

Meeting of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the BOR
July 14, 2023. 1pm

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Reports of Chair and Vice Chair
4. FAC study update
5. Post-July1 CSCC: campus updates?
6. Other budget: WCSU etc.
7. Old/new business
8. Adjourn

Next Meeting: Aug 18 2023

[Join meeting](https://ctedu.webex.com/ctedu/j.php?MTID=mf2051bf56fb1fec0bd191b3dd09bf742)

<https://ctedu.webex.com/ctedu/j.php?MTID=mf2051bf56fb1fec0bd191b3dd09bf742>

Regular Meeting of the State of CT
Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents for Higher Education
Minutes
June 16, 2023

Present:

Aime, Lois, Admin Fac, At-Large Rep, NCC
Blaszczynski, Andre, Fac, alternate, TXCC
Blitz, David, Fac, Vice-Chair, CCSU
Coan, Francis, Fac, TXCC, Emeritus
Dunne, Matthew, Fac, HCC
Emanuel, Michael, Fac, alternate, NWCCC
Farquharson, Patrice, Fac, COSC
Goh, Bryan, Fac, alternate, MXCC
Long, Jennifer, Fac, alternate, TRCC

Muldoon, Linsey, Fac, alternate, MCC
Rajczewski, MaryBeth, Fac, ACC
Robinson, Dyan, SUOAF, CSU
Sesanker, Colena, Fac, Chair, GWCC
Shea, Michael, Fac, SCSU
Stoloff, David, Fac, alternate, ECSU
Trieu, Vu, SUOAF, alternate, CSU
Yiamouyiannis, Carmen, Fac, alternate, CCC

Absent:

Andersen, Jonathan, Fac, alternate, QVCC
Cunningham, Brendan, Fac, ECSU
Fisher, Mikey, Fac, alternate, SCSU
Lumbantobing, Rotua, Fac, alternate, WCSU
Jackson, Mark, Fac, alternate, CCSU

Perfetto, Linda, Admin Fac, alternate, COSC
Picard, Ronald, Fac, alternate, NVCC
Whittemore, Rob, Fac, WCSU
Wilder, Linda, Admin Fac, COSC

- Meeting called to order at 3:03 pm by Chair Sesanker. Meeting is being recorded as required.
 - Approval of 5/12/23 FAC minutes – not distributed so approval vote deferred until 7/14 meeting
 - Approval of Agenda – Motion to approve – André Blaszczynski; seconded – approved unanimously
- List of questions for joint meeting was shared. Ben Barnes emailed all BOR members about questions, stating he did not have much of this information at the present time. (see list below)
- No comments from BOR members, others, about imminent approval of CSCC for accreditation. However, not surprising as this is in line with previous lack of commentary throughout this process.
- 4Cs and AFSCME sent joint letter to NECHE correcting misinformation regarding IT, Marketing, and other areas, that was part of the Progress Report submitted to NECHE on 6/01/23.
- No comment in the Progress Report that indicates the fiscal issues the system is facing
- CSCU administration needs to state how their mitigation process is going to work in this fiscal environment
- Report of Vice-Chair
 - Statement to Executive Ctte. of BOR on 6/06 contesting the way the deficit is calculated
 - Misstated information; inclusion of PACT in calculations even though PACT is not an operating expense
 - There should be three components – Operating expenses; PACT; SEBAC related costs
- Report of Chair
 - Delivered questions to administrative attendees from 5/12 meeting right after that meeting, however receipt of these questions has not even been acknowledged much less responded to, except for a complaint filed by one of the Vice Presidents in attendance at the 5/12 meeting. This complaint initiated a criminal investigation because of wording used by an FAC member at the April 14 FAC meeting.
- FAC needs a formal statement on this complaint and a formal statement noting the inaccuracies in the 6/01 Progress Report to NECHE along with the fact that the serious concerns associated with the negative fiscal issues facing the system were never even hinted at in that report.
- Enrollment appears to be an issue. The community colleges are seeing something different than what is being stated in New Britain. The published schedule format, which is neither intuitive, nor user-friendly, and therefore difficult to navigate and to interpret, is probably contributing to the enrollment concerns.

