Chronology and Critique of the BOR Plans and Projects, 2010-2018
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What follows is a analysis and critique of the plans and projects of the Board of Regents for
Public Higher Education of Connecticut. It has been prepared by a university faculty member
with 28 years service, and who served for 4 years on System level committees of the previous
Board of Trustees of Connecticut State Universities, and is a member of the university Senate.
Please submit to me any errors or omissions you feel need correction or addition.
Background to the BOR

In 2011, recently elected Gov. Dannel Malloy proposed the creation of a Board of Regents for public higher education (hereafter, BOR), with the stated objectives to save money through centralization of functions and economies of scale, and to assure efficient student transition from community colleges to universities. Initially, it was proposed that UCONN be part of the merged system, but following protest by UCONN this did not occur. That left the four CSU Universities (Southern, Eastern, Central and Western), 12 community colleges, and the Charter Oak State College (distance learning). For an initial period of time the Board of Higher Education reported to the BOR, with the unusual result that program modifications from UCONN were transmitted from the BHE to the BOR of which UCONN was not a part. The BHE, now Office of Higher Education, was subsequently removed from the BOR.

Problems at the previous CSU Board of Trustees

The Connecticut State University System was created in 1983 with a Board of Trustees headed by a President as of the early 1990s, a Chancellor, for the four state universities: Eastern, Central, Western and Southern. The Community Colleges in CT began with the creation of the NorthWest Community College in the 1970s.

The last iteration of the BOT of the four CSU Universities was headed by a Chancellor, David Carter, succeeding its previous chancellor, Bill Cibes (former head of the Office of Policy and Management – OPM - under Gov. Weicker and a political science professor at Connecticut College). Carter was previously a faculty member (education at UCONN) and Pres. Of Eastern Connecticut State University. In 2010 controversy arose over salary raises to senior CSU administrators, including Carter, who in addition received a substantial ($80k) retention bonus for staying on as Chancellor. There was also controversy over a procedure, subsequently ruled to be incorrect under state law, by which the President of Southern Connecticut State University was dismissed by the executive committee of the Board, but not by vote of the whole Board. A campaign for votes of non-confidence in Carter was launched by two faculty members at Southern and at Central, but neither university Senate voted non-confidence. Presentations by the protesters were made to elected officials, including the heads of legislative committees on higher education. The combination of the above factors formed the political backdrop to the newly elected Governor’s proposal to dissolve the BOT of the four CSU’s, and create a merged BOR for public higher education (with UCONN subsequently excused).

Establishment of the Board of Regents

Legislation to consolidate governance of public higher education in CT was passed in 2011, and entered into effect July 1, 2011. (Sec. 10a-1a, Chapt. 185 of the Statutes of the State of Connecticut. The Board consists of up to 21 members representing various constituencies within the state, with the President appointed by the Governor. The Board also has a Chairman, who presides at its meetings; day to day direction is provided by the President.

Major Issues and Events of the BOR

What follows is an effort to summarize, based on documents of the BOR, resolutions of faculty Senate, and reliable online reports of the major issues and events of the BOR:
Multiple Presidents (5) in 6 years at the BOR

The past 7 years is divided into the mandates of the 5 presidents as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07-01-2011</td>
<td>Michael Meotti (interim)</td>
<td>Former Pres. Of United Way, CT; became executive VP under Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-12-2011</td>
<td>Robert A. Kennedy</td>
<td>Formerly Pres. Of the Univ. of Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12-2012</td>
<td>Phillip Austin (interim)</td>
<td>Formerly Pres. Of UConn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-01-2013</td>
<td>Gregory Gray</td>
<td>Formerly Chancellor of Riverside Community College District (3 colleges)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-28-2015</td>
<td>Mark Ojakian (interim)</td>
<td>Formerly Chief of Staff to Gov. Dannel Malloy (Democrat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-06-2017</td>
<td>Mark Okakian</td>
<td>No national search; contract extended 3 years by Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The full title is President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education of the Connecticut States Colleges and Universities. The abbreviation was initially CONNSCU, subsequently changed to CSCU. Of the five presidents, only one – Phillip Austin (interim 2012-2013) had previous experience in public higher education in Connecticut. The following are general issues which have characterized the BOR.

Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs)

Based on legislative intent, the Board has focused on Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs) by which community college students can be advised as to courses to take in their two year stay which would fully transfer (upon completion of their associates degree) to one of the four CSU universities. This work is largely conducted by two faculty members, one from the community colleges and one from a CSU university who are reassigned on a full time (or almost full time) basis to the BOR. A number of these TAPs have been produced, and students are in the “pipeline” to transfer on their basis. It has been noted that this work could and has been done by a very small subset of the over 150 staff at the BOR headquarters. It is not clear how these TAPs once published will be updated to take into account curricular changes at the universities, and whether the TAPs will be in a user-friendly format easily accessible by students; the current multi-page PDF files are not. Moreover, the best case scenario presupposes a number of conditions that may not be met in many (perhaps most) cases:

- 1/ The student entering a community college knows from the start the eventual university major they want to take;
- 2/ The student does not change their mind as to their eventual major;
- 3/ the student remains at the community college until graduation and does not transfer before that;
• Each TAP is continually up to date, reflecting any curriculum change made since its inception at both college and university levels.

In fact, each of the above is false: students typically do not know their proposed major on entering college, often change their mind in the course of their studies, and often transfer to a university once they decide to complete a bachelor’s degree. While it is a goal shared by all to have as seamless a transition from college to university as possible, the cost of the CSCU system to date (about 1/3 of a billion just for the system office, according to its own spreadsheets) does not justify the benefit expected from TAPs. Moreover, what has been accomplished by the TAPs is almost exclusively due to faculty committees in each discipline, and at most two faculty (one from the community colleges and one from the universities) who worked on the TAPs at the system office.

Distinct Missions of the CCs and CSUs

The legislature also intended that the Board clearly distinguish the distinct missions of the Community Colleges on the one hand, and the public CSU universities on the other.

“The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall develop and implement, not later than December 1, 2011, a plan for maintaining the distinct missions of the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College and report on such plan to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and appropriations in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a not later than January 1, 2012, and annually thereafter.”

Ref: https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1c

It has been a consistent complaint of faculty at the universities that the Board in focusing its strategic planning almost entirely on the community colleges, including the current merger plan (“Students First”), has failed to fully understand the teaching, research and community outreach functions of the universities, other than through awards for excellence in teaching and research and conferences already initiated by the preceding BOT/CSU. Moreover, proposals to consolidate the “back offices” of the universities have been seen as infringements of the autonomy of the institutions, especially as concerns financial operations and direct student services such as enrollment and registration.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)

Legislation creating the BOR also created the Faculty Advisory Committee, initially consisting of 7 members: 3 faculty from the community colleges, 3 from the state universities, and 1 from Charter Oak. The following year, 3 additional administrative faculty were added, one each from the CCs, CSUs, and Charter Oak. Additionally, in 2013 and 2014 the Chair and Vice-Chair were admitted as ex-officio, non-voting members of the BOR. They do not participate in closed sessions, but can serve on committees of the Board.

The FAC has acted to advise the Board on matters relevant to faculty (both teaching and administrative) and was very critical of Transform 2020 and “Design Thinking”, as well as significant aspects of “Students First” (to be discussed later in this document). The FAC also
participates in annual conferences on shared governance and student success. Faculty serving on this body have closely followed the work of the BOR and acted as a kind of “loyal opposition” or principled opposition to misguided projects that the BOR has developed, along with suggestions for improvements to existing operations. Note: there is also a Student Advisory Committee, whose Chair and Vice-Chair also sit as ex-officio non-voting members of the Board.

