

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

Please accept my apologies for not testifying in person today. My name is Dr. Patty O'Neill, and I teach in the Psychology Department at Western Connecticut State University. I am WCSU-AAUP's Chapter President, and I also serve as Western's representative to the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents. I am here to testify about Transform CSCU 2020.

Midway through the third year of the new Connecticut State Colleges and University System, we continue to face challenges in providing a world-class education to our students. Such an education is grounded firmly in the liberal arts, and prepares our students to become engaged and informed citizens. Governor's Bill 30, *An Act Concerning the Board of Regents for Higher Education Infrastructure Act*, is an initial step in addressing some of those challenges. The Bill proposes to increase enrollments at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and prepare tomorrow's workforce. It includes a one-time revenue transfer of \$60 million to create a "President's Office Operating Fund" and proposes to increase capital funding by \$60 million for IT/smart classroom technology and the creation of a system-wide master plan.

I applaud the goals of the Transform CSCU 2020, particularly the focus on maintaining tuition at levels that mean the Connecticut State Universities remain accessible to our students, and the efforts to recruit those who started college but then left. Both of these efforts will help more of our residents complete their degrees, which will have significant positive long-term consequences for the State. An important facet seems to have been overlooked, however: the need for additional full-time faculty and staff to ensure that these efforts are successful. As it is now, the system is too reliant on part-time faculty. It would be most welcome if the state were to make an important investment in the future by providing for additional full-time faculty and staff so that we may continue to support our students in their diverse and often non-traditional path to higher education.

The Connecticut State Universities, the Community and Technical Colleges, and Charter Oak provide three distinct avenues to higher education in Connecticut, each with the ability to transform our student's lives. While we are all under the Board of Regents, it is important to maintain the distinct missions and identities of each of these systems. It is also important to maintain the existing independence between the funding structures for these three types of systems. It will allow us to continue to provide students with the skills and abilities they will need to navigate a globalizing economy, and to transform them into engaged and informed citizens of Connecticut. Governor's Bill 30 is an initial step to supporting such efforts, and I welcome it.

Thank you for your time.

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