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- Selective admissions process for PTA, Respiratory Care, Vet Tech has pretty much decimated Norwalk CC programs, in particular the Vet Tech program. The Program Coordinators who run these programs were not permitted to participate in the admissions process for unknown reasons. This process has been mishandled on every level for these programs.
- In general, college faculty and staff are “sitting on pins and needles” waiting to see how the fall semester will unfold for students, faculty, and staff because of the uncertainty with curriculum issues, registration issues, admissions issues, advising issues, student support services, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm

Next Meeting: July 14, 2023

Submitted by FAC Secretary, Lois Aimé

DRAFT

June 14, 2023

President Cheng, CFO Ben Barnes, and Board of Regents,

In the absence of any official updates on our financial outlook since the state budget was voted out of house and senate on 6/6, we submit the following questions in advance of our Joint FAC-BOR meeting on June 16th, 2023.

Some questions concern the administration's documents, plans, and calculations. For those, we (again) request as much in writing as is feasible in advance of the meeting so that our committee can review and digest the information in time for a productive discussion on Friday. What cannot be provided in advance, we request in writing as soon as it is available.

Other questions concern the administration and board's perspective and goals. For those questions, we hope you will review and reflect in advance. We look forward to our interaction and to getting to know you all a little better as we problem-solve together at this difficult time.

CSCU administration:

1. Your [June 8th response](#) to my and David Blitz's [emailed statement to the BOR](#) in advance of its executive committee meeting on 6/6 noted a difference of \$181M between what the system received in state funding and the CSCU 2030 request. But the CSCU 2030 request does not describe the funding needed to maintain a current-services level of operation. It is, rather, a more aspirational document calling for a ['generational investment'](#) in our system. The difference between the generational investment number and what we have received could not possibly be the amount required to maintain status quo.

Likewise, if you subtract the CSCU2030 ask from the *governor's* proposed budget- which is \$165M less than we received- you get a number that falls within \$2M of our advertised deficit: \$337M. But such a comparison is unhelpful and uncredible as a claimed deficit that requires hundreds of layoffs, thousands of part time reductions, tuition increases and other devastation.

To this end, please describe for us:

- a) How much is the projected current service level for FY24 and FY25?
 - b) What are projected revenues for FY24 and FY25?
2. An early [deficit mitigation plan](#) identified a \$109M system deficit in FY24 and attributed \$95M of that to CTState. And yet your public narrative has attributed all shortfalls to the state's failure to adequately fund the SEBAC wage increases it voted to implement in spring of 2022, backdated to the contract start date of July 1, 2021. What difference between the colleges and universities explains why the colleges suffer so much more, and so very immediately, from this oversight?
 3. Please provide an updated breakdown across institutions of projected revenues and expenditures so that we can understand the variations between institutions. If the large disparities between institutions are still there, please explain why there are such wide variations between institutions.
 4. Using your estimates of SEBAC-related costs from the CSCU2030 document (p.7) and how they vary relative to FY23, those costs are about \$32M less in FY24 than in FY23 and about \$0.7M more in FY25 than they were in FY23. In FY24, the approved budget gives us (using the numbers as presented in Ben Barnes' June 8 email) \$13M more than FY23 but \$102M less than FY23 in FY25.

- a) How do these numbers relate to the [system's claim of a \\$335M deficit over the biennium](#)?
- b) Does your most recent calculation of the cost of wage increases match these numbers? If not, what are they?

5. CSCU has aggregate reserves of \$329.0M as of 6/30/23, which constitutes 22.6% of FY24 systemwide expenditures. The initial deficit mitigation plan proposed using only \$22.7M of these reserves to offset the projected deficit, and none of the \$75.1M in reserves held at the system level, leaving projected systemwide reserves equal to 19.6% of expenditures as of 6/30/25.