Support Staff for the BOR: numbers and roles

The support staff on Woodland Street for the BOR has increased considerably from that of the previous BOT/CSU, even taking into account the addition of support staff from the previous Community College board. The number of staff, for a Board of just over a dozen members, has oscillated around 150. Currently, the breakdown is as follows for a total of 144 (based on the BOR Directory):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Includes a Vice President for Community Colleges and one for State Universities who are paid salary bonuses above their campus President salaries; two faculty (one CC, one CSU) as transfer articulation managers; and a full time Provost for Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>All CSU campuses have their own facility management teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Second largest department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Smallest unit, along with the next one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Smallest unit, along with preceding one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Largest group, more than at the largest university in the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Affairs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Includes the President and his Chief of staff, and an Associate for Board Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and System Effectiveness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following points are worthy of note: (1) The largest department at the Board is constituted by Information Technology: 67 (or 70 including the three Student/Academic InfoSys staff), accounting for 46.5% of staff (using the lower figure) or 48.6% of staff using the larger figure. This is significantly more IT staff than the largest of the CSU universities, which has over 10,000 FTE and more than 300 full time faculty, as well as a similar number of staff. Some system IT support is required for the BOR itself and for those community colleges which do not manage their own IT – eg, which do not have their own email server, and for the common Banner database for the community colleges. But the total number far exceeds those needs, for a system office on Woodland Street with no faculty and no students.

It is perhaps surprising that the smallest departments at the BOR (other than the single individual servicing the board itself) are Financial Aid and Government Relations, given the obvious importance of these areas.

Note: The number of staff currently at the System Office is lower than when it was first established, as the system office also listed Charts a Course staff (an elementary ed. program) and the Board of Higher Education (now Office), which are no longer part of the CSCU system.

Annual Cost of the System Office

The current “Students First” plan calls for savings in the order of $41 million per year. The System Office itself costs, on average at least $35 million per year. The following are the most recent figures available to this author:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$ 34,644,075</td>
<td>First year of BOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$ 37,765,547</td>
<td>Increase of nearly $3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$ 35,206,076</td>
<td>May reflect removal of BHE and Charts A Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$ 35,022,766</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$ 33,325,376</td>
<td>Decrease of 1.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 (estimated)</td>
<td>$ 38,290,873</td>
<td>Projection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: System Office Spend and Savings – FY10 through FY 15 (Proj) Excel SpreadSheet

Given the bloated size of the staff at the System Office, accounting for the largest fraction of the BOR budget, at app $21 million to $25 million per year, it is safe to estimate 2015-16 and 2016-17 at least at the average for the preceding 5 years, app. $35,000,000. Extrapolated
to the end of the current fiscal year that would make 8 years x $35,000,000 or app. $280,000,000, over $¼ of a billion dollars, for rather slender results – essentially, the failed or failing projects to be listed below, exclusive of the comparatively small amount (essentially, 2 faculty salaries and support staff to assist them) spent on the Transfer Articulation Policies, whose application has only just begun.

**Period of Robert A. Kennedy as President**

The first full time president, Robert A. Kennedy (previously, President of the University of Maine) appointed his interim predecessor, Michael Meotti, as executive Vice President.

Resignation of Robert Kennedy as President

Kennedy, along with Meotti, was forced to resign after just one year, in Oct. 2012 as the result of the following controversies:

a/ Despite a state-wide public sector salary freeze, Kennedy awarded pay raises to executive staff, including $48,000 to VP Meotti;

b/ Pressure by Kennedy and Meotti had been placed on several community college presidents to take “expedited separations” in what was perceived by stakeholders as an attempt to force a consolidation of the community colleges;

c/ Kennedy himself had been absent for 6 weeks from the System Office, on what he termed “professional development” at his summer home in Minnesota. Ref: https://ctmirror.org/2012/10/12/embattled-board-regents-chief-resigns/

**Period of Gregory Gray as President**

Following a national search, Robert A. Gray was appointed President of the BOR in July 2013. He had previously been the chancellor of the Riverside Community College District, which incorporated three community colleges in California. Later that year, in December, Nick Donofrio, a former IBM executive with an information technology/engineering background. At the same time, Donofrio was a senior advisor to KNOD, a private start-up to provide “job-ready” degrees in business, with an initial investment in Malaysia. The group, now defunct, promised the “knodification” of courses as follows: “The Knodafication Process is a 12 Phase system that deconstructs an existing course then re-assembles the course so that all the original course outcomes, objectives, and goals remain the same; however, the Knod version of the course has been enhanced so that the course has a deep integration with Employer-Sponsored Project-Based Learning, modern educational psychology research, and the latest advances in technology, e.g, the Knod Learning System.” (KNOD.net – no longer available). No mention was made of the role of knowledge, nor was the meaning of the mysterious term “knodification” further explained, yet the Chairman of the Board of Regents of public higher education remained as “senior advisor” to this apparently for profit outfit. This conflict of interest was only disclosed by faculty investigation into his background, but was not taken into account during his time as Board Chair, which he occupied until June 2016.
Gray proposed a major reorganization of public higher education known as “Transform 2020”. The plan for the project, for which up to $20 million had been allocated, was outsourced to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a group with no previous experience or knowledge of public higher education in Connecticut. At a cost of more than $1.9 million the BCG produced a total of 36 “Road Maps”, incorporating 743 “Milestones”, most of which were imaginary or unfounded on consultation with faculty and staff at the campuses. At least 12 of the constituent units of ConnSCU (as it was then termed) voted non-confidence. Ref: https://ctmirror.org/2015/08/14/gray-resigns-as-president-of-connecticut-college-system/

Attempted Closing of the Meriden Satellite Campus

In addition, Gray had previously attempted to close the Meriden campus of the Middlesex Community College, located in the district of Sen. Dante Bartolomeo, co-chair of the Higher Education committee. Following disclosure of the plan, the Senate passed a law requiring legislative approval for the closure of any higher education campus. Ref: https://ctmirror.org/2015/04/08/senate-to-rebuke-gray-stop-meriden-campus-closure/

“Go Back to Get Ahead”

Not untypical of specific System Office projects was “Go Back to Get Ahead” which was intended to recruit individuals who had not completed higher education to return to complete their degree, usually an associate’s degree at a community college. Of a $1.5 million allocation for the first year, ½ was spent on software and system office staff. All that remains of this project is a two line web page which states “The Go Back to Get Ahead program has now ended. The Go Back to Get Ahead program received nearly 9,000 inquiries and enrolled over 1,400 Connecticut residents in the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities from June 2014 to March 2015. Thank you to everyone who took part in this program, and each of the seventeen Connecticut State Colleges & Universities.” No further details on retention or graduation rates, or reasons for discontinuing of the program are provided. Ref: https://www.gobacktogetahead.com/

Resignation of Pres. Gray

Faced with the non-confidence votes at CSCU campuses and public dissatisfaction in particular over the BCG contracts, Pres. Gray resigned in mid August 2015, with the following statement: “Please be informed of my intent to resign my position as President for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities as of Dec. 31, 2015.” Ref: Ref: https://ctmirror.org/2015/08/14/gray-resigns-as-president-of-connecticut-college-system/

