

February 24, 2014

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I regret that I cannot be there in person this evening as I am teaching a one-day-a-week Monday night class. I am Elena Tapia, Professor of Linguistics at Eastern Connecticut State University. I also serve as Vice-President of the Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP). Please accept my testimony regarding Transform CSCU 2020.

Governor's Bill 30, *An Act Concerning the Board of Regents for Higher Education Infrastructure Act*, aims to grow enrollments at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and prepare tomorrow's workforce. The Board of Regents set forth five goals in its budget initiatives for *Transform CSCU 2020*; I wish to draw your attention to just four of those and to speak to their relationship to appropriations:

- **A successful first year:** Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college.
- **Improve student success:** Graduate more students with the skills to achieve life/career goals.
- **Cultivate innovation and economic growth:** Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast-changing world.
- **Ensure equity:** Eliminate achievement disparities among ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups.

Each of these four efforts cannot be successful without the expertise and commitment of full-time faculty and support staff.

- The connections made to faculty during the first year – if it is to be successful-- should be with faculty with whom students can expect to interact in the years to come. Though part-time faculty and temporary staff provide a short-term solution, they cannot establish the solid ground that students need.
- The full-time faculty member, strongly rooted in the university community, guarantees the long-term support and mentoring of the undergraduate and graduate student. In the CSUs, many of our students are first generation college students and many represent minority groups. It is crucial that students from these backgrounds be able to expect -- for the duration of their college experience and even after graduation -- faculty who have the stability, time and resources to devote to their students' success.
- Our full-time faculty are active researchers and teacher-scholars who bring current knowledge and innovation to the classroom each semester; it is they who are conversant with current trends and developments in many, many fields. The full-time faculty member is absolutely in the best position to create innovative classroom, program and experiential learning environments. "CSU faculty members transform the lives of our students, enabling them to develop the knowledge, skills, and perspectives essential for their roles as engaged citizens and members of an educated workforce" (*Who We Are*).
- Finally, a goal of eliminating achievement disparities can only be attained through close interaction with faculty members who students can rely on to be in the classroom, in their offices, and on campus consistently and with whom they will come to enjoy mutual trust and respect.

As a faculty member, I am grateful for the improvements that have been made on our campuses and hope that the innovations promised for CSCU 2020 will be honored. I wish President Gray and the Board of Regents success in their new endeavors, but believe that many of the initiatives can only be achieved with an investment in more full-time tenure-track faculty positions and, of course, with the involvement of the faculty in future planning and implementation.

Thank you for your consideration in these matters.