- a) Does CSCU have a standard for the colleges and universities as to the targeted level of reserves as a percentage of expenditures? If so, how did you arrive at that target?
- b) CSCU's projected systemwide reserves as of 6/30/23 equal 22.6% of expenditures. Are you aware that community colleges in other states, such as California, use a reserve target of 5% of expenditures?
- c) Why didn't the early version of the DMP propose using reserves more aggressively as an alternative to program and staffing cuts and to tuition increases? Will mitigation plans currently being developed take a different approach to use of reserves?

6. Could you share with us the most recent version of the FY24-25 CSCU Deficit Mitigation Plan, including comparable figures on revenue and expenditures for FY22 and 23 for the purpose of comparison?

7. Deficit mitigation, thus far, has been focused on cuts to offerings and increases in tuition but, in the face of reduced state funding, enrollment is an increasingly important source of revenue. These mitigation measures would serve to further depress enrollment, resulting in both reduced revenues and further justification— by the governor's and OPM's current logic, anyway— to withhold state funding. As such, no mitigation plan we have seen can be said to successfully address our current challenges to preserving the public service with which we have been entrusted. They are focused, rather, on describing, with numbers, the measure of pain that has been inflicted on us.

- a) Now that efforts to alert the legislature and the executive branch to the enormity of the problem are behind us, what other approaches have been considered in the service of preserving the integrity and existence of the system?
- b) Related: what are the current enrolment numbers- broken down by college/campus for the community colleges?

8. You have claimed that the transition to the consolidated college has had no cost and indeed the [Students First Plan](#) that proposed this transition did not project a cost greater than just over one million dollars for the transition (appendix LL, p.264). If that is true, over the past five years we have managed to achieve the (imminent) opening of the fifth largest community college in the country at almost no cost— perhaps at a savings.

- a) If this is true, how do we justify this extended project of targeting the sector of our public college population that is least wealthy and majority non-white for extracting savings? If this assessment has since been modified, what is your estimate of the cost of launching the fifth largest community college in the country?

The following two questions are versions of questions included in a list we submitted to CTState leadership after they met with our committee on May 12. They have not yet answered. We ask for Regents' responses here:

9. The current budget crisis and political climate do not indicate that this new college will have very

much external support. In fact, in a recent interview, Governor Lamont was quite clear about his vision for the community colleges and unapologetic about the budget's potential consequences for our workforce.

- a) Does the Board agree with the vision that the Governor outlined for the community colleges of more night classes and certificates that can be achieved in a few weeks? If not, what is he missing and how might we best convey that vision to him?
- b) There is quite a lot of work ahead of us to get this college running even adequately. How do you launch a college while being starved into reductions by your primary funding source- the state? Is it responsible to launch an enterprise like this one with no investments on the horizon?
- c) Given the forecasted budget deficits for the one community college, can we reasonably and responsibly claim that the new college can meet NECHE's standards for accreditation, especially standard 7 that requires adequate financial resources? (the [June 1st submission to NECHE](#) makes ~~no mention of the advertised deficit and mitigation plans~~)

10. This Consolidated College was [advertised as a triumph for equity](#) and even as an antiracist institution but cutting funding, decreasing offerings, increasing class sizes, reducing full time staffing etc are all time-tested austerity measures that have a proven track record of undermining the prospects of the working class and people of color.

- a) What is the relationship of this college to the aspiration of equity? How could it be understood as meeting even the most minimal standards of justice in a state that struggles with the challenges of income inequality and disparities exacerbated by racial segregation in education?

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Present:

Aime, Lois, Admin Fac, At-Large Rep, NCC
Blaszczynski, Andre, Fac, alternate, TXCC
Blitz, David, Fac, Vice-Chair, CCSU
Cunningham, Brendan, Fac, ECSU
Emanuel, Michael, Fac, alternate, NWCCC
Farquharson, Patrice, Fac, COSC

Jackson, Mark, Fac, alternate, CCSU
Long, Jennifer, Fac, alternate, TRCC
Muldoon, Linsey, Fac, alternate, MCC
Sesanker, Colena, Fac, Chair, GWCC
Stoloff, David, Fac, alternate, ECSU
Trieu, Vu, SUOAF, alternate, CSU

Absent:

Andersen, Jonathan, Fac, alternate, QVCC
Coan, Francis, Fac, TXCC, Emeritus
Dunne, Matthew, Fac, HCC
Fisher, Mikey, Fac, alternate, SCSU
Goh, Bryan, Fac, alternate, MXCC
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Shea, Michael, Fac, SCSU
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Wilder, Linda, Admin Fac, COSC
Yiamouyiannis, Carmen, Fac, alternate, CCC

Meeting called to order at 1:05 PM by Chair Sesanker. Meeting is being recorded as required.