Period of Mark Ojakian as President

In 2016 Governor Malloy named his former Chief of Staff, Mark Ojakian to head the BOR as President, in the expectation that he would avoid the elementary political mistakes committed by his predecessor Gregory Gray. Pres. Ojakian had no previous experience in public higher education, in Connecticut or elsewhere. Ojakian was initially named as interim President, and then reappointed by the Board for a three year term in 2017. No national or affirmative action search was conducted to fill the post, despite Board policy implemented during the previous

Contract Renewal

One of the first controversies surrounding the new President was the release of the management proposals for the AAUP Collective Agreement between teaching faculty and the CSCU administration. A request to delay release was turned down by the union on the grounds that the BOR knew the deadline and should be prepared. The Board proposal as released had crossed out all mention of travel funds, faculty development funds and other monetary items, eliminating the articles that mentioned them. It also called for management to have the ability to relocate faculty from one university to another, without maintenance of tenure. This and related issues resulted in an unprecedented faculty mobilization and protests at the system office headquarters at Board meetings, despite claims by the President that eliminating the travel, development and other clauses was a “clerical error”. The contract, as finally negotiated, eliminated the forced movement of faculty, restored funding for travel, research and faculty development, extended the contract to five years with the first three at zero pay raises, mandated three furlough days in the current (2017-18) year of the contract, with pay raises in the final two years. Ref: http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/University-faculty-see-wear-red-over-contract-6673972.php

Students First

Pres. Ojakian has focused his energies on a plan known as “Students First” aiming at the consolidation of the community colleges into a single unit, the Community College of Connecticut, and consolidating “back office” functions of the four CSU universities, for a projected $41 million dollars per year savings – just over the amount the CSCU system office itself consumes each year.

Non-Confidence Vote

This plan, like its predecessor “Transform 2020” was developed with little of no campus faculty or regional stakeholder input. Moreover, in requiring consolidation or double-duty for administrative staff, it is in violation of existing collective agreements. Reaction was not long in coming: shortly after the BOR meeting of April 2017, at least one university senate voted non-confidence in the Board for lack of prior consultation with faculty, centralization of needed local functions, unchecked growth of the system office, undemocratic procedures of approval and the overall deleterious effect on constituent campuses. Ref: http://connecticut.cbslocal.com/2017/04/24/ccsu-faculty-votes-no-confidence-in-ojakian-regents/

“Design Thinking”

At about the same time, the Academic Affairs department of the BOR developed a multipage document, entitled “Design Thinking”, which attempted to extend BOR control from back-
office functions to campus teaching, in violation of faculty governance over curriculum. The document advanced the concept of a “network of faculty” across the institutions, in opposition to institutional autonomy. The document met with unanimous condemnation by all faculty who spoke at the May 2017 meeting of the BOR. Ref: https://ctmirror.org/2017/05/11/another-day-another-flare-up-between-ojakian-cscu-faculty/

“Student Success Through Quality Instruction”

At its June 2017 meeting the Board of Regents of CSCU, a presentation was made, entitled “Student Success Through Quality Instruction” by the ACUE (Association of College and University Educators), which aims to “better support CSCU’s 6,700 (sic) faculty, to make instructional quality a strategic driver of student retention, graduation and learning”. ACUE is a recently organized association directed by former higher education administrators, and headed by an individual (Jonathan Gyorko) who has previously supplied “educational services” to the State of Connecticut, and is currently suing the state for non-payment of fees. The program involves -- at a cost reported to be in the millions of dollars, supposedly to be paid by external donors -- teaching faculty the basics of “preparing an effective syllabus”, “motivating your students”, “delivering an effective lecture”, etc., all of which fall within existing faculty competences and which are evaluated and assisted at the institutional level through existing structures.

This project has been tried out on a provisional basis at two community colleges and two CSU universities, with results unknown and never communicated. At least one CSU university has rejected participation in the project as: “… unnecessary and redundant to existing university-based programs and criteria for evaluating and improving teaching; developed without faculty consultation; and involving external funding and influence over teaching, an area of exclusive faculty control.” Ref: http://web.ccsu.edu/facultysenate/files/Supporting_Documents_2017-18/Resolution%20in%20Opposition%20to%20CCSU%20Participation%20in%20the%20ACUE.pdf

Information Technology

As with the previous BOT/CSU, the BOR/CSCU continues to favor proprietary software costing in the tens of millions of dollars (including maintenance and upgrades) over equivalent open-source software available at a mere fraction of the cost (with no purchase fee). Recent projects include the upgrade of the Banner database management system, which exists in 5 instances (one for the CCs, 4 for the CSUs: one each). Provided by the Ellucian Co., this software provides access modules and front-end presentations (on desktops/laptops, tablets and even cell phones). The initial cost has been bonded at $15 million dollars; final cost may be up to $30 million (Bonding Commission, Jan. 2017, Acct. No. 17171-CCC78000-43360) It is not clear that competitive bidding was involved, or that less expensive software was considered. A planned upgrade for the Blackboard course management system would also likely be in the millions to tens of millions, when open-source and equally if not more reliable software used by larger university systems is available at a fraction of the overall cost (eg: Moodle), as well as OpenOffice (replacing Microsoft Word) and many others.

As noted above, the largest department at the System Office is Information Technology – even though the SO does not directly service any classes. Many if not most of that staff could be employed filling vacancies at the campus level, with at most a significantly smaller group
to service otherwise unmet community college needs and the specific needs of SO staff. Yet at the same time the System Office of the BOR is once again hinting at centralization of campus level Information Technology services, despite the well known aphorism that IT help is local. An attempt to centralize IT by the previous BOT/CSU known as the “SITES” project failed due to its violation of existing collective agreements and opposition at the campus level from both IT staff, faculty, and campus administrations.

NEASC Concerns

A preliminary version of the proposed reorganization was submitted to NEASC, the accrediting body for colleges and universities in the North East US. In response, a two page letter was sent by NEASC to Pres. Ojakian indicating: (1) insufficient details were provided to allow for even a preliminary response, and (2) there are concerns about institutional governance and shared governance (eg: faculty responsibility for curriculum). NEASC further notes that while the BOR had made clear its financial reasons for the proposed CC merger, it was “less clear” on the academic rationale linked to the college’s mission. Moreover, on the proposed $13 million “administrative consolidation”, the NEASC report states “It is not clear from the information presented to date that the anticipated savings will be sufficient to do anything than eliminate the deficit and consequently, it is not clear how the proposed merger will result in an improved educational experience for the students.” P. 3) In short, that the BOR had not made its case for “students first”. Ref: Letter of Aug. 11, 2017 from David Angel, on behalf of NEASC, to Mark Ojakian).

Student First Planning Teams

In order to placate clearly expressed concern and opposition to Students First, the BOR established 6 “planning teams” consisting of selected administrators, faculty and staff from various campuses (community college and universities) to come up with the proposed savings in Students First: $28 million from the community colleges through consolidation into one institution, and $13 million from consolidation of “back office” functions at the universities (which would remain distinct institutions). The results did not meet expectations, failing to indicate how the total of $41 million annual savings could be achieved: Ref:

http://www.ct.edu/studentsfirst/planning

An examination of the six reports indicates the following:

1) Facilities Management: Almost all of “cost savings” is to be due to campus level reductions: eg $1.5 millions from limiting facilities overtime, and $2.05 millions from energy conservation, none of which is due to centralization of anything. Most of the rest of the projected “saving” is due to position attrition or elimination of positions at specified community colleges. Note: There will be a “System Office new Project Manager position” for $170,000 (non-saving or COST).

