

**BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
CT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (CSCU)
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021
CONDUCTED VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION**

REGENTS - PARTICIPATING (Y = yes / N = no)	
Matt Fleury, Chair	Y
Merle Harris, Vice Chair	Y
Richard J. Balducci	Y
Aviva D. Budd	Y
Naomi K. Cohen	Y
Felice Gray-Kemp	Y
Holly Howery	Y
David R. Jimenez	N
Antonia Oglesby	N
Audrey Redpath	Y
JoAnn Ryan	Y
Ari Santiago	Y
Elise E. Wright	Y
*David Blitz, FAC Vice Chair	Y
*Colena Sesanker, FAC Chair	Y
*Kurt Westby, Labor Commissioner	Y
*Deidra Gifford, Public Health Commissioner	N
*David Lehman, DECD Commissioner	N
*Charlene Russell-Tucker, Acting Education Commissioner	N
<i>*ex-officio, non-voting member</i>	

CSCU STAFF:

Dr. Jane Gates, Interim CSCU President
 Dr. Alice Pritchard, Chief of Staff/Chief of Operations
 Ben Barnes, Chief Financial Officer
 Ernestine Y. Weaver, Counsel
 Ken Klucznik, VP of Academic Affairs
 Pam Heleen, Asst. Secretary of the Board of Regents (recorder)
 Patrick Carr, Program Operations Manager, CSCU Library