- Approval of Agenda – Motion to approve – Lois Aimé; seconded – approved unanimously
- Update on 6/28/23 BOR meeting:
 - Tunxis student wrote public comment regarding difficulties for students because of consolidation procedures, or perhaps lack of clear procedures. She cannot get accurate information regarding the completion of her degree because of the lack of teach-out/no coherent transitional policy
 - Exchange regarding the accuracy/inaccuracy of financial numbers being supplied
 - Question whether study had been done on impact of tuition increases for students not receiving any form of financial aid/scholarships. Was informed that no research had been done on that issue.
 - Resolution on consolidation was put forward. This had not been on the agenda and was a surprise move
 - There are projections of “worst case scenarios” coming from the System Office regarding funding issues when presented to general assembly. However, these “doomsday” scenarios seem to be interchangeable with “wine and roses” scenarios that are presented to others, such as NECHE.
 - “Creative accounting” continues to be the hallmark of how the costs for the consolidation are presented, i.e., it continually appears as if the consolidation process does not appear to be costing anything at all.
- In the Substantive Change submitted March, 2018 to NEASC it was noted that the removal of Dept. Chairs and Program Coordinators and replacing them with Academic Deans would save around \$1.5M. This seemed impossible so research was done by some faculty and staff that showed that would have actually cost around \$3.9M. This to show that this kind of “creative accounting” has been inherent in their representation of costs for the consolidation process.
- Where will the resolutions be sent if passed? Suggest that at the least, NECHE and the Legislature should receive them.
- Resolution on Intimidation, Retaliation, & Obstruction – Motion to Approve – Lois Aimé; seconded – approved with 1 abstention. (see resolution statement below)
- Resolution on Transition from 12 independently accredited community colleges to a single CT State Community College – Motion to Approve – André Blaszczynski; seconded – approved with 1 abstention (see resolution statement below)

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- Resolution to create a Study Commission Committee within the FAC to look into financial and academic issues involved in this transition. There has been little transparency in any of the processes.
 - Motion by David Blitz – to create a Study Commission Committee concerned with finances and structure, along with academics, of the CSCU system and the Board of Regents consisting of the following individuals: the Chair and Vice-Chair of the FAC, Economists from our membership, specifically Brendan Cunningham and André Blaszczyński, Lois Aimé, Stephen Adair an FAC emeritus member, and other volunteers. It will give a preliminary report at the next FAC meeting, and it will ask to be apprised of the number of eliminated positions as they occur and the number of retirements during the period between now and approximately November 1, 2023.
 - Seconded – approved unanimously
 - Possibility of joint meeting with the BOR on 11/17 that would include the presentation of the Committee’s report

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm

Next Regular Meeting: July 14, 2023

Submitted by FAC Secretary, Lois Aimé

Faculty Advisory Committee to the CT Board of Regents for Higher Education Statement on the Community College Merger

June 30 2023

Connecticut State Community College opens tomorrow, and the process of its creation has been one of great difficulty. In addition to simultaneously managing a pandemic and then record inflation during this process,