2/ Financial aid: centralization will COST $883,000 including $308,000 for out-sourcing of a “verification plan” to a third party vendor and another $75,000 for outsourcing of a “financial literacy plan”. Savings of $2,000,000 (exactly!) are projected revenue increase due to increased enrollment – not because of better institutional outreach and recruitment by institutions, but ”due to improved verification and timing” (plans for which are to be out-sourced).
3/ Financial affairs: $1.4 million from “purchasing efficiencies”, $1.3 million from 5% personnel reduction. Additional savings are not specified and the report simply notes: “We are committed to achieving this level of savings at a rate that is practicable”.

4/ Human resources: Savings of $400,000 to $500,000 by elimination of 4 positions; long term savings (not defined) due to “functioning as a coherent whole, rather than as 17 separate operations.

5/ Information technology: $1.1 million from eliminating “duplicate operations across the administrative systems”, including $330,000 from cell phones savings (reduction in the number used).

6/ Institutional research: The report has many administrative diagrams (organigrams) but no indication of any $ savings.

It is clear from this summary that (a) The working groups were unable to find the targeted savings through consolidation of “back office” functions; (b) some reports propose increased costs (eg: Facilities Management for the system office project manager, and Financial Aid for two “financial literacy” and “timing” reports to be outsourced), a total of nearly $1 million of additional costs; (c) the project overall increases System Office staffing and aims at control via centralization of functions needed at the campus level.

CT Community College Management Consolidation

Most recently, the BOR received a report (in the form of a PowerPoint presentation) entitled: “Students First: CT Community College Management Consolidation”. This report specifies organizational diagrams for the prospective “CT Community College Model” and forms the basis of the work plan leading to approval of the merged community college system:

1/ The current organization of one CSCU President (Ojakian) and 12 Community College Presidents (CEOs), each assisted by a CFO (chief financial officer) and CAO (chief academic officer: perhaps a dean in some cases) would be replaced by one Chancellor, assisted by a Vice Chancellor, a CCC (Community College of Connecticut) Provost, a CFO, a Vice-President for Enrollment Management and 3 Regional Presidents, as the 12 community colleges would be regrouped in three regions. For example, North West Community College would be in Region 2.

2/ Each Community College would have a “campus” Vice President; for each of three regions, the Regional President would double as the campus Vice-President.

3/ Detailed organigrams for the larger and smaller/medium CCs are also included. For example, a larger campus (5 campuses, eg Norwalk) would have Deans for Student and Academic Affairs; “smaller/medium” campuses would have only a Dean for Student and Academic Affairs (7 campuses, eg: NWCC). All campuses would have Associate Deans, at least 3 in all cases.

Upon analysis, this appears to be a shifting of names rather than a significant reduction of positions. The 12 current Presidents are replaced by 12 campus Vice Presidents, three of
whom are also Regional Presidents. Chief Academic Officers are apparently eliminated from each campus, but two Deans are maintained for larger campuses (2 x 5), and one Dean for smaller ones (1 x 7). Thus there are 12 Vice-Presidents and 17 Deans who are retained.

The only place where significant reductions seem to occur is for CFOs, but the organigram presented for current community colleges does not explicitly specify their positions and it is unclear how many of them there currently are (presumably, at most one per campus). How financial operations are to be handled is also unclear, though if the System Office staff were to handle this, additional positions might be needed, and campus level implementation and control of financial decisions would be compromised.

The organigrams for the campuses (large and small/medium) are also vague as to “Regional/System Positions” which are indicated as Institutional Research, Human Resources, Finance Support and System IT, with an equally vague statement: “Possibilities will exist for position sharing across campuses”. Whether local campuses will retain their current names is not explicitly stated. Ref: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0T3NPgtzt06UjVUOHgtaDk2bjU3anE4YUxqaGFLNjBEUNnN3/view

The BOR Proposal to NEASC

Pres. Ojakian presented the plan for consolidating the 13 commutnity colleges into one in a 272 page document, “CSCU Substantive Change request document entitled Students First: Securing Connecticut’s Future through Excellence in Higher Education” dated March 16, 2018. The plan would divide the proposed Community College of Connecticut into three regions, with 4 former colleges in each. Colleges were designated as “small”, “medium” or “large” for numbers of secondary administrators (see below); each region would be headed by a Regional President (3 additional positions) and the whole college by a College President (distinct from the President of the BOR). This would in fact add two additional layers of management to the current structure. Each college would in addition have a Vice-President.

One of the most contentious aspects of the plan was a proposal to eliminate division directors and department chairs who presently are selected (or elected) from amongst faculty and provided with appropriate “reassigned time” to accomplish their coordinating duties. The plan would replace these chairs with associate deans, appointed by management. (Substantive Change, pp. 47-48). Part time faculty currently replacing full time faculty on reassigned time would lose their teaching assignments, and new associate deans would have to be hired – 2 each at “small” community colleges, 3 at “medium” and 4 at “large” colleges (Substantive Change, p. 51). Not only would such a measure reduce faculty governance over curriculum, it would cost an additional $3.9 million dollars annually. (See attachment: “Yearly Cost of Eliminating Department Chairs and Division Directors as Described in CSCU’s NEASC Substantive Change Request” by a member of the the FAC council).

Overall, the plan involved eliminating 163 administrative positions (not specified) for a net saving of $23 million in salary and fringe benefits (p. 83), but would involve creating 80 new positions, at a cost of $9.8 million (salary and fringes) at the central office (Appendix GG-2), and 28 positions at the various community college, at a cost of $3.6 million. (Appendix GG 3-5). A total of 61 positions would be transferred from the central office to the regions or campuses, including 41 from Information Technology (Appendix GG-2)
NEASC Rejection and Pres. Ojakian’s Response:

NEASC in its response of April 24, 2018 turned down the BOR proposal as unrealistic and potentially disorderly, given the magnitude of the proposed changes, and not a “substantive change” which would allow the BOR to retain individual accreditations during the transition process. The BOR would have to apply for accreditation as an entirely new institution.

“While the Commission appreciates the considerable work done already to develop a proposal that addressed both the significant financial challenges faced by the twelve community colleges and the importance of improving student success the Commission was not persuaded that planning for the new Community College of Connecticut as outlined in the Students First report is realistic.

“The Commission determined that the Community College of Connecticut will be a new institution, and not a "substantive change" for the current twelve separately accredited community colleges. Therefore, in order to become accredited, the Community College of Connecticut will need to go through our established processes to become a candidate for accreditation and then an accredited institution. Because of the magnitude of the proposed changes the proposed timeline, and the limited investment in supporting the changes the Commission is concerned that the potential for a disorderly environment for students is too high for it to approve the proposed Community College of Connecticut as a candidate for accreditation based on this proposal.” (letter from David P. Angel on behalf of NEASC, April 24, 2018)

President Ojakian issued his response that same day:

“Today, NEASC has issued a response to our Students First consolidation plan. It is not the decision that is best for our students, nor is it the decision for which we had hoped. This decision by NEASC is devastating to our ability to hold the line on tuition and keep all campuses open. In the face of an on-going fiscal emergency, it forces us to consider options that we have strongly fought against because it will harm the 50,000 students who rely on their campuses and their campus communities.

“Since April of 2017, NEASC has guided us and included in that guidance was the recommendation that CSCU submit a “substantive change” document for review and approval. Given that NEASC has voiced concern about our institutions’ sustainability, and is fully aware that they cannot financially survive in their current structure on their own, we followed their advice every step along the way. While we expected further guidance, we did not expect NEASC to redirect us to consider “candidacy for accreditation”, a new process that will take another 5 years. The problems that our institutions and students face cannot wait 5 years. In 5 years, our institutions will be financially insolvent.

