

February 10, 2016

**Testimony of Dr. William Lugo, Faculty Advisory Committee Representative to the Board of Regents
and Member of the Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing**

Dear Members of the Appropriations and Higher Education Committees:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to talk today. My name is William Lugo. I am chair of the Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work Department at Eastern Connecticut State University, and a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents and the state's Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing.

The governor is proposing significant cuts to the CSCU system- a system which has already received several cuts and rescissions in the previous two years. This comes at a time when the system is struggling to find its identity, to find permanent leadership, and develop a plan which will guide higher education for Connecticut residents- one that is built on excellence, accessibility and affordability.

Under the leadership of President Ojakian, we are finally in the beginning stages of this process. The administration is ready, the faculty are ready, and our students are ready. The state has also formed a task force to ensure that our outcomes will benefit the state in ways that will not only educate its citizens, but also help the state meet its workforce needs and fiscal responsibilities for the foreseeable future. It has brought every stakeholder to the table in this endeavor. As a member of this task force, it is exciting to see so many pieces of a puzzle coming together for higher education.

I am optimistic the state will fight to protect these resources and that it sees the value in supporting these efforts. There have been thousands of hours in administrative, faculty, staff and legislative time to get to this point, and there are opportunities that have only presented themselves in the last few months, e.g. in the preliminary findings of the Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing. It would be tragic to derail all of these efforts which are poised to bring so much to the state of Connecticut. To divest in higher education now would ensure we remain in a permanent fiscal crisis – where brain drain and lost wages only deepen Connecticut's fiscal woes.

The CSCU system sits at a fragile and exciting time. We have and continue to educate Connecticut's citizens of *all* backgrounds. We look forward to being given the opportunity to continue these efforts and move higher education into a future that works for everyone.