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Hello

I'm Tad Lincoln, and I teach Economics courses at Middlesex Community College.

I'd like to start by pointing out that 60% of our incoming students need to take below-college-level English and Math courses. This causes students to have to attend community colleges often for an extra year or more, increasing the cost of college for these students. But we provide the bridge that allows these students to be directly ready for the workforce. And our students tend to stay in our state, making them a particularly good investment in our economy.

We need to cut government spending, but do we really think community colleges are the place to cut? If we strangle our community colleges, it would only be a matter of time before we see an acceleration of companies leaving this state.

For example, Community College programs include high-tech manufacturing training. We've lost a lot of manufacturing in Connecticut, but most of what remains demands high-tech workers for high-paying jobs. These companies can compete with anyone in the world as long as Community Colleges continue to provide the highly-skilled people these firms need, as older manufacturing workers retire.

As for combining the CSU system with the Community College system, personally I am not necessarily against it, if it is thought through. If some systems must be merged, I think the governor's proposal to merge Community Colleges with the CSUs, and leaving UConn separate, is a wiser way to do it. But we would need to lay out the new org chart in detail, and see where the savings will be. And we cannot let a transitional period drag on for years, as keeping everyone in limbo for a long time is worse than just setting a deadline in a matter of months and getting it over with. Yes, there will be bugs to work out, but you will get the bugs anyway if you drag it out, and many additional problems too.

Lastly, one small way to save and improve our services is to have a common schedule for all community colleges. Each community college has a different schedule: different holidays, different spring breaks, different start and end dates, and different final exam schedules. More and more students take courses, especially on-line courses, at a few community colleges at the same time. This not only creates misunderstandings and problems for students, but resources are wasted when every year 12 calendars are independently created and have to be sent through each college's hierarchical approval process. A common calendar centrally created would both save resources and benefit our students.