



**CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS**

March 14, 2013

Senators Bye, Cassano, and Boucher, Representatives Willis, Haddad, and LeGeyt, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of SB 867, *An Act Concerning Faculty Representation on the Board of Regents for Higher Education*. My name is Vijay Nair and I am president of the Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors, which represents over 3,400 full-time and part-time faculty, librarians, coaches, and counselors at CSU. CSU-AAUP is both a collective bargaining agent and a professional organization, affiliated with National AAUP, which works to advance academic freedom and shared governance.

In the brief history of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, it has been demonstrated that faculty-board collaboration and communication is extremely constructive. A good example is the passage of a comprehensive Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) between all community colleges and all Connecticut State Universities. The passage of this landmark policy began with a committee of the Board putting forth a draft policy, which in the eyes of the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) was flawed. The FAC therefore gathered faculty input and made recommendations to the Board committee. Nearly all of the FAC's recommendations were accepted (only the timeline suggested by the FAC was not incorporated), thereby creating a final policy that is good for the students and the State of Connecticut and acceptable both to the Board and to the faculty. However, it should be noted that the Faculty Advisory Committee was not asked for its input into this policy. The FAC had to be extremely persistent to be heard and had to continue fighting for the faculty to have a voice in the implementation of this policy.

Collaboration and communication between board members, faculty, and students are vital for the success of our system. To quote from a report from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges in 2009, "Faculty and trustees bring very different backgrounds, responsibilities, and skill sets to the table. Trustees, as fiduciaries, bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring sound financial decisions as well as sound academic quality, but most trustees have business backgrounds and few have ever worked in higher education. They are dependent upon the administration for leading and managing the institution and for the expert professional judgment of faculty in regard to curricula, degree requirements, and peer review...faculty participation in institutional governance isn't a privilege, it's a necessary part of decision-making in colleges and universities" (Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance, p.11).

Faculty are dependent upon the administration and the Board of Regents for leading and managing the institution, but our Board only has a few individuals who have prior experience in higher education. Therefore, the expertise of faculty is essential for good decision-making.

SB 867 allows for the chairperson and vice chairperson of the FAC to serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members of the Board. Currently, members of the Faculty Advisory Committee are sent agendas and they are invited to attend Board meetings, but only as members of the audience. This legislation, if passed, would allow the chairperson and vice chairperson a voice at the table.

Further, as most of the work of the BOR takes place in committees, SB 867 would allow the chairperson of the FAC to appoint at least two members to all Board committees except those dealing with personnel matters. This is where we feel the faculty voice is most crucial to decision-making.

Many institutions allow faculty representation on the governing boards, such as State University of New York, City University of New York, Colorado State System, University of Florida, California State System, University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, University of Delaware, University of Toledo, University of Cincinnati, and Cleveland State University.

In conclusion, we feel that allowing for a faculty voice will help the Board of Regents to create more effective policy. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vijay Nair". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vijay Nair  
CSU-AAUP President