



**Testimony of Goodwin College in Support of SB 26 & SB 131, AN ACT MAKING PERMANENT THE MORATORIUM ON APPROVAL OF A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PROGRAMS AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION and in Opposition to HB 7088, AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAM APPROVAL AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

**Higher Education & Workforce Advancement Committee Public Hearing February 14, 2019**

On behalf of Goodwin College, I write in support of S.B. 26 (An Act Making Permanent the Moratorium on Approval of a Certain Number of Programs at Independent Institutions of Higher Education) and of S.B. No. 131 (An Act Making Permanent the Moratorium on the Approval of the Office of Higher Education (OHE) for a Certain Number of Programs at Independent Institutions of Higher Education).

Goodwin College has a lengthy and substantive internal review process that makes the OHE program approval process duplicative and unnecessary. For a new program to be approved at Goodwin, it goes through a rigorous vetting process. Goodwin College's new program development concepts require input and approval from faculty, staff, community and industry stakeholders. Curriculum moves through the college's governance process, specifically the New Program and Evaluation Committee, the President's Cabinet, the Board of Trustees (BOT) Academic Subcommittee, Corporate/Industry Programmatic Advisory Boards, Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs Committee, and requires final approval by the Board of Trustees. Our comprehensive review of proposals includes environmental scans and analysis by our Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure there is demand in Connecticut, a financial analysis to ensure viability, and academic reviews for student learning outcomes and assessment. We review our process annually, and we make incremental improvements as part of our internal quality improvement process.

To be exempt from OHE's academic program approval process, an institution must be regionally accredited and in good-standing for ten years or more. Goodwin College is regionally accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), as are the State community colleges and universities along with most private institutions. NECHE has very strong oversight over the institutions it accredits. It is the appropriate entity to monitor the quality of programs at our institution. In addition, the college has 12 programs which have professional accreditation, which adds an additional layer of oversight.

Goodwin is presently working with many employers in the region to be responsive to their needs, and we develop new programs to train the workforce of the future, which provides our students quality job opportunities upon completion. In the 2017-18 program year, the college developed seven (7) new programs in many areas including manufacturing certificates in CNC machining and welding, an accelerated Bachelor Degree in Nursing, Masters in Organizational Leadership and an Insurance Sales Certificate. If we were to be required to put these programs through OHE for approval, it would significantly delay these programs being offered to prospective students for which these programs are in response to local industry needs.

Goodwin opposes HB 7088 which seeks to require OHE to promulgate regulations to govern which institutions are exempt from program approval. In addition to the current requirements already outlined in state statute which govern which institutions are exempt from program approval and which are not,

HB 7088 requires OHE to adopt thresholds for eligibility for program approval around graduation rates, employment outcomes and student loan default rates. These outcomes have no correlation with the academic program approval process. Whether an institution has a high graduation rate and a low default rate has nothing to do with whether or not its programs are reviewed by OHE.

The program approval exemption for private, non-profit colleges that has been in place since 2016 has allowed Goodwin to be more nimble and responsive to student and market demand without compromising quality in any way. It should be made permanent in its existing form as SB 26 and SB 131 have proposed.

Thank you.

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