

March 6, 2011

Dear Senator Harp,

I live in your district and I vote in every election. I am also an assistant professor at Southern Connecticut State University, where I teach in the Anthropology Department and lead the Forensic Science minor.

I would like to explain why I am **against Governor Malloy's proposal** to merge Higher Education (SB 1011) and in doing so highlight what I think makes CSU special.

1. In light of our budget problems, the merger is a **bad idea for financial reasons**. Quite simply, the Minnesota experience tells us that a merger of this type will not result in cost savings; in fact, the merger is likely to be quite costly.
2. It is also clear that a merger is not **necessary in order to accomplish transfers** between the community colleges and CSUs. We have articulation agreements in place and these are continually being refined to improve transfers. A mega-agency is not required to facilitate transfers.
3. Finally, we **need to preserve the unique missions** of both CSU and the community colleges. One of the unique traits of the CSU system is that students work one-on-one with their professors in ways that are unheard of at research universities. Since I joined the Southern faculty four years ago, I have taken students with me each summer for international research in Peru. I also bring students to national conferences and conduct weekend trips to museums and other educational resources.

Through these experiences and rigorous coursework on campus, my students learn to think critically, problem-solve, and work collaboratively. All these qualities serve them well as they transition to demanding jobs in the Connecticut workplace. At Southern students gain vital preparation, not just in direct job training but in the life-long skills necessary to innovate and create jobs.

This merger will **undermine the unique identities**, missions, and educational experiences provided by each individual institution. In our commitment to Higher Education, we must recognize that this merger will not help us achieve our goals.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of these matters.

Sincerely, *Valerie Andrushko*

Dr. Valerie Andrushko

Westville resident