“In the coming days we will review all of our options including legislative and accrediting options, a review of tuition rates, and the closing of one or more of our campuses.” (email of April 24, 2018)

The explicitly made threat to raise tuition and close campuses was not well received, and resulted in further motions of non-confidence, including one call for Pres. Ojakian’s resignation.
Resolutions of Non-Confidence and Calls for Resignation

The first CSCU institution to pass a resolution of condemnation was CCSU: “Resolution Calling for the Resignation of President Ojakian, a complete halt to "Students First"; and Full Funding for Public Higher Education in Connecticut.” This resolution also called for a halt to further Students First planning and to any “back office” consolidation at the four CSU universities, and called upon the legislature to consider abolishing the Board of Regents, to be replaced by structures that would respect the distinct missions of the community colleges and universities, as required by the legislature. (see attached, Approved and forwarded from the Council of Chairs at CCSU (12-2, with 2 abstentions, April 26) and Approved by the CCSU Senate (38-1, secret ballot, April 30):

(1) “calls upon Pres. Ojakian to resign and that Board name no permanent replacement until after the Nov. elections when a new governor and legislature in place can reconsider the role and structure of CSCU in light of the costs and problems in its seven-year history;

(2) calls upon the Board to refuse any proposal to increase student tuition or close any community college; and instead to seek to fully fund public higher education through the state budget and fund raising;

(3) calls upon the Board to commit to no further plans of "systemization" such as Transform 2020, "Design Thinking", or "Students First"; and in particular, to stop any plans or ongoing efforts to consolidate support staff, eliminate chairs, or consolidate programs and courses across the four CSU universities or CSCUwide;

(4) calls for consideration by the legislature to abolishing the Board of Regents to be replaced by a structure or structures that will respect the distinct missions of the community colleges and universities and reduce the bureaucracy on Woodland Street, thereby saving tens of millions of dollars, and assuring the autonomy and integrity of the community colleges and the state universities.”

Norwalk Community College passed a resolution: “Calling for the Dissolution of the Students First Workgroups and Other Related Entities and the Restructure of System Office and the BOR” on May 16, 2018, as follows:

(1) “calls for the Students First General Education Workgroup to cease and desist in its effort to create a single common general education core for the individually accredited colleges;

(2) calls for the dissolution of all committees, workgroups and other related entities that were created specifically to address the “Students First Consolidation” plan; and

(3) calls for the restructure of the System Office to remove unnecessary and duplicative managerial staff that will allow the individually accredited institutions to be responsible for their own management. In addition, the Board of Regents should only be responsible for strategic direction, non-academic system policies and interaction with the legislature. These actions would save millions of dollars while promoting the autonomy and the integrity of the colleges and universities.”
Also on May 16, 2018 the Three Rivers Community College voted:

(1) “that the College Congress joins with their colleagues at other state colleges and universities in expressing their dissatisfaction with the lack of effective leadership and direction of the current CSCU President and Board of Regents; and,

(2) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the College Congress strongly encourages the State Legislature to take immediate steps to correct both the fiscal shortfalls and organizational ineffectiveness that have hampered publicly funded post-secondary education, particularly since the creation of a single Board of Regents."

Regionalization of the Community Colleges:

While under many circumstances the rejection of the community college consolidation plan by NEASC, and numerous votes of non-confidence in Pres. Ojakian and the Board would have brought about serious reconsideration of the structure and plans, Pres. Ojakian has persisted in his objective of a single community college. NEASC’s clear rejection of the plan becomes just a statement of “concerns”, and the planned consolidation is put off to 2023, with in the meantime a “revised” plan to create three regional structures as an intermediate step to full consolidation. The revised plan would have a “CEO” at each of the 12 campuses, rather than a President or Vice-President, organized into three regions each with a regional president and would save $17 rather than the initially proposed $23 million a year.

As is typical of all plans associated with “Students First” the emphasis is on financial considerations, with no specifics as to how the content of education would be improved (only its standardization and modes of delivery). The table of revenues and expenses included with “Students First” predicts, based on inadequate state funding, that the “unrestricted reserves” of the community colleges (currently at $45 million) will cease to compensate for overall losses by FY21, with deficit figures of $20 million for that year, and $43 million projected for FY22 (“Students First”, appendix HH). This assumes a steady increase in salary and fringe benefits, combined with a an “increase” of state funding to the general fund of less than $3 million dollars over a 5 year period, with decreases in FY18 and FY19, increases in FY20 and FY21, held flat in FY22. No account is taken of requesting full funding from the state and institutional fund raising.

In a document dated June 18, 2018, Pres. Ojakian stated that after further consultations, the revised plan would “extend our timeline for the single accredited community college to 2023 thereby keeping the 12 accreditations of the colleges, develop a more gradually paced academic planning and transition process, and maintain the current department chair structure. The revised plan is estimated to save $17M when fully implemented versus the $23M as originally proposed. The resolution approving the revised plan was approved at the BOR meeting of June 21:

‘RESOLVED, that based on the above-referenced deliberations, the Board of Regents for Higher Education endorses the attached Students First revised plan to prepare for a singly accredited community college by:

• maintaining the accreditations of the 12 community colleges until fall 2023 when all integrated academic, student support services are in place, and CSCU
has worked with NEASC on a process to achieve a single accreditation;
• reorganizing our college system regionally with new leadership structure;
• aligning college curricula statewide, while addressing local and regional distinctiveness, to support high quality educational programs and seamless transfer, including adoption of a statewide general education curriculum;
• implementing initiatives such as guided pathways to improve and increase student enrollment, retention, and completion;
• integrating administrative functions into centralized shared services; and
• sharing resources across campuses to stabilize critical college functions, reduce redundancies, and leverage expertise.” (Agenda for June 21 meeting)

As is usual the vote was unanimous. When an earlier vote on the previous Students First was approved with a single abstention (Mr. McGurkin), the abstaining voter was not renewed as a member of the Board.

**Outsourcing the Financing of College Education Reform**

Of interest is one of the sub-items: “adoption of a statewide general education curriculum”. On June 26, 2018 under the logo of Fairfield County’s Community Foundation and SVP Connecticut (Social Venture Partners), CSCU announced “Today, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities announced that it has formed a partnership with the philanthropic group Social Venture Partners (SVP) – a program and field of interest fund of Fairfield County’s Community Foundation. SVP has donated $62,500 and pro bono consulting to continue Guided Pathways efforts at CSCU’s Student Success Center. The grant will support three teams of CSCU faculty, staff, and administrators working throughout the summer on redesigning students’ first year experience, general education core, and academic and career planning. “

How the sum of $62 thousand dollars from an outside donor would suffice to reorganize all of first year experience, a complicated issue involving preparation and retention of students, the general education core, a much debated and often controversial issue at the best of times, and both academic and career planning is not stated; nor does it seem plausible. Moreover, like the earlier “Design First” the plan circumvents faculty procedures for governance over curriculum.

