

Questions for Nominees to the Board of Regents for Higher Education

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Board of Regents for Higher Education ([CGS §§ 10a-1a & 10a-6](#))

The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) makes policies and rules for governing the Connecticut State University System, the community-technical college system, and Charter Oak State College, and prepares a consolidated budget request for these constituent units, collectively known as the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU). For each institution under its jurisdiction, the board appoints and removes a chief executive, sets tuition and fees, and develops a mission statement, among other responsibilities. It also appoints the CSCU president.

BOR consists of 22 members, 15 of whom are voting members. The governor appoints nine members to staggered six-year terms. The top four legislative leaders each appoint one member to staggered four-year terms. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of BOR's student advisory committee also serve as board members and are elected to one-year terms by the advisory committee. The commissioners of economic and community development, education, labor, and public health, as well as the Office of Workforce Strategy's chief workforce officer and the chairperson and vice-chairperson of BOR's faculty advisory committee, are ex-officio non-voting members of the board.

Questions

1. Most CSCU presidents have served two or fewer years apiece, with the exception of Mark Ojakian, who retired after serving over five years. What role should BOR have in helping to maintain leadership stability?
2. BOR currently has two student members among its 22 total members. If appointed to the board, how do you intend to work with the student members?
3. The New England Commission on Higher Education [accepted](#) CSCU's substantive change proposal, allowing the system to proceed with its plans to merge the 12 state community colleges into [Connecticut State Community College](#). The community colleges will merge into Connecticut State Community College, and the first semester of operation will be Fall 2023. How will BOR continue to support community college faculty and staff during the next stages of the merger?
4. Student loan debt has become increasingly burdensome for college graduates. What is your assessment of the amount of debt that CSCU students have? What steps can BOR take to mitigate student debt levels?
5. Broadly, enrollment has declined over the past ten years, a trend that has impacted schools nationwide. Specifically, CSCU's overall student enrollment has declined by 30% according to the governor's FY 24 budget [proposal](#) (see page 29). Among other things, the increasing cost of tuition, a decline in the number of high school graduates, lack of marketing and services for students, understaffed campuses, and application fees are all mentioned as possible contributing factors. How should BOR address current enrollment challenges?
6. The governor's FY 24 budget [proposal](#) increases baseline appropriations for the regional state universities and community colleges from \$693 million in the current biennium to \$755 for the next two fiscal years. However, overall assistance for the regional universities and community colleges decreases over this period once temporary aid is considered. How will BOR work with university leadership to ensure that the CSCUs are supporting their students and balancing their budgets?
7. The governor's proposals, among other things, generally requires the comptroller to pay certain fringe benefit costs for retirees while requiring the constituent units to fund existing health and life insurance, unemployment compensation, and employers' social security tax. Can you comment on the impact of this proposal on the CSCUs?
8. [CT Health Horizons](#) is a three-year, \$35 million initiative focused on supporting nursing and social work students and programs. The CSCUs are collaborating with the Office of Workforce Strategy, UConn, the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, multiple state agencies, and the Connecticut Hospital Association for the CT Health Horizons as a part of this initiative. How does BOR plan to support students entering careers in healthcare to address the statewide shortage in this workforce area?

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