- All curriculum and policies were developed in the absence of appropriate faculty control (which is to say that ultimate authority did not rest with the content experts).
- The transition plan did not include a teach-out process, leaving many students, faculty, and staff misinformed about degree requirements and relying on yet-to-be established labor-intensive manual course substitution processes to make students whole.
- Exclusion and intimidation were among management's strategies to deliver the Students First plan on schedule, with no regard for representative faculty and staff input, nor for its deleterious effects. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)
- The process involved leaving many positions at the colleges unfilled while the state funds allocated to the needs of students at our twelve existing colleges, were appropriated by system management for creating the infrastructure for what would be the fifth largest community college in the country. This reallocation of funding (and labor) intended for community college students towards a project for which no state allocation or approval was requested is one
 - a) That has reduced the capacity of our community colleges over the past few years.
 - b) whose cost has never been disclosed, and
 - c) For which we have never had a transparent justification nor an assessment of this use of state funds [\[4\]](#)
- The input of outside consultants was prioritized over local expertise, leaving us with elements of the institution's design that may prove inappropriate for many of our communities. Meanwhile, key elements of the advertised benefits of the consolidation have yet to be implemented (for example: guided pathways) [\[5\]](#)
- Required updates to our accreditor contained falsehoods and key omissions that leave us liable for any failure to meet accreditation standards in the future and leave students at risk of ineligibility for federal financial aid, should that happen. [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#) [\[8\]](#)
- Its centralized structure, the bypassing of institutional leadership for certain key functions, and gross underestimation of required resources, especially in the face of our current budgetary shortfall and withdrawal of key state funding, create the distinct possibility of facilitating disinvestment in a student body, composed primarily of students from demographic categories that have suffered the effects of historic disinvestment in this state. [\[9\]](#) [\[10\]](#) [\[11\]](#) [\[12\]](#) [\[13\]](#)

As a result, **we believe the following are necessary:**

Faculty Advisory Committee to the CT Board of Regents for Higher Education Statement on the Community College Merger

June 30 2023

1. A process for ensuring what individual accreditations previously did: access to all the essential services of a college in all current locations and a commitment to maintaining that access.
2. Transparency in the funding levels and formulas for funding each of CTState's campuses.
3. An assessment of how funding for developmental education is being used, the extent to which we are complying with current statutory requirements, and the adequacy of current levels of funding and requirements in the context of continuing disparities in k-12 education in the state.
4. A reassessment of structure and resources of the community college, including sufficiency and cost of the current shared services model, to determine realistic goals and needs.
5. Full transparency in the costs of the transition from twelve to one. Thus far, the SF plan projected a total cost of \$1.2M and, to date, system leadership maintains that it has achieved savings by crediting attrition (but not calculating the effects of that understaffing) while excluding all expenditures and staffing costs of the transition from the calculation.

And the following are recommended:

Given the exploitation of rhetoric about equity and antiracism to shield this plan from intervention, even when all evidence indicates that it is poised to produce the opposite effects, we encourage good faith efforts toward the goal of minimal justice in the form of mere *equality* and mutual respect at the core of the institution and its practices. These efforts should include working with community college unions and governance bodies to take steps toward

1. increasing the ratio of full time faculty and staff to contingent workers to whom the institution makes no more than a few weeks' commitment,
2. keeping class sizes small,
3. Creating a process that honors the commitment of many long-serving contingent workers who constitute the majority of our student-facing staff
4. Making material commitments to the diversity of academic content-- as intended by the addition of a diversity gen ed outcome--by hiring experts with diverse academic lineages and expertise with an eye toward the local needs of the communities in which each campus is rooted.
5. Subjecting all policies that risk reducing the scope of possibility for community college students relative to their university peers, such as financial aid policies that restrict which courses are covered by federal aid or standardized courses that encourage premature commitment to a career path, to thorough and public analysis and debate concerning their consistency with our mission and goals in service to our students, before these policies are applied.

During the April 14, 2023 and May 12, 2023 meetings of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the BOR, a faculty representative employed figures of speech (“drawn and quartered” and “make an example of”) as a rhetorical means of expressing his frustration with those (unnamed) people responsible for the current state of the community college consolidation¹. He was, by use of this language, expressing both the urgent need for accountability to the state for how the consolidation of the community colleges has been handled and our shared frustration at the refusal of many of CTState’s leadership to take ownership of the decisions that led us here.

