

To: Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
From: Dr. Ross Tomlin, President of Quinebaug Valley Community College
RE: SENATE BILL 1011
Date: March 11, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you about Senate Bill 1011 regarding the reorganization of the higher education boards. I am familiar with the Minnesota Higher Education System and the huge number of negative issues that ensued during that merger and lasted for over ten years. I would hope that Connecticut could develop a process for any merger that would be more effective and much less disruptive.

As a community college president, I am most concerned that this bill does not provide an opportunity for community college management to have a voice in how any merger would be undertaken. Community colleges have a unique mission, and I am very concerned that without a voice in any merger undertaken, that unique mission could be diluted and/or displaced. I am not adverse to thoughtful change, but we clearly need a plan that involves all the affected parties. This will take more than three months to complete, but could be done in a reasonable amount of time. Finally, any plan should include a clear and detailed budget that must include enough funds to make any new structure successful.

With all of the budget challenges we are facing statewide and at the community colleges, this is not the time to create more chaos and uncertainty by implementing a major restructuring of higher education without having the time to craft a well thought out plan that involves all the affected stakeholders. With this done over the coming year, we would mitigate much of the anxiety and chaos and come out with a solution that could benefit both community colleges and universities and their students.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Tomlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in the bottom left corner of the page.