



Committee of Higher Education and Employment Advancement Public Hearing

Thursday, February 17, 2011

Testimony

by

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Good morning Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. I am Dr. Diane Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), and I am here today to support **Raised Bill HB-6321, An Act Concerning A College Transition Pilot Program.**

The CTDLC is pleased to testify today regarding the state's efforts to confront this serious and costly problem. We know that for years you, the members of the General Assembly, as well as higher education and K12, have have grappled with the complex problems of students entering college unprepared to succeed in their college level work. This is a national problem that too often has been left to individual institutions to solve, so we are strongly supportive of Governor Malloy's efforts to find effective statewide solutions.

As you know the CTDLC's works with its institutional members to create collaborative efforts designed to save money while providing innovative eLearning solutions to difficult problems. We have been doing this in many ways around the issue of transition to college for both high school students and adults who are seeking to re-enter education and obtain a college degree. Our CT Virtual Learning program has been offering high school students second chance opportunities through our Credit Recovery courses as well as offering Advanced Placement courses. Our CT Adult Virtual High School program offers courses that lead to either an Adult Credit Diploma or a GED certificate. The curriculum includes courses that prepare students for the Accuplacer Math component as well as transitional college preparation. Our grant-funded Adult Success Center program is designed to increase the persistence and graduation rates of adults enrolled in college by providing research-based services including online personal coaching.

The CTDLC would like to offer our services in designing, developing, and delivering a pilot program that leverages the advantages of online courseware. We have a long history of collaborating with both in-state and out-of-state partners in developing academic programs and have been able to secure grant dollars to support previous programs. Our goal is to help reduce and eventually eliminate repeat remedial course work through the implementation of a variety of pathways which can target students currently in high school, recent graduates, and those adults who are re-starting their education. We are working with nationally known open source courseware developers as well as commercial vendors who are using innovative online tools to develop adaptive courseware with embedded analytics so that students can work at their own pace to achieve mastery. Online courseware is a substitute for textbooks not for teachers. The goal is to create individualized learning plans designed to help teachers ensure that students are prepared for credit level college work. At the high school level these individualized learning would be based on a pre-test attempt of the Accuplacer administered, as the PSAT is, in the junior and senior years of High School to allow for ample learning time. I have attached a sample outline of courseware being developed with a five million dollar grant from the Gates



Foundation to the National Repository of Online Courses as well as a white paper supporting their approach.

The legislature, through its funding of the CTDLC and the CT Virtual High School, the State Department of Education, through its funding of the Adult Virtual High School, and a variety of national and regional granting agencies have seen the value that the CTDLC provides in offering a single online program that can be accessed throughout the state of CT. We would like to suggest that as we grapple together with this complex problem, creating a single online program provides economies of scale and thus cost savings to the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.