Connecticut State University Organization of Administrative Faculty

To: Members of the Higher Education Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

From: James LoMonaco, President, SUOAF/AFSCME Local 2836

Date: February 9, 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Higher Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on two important bills now before your committee. HB 05024 and HB 05026 are both extremely important pieces of legislation that deserve your support as they are intended to address two critical needs that face the citizens of the State of Connecticut. The first, HB 5024, is a bill that seeks clarification of the authority the Connecticut State University System has to offer an Ed D. program in nursing education. The second bill, HB 05026, is a bill intended to allow the CSU System to move to voice over IP for telephone services which will allow the system to achieve significant savings in the operational costs of the University's telephone system. It goes without saying that cost saving are critically needed in this difficult financial environment.

The bill supporting the offering of nursing education would allow the CSUS to respond to the critical shortage of nursing educators that exists currently both in Connecticut and the nation generally. For some time the nursing programs at both Southern and Western Connecticut have found themselves in the position of having to deny admission to fully qualified candidates for admission to the program due to the lack of nursing faculty. In fact, in the fall semester 2007, the two Universities had to deny admission to 472 such candidates due to then lack of teaching capacity. Given the demographics that show Connecticut's population aging, a growing deficit of trained nursing professionals and the lack of a means to train new nursing candidates the problem is clear. Providing the CSUS with the ability to offer the Ed. D. using the currently existing facilities at Southern and Western will allow for a rapid response to this shortage at the minimum cost of the addition of two faculty positions at each University.

The CSUS has proven through the response to the need for Ed. D. professional personnel for the public schools of the state that it has the capacity to deliver a similarly successful program in nursing education. In addition since the program will offer non-traditional course delivery formats in the form of online courses, summer and weekend intensive courses the program will be accessible to working professionals in the field who then may train for career advancement as well as an opportunity to become a part of the solution to the nursing shortage in Connecticut. Designed as it is to prepare participants for the introduction to a faculty role the curriculum can be tailored to the needs of students who have varying experience in the area of teaching and instruction.

Quite clearly the CSUS is responding to both a critical workforce shortage as well as working to enhance the teaching capacity of the University in the service of the people of Connecticut. I would

direct the attention of the Committee to the extensive letters of support the University has received for this initiative which is an indication of the importance of the undertaking. I would also stress that the Ed. D. initiative is one that falls within the mission of the University to provide professionals necessary to meet the workforce requirements of the State. I urge your favorable support for this HB 05024.

The Second bill under consideration by the committee is a bill designed to allow the CSUS to redirect a small portion of the 20/20 program to allow the University to move forward with a telecommunications project that will allow the merging of voice services with the standard internet protocol thus making use of the University's digital network for both voice and data communications. In this fashion the University will be able to better utilize current staff, allow for faster communications and maintain a single network. Savings will be achieved as a consequence of moving toward the modern voice technology and away from the older, stand alone telephone switches that are currently employed. The technology will allow for the use of a desk top to desk top video capability, making it possible to hold meetings in real time from various sites. Travel for meetings can be more effectively managed.

I urge the committee to support this as well in order to allow the University to maximize its investment in technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee

Jim LoMonaco

President, SUOAF/AFSCME Local 2836