



**Testimony for the Higher Education & Workforce Advancement Committee**

**From**

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on the approval process for new programs in the state of Connecticut and to support the concept raised by H.B. No 5221 and the suggested substitute language provided by Ms. Greiman. I am new to the state and will be talking about my experiences from my 10 years working in private, non-profit higher education in Massachusetts. I was at an institution that was excluded from the state approval process due to its historic nature. This institution did not have to seek approval for new programs or program modifications as long as the programs were covered by the charter of the College.

The institution was able to respond to the need for new programs to meet workforce demands and expand into emerging areas in a competitive and aggressive manner. The College responded by creating new and innovative programs. These programs responded to the workforce needs and provided the College with a competitive edge. Examples included accelerated formats, which were mainly four year baccalaureate degrees that were completed in three years, allowing the students to enter the workforce more quickly. We also developed new programs or modified existing programs to include the use of technology in the delivery methods, these included both online and real-time video linking between multiple campuses. These delivery methods improved access to the academic programs for students. As the needs of employers changed, we were able to meet the demands by developing programs to increase the level of education of the workforce. For example, we created B.S. programs for fields with high numbers of Associate or Certificate trained workers. These programs were often the first in the state and region and provided graduates with increased career possibilities. Because the institution was well established the quality of the programs did not suffer. There was extensive internal and external review. All of the programs were subject to approval by the regional accrediting body and many of the programs required specialized accreditation.

The College was able to acquire programs from other institutions that needed a new institutional sponsor and the speed with which the College could act was enhanced by the lack of a state review. Therefore, the lack of a state review process allowed the College to move

much more rapidly than other institutions in the state and in my estimation provided a significant competitive edge. This allowed the College to respond to workforce needs and to be responsive to the needs of the students. The quality of the programs in Massachusetts from Colleges and Universities that are subject to review and those that are not are equal in my estimation.

In my experience in Connecticut, state approval for new programs and program modifications for private, non-profit institutions requires different documentation than the regional or specialized accreditors. Therefore, additional time is spent on creating these documents and then the approval process itself adds time to the process. This can cause a delay in responding to the needs of the market as well as students.