**Low Enrollment Programs**

Recently, the BOR attempted to determine how “low enrollment” programs at both the community colleges and universities would be handled, claiming that it (the Board) could determine whether to continue, suspend or eliminate low enrollment programs, using criteria developed by the system office without consultation with the various institutions (“Undergraduate Certificate: 12 (avg. 4 per year); Bachelor’s Degree 30 (avg. 10 per year); Masters Degree Post-Master 15 (avg. 5 per year); Doctoral 3 (avg: 1 per year)”. The numbers do not take into consideration the student enrollment at each university, and whether the number proposed to designate “low enrollment” is consistent with standards nation-wide for each discipline and type of institution. Moreover the BOR itself cannot decide the future of any program, as this is reserved, in the case of the universities, to the institutions themselves, using a procedure defined by article 5.20 of the CSU/AAUP Collective Agreement. This overreach by the Board was rejected by university resolutions (see Resolution Opposing the CT/BOR Academic Program/Low Enrollment Process, reproduced in the appendix).
Multiplication of Levels of Bureaucracy

The latest BOR proposal to regionalize the community colleges as a transition to centralizing them in one state-wide institution calls for the creation of two additional levels of Presidents: regional presidents and an overall community college president. This will make for four levels of bureaucracy: the President of the BOR, the Community College President, the Regional Presidents, and the CEOs of each community college (formerly, presidents. Each level will require secretaries and executive assistants, adding to an already overgrown bureaucracy directed from the system office. Just the cost of 5 Presidents (BOR, regions and institutions) and at least 12 campus CEOs will add millions to the cost of public higher education in the state. The BOR recently began to advertise for the regional presidents. See the announcement at http://www.ct.edu/regionalpresidentsearch

Centralization of University Functions

The argument can be made that some regionalization of services would be helpful at the community college level, it should be clear from what precedes that this cannot be done top-down, imposed by remote officials at the system office, but needs to be done “bottom-up” based on bilateral and multilateral agreements that take into account real opportunities. But the four CSU universities are already regional institutions. The current efforts by the BOR to centralize university functions such as Institutional Research will only serve to hinder the development and deployment of policies specific to each institutions. The Board proposal to begin university “back office” centralization, with a “dotted-line” system office report by CCSU and other university staff is detrimental to the autonomy of the institutions, and has been rejected by university Senate resolutions (see Resolution of Nov. 26, 2018 in the appendix to this document).

Given all of the above, it is time to re-assess the merger of the Community Colleges and the CSU universities, and consider alternatives to a broken, wasteful system that hinders rather than helps public higher education in the state.

Some Conclusions

1. The “merging” of the Community Colleges and the four state CSU state universities has resulted in a succession of presidents (five in seven years), and a bloated system office bureaucracy (averaging 150 in any given year, currently 144), for an annual cost of app. $35 million and more than $ ¼ billion over its brief lifetime – an unstable leadership (5 Presidents in 7 years) combined with excessive costs.

2. One of the major reasons for the merging – efficient and transparent student transfer of credits from the CCs to the CSUs – has resulted in Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs) – developed largely by two faculty assigned to the System Office, at a fraction of the overall cost of the BOR. Moreover, the efficacy of this program has yet to be demonstrated.

3. The BOR has almost entirely failed to uphold the legislative mandate of distinguishing between the distinct mandates of the CCs and that of the CSUs and has focused instead on “merging” the two distinct areas of public higher education.
4. Faculty serving on Faculty Advisory Committee have closely followed the work of the BOR and acted as a principled opposition to misguided projects that the BOR has developed, along with suggestions for improvements to existing operations. The Board, despite advice to the contrary, has persisted in failed or failing projects which put in jeopardy academic excellence, institutional autonomy and shared governance.

5. Transform 2020, the first major initiative of the BOR was a failure, misspending nearly $2 million on an out-sourced plan which failed to incorporate faculty input, which was unrealistic and rejected by faculty, resulting in system-wide votes of non-confidence and the resignation of the President.

6. The second major initiative of the BOR “Students First” suffers from many of the same problems as the preceding Transform 2020 – with no faculty input at its inception, outsourcing of finance plans to third parties, increased hiring for the System Office and attempts to centralize campus support staff along with possible “position sharing” across campuses; non-respect of the collective agreement for administrative faculty, non-respect of teaching faculty governance over curriculum, concerns expressed by the NEASC accrediting agency, and planning team reports which fail to account for the projected $41 million in annual savings.

7. The consolidation of community colleges into a single institution does not significantly reduce the number of executive positions, and so does not produce its expected major part of the $28 million per year savings; moreover, it does not take into account the role of community colleges as local institutions with local stakeholder financial and civic support.

8. The revised plan for regionalization as a stage towards consolidation, now put off to 2023, remains unrealistic, with up to 100 new positions, massive consolidation of academic programs with outside funding, and projections that do not take into account more adequate state funding and college foundation fund raising.

9. The planned consolidation of “back office” operations of the four CSU universities will not produce the expected $13 million in savings, and is detrimental to the autonomy of the institutions, in particular local control over financial operations in order to implement campus policies, and local offering of information technology services and support.

10. The system office was unwilling to consider cost-saving measures such as a significant reduction in its own IT staff, many if not most of whom would be better employed filling vacancies and needs at the campus level. The latest plan takes the opposite approach: eliminating all central IT positions in favor of institutional ones, with no indication of how this is to be done. No consideration is given to additional and substantial savings could be achieved through the use of open-source software which is inexpensive, scalable and secure.

11. The System Office is cut off from the academic reality of the constituent institutions, as evidenced by the ill-conceived “Design Thinking”, dubious outsourcing of development of teaching skills proposed in “Student Success Through Quality Instruction”, and most recently the “joint venture” with Social Venture Partners for consolidation of first year
experience, general education core, and academic and career planning, without respect for faculty governance and procedures for curriculum revision.

12. Overall, the CONNSCU/CSCU “experiment” has cost $¼ of a billion dollars just for System Office operations, and within a short time (by 2019) will reach 1/3 of a billion, with very few positive results (other than the TAPS, with application still to be seen).

13. The BOR has generated controversy and after controversy with little or no progress towards real accomplishments that substantially improve public higher education; it has wasted tens and indeed hundreds of millions of dollars, along with the time spent developing failed or failing projects, indicating that the decision to establish it needs to be reviewed, and simpler, more responsive and less expensive structures developed to replace it.

A simplified Alternative

What might this look like? Here is a simplified initial proposal:

1. Eliminate the merged System Office and Board of Regents, and either (1) restore Board of Trustees, one each for the Community Colleges and the State Universities or (2) establish regional boards for the Community Colleges and one board each for the CSU universities. The Boards should focus on assisting their institutions in establishing regional cooperation with businesses and communities, raise money, and provide final approval for graduation of students, and the hiring and promotion of faculty. They should not meddle in academic affairs, best left to the local autonomy of the institutions. Every effort should be made to reduce administrative bloat at all levels.

2. Limit the number of support staff to a fraction of those currently employed and impose a maximum size and budget for each of the two System Offices, taking into account only needed functions which do not duplicate already existing ones at the campus level. Rather than centralizing with resultant bureaucratic bloat, decentralize to produce real savings.

3. The University System office would only require a small team of IT personnel to serve the needs of the Board and its staff; the rest could be offered positions at the campus level as these become available through retirements or resignations. The Community College System office would require a larger IT staff as some community colleges do not have their own email servers or other IT services; but the grossly inflated 67 member IT department would be considerably reduced.

4. Replace costly and burdensome proprietary software in areas where comparable open-source software is available which is scalable and secure.

5. Eliminate all out-sourcing of academic planning and project management by consulting groups and third parties; there are sufficient resources within the systems to accomplish these tasks if these tasks are conducted with real, not sham consultation of all stakeholders.

