

January 30, 2018

Susan Breault, Director of Marketing and Communications at Quinebaug Valley Community College

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

I am Susan Breault, Quinebaug Valley Community College, director of marketing and communications. I am a member of the 4 Cs union; I do **NOT** have job protection through tenure and per the information I have seen in the Student First consolidation plan, my position will be eliminated at QVCC.

I consider myself to have institutional and system knowledge, as well as a deep understanding of the communities we serve in Windham county and Eastern Connecticut. I have worked at the College for 18 years in a variety of positions including business and industry training, workforce development; enrollment management covering admissions, records and financial aid, and have been the Director of Marketing and Communications, for the College and The QVCC Foundation, for seven years.

The **SYSTEM** will serve approx **77,000** students this spring enrolled in degree programs, of which **58%** are community college students. **I agree that there are benefits to an administrative consolidation of the CSCU SYSTEM**, such as streamlining business processes, reducing duplicate of job functions and achieving economies of scale in purchasing. The original goal presented in spring 2017 was for \$13 million dollars in administrative savings. As of October 2017, the summary of recommendations included the statement “there is intention for reaching the goal **though the timeline may take longer** and alternate strategies may be necessary.”¹ Also stated was, “these strategies whenever possible included all seventeen institutions and system office.”¹

Recommendations were requested via public survey, yet survey results were not shared; an amended proposal has not been distributed system-wide, including a new timeline or improvements to the plan. More importantly the majority of the administrative consolidation is focused on the community colleges and not the system as a whole. This committee should request the detailed financial support and the realistic timeline which supports the statements made in the administrative consolidation plan.

I DO NOT AGREE the “Students First” consolidation plan of the Connecticut Community Colleges has performed due diligence. This plan is not a comprehensive plan without the inclusion of all

1. Student’s First Administrative Planning, October 19, 2017, <http://www.ct.edu/studentsfirst>

2. Messages from President Ojakian, October 2017, <http://www.ct.edu/studentsfirst/about>

3. QVCC Town Hall, April 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crKSOERU99A>

seventeen institutions in the **SYSTEM**. It has been stated that the plan was developed, “in the context of a growing structural deficit, declining state support, and recognition that our **SYSTEM** is unsustainable in both the short and long term without real structural change.”² If this statement were true, the plan would have presented scenarios which including the four state universities as part of a consolidation solution. The plan presented to the BOR finance committee shows \$28 million in NET savings, after a \$42 million dollar investment and the formation of a new “institutional level” college based in Hartford, with 12 locations state-wide. The plan misses the true opportunity costs of a **SYSTEM** consolidation. With the aggressive timeline presented, I’m concerned about the validity of what I have seen as financial support backing up the plan; pressure to move the plan forward and a lack of integrity and transparency.

The consolidation plan titled “Students First” is **NOT INCLUSIVE** of all who are community college students. In addition to the 77,000 degree seeking students this spring, in the last academic year, **29,486 students** were enrolled in **other programs** at Connecticut community colleges. These students were NOT enrolled in degree program yet have the same desire to achieve their life and career goals.² The overarching message delivered by President Ojakian at the 12 community college town halls was, “Strategies presented are not going to impact our students”. Those 29,486 students are not accounted for in this plan. This plan fails to identify how we will best serve **ALL students** including our senior population; the needs of our business partners for training incumbent workers; and the short-term workforce training programs providing the underemployed and unemployed opportunities to return to the workforce.

It is my hope that a more in-depth analysis of the plan is requested not only by this committee, but by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Quoting President Ojakian, “If we are not collectively part of a solution, a solution is going to be given to us.”³ This plan was not collaborative and a solution has been given to us. Although I am part of professional staff at the College, I believe that I am an educator, regardless of my formal title. At QVCC and most community colleges, all employees work daily to help ALL students “achieve their life and career goals”².

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