

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's Public Hearing on  
S.B. No. 1011-An Act Concerning Reorganization of Connecticut's System of Higher  
Education

Susan H. Cusato, Ph.D.

639 Washington Rd.

Woodbury, CT 06798

As a faculty member at SCSU and President of the Faculty Senate, I have read and heard many things about Governor Malloy's proposal to consolidate Connecticut's Higher Education System. However, I am not sure what the real reason is? Is it to reduce costs? Enhance the quality of education? To Set a comprehensive public agenda? Provide greater access to education? Better align Higher Educations goals with State priorities? Better meet workforce needs? Streamline administrative costs and functions? Or is it all of the above? The goals of the Governor and legislature are admiral and goals I think we all support.

So I have gone looking for the data or at least historical reports that university systems that have adopted this potential model have been successful. I have looked for any evidence that consolidation of our Higher Education System will help us in accomplishing any of those goals. I have found nothing. There appears to be a belief that consolidation reduces costs but so far in my efforts I have not found evidence. An article from Minnesota Daily last October, discussed how the University of Minnesota System was working to deal with budget reductions and decreasing financial support from the state. I would like to take some quotes from Richard Pfitzenrueter Univ. Chief Financial Officer "The University is a public institution which should stand for the practical purpose of educating the citizens of Minnesota and those others who apply as well. It is not here to make a profit for anyone." I would also like to quote from the faculty who wrote an Open Letter to the Board of Regents on the Faculty for Renewal of Public Education Website. "Embarking on new projects that add to recurring costs or debt can therefore be paid for by making deeper cuts to existing units, raising tuition, or some combination of the two. Embarking on new projects is imprudent in a fiscal environment in which academic units have already undergone cuts that severely damage the educational research missions of the University. These cutbacks have already resulted in reduced teaching support, increased class size, layoffs, furloughs, and temporary pay cuts. Students have already endured both a decline in the quality of their education and repeated tuition increases. And from the website I will reference other statements "As the administration has come to dominate instead of serve the university, intellectual and educational values have been displaced." and later, "We demand that values central to scholarly and scientific inquiry and education be restored". I am very concerned that Minnesota is the model that our Governor is using as a "comparable system" for Connecticut.

In researching this information I found that I am not the only one who feels this way. On January 19, 2011 a comment was written on Connecticutmag.com by Charles Monagan of Connecticut Magazine in response to a press release put out on January 19, 2011 by the CT Department of Higher Education entitled "Connecticut Drops in National Education Rankings: Falls from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in Percentage of Adults with Degrees. Mr Monagan also references the same article that Governor Malloy used to select his statistic that CT is currently 34<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of growth of college graduates. He also says the article could have easily been named "Connecticut Rises in National Rankings-Moves Up in Percentage with High Scholl, Post-Graduate Degrees. One of the reasons Connecticut's growth in college attendees is low is because are already near the top of the nation. New growth is easy when you are at the bottom.

Current US Census data reflect numbers from 2008. But at that time it still ranked Connecticut forth among States for bachelor degrees and third for states for advanced degrees. In 1990 CT ranked first as tied with Massachusetts for citizens 25 and older with Bachelors and first for those with advanced degrees. However, what is not mentioned is that since 1990 the State has cut back it support of CSU from just under 74% in 1990 to 47% in 2009. The article goes on to say that in 2000 CT ranked 4<sup>th</sup> only behind Massachusetts, Minnesota (the university system used as a comparable system to Connecticut's by the Governor's announcement) and North Dakota. According to US census data now Minnesota is 10<sup>th</sup>, behind Connecticut in performance.

What you have before you is a successful model of education for Connecticut. We have remained near the top in the nation in performance for the last 20 years even though we have experienced consistent reductions in state support. This system works, I am just hoping we can say the same 5, 10, 20 years from now.

Thank you.