



CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

**Testimony of  
Vijay Nair, President  
Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors  
to the  
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
March 12, 2015**

*H.B. 6812: AN ACT CONCERNING FACULTY REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.*

Greetings, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Willis, and members of the Committee. My name is Vijay Nair and I am the President of the Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP), which represents more than 3,100 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.

While I write this in support of H.B. 6812: *An Act Concerning Faculty Representation on the Committees and Subcommittees of the Board of Regents for Higher Education*, I do believe it needs to be revised to say “The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the faculty advisory committee created under section 10a-3a shall serve as ex-officio, nonvoting members of the board for a term of two years and, in their respective roles as chairperson and vice-chairperson, shall be excluded from any executive session, as defined in section 1-200, of the board unless specifically invited to an executive session by the chairperson of the board. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the faculty advisory committee shall each appoint a member of the faculty advisory committee to serve on each standing and special committee of the Board of Regents that does not have cognizance over personnel matters.”<sup>1</sup>

At present, the faculty representatives on the board are forbidden by legislation to attend executive sessions **even if the chairperson of the board wishes either or both of them to attend such a meeting.** There could be occasions in which their presence at an executive session would be of value to the board.

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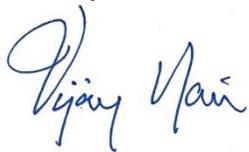
<sup>1</sup> Proposed additions to existing language are indicated by underline.

Collaboration and communication between board members, faculty, and students are vital for the success of any system such as ours. To quote from a report from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges: “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.”<sup>2</sup>

Such meaningful participation by the faculty in decision making is essential for the success of our system. At present, the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the faculty advisory committee (FAC) serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Regents. The vice-chairperson serves on the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the board as a non-voting member, but since that person is from the Connecticut State Universities, this committee has no faculty representation from the Community Colleges. The chairperson of the FAC, who is from the Community Colleges, serves on the Audit Committee as a non-voting member. *Not one of the other standing committees of the board has faculty representation.* Furthermore, while it is in the BOR’s purview to appoint special committees to address subjects or issues outside the scope of the standing committees, there is no provision at present to require faculty representation on such committees. While we do not seek voting rights for faculty representatives on the Board of Regents itself, we strongly believe voting rights for the faculty representatives on the board’s committees are essential to assure the faculty meaningful participation. Ultimate decision making authority rests with the board, not with its committees.

The board and our institutions can only benefit from the expertise and insight that the CSCU faculty are able and willing to bring to the committees’ deliberations. After all, they know the business of our colleges and universities better than anyone: learning, teaching, and research. By passing HB 6812, with the revision we propose, there will be nothing to lose and much to gain.

Thank you for this opportunity to address this important matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vijay Nair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vijay" and the last name "Nair" clearly legible.

Vijay Nair  
CSU-AAUP President

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<sup>2</sup> Schwartz, M., Skinner, R., & Bowen, Z. (2009). *Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. 11.