At the latter meeting, the aforementioned faculty representative clarified that he had been speaking metaphorically, that he meant no threat, and that it is the management of the transition to the consolidation that caused that frustration. All of this was self-evident to every other member of the FAC. We assert it would be equally self-evident to any reasonable person who viewed the April and May FAC meetings after the fact. The comments were made without anger, and within the context of discussions, which multiple FAC representatives participated in, about some of the many serious problems the consolidation has created.

On May 17th 2023, the Chair of the FAC sent [written follow up questions](#) to CSCC executives who had visited the May 12th meeting. Those questions included a request that the group identify the individuals responsible for addressing the problems we’d discussed.

The next day, On May 18th 2023, one of those executives initiated a *criminal* investigation into the FAC committee member who used the term ‘drawn and quartered’ 5 weeks previous. The investigation was completed on May 30th and concluded that the member’s actions did not rise to the level of a criminal act.

Well over one month later, and on the cusp of the opening of the new college, those managers have not yet even acknowledged receipt of the questions-- questions that aim to establish basic concrete facts, including the percentage of the CSCC course catalog that is accurate, details of the process to make students whole in the absence of teach-outs and accurate information about degree requirements, when and how the consolidated college will be eligible to accept and disburse federal financial aid, etc. In fact, the only ‘response’ we have received is this criminal investigation into one of our members.

Initiating this criminal investigation is not just behavior unbecoming of someone who has taken on a position of leadership at an historic moment in public higher education in Connecticut, it is an unjustifiable waste of resources in the following forms:

- the deployment of a state police officer to the effect of intimidating those he is employed to protect.
- An executive, who has refused to take responsibility for his job, or for the consequences his refusal has entailed for the community college system, finding the time to file a criminal complaint against a faculty member
- The obstruction of the FAC’s statutory role in the governance that might preserve a public service central to educational and economic opportunity for the state’s residents and that contributes to meeting the state’s workforce needs at a crucial time.

The FAC denounces intimidation and retaliation in all its forms and particularly when it impedes governance in the service of preservation of state services at any level.

The FAC also attests on this day, the day that the transition from 12 colleges to 1 culminates, that though this incident stands as a particularly egregious and embarrassing instance, impedance and obstruction of governance, and other forms of silencing faculty and staff have been a hallmark of the implementation of the Students First consolidation plan, beginning in January 2018².

¹ Video here: <https://youtu.be/E3mm1W3MCGM> at 1:25- original statement. <https://youtu.be/9t6a6he8MpU> clarification in the first three minutes of the meeting recording and more discussion at the end.

² [Urgent Recommendations from the Shared Governance Workgroup \(of the SFASACC\)](#) and [Provost Gates' response to the recommendations](#) (Fall 2019) in which members of the shared governance committee were invited to resign if they continued to insist on shared governance in the creation of the consolidated college’s curriculum and policies. Also:

[FAC resolution of support for college rejection of SF curricular endorsement process](#) (Feb 2020)

[FAC memo to CCIC on curricular process](#), (Jan 2019)

[FAC statement on Shared Governance](#)(Oct 2018)

[Report of the Vice Chair, FAC](#) (Dec 2020)

[FAC Memo to David Levinson](#) (Nov 2019)

[CCS101 As a Case Study of the Flaws of SF](#) (Jul 2020)

FAC Study Commission

Resolved: That the FAC establish a study commission to analyze the structure and functioning, including financial and academic aspects of the CSCU and the BOR:

1. to consist of the Chair (Colena Sesanker) and Vice-Chair (David Blitz) of the FAC, the secretary (Lois Aime), as well as economists Brendan Cunningham and Andre Blaszczyński, and emeritus member Stephen Adair, as well as other FAC members who may wish to join, to present a report to the FAC by Nov. 1,
2. with an initial meeting of the study commission before the next FAC meeting (July 14) to further establish the commission's objectives and report to the FAC, along with
3. an immediate request by FAC co-chairs to the System Office for ongoing information concerning any eliminated positions at the community college, as well as retirements and resulting changes to wage cost projections at the colleges and universities, and failing that an FOI request.

Note: Any report or resolution proposed by the study commission will be presented at a public meeting of the FAC for discussion and vote.