

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Senator Maynard, Representative Willis, and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Jason B. Jones, and I am an associate professor of English at Central Connecticut State University, where I am also the president of the CCSU-AAUP, the union representing teaching faculty, coaches, counselors, and librarians. I have taught at Central since 2003, and have been union president since 2009. I am also a member of the executive committee of the national AAUP's Collective Bargaining Congress.

I'd like to begin by thanking the governor and legislature for addressing a problem we have decried for at least 2 decades: the rapidly growing administrative and management expenditure in the CSU system office, and the need to streamline management costs in our system. As the governor has correctly noted, long-standing mis-aligned priorities have resulted in a system that spends less on classroom instruction than our peer institutions in the region. We welcome a re-organization plan that addresses those costs.

Likewise, we welcome the opportunity to demonstrate, in a thoughtful way, our real value to you, to the citizens and taxpayers of Connecticut, to employers, to the parents of our students, and to all the other people who watch higher education closely.

It is important to understand, however, that the proposed budget cut will make it impossible to meet the governor's stated goal of putting more dollars into instruction, and will do long-term harm to our graduation rates and other measures of student success.

According to a study done by CCSU's Office of Institutional Research¹, after a major budget cut it can take more than six years for one-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates to return to the *status quo ante*. Fewer classes, larger classes, and fewer full-time faculty can create bottlenecks to graduation that hit the CSU student population with particular severity.

A 10% cut to the budget, then, will necessarily hurt graduation and retention. In the near term, it will result in fewer dollars being spent on instruction, because the universities will shrink the full-time faculty. I have reviewed budget cut scenarios from the President's office and the CCSU planning and budget committee, and it is not possible to get to 10% without losing full-time faculty lines. It is important to understand that, whatever goals the governor, the legislature, or the new CEO have for higher education, this cut will be implemented in a way that does not spare instruction.

¹ Reference:

http://www.ccsu.edu/uploaded/departments/AdministrativeDepartments/Institutional_Research_and_Assessment/Research/20100309.pdf

The re-organization plan contains implied budget cuts as well. Currently, the CSU system is hiring full-time faculty more slowly than demand warrants, because of the possibility of rescission. Performance-based funding—an experiment abandoned by the majority of the states implementing it—will exacerbate that uncertainty, especially when massive budget cuts have such demonstrably harmful effects on student retention and graduation.

Moreover, the proposed budget allows the new CEO of higher education to move up to 15% of an institution's budget to other institutions, creating an unprecedented level of budgetary uncertainty. It will be very difficult to convince universities to hire.

It is also striking that the Minnesota state university system being offered as a model has yet to realize any significant savings—a fact recognized by the legislature's own study in December.²

The proposed budget and re-organization thus cuts higher education in four different ways: a direct cut to the block grant; implied cuts caused by budgetary uncertainties around the re-organization; concessions being exacted from state workers, and a tax hike on most of the faculty and staff in such a system. Moreover, as the legislature's own study³ again showed, faculty are already working at a discount of tens of thousands of dollars when compared to private-school faculty in the state.

Such a four-fold cut—especially when the wealthiest among us, including those directly and indirectly responsible for the financial crisis, aren't facing significant changes—isn't shared sacrifice. It balances the budget by sacrificing quality education for those students who become our state's citizens, taxpayers, business owners, and workers.

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http://www.cga.ct.gov/pri/docs/2010/1216/Higher_Education_Governance_Structure_Committee_Approved_Findings_and_Recs.PDF

³ <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/rpt/2011-R-0055.htm>