

**Written Testimony**  
**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee Public Hearing**  
**March 10, 2011**

From Gena Glickman  
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I would like to discuss the serious implications and impact of Senate Bill No. 1011, concerning a reorganization of Connecticut's system of public higher education, and Senate Bill No. 1000, an act reforming the state budget process, which limits position control for non-faculty positions. Both of these proposals raise grave concerns about our ability to remain agile and responsive to our local communities, one of the primary strengths of Connecticut's community colleges.

The mission of the community college is to provide comprehensive, innovative and affordable learning opportunities to diverse populations. The most important things we do revolve around our students – teaching, learning and advising – while creating a supportive physical and cultural environment. This is what makes MCC and the other Connecticut community colleges such great places to get an education; this is what makes us unique.

As the president of the largest community college in Connecticut, I have seen first-hand the effects of the economic downturn. We are all doing more with fewer resources. MCC experienced tremendous enrollment growth in the last several years caused by the demand for an educated, trained workforce and an affordable alternative to the increasing costs of the State's public and private universities.

Last fall, we were forced to cap enrollment for the first time ever. Consequently, as MCC saw record enrollment, it also experienced state funding cuts of more than \$1.6M in a single year. These cuts resulted in the elimination of 16 full-time permanent positions and reduced funding for academic programs and other educational opportunities. MCC receives 36 percent of its operating budget from the State of Connecticut but, with reduced funding, it has become more difficult for us to support this growth.

Our mission is to serve the needs of students, whether they are pursuing a liberal arts degree, preparing for transfer, entering a new career or meeting the demands of the changing workforce. At the same time, businesses are eager to partner with community colleges. We are responsive and agile, making it easier for businesses to receive services at a community college and to train workers at a fraction of the cost of what it would cost to obtain training in the private sector.

The community college mission also includes remedial education for students who need post-secondary education to become economically self-sufficient. Connecticut is the only state in the nation to have its community colleges receive funding in four rounds of the competitive USDOL community-based job training initiative. Each grant brought Federal funds to Connecticut to develop curriculum and capacity to educate students in nursing and allied health, manufacturing and green technology - each which supports the state's economic development by upgrading the skills of its workforce.

Community colleges are the **largest and fastest-growing segment of higher education** in America. Nearly half of all undergraduates attend a community college and, over the next decade, new jobs will require post-secondary education or workforce training. Connecticut residents with an associate degree earn an average of \$45,400 annually, 26 percent greater than those with a high school education or less,

and those with community college degrees are more likely to stay in the state after they graduate – filling needed jobs and growing the State's tax base.

We will continue to partner with legislators and the Governor to create opportunities and remain a valuable resource for Connecticut and the growth of our economy. We are analyzing the impact of the Governor's policy proposal that dramatically alters governance for public higher education in Connecticut, and the budget that reduces our State appropriation significantly and that may considerably change our funding formula. Our greatest concern is our ability to remain agile and support the workforce needs of the state while continuing to serve our students well.

Governor Malloy's message of "shared sacrifice" resonates profoundly with the leadership of the Connecticut Community College system and, specifically, Manchester Community College. As you consider the policy decisions before you today and over the next several weeks, I urge you to consider our unique mission, our range of students – both traditional and non-traditional – and the invaluable resource the State of Connecticut has in its community colleges.