

To: Senator Bye, Representative Willis, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 5030: An Act Concerning the Development of a General Education Core of Courses.

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 local chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

I want to begin by stating plainly that the faculty of CCSU take seriously the issue of articulation and transfer. You will hear today from my colleague Tom Burkholder, who will speak to some of the ways that we have revised general education--and are currently developing a further revision--in ways that provide clear guidance for transfers. (You can see some of this work at https://webapps.ccsu.edu/CTAB/CCSU_TransCourses.aspx, a site that allows applicants to instantly see how their courses will transfer.)

We welcome any well-conceived efforts to support articulation and transfer. There are three ways, however, in which the Board of Regents current plan is poorly conceived:

1. **The Board of Regents plan moves too quickly.** The idea that we could implement a plan for the five biggest majors (exclusive of nursing and education) by July (which is really by late April) beggars belief. Piloting the program with the largest majors--which have many sub-programs and complex accreditation demands--in 10 weeks is a recipe for disaster.
2. **The Board of Regents plan violates norms of shared governance.** Previous attempts at comprehensive system-wide articulation have failed due to lack of buy-in from front-line teaching faculty, who have not been consulted, except as a fig leaf. The Board of Regents plan is even worse. While the BOR draft plan says that faculty will approve the agreements and oversee them, much work has been done to circumvent the faculty. First, a provost-led committee has already been formed, even though the plan hasn't been formally approved. Second, the campus administrators were instructed not to mention this to the faculty. (Consider! Instead of trying to build support, which would not have been hard to do, this Board decided to spring it on the faculty, causing storms of protest on every campus.) The Faculty Advisory Committee has been informed by e-mail that it will only be permitted ten minutes to comment on this draft proposal at the relevant committee meeting, which is a gesture of contempt for those people with actual experience of the curriculum, and of the effects of transfer.
3. **The Board of Regents plan fails to recognize the interdependence of general education and the major.** Many departments have sophomore courses that serve both as general education courses and that play a role in the major. Other departments address similar problems (the need to reinforce writing beyond first-year

writing) in different ways. Majors that seem notionally similar (such as Chemistry) are often quite different, depending on whether the program is accredited. On many campuses, the major has been adjusted in response to specific NCATE accreditation demands--and those demands have not always been consistent. In many cases, hiring decisions have been driven by those accreditation requirements. As drafted, the current plan appears to make it possible that departments' attempts to revise their majors will be held hostage by other schools.

Improved transfer and articulation is an important goal, and should surely be one of the benefits of reorganization. However, the Board of Regents' plan, by virtue of excluding the faculty and by its unreasonably hasty timelines, will not improve the education of Connecticut's students.

The best way to achieve the goals of improved transfer is to have the enabling legislation specify that any committees tasked with implementing the policy **be elected from the faculty of the affected campuses**. Campus and system administrators should properly play a facilitating role, but should not have a vote, an approach consistent with the national standard for governance practice, the AAUP *Policy Documents and Reports*. Similarly, the committee should be given adequate recourses--including support for summer work, or in-semester reassigned time--to perform a job of this importance.