6. The Transfer Articulation process should be maintained as a working group established between the State University and the Community College systems, with (as at present) a small number of teaching faculty assigned to the task, with some support staff for
technical needs, all of which would be under the supervision of the Chancellors of the two systems.

7. Savings in the millions, and more likely the tens of millions per year could thereby be achieved without consolidating or closing any campuses, consolidating “back offices” at universities or diverting needed campus funds to system operations.

David Blitz, draft 7, Feb. 2019

Annex: CCSU Senate Resolutions 2017-18 in Opposition to the BOR

In the following pages I reproduce five resolutions critical of the BOR passed by the CCSU Senate in the last two years:

Nov. 2018: Resolution to Freeze Hiring and Consolidation by the BOR
Sept. 2018: Resolution Rejecting the BOR “Low Enrollment” Policy
July 2018: Resolution Requesting that NEASC Reject “Students First”
April 2018: Resolution Calling for the Resignation of the President of the BOR
Oct. 2017: Resolution Rejecting the Proposed “ACUE” Program
April 2017: Resolution Rejecting “Students First”
Resolution to Freeze BOR activities

Whereas the CCSU Faculty Senate has approved motions sanctioning the Board of Regents of CSCU on numerous occasion: for its Transform 2020 and Students First failed multi-million dollar projects, and for Design Thinking proposals and Low Enrollment policies that infringe on our institutional autonomy in curriculum and academic affairs;

Whereas the BOR continues to implement its Students First program aimed at forcing the fusion of all Community Colleges into a single institution, despite the negative judgment by NEASC that the project is unrealistic and unfeasible; including efforts to consolidate all of General Education across the community colleges without faculty governance, impose three new regional Presidents, and downgrade community college leadership to CEO status;

Whereas the BOR of CSCU also continues its efforts to impose centralization of administrative services at the university level, including Human Resources and Institutional Research at CCSU;

Whereas the BOR has issued a “white paper” which does not include the major requests made in the CCSU submission to the system office;

Whereas the BOR system office has consumed over $300 million since its inception in 2011, at the same time that we face a fiscal shortfall for the universities and community colleges;

Be it resolved that the CCSU Senate urges that the outgoing Governor freeze all administrative hiring by the BOR and all consolidation of academic and administrative programs by the BOR until these issues can be addressed by the incoming governor and legislature;

And further be it resolved that the CCSU Senate proposes the re-establishment of separate Boards of Trustees for the Community Colleges and State Universities, with a strict limitation on the size of each to functions not otherwise performed at the institutional levels, or the establishment of separate boards for each campus with no central office, except to the extent that individual campuses opt to form consortia for specific functions.

Approved by unanimous vote, CCSU Faculty Senate, Monday, Nov. 26, 2018
RESOLUTION OPPOSING the CT/BOR

“Academic Program/Low Complete Review Process”

WHEREAS initiation of program termination is a university responsibility to be initiated by faculty and conducted at the university level, as specified by Article 5.20 of the Collective Agreement:

“5.20 A department, interdisciplinary program, University-wide Curriculum Committee, the Senate or the President may initiate a recommendation for program discontinuance. If a recommendation for discontinuance originates from a source other than the Curriculum Committee or Senate, as appropriate, it shall be submitted in writing to the Curriculum Committee or Senate as appropriate. Once it has received or initiated a recommendation for program discontinuance, within sixty (60) days during the academic year, the Curriculum Committee or Senate as appropriate shall investigate the impact of such discontinuance and make its recommendations to all affected parties. Assessment of such program discontinuance proposals by all parties shall include consideration of recommendations, the President shall take appropriate action, including appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees. If program discontinuance would result in involuntary separation of a full-time member, said discontinuance shall not occur except pursuant to the provisions of Article 17.”

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees has directed that a process of LOW COMPLETER assessment of programs be initiated by the BOR which does not refer to this article of the Collective Agreement (CT/BOR “Academic Program/Low Completer Review Process”, no date, but likely summer 2018).

WHEREAS the document establishes LOW COMPLETER criteria based on numbers for “credentials conferred” over a three year period with no justification for the numbers, either in comparison to other similar institutions or in comparison to the number of students in the program, eg: “Undergraduate Certificate: 12 (avg. 4 per year); Bachelor’s Degree 30 (avg. 10 per year); Masters Degree Post-Master 15 (avg. 5 per year); Doctoral 3 (avg: 1 per year)”

WHEREAS the BOR document requires the institution's Chief Academic Officer to recommend a course of action for LOW COMPLETER programs (termination, suspension, consolidation or continuation) directly to the BOR, without further consideration of contractual due process as specified by Article 5.20 of the Collective Agreement

BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSU Senate rejects this BOR interference in academic programming, which is and remains a matter of faculty governance over curriculum, with due consideration for the role of the university president.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CCSU requests that the Board of Regents cease further interference in institutional affairs pending a review of the mandate and existence of the Board, as affirmed by previous resolutions of the CCSU Senate.
Faculty Senate
Central Connecticut State University

On the Matter of “Students First”: A Pending Proposal before the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Central Connecticut State University reaffirms its serious commitment to the principle of shared governance of Connecticut public universities and community colleges; and

WHEREAS the Board of Regents (BOR) for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System and its President Mark Ojakian have launched the “Students First” Initiative, which attempts to consolidate the administrative infrastructure and academic programs of the 12 community colleges that are part of the system; and

WHEREAS it is public knowledge that the CSCU administration of has submitted a preliminary plan outlining the goals, objectives, methods and structure of “Students First” to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC); and

WHEREAS this plan did not include input from any committee or faculty body representing either the community colleges or the four universities that comprise the system despite President Ojakian and the BOR’s commitment to do so when the initiative was first announced; and

WHEREAS CCSU’s Faculty Senate has been privy to NEASC’s initial response to the plan and shares many of the concerns raised in that response; and

WHEREAS our current understanding of “Students First” leads us to believe that it is a flawed initiative that lacks a coherent rationale, accurate financial data, and sound academic assessment evidence that would justify such a radical proposition that will result in the dismantling of the twelve community colleges; and

WHEREAS the proposed savings said to result from the consolidation of the community colleges have not been factually demonstrated by Mr. Ojakian and the BOR and the plan, to the extent that it has been made available to CSCU’s academic constituents including the Connecticut State Universities, seems to be ill conceived and structured; and

WHEREAS this consolidation plan will further increase the administrative infrastructure of the CSCU System Office at the expense of the academic units that comprise the system and the sound education of the students we are committed to educate; and
WHEREAS in order to protect and defend the autonomy and integrity of the missions of the universities, we reject any effort to consolidate so-called “back office” support staff and operations at the universities, and/or require them to double-report to the individual university and the System Office; and

WHEREAS the “Students First” plan will have a negative impact on many of the academic programs offered in the four state universities that receive hundreds of transfer students every year from the community colleges and that impact has not been adequately assessed and analyzed;

BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSU Faculty Senate requests that NEASC not grant provisional accreditation to the Connecticut Community College under the current proposal submitted by Mr. Ojakian and the Board of Regents as this has the potential to undermine the entire CSCU system to the detriment of its student body and the effectiveness of its institutions.
Resolution Calling for the Resignation of President Ojakian, a complete halt to "Students First"; and Full Funding for Public Higher Education in Connecticut:

Whereas Pres. Ojakian's plan for Community College Consolidation has been rejected by NEASC as unrealistic for its planned two-year implementation, disrespectful of faculty control of curriculum, unjustified in eliminating department chairs, and unclear as to how multi-campus programs would be overseen;

Whereas Pres. Ojakian's reaction to the rejection of “Students First” is to threaten that he now "cannot hold the line on tuition and keep all campuses open" (email of May 24 to faculty);

Whereas we cannot permit Pres. Ojakian to react to the NEASC decision in a way that punishes students and their campuses, with the consequent irreparable loss of institutions of public higher education in Connecticut;

Whereas "Students First" also proposes consolidating "back office" staff at CCSU and other CSU universities with no understanding of the essential roles on and for our campus provided by these valuable colleagues, and thereby undermines the integrity of our university as an institution of higher education;

Whereas there is a clear indication in "Design Thinking" and elsewhere that consolidation would also apply to programs and courses offered at both the community colleges and universities, in conflict with the role of departments to determine curriculum; and that the "Students First" plan for the community colleges proposed eliminating chairs elected by faculty and replacing them with administratively appointed Associate Deans, in contradiction to shared governance;

Be it Resolved that the CCSU Senate

(1) calls upon Pres. Ojakian to resign and that Board name no permanent replacement until after the Nov. elections when a new governor and legislature in place can reconsider the role and structure of CSCU in light of the costs and problems in its seven-year history;

(2) calls upon the Board to refuse any proposal to increase student tuition or close any community college; and instead to seek to fully fund public higher education through the state budget and fund raising;

(3) calls upon the Board to commit to no further plans of "systemization" such as Transform 2020, "Design Thinking", or "Students First"; and in particular, to stop any plans or ongoing efforts to consolidate support staff, eliminate chairs,
or consolidate programs and courses across the four CSU universities or CSCU-wide;

(4) calls for consideration by the legislature to abolishing the Board of Regents to be replaced by a structure or structures that will respect the distinct missions of the community colleges and universities and reduce the bureaucracy on Woodland Street, thereby saving tens of millions of dollars, and assuring the autonomy and integrity of the community colleges and the state universities.

Approved and forwarded from the Council of Chairs at CCSU (12-2, with 2 abstentions, April 26) and Approved by the CCSU Senate (38-1, secret ballot, April 30).
Resolution in Opposition to CCSU Participation in the ACUE “Student Success through Quality Instruction”

Background: At its June 2017 meeting of the Board of Regents of CSCU, a presentation was made, entitled “Student Success Through Quality Instruction” by the ACUE (Association of College and University Educators), which aims to “better support CSCU’s 6,700 (sic) faculty, to make instructional quality a strategic driver of student retention, graduation and learning”. ACUE is a recently organized association directed by former higher education administrators, and headed by an individual (Jonathan Gyorko) who has previously supplied “educational services” to the State of Connecticut, and is currently suing the state for non-payment of fees. The program involves -- at a cost reported to be in the millions of dollars, supposedly to be paid by external donors -- teaching faculty the basics of “preparing an effective syllabus”, “motivating your students”, “delivering an effective lecture”, etc., all of which fall within existing faculty competences and which are evaluated and assisted at the institutional level through existing structures.

Whereas the CCSU Senate has already, at its April meeting, voted no-confidence in the CSCU administration over its "Students First" policy, then the latest in a string of failed multi-million dollar projects promoted by the system office, and whose real aim is not student success, but "back office" consolidation detrimental to student success;

Whereas numerous CCSU and other CSCU faculty attended the May Board of Regents meeting to criticize the "Design Thinking" document prepared by the system Provost and Academic affairs office, which aimed to extend system office control to curriculum, which to the contrary is an exclusively individual institution and faculty area of governance;

Whereas the system office has now adopted, without any consultation of CCSU faculty, a project known as "Student Success Through Quality Instruction", which would pay undisclosed sums -- reportedly in the millions of dollars - to the "Association of College and University Educators", run by former senior administrators at various universities, at a time when the budget for public higher education is being cut and cut again;

Whereas the President of the CSCU system claims that "private donors" will pay for this project, thereby diverting money that could otherwise accrue to individual institution foundations for other academically needed purposes, and outsourcing to external funding the improvement of the key faculty area of competence, teaching;

Whereas the ACUE in its literature indicates that the CSCU system has “adopted” its program, and the System Office has already signed on to pilots for implementation at two CSU Universities (not CCSU) and two community colleges without any public discussion or consultation;

Whereas the project aims at teaching faculty how to teach, based entirely on ACUE "research", and not on faculty based knowledge of their disciplines, experience as teachers, or existing faculty development centers; and is therefore redundant and external to our real needs;

Whereas the project aims at "certifying" those who take the ACUE course and "hear from" external experts as determined by ACUE, thereby dividing faculty into two groups: certified and non-certified, in contradiction with our collective agreement which recognizes only faculty-based evaluation, including peer reviewed academic ranks as marks of distinction;

Whereas the project requires participation in a 25-hour on-line course, which in the case of part-time faculty would be an unpaid imposition on their scarce time;

Be it resolved, that the CCSU Senate:

Rejects participation of CCSU in the ACUE project as unnecessary and redundant to existing university-based programs and criteria for evaluating and improving teaching; developed without faculty consultation; and involving external funding and influence over teaching, an area of exclusive faculty control;

Communicates this resolution to the other CSCU Senates as an expression of our concern for yet another ill-conceived, unnecessary project by the System Office.
Resolution on the proposed reorganization plan of the BOR of CSCU and its President

As amended and approved by secret ballot at the April 24, 2017
CCSU Faculty Senate Emergency Meeting:

Whereas the Board of Regents and its President have recently proposed another major project without previous consultation of faculty, as contained in the email message from Pres. Ojakian on April 3, entitled “A Message from President Ojakian Regarding CSCU Administrative Consolidation”, and further detailed in the attached “Students First” PowerPoint presentation;

Whereas in his message to CSCU faculty the Board President indicated this was only a first step in projected further centralization of services and institutions, assuming insufficient cost savings from the current measures and proposed “give backs” demanded by the Governor;

Whereas the System Office, with well over a hundred employees, continues to consume tens of millions of dollars, and will likely grow even more as it assumes additional “local” functions previously the purview of its constituent institutions;

Whereas help is local, centralization of functions will remove needed staff from campuses, beginning with Human Resources, and potentially affecting other departments and even faculty in later phases, preventing them from working directly with students, faculty and campus administrators;

Whereas, in the wake of the failed “Transform 2020” project where millions of dollars were wasted on external consulting groups, the current project is yet another attempt to make a bureaucratic creation – the CSCU – into a “system”, at the expense of the real systems – in particular, the colleges and universities such as CCSU –, thereby reducing our ability to carry out our teaching, research and community tasks;

Whereas the project was approved at the April 6 meeting of the BOR, just days after faculty were informed and without advanced copies of the approved resolution to the public, thereby severely limiting further scrutiny of the changes proposed for this summer;

Be it resolved that:

CCSU will participate in the implementation of the “Students First” plan in order to assert our rights as faculty (AAUP and SUOAF-AFSCME), the rights of students, and the institutional identity and advocate that they be respected, and to offer the needed expertise of faculty on the CCSU campus, even though we oppose the proposed plan as unfounded, nontransparent and undemocratic, and consider the plan an assault on the integrity and autonomy of the institutions of higher education forced to be a part of CSCU.

The CCSU Senate votes non-confidence in the Board of Regents of CSCU and its President, as it has done previously in the context of “Transform 2020”, and for the same reasons:

* Lack of prior consultation with faculty
* Centralization of needed local functions
* Unchecked growth of the “system” office
* Undemocratic procedures of approval
* Deleterious effect on constituent institutions