Representative Haddad, Senator Haskell, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities today.

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) provide affordable, innovative and rigorous programs for students to achieve their personal and career goals as well as contribute to the economic growth of Connecticut. CSCU is comprised of seventeen colleges and universities - four state universities, twelve community colleges, and Charter Oak State College. With both the lowest sticker price and the lowest net price for higher education in Connecticut, CSCU institutions graduate 15,000 students annually.

**SB 750 An Act Concerning the Prevention and Treatment of Mental Illness at Institutions of Higher Education**

We are grateful to the committee for raising this concept and look forward to learning more about the additional language. CSCU is currently doing good work in this area, and is very interested in partnering to do better given the importance of this topic. A number of suicide prevention and other programs exists at our institutions, and the institutions also partner with local nonprofits like Mental Health CT to connect students to services. We are supportive of connecting students to mental illness treatments both off and on campuses and committed to addressing all degrees of mental health. Many of our students are low-income or first generation students who lack adequate supports, making this bill even more crucial. CSCU recognizes access to mental and behavioral health as one of the top barriers to academic success.

**HB 7089 An Act Concerning the Funding and Expansion of Certain Advanced Manufacturing Certificate Programs**

We thank the committee for raising this bill and recognizing the important role our certificate programs play in helping to fill critically needed jobs in Connecticut’s economy. CSCU supports dedicated funding for advanced manufacturing, but we defer to the Department of Revenue Services on the practicality of this approach.

CSCU recently expanded the number of certificate programs from four to eight, recognizing that Connecticut’s manufacturing industry is expected to need between 25,000 and 35,000 new workers in the manufacturing field in the next decade. This one of several real steps we’ve taken to expand training opportunities for Connecticut residents. We’ve doubled enrollment in certificate and incumbent worker manufacturing programs, improving our capacity to provide quality and affordable training for more students. We welcome the opportunity to discuss expanding these offerings and determining the best use of additional funding.