



Senators Bye, Cassano, and Boucher, Representatives Willis, Hadda, and LeGeyt, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of SB 867, An Act Concerning Faculty Representation on the Board of Regents for Higher Education. My name is Patty O'Neill. I teach and conduct research in psychology at Western Connecticut State University. I am chapter president of WCSU-AAUP. I am here today as a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents. Ilene Crawford of the Faculty Advisory Committee, who couldn't be here today, has contributed to my remarks.

Goof ups are my own responsibility, of course.

The past year has been an eventful one, to be sure. I will highlight one of the Faculty Advisory Committee's successes to emphasize why it is important that the Board of Regents take advantage of faculty input and perspective.

Last year, the BOR's initial draft of the Transfer and Articulation Policy raised serious concerns with faculty across the ConnSCSU system. The FAC solicited and received input from each of the 17 institutions and proposed 10 concrete suggestions for improving the policy. These suggestions reflected broad faculty buy in. Most of these suggestions were adopted by the Academic and Student Affairs subcommittee of the BOR. The input from faculty members via the FAC resulted in an outcome that will improve students' experiences across the new ConnSCSU system.

This outcome illustrates what could be.

Since then, however, the FAC has had less success in influencing the Board in other important matters. The legislation creating the FAC calls for the committee to meet at least twice a year with the Board of Regents.

In the year since its creation, the FAC has met twice with the Board of Regents. Unfortunately, these meetings have been perfunctory in nature and ineffective for creating the ongoing dialogue necessary to shape good policy for our students.

The FAC strongly feels that an additional means by which faculty can have input into the Board is necessary, and SB 867 provides this mechanism. It would allow the chairperson and vice chairperson to be part of the Board on a regular basis, rather than members of the audience during legislatively mandated biannual meetings. SB 867 would also allow members of the FAC to contribute substantively to the subcommittees of the Board of Regents. FAC members on these subcommittees could be particularly useful as the BOR grapples with issues such as student success, retention, and more effective support for underprepared students.

The creation of the Faculty Advisory Committee was an important first step to ensure that faculty members have a role in charting the path forward for this ConnSCU system. SB 867 extends and solidifies that role. There are significant benefits to strengthening faculty involvement in governance. The Board of Regents and its subcommittees will benefit from regular interactions with faculty members, and vice versa. Faculty members will be more involved, and invested, in the path forward being charted by the Board of Regents when they are involved in the development of those plans rather than the passive recipients of such plans. The Board of Regents and the ConnSCU institutions can only be strengthened by SB 867.

On behalf of the ConnSCU faculty I represent, thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Patty O'Neill, Ph.D.

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