



**BOR ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA  
Friday, March 8, 2024 @ 9:30 a.m.**

Regents Present: Committee Chair Ira Bloom, Regent Juanita James, Regent James McCarthy, Regent Richard Porth

Members: Professor Colena Sesanker

Staff Present: Aynsley Diamond, Pamela Heleen, Kaylah Davis

Other Attendees: Brad Baker, Eric Balboni, Lourdes Cruz, Yaseen Hayajneh, Stephen Hegedus, Diba Khan-Bureau, H. Justin Moore, James Mulrooney, Joan Palladino, Katherine Roe, Deborah Simmons, Michael Stefanowicz

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Ira Bloom.

1. Call to Order: Declare Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes – February 2, 2024  
**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 minutes. On a motion by Regent Juanita James, second by Regent James McCarthy, a vote was taken, and the minutes were approved unanimously.**
3. Central Connecticut State University Report – Dr. Kimberly Kostelis, Provost
  - a. Academic Updates  
Dr. James Mulrooney, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs served as the delegate for Provost Kimberly Kostelis. Dr. Mulrooney provided an academic update, advising that they anticipate new programs coming forth in the future in the areas of AI and social work. They are working with the legislature and accreditation to ensure that social work students are licensed. They also received \$150,000 grant from Health Horizons dedicated to the MSW program. He added that there was a fire at a dorm, but everyone followed protocol and the fire department came quickly; overall, there is little damage.  
New Program
    - i. Criminal Justice Administration – MA  
Central Connecticut State University requested approval for a new Master of Arts program in Criminal Justice Administration. This program has connections to the three new graduate certificate programs - Criminal Justice Leadership, Forensic Counseling, and Victim Advocacy, and all target practitioners in the field. The certificates and degree program are designed for students interested in the administrative role within the Criminal Justice field. The Criminal Justice Leadership certificate focuses on applied research, data interpretation, management and leadership skills, the development of organizations and implementation of policies, which are attractive to students interested in a leadership role. This certificate is stackable into the master's degree program. The Forensic Counseling certificate program focuses on areas such as offender counseling, offender profile, and intervention. The Victim Advocacy certificate program focuses on mental health, domestic violence, and other prevalent issues. The Master of Arts in Criminal Justice Administration program allows students to choose courses in their area of interest, serves students who are looking for advancement in their career, and may appeal to a non-traditional student. The college also has a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. Both programs complement one another but target different populations, another difference lies in the completion of each program, where MS students must complete a thesis, and students in the MA must complete an exam. The new MA program will be offered in a hy-flex modality, which streamlines opportunities for working professionals.

Regent James McCarthy shared his congratulations, stating that he is impressed at the stackable option, multiple modalities, and aiming the program for working professionals. He added that a student can begin in the core program and obtain a certificate, which may be needed for their career. Dr. Mulrooney added that students without experience in the field may use the leadership certificate as an onramp for development and knowledge.

Regent Juanita James commented in agreement with Regent James McCarthy regarding the impressiveness of the stackable and interdisciplinary nature of the program. She inquired on how students are advised on the path to take. Dr. Mulrooney advised that their undergraduate Criminal Justice program is large, requires internships, encompasses faculty that are practitioners in the field, and has partnerships that provide students with experience. During that undergraduate experience, students may be forming an idea of their pathway. Students also obtain firsthand experience in their internships. The stackable option allows students to take other courses, which can aid in deciding route. Regent James added that she is interested in seeing pathways that students choose to pursue, and the feedback mechanism on their intention. Dr. Mulrooney agreed and added that findings would provide an assessment in determining student needs.

Committee Chair Ira Bloom inquired if this program, as it is intended for practitioners, teaches students how to address situations, such as Uvalde. Dr. Mulrooney advised that the program teaches students how to be leaders and equips them with the skills on how to implement policies and manage organizations, which would aid in addressing that type of situation. Dr. Mulrooney advised that this program prepares students to identify situations of this nature.

**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the new program. On a motion by Regent James McCarthy, second by Regent Juanita James, a vote was taken, and the new program was approved unanimously.**

- b. Endowed Chair Reports
  - i. American Savings Foundation Endowed Chair in Banking and Finance
  - ii. Gov. William A. O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics
- c. Below Threshold
  - i. Artificial Intelligence – Concentration
  - ii. Artificial Intelligence – New Degree Minor
  - iii. Criminal Justice Leadership – New Graduate Certificate
  - iv. Cultural Resource Management – New Graduate Certificate
  - v. Cultural Resource Management – New Undergraduate Certificate
  - vi. Forensic Counseling – New Graduate Certificate
  - vii. Victim Advocacy – New Graduate Certificate

4. Western Connecticut State University Report – Dr. Stephen Hegedus, Provost

a. Academic Updates

Dr. Stephen Hegedus provided an academic update. He added that he has been at WCSU for half a semester and has enjoyed getting to know the faculty, their expertise, and aspirations. They are thinking carefully and collaborating across departments regarding new programs and aligning programs to meet student and workforce needs. This includes areas for 4+1 programs, AI, STEM, and a redesign of the master's in music program. They are also looking at how to serve regional and international needs. Additionally, they are looking to partner with local businesses, hospitals, and schools to provide experiential learning opportunities for students. There is a commitment to rethinking enrollments in areas that matter for students and the workforce of the state. He was joined by Dr. Joan Palladino and Dr. Yaseen Hayajneh. Dr. Hegedus detailed the below threshold item, a new concentration in AI, within the existing MBA program. It will help prepare the next generation in the field of cybersecurity, specifically in the needed area of cyber risk management.

b. New Program

i. Comprehensive Special Education Paraprofessional Program – BS

Dr. Hegedus and Dr. Joan Palladino presented. Western Connecticut State University requested approval for a new Bachelor of Science in Comprehensive Special Education Paraprofessional program. The program is designed for paraprofessionals to obtain their certification in special education. This is the highest shortage area of teachers in the state of Connecticut. The program has strong support from local schools and has transfer opportunity pathways from the CT State

Community College system. There are also opportunities for grants to offset cost. This program is important to serve the needs of the region and build teacher capacity in the state.

Regent Juanita James commended and added that there is a tremendous need for this area. She shared that in Fairfield County, the number of students classified as needing special education is growing, and parents are struggling to fulfill the IEP requirements due to lack of resources. She asked why there is an acceleration of student needs. Dr. Hegedus added that during his time as a Dean at SCSU, he had the opportunity to learn about the historical context for this. The field has learned how to better identify students, but also, there are less people entering the field. Dr. Palladino added that the paraprofessionals entering the program have already been in the field and know that they want this career and to pursue certification. The program collaborates with Danbury and Bethel schools, as well as CT State Community College.

Committee Chair Ira Bloom added that there are students that receive education accommodations in higher education. He inquired how this program prepares students with accommodations for their careers and emergence into the workforce. Dr. Hegedus confirmed that IEP requirements drop off after the age of 22, and that advising and ensuring students are on a pathway, aids in successful transfer into society and the workforce. Strengthening partnerships in the workforce is also critical. Dr. Palladino added that this is needed, and that having more qualified teachers in the field will help address this. Dr. Hegedus added that the professionals entering this program have been in the classroom for many years, however, they just do not have the certification.

**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the new program. On a motion by Regent Juanita James, second by Regent James McCarthy, a vote was taken, and the new program was approved unanimously.**

c. **Below Threshold**

- i. MBA – New Concentration

5. Connecticut State Community College – Dr. Levy Brown, Provost

a. Academic Updates

Michael Stefanowicz, Executive Dean for Policy, Governance, and Strategic Projects served as delegate for Provost Levy Brown. CT State Community College is preparing for their first set of commencement ceremonies as CT State. The applications for graduation are higher than anticipated, highlighting that students are completing their degrees. Many students began their programs at a legacy community college and are finishing at CT State. Since the curriculum structure has begun, over 300 items have been worked on and approved. He commends faculty and deans for their hard work, coordination, learning a new system, and working statewide. The alignment work continues, including modifications and new programs. The curriculum continues to change to improve and meet workforce and industry demands. He added a comment regarding the below threshold item, Public Utility Management, in which they are adding an elective.

b. Discontinuation

- i. Meetings, Conventions and Special Events Management – Certificate

CT State Community College requested approval for the discontinuation of the Meetings, Conventions, and Special Events Management certificate. This program was found duplicative during the consolidation, and there are no students enrolled. This specific program was offered at the Gateway campus, but there are other similar programs that students can enter.

**Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the discontinuation. On a motion by Regent James McCarthy, second by Regent Juanita James, a vote was taken, and the discontinuation was approved unanimously.**

c. Modifications

- i. Music Studies – AA – Name Change

- ii. Music – AA – Modification of an Accredited Program

Items 5.c.i. and 5.c.ii. were discussed and voted on together.

Dr. Brad Baker, Dr. Deborah Simmons, and Professor Eric Balboni presented. CT State Community College requested approval for modifications to the Associate of Arts in Music Studies and Associate of Arts in Music programs. Dr. Baker congratulated Dr. Simmons on the accreditation of the music program at the Manchester campus. The accrediting organization NASM, requested the name change from AA in Music to Music Studies, to align with the other NASM accredited institutions. Dr. Baker advised that there are two music programs offered at CT State, one is accredited at Manchester's campus, and the other is non-accredited. Through the alignment process, it was found that both

programs share a name and similar codes but were two distinct programs. The program at Manchester's campus attracts students who want the experience and rigidity of an accredited program. The four-year institutions have NASM accreditation, and that will aid in a student's ability to transfer. The other non-accredited program is heavily centered on electives. The curriculum encompasses seven areas of interest and allows students to choose their path. This program is also reducing the number of minimum credits needed to graduate from 65 to 62.

Regent Juanita James commented on a trend at the elementary school level, where music and arts lack funding. She inquired if higher education programs are seeing the impact of this. She also congratulated Dr. Simmons for the accreditation of the program on Manchester's campus. Dr. Simmons noted that there is a movement towards changing STEM to STEAM, which includes the arts. After Covid, there was a shortage of music educators in public schools, adding that some schools have expressed interest in having Manchester's students substitute teach. Dr. Simmons added that many students in the accredited program can transfer into one of the four-year institutions' programs. She shared that she recently encountered a previous student who transferred to WCSU, and upon completing their program, she obtained a full-time teaching job. This program harnesses skills and training, with a commitment to students. Committee Chair Ira Bloom added that though it may be unexpected, music students that complete the LSAT, typically do well.

**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the two modifications. On a motion by Regent Juanita James, second by Regent Richard Porth, a vote was taken, and the discontinuation and modification were approved unanimously.**

d. **New Program**

i. **Land Surveying and GIS – Certificate**

Dr. Moore and Dr. Khan-Bureau presented. CT State Community College requested approval for a new certificate program in Land Surveying and GIS. Dr. Moore shared that this is an example of coordinated efforts to refine curriculum and address workforce needs. Dr. Khan-Bureau shared that she oversees the growing Environmental Technology Program at the Three Rivers campus. She has met with the CT Association of Land Surveyors who requested development of this program in response to growing the industry. GIS is fairly new but provides aid when a surveyor is conducting a review. Additionally, surveying careers have an increase in pay with a corresponding degree. GIS not only looks at engineering, but also preserves indigenous lands, documenting water and land rights, urban planning, development, wildlife habitat preservation, hazardous waste cleanup, and more. This certificate is stackable into the Environmental Engineering Technology degree program, and students can transfer into bachelor degree programs offered at UConn and SCSU.

Regent Juanita James inquired on the location of the program. Dr. Khan-Bureau advised that this certificate can be offered at other campuses in the future but will be located at the Three Rivers campus at this time.

Regent Richard Porth commends the new certificate program, adding that students who are trained in surveying, inspections and zoning are needed in the state.

Committee Chair Ira Bloom inquired on the use of drones. Dr. Khan-Bureau advised that the students are excited to use that technology, and that drones make mapping and surveying easier.

Regent James McCarthy added thanks for the program and shared an anecdote of his own need for a surveyor. He added that this certificate is vital to the needs in field.

**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the new program. On a motion by Regent Richard Porth, second by Regent James McCarthy, a vote was taken, and the new program was approved unanimously.**

e. **Below Threshold**

i. **Bookkeeping – Certificate – Program Modification**

ii. **Electronics Technician – New Certificate**

iii. **Public Utility Management – New Certificate C2**

iv. **Surgical Technology – AS – Program Modification**

6. Honorary Degrees

a. Charter Oak State College

b. CT State Community College – Housatonic

c. Eastern CT State University

d. Southern CT State University

Regent James McCarthy commented that the honorary degree nominations are a phenomenal group and

added kudos to the selection committees.

**Committee Chair Ira Bloom asked for a motion to approve the honorary degrees. On a motion by Regent Richard Porth, second by Regent Juanita James, a vote was taken, and the honorary degree nominations were approved unanimously.**

Regent James McCarthy commented regarding the new meeting format. He added that the change provides an insight into what is happening at the campuses and allows for more discussion time. He encouraged the continuation of discussion and provided thanks to all. Additionally, he inquired on the difference between below threshold and vote needed items, adding if more can be done to move items into the below threshold category, to allow more time for discussion. He added that the question does not require an immediate answer, but to be considered for the future.

Committee Chair Ira Bloom commented with thanks for participation, and seconded Regent James McCarthy's comments regarding program considerations.

**Chair Ira Bloom called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. On a motion by Regent Juanita James, second by Regent James McCarthy, a vote was taken, and the motion to adjourn was approved unanimously at 10:45 a.m.**