

**TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT  
ADVANCEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2021**

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 6582:** an act to ensure that adjunct faculty be made eligible for unemployment compensation  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB 5545:** To require the Board of Regents of Higher Education to include the central office of the CSCU in the itemization of its budget request.

Thanks to Rep. Elliott, Senator Haskell and members of the Higher Education Committee for the opportunity to share my views with you about legislation impacting our community colleges. I work as the Advancement Director at Capital Community College and am on the Delegate Assembly of the Congress of CT Community Colleges, SEIU Local 1973. I've worked in higher education at private and public institutions in Hartford for more than 30 years.

I urge you to adopt favorable reports on HB6582 and HB5545 and to work with your leadership to bring these bills to the floor for a vote.

**HB 6582:** The year-long pandemic has caused more job insecurity and uncertainty for individuals who teach part-time at our colleges and universities. Many adjunct faculty provide instruction at more than one institution as they pursue a teaching career that comes without the guarantees of benefits and tenure. As enrollments fluctuate adjuncts may go from one semester to another without knowing where needed income is going to come from. During the pandemic and after the pandemic adjuncts should be entitled to unemployment compensation, a system they contribute to as wage earners.

Because of the fiscal constraints of hiring full time faculty, adjuncts are essential to ensuring academic quality and serving students at the campus where I work and others in the CSCU system. I urge Connecticut to follow New Jersey's lead. Our neighbors just enacted legislation that opens unemployment compensation to adjuncts. In signing the act that in all respects is similar to HB6582 here in CT, New Jersey Gov. Murphy said: "Our adjunct professors have too often been caught in limbo in terms of their eligibility for unemployment benefits. This legislation will provide adjunct instructors and other employees the clarity they need to receive full unemployment benefits so they can get back on their feet."

**HB 5545:** The budget to be enacted for CT state colleges and universities needs a provision that will require the Board of Regents for Higher Education to include the central office of the CSCU system. It is a failure of proper oversight that this provision is even necessary to make expenditures in public higher education fully transparent and the BOR accountable for the way it spends and allocates resources to the 12 community colleges, four state universities and Charter Oak State College. This provision would be necessary whether or not the community colleges were undergoing a radical consolidation toward a "one college" framework by 2023.

The Legislature and Administration needs clarity on where the funds appropriated in the next biennial budget are going so that tax dollars go to directly serving students and campuses, and not diverted to a build-up of a new educational bureaucracy that is risky and unproven as a way to deliver efficiencies and equity to students in the community colleges.

Every educational organization and system needs to examine its operations to better serve its students. Restructuring is needed to ensure a responsive public higher educational system. But that restructuring should be from the bottom up and not the top down and, above all, not add unnecessary expenditures that will never reach classrooms.

In supporting more transparency in the BOR budget, I agree with Professor Stephen Adair of CCSU, Professor Lois Aime of NCC and others who in a recent CT Mirror said: "The state is gambling the consolidation will be completed on time. The initial timeline indicated that the work of unifying curriculum for over 400 programs would be completed by the end of 2020, but not a single program has yet been completed. Every year in delay will likely cost an additional \$20 to \$25 million. Most importantly the state is gambling that a centralized administrative bureaucracy can run the 12 satellite campuses more efficiently and with better outcomes. One thing is for sure. The educators who work on the campuses think the state made a lousy bet. It is time to put an end to this shell game."

Thank you. John McNamara