

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for the hard work you do in trying to keep Connecticut both financially solvent and a place where families can raise their children with hope for the future. My name is Edmond Chibeau and I teach writing in the Communication Department of Eastern Connecticut State University. I am here to testify regarding Transform CSCU 2020.

On the Transform CSCU 2020 web page the vision statement states that: "Connecticut will have a high-quality, accessible, and affordable post-secondary education that enables students to achieve their life and career goals and make Connecticut a place of engaged, globally competitive communities."

The Board of Regents Goals call upon the schools of higher education to: "Cultivate innovation and economic growth."

I commend you on your work and I embrace the vision and goals of the Board of Regents. But the devil is in the details.

If we are to have a higher education system that supports the people of Connecticut the system must be funded and that system must have the autonomy to create programs that respond to the needs of the people.

I have been working with a group of dedicated scholars to develop a major in New Information Technologies at Eastern. I am impressed with the dedication of my colleagues and with their knowledge of how new digital technologies can be taught and what the trajectory of such a program might be.

But we have neither the budget to hire professors nor the funds to continue their education at conferences. It is difficult to keep up to date in the field. It is a challenge to find funding to go to seminars because only a small number of our requests for travel are funded. Going to a conference is often only possible if the professor is going to spend his or her own money to get there. This does not appear to be the case at the University of Connecticut.

Because the faculty has autonomy we are able to develop a cross-departmental major in new electronic technologies. We are trying to give the students of the Connecticut State College and University System an education that is in step with the world of the 21st century.

To do that we need enough professors to inspire the student population, and those professors must be familiar enough with their field to keep their students apprised of current trends in business, employment and research.

I am not too many years from retirement; the funding I am asking for is not something I will be able to use, but is for the intellectual improvement of the faculty that will come after me, and the students they will teach. And finally, if we believe that education enriches the whole community, then the strengthening of the CSCU system will make Connecticut "a place of engaged, globally competitive communities" where families wish to live, contribute, and raise their children. Where I teach, in the CSCU system, we call that, "Civitas."