical partner of New England Spring & Metalstamping Association. Credit degree and certificate programs feed into four-year engineering and advanced degree necessary for innovation and growth. Workforce Development and Continuing Education delivers short-term, just-in-time training that feeds to our largest employers including Electric Boat, Sikorsky, and Pratt & Whitney, plus the hundreds of small and medium manufacturers that are part of the supply chain.

The vision for CT State aligns with our industry – to be exceptional. We supply the world with the very highest quality aerospace, medical, and transportation products while providing livable wage jobs with viable career paths. CT State supplies the talented, skilled workforce. We look forward to continued collaboration to develop opportunities for Connecticut's citizens and meet the needs of employers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lucas Karabin", is written over a horizontal line.

Lucas Karabin
NESMA President



February 10, 2022

Dr. Lawrence M. Schall
President
New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803

Dear Dr. Schall,

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) is a not-for-profit membership organization that represents hospitals and health-related organizations. With more than 90 members, CHA's mission is to advance the health of individuals and communities by leading, representing, and serving hospitals and healthcare providers across the continuum of care that are accountable to the community and committed to advancing health and health equity. **We write to support the application by the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system to create the Connecticut State Community College.**

Like other New England healthcare providers, Connecticut's hospitals and health systems face a severe shortage of skilled labor. Across our state, hospitals are in need of nurses, nursing assistants, and skilled technicians. These roles are essential to providing quality patient care. We have currently and will have in the future far more vacancies than available skilled workers to support our patients and their families.

The shortage in the healthcare labor workforce amplifies the ongoing and important partnership we have with educational institutions in our state, and importantly, that relationship with CSCU. Assessing workforce need and continually evaluating and changing curriculum to meet changes in clinical practice is essential if we are to maintain our already world-class healthcare workforce supported by CSCU and the proposed Connecticut State Community College.

It is important that our future workforce come prepared for current and future clinical practice and to meet the challenges and demands of employment in healthcare settings. For these reasons we are supportive of the work envisioned in the new, unified structure, namely, aligned curriculum, consistent offerings, and the ability to adjust efficiently to the workforce needs of the future.

We respectfully appreciate you considering the needs of healthcare providers and patients when reviewing the application by the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system to create the Connecticut State Community College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Jackson', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jennifer Jackson
CEO

JDJ:ljs

February 9, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education:

CT State is good for business and workforce development.

According to CBIA's *2021 Connecticut Manufacturing Report*, 88% of Connecticut manufacturers report difficulty finding and/or retaining workers, with skills shortages cited as the main reason for difficulty finding workers; 41% of manufacturers call the labor shortage their main obstacle to growth. CT State Community College promises to help Connecticut manufacturers address the skills shortages that limit their growth and Connecticut's economic vitality.

Having a single, statewide institution with consistent offerings and aligned curricula will help to meet Connecticut's manufacturing workforce needs. I believe that CT State Community College will help address this demand because of its statewide scale and simultaneous ability to serve our communities. As an organization representing over 115 aerospace component manufacturers, suppliers, and processors, we welcome the opportunity to have a streamlined approach to working with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education with 12 campus that offer customized access in every corner of the state.

We will continue to build partnerships to prepare a highly skilled and well-educated workforce, while at the same time work strategically with CT State to plan for and respond to opportunities and challenges. The Connecticut community colleges have been a critical partner of Aerospace Components Manufacturers, Inc. Credit, degree and certificate programs feed into four-year engineering and advanced degrees necessary for innovation and growth. Workforce Development and Continuing Education delivers short-term, just-in-time training that feeds hundreds of small and medium manufacturers that are part of the local aerospace supply chain and companies that ACM represents.

The vision for CT State aligns with our industry – to be exceptional. We supply the world with the highest quality aerospace components while providing livable wage jobs with viable career paths. CT State supplies the talented, skilled workforce. We look forward to continued collaboration to develop opportunities for Connecticut's citizens and meet the needs of employers.

Sincerely,



Jessica Taylor
Executive Director
Aerospace Components Manufacturers, Inc. – The World's Aerospace Alley! ®
222 Pitkin St.
East Hartford, CT 06108
Office (860) 282-4239
jtaylor@acm-ct.org
www.aerospacecomponents.org



Christian L. DiPentima
President & Chief Executive Officer

February 14, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear NECHE Commissioners:

I am writing today to share support for CT State Community College and the efforts to create a 21st century college for the state of CT. As the President of the CT Business and Industry Association (CBIA), the voice of business in Connecticut, I am keenly aware of the workforce needs of Connecticut and the importance that the community colleges play in providing educated and trained employees in a wide range of positions particularly in the manufacturing field. CT State Community College, as a single institution with 12 campuses, will be uniquely positioned to prepare large numbers of Connecticut students from all walks of life for in-demand jobs that help businesses to grow and our economy to thrive.

In order to play this role, Connecticut's community college system must be on solid financial footing and must improve student enrollment and completion so that businesses get the workers they need post-pandemic. As so many businesses have done, CT State Community College must streamline processes and procedures and centralize back-office functions thus allowing resources to be reallocated to increase the workforce pipelines in our state.

The consolidation of the 12 community colleges into CT State is clearly necessary to ensure the financial viability of the 12 campuses that our member businesses rely on for their future workforce. The consolidation will provide another important benefit for employers; the alignment of the 12 different colleges' curriculum with common learning outcomes, giving businesses confidence that they know what they are getting when they hire a CT State Community College graduate.

On behalf of our member businesses, I am happy to support this consolidation and I look forward to our future collaborations with CT State Community College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris L. DiPentima".

Christian L. DiPentima

February 14, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education

3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100

Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Commissioners:

As you may be aware, Connecticut like other states in New England are facing significant shortages in health care workers particularly for nurses, nursing assistants, skilled technicians, and long-term and home health care workers. The health care sector consistently has far more job openings than any other industry. I believe that Connecticut State Community College (CT State) will help address this demand because of its strong educational programs. Yale New Haven Health System is one of the state's largest employers and we welcome the opportunity to work with what will be one of Connecticut's largest institutions for higher education.

As Connecticut's 12 community colleges prepare to become CT State with 12 locations, we affirm that having a single, statewide institution with consistent offerings, aligned curricula, and dedicated regional workforce officers will be critical in meeting Connecticut's health care workforce needs and will make CT State a stronger partner for the Yale New Haven Health System.

Sincerely,



Melissa B. Turner

Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer
Yale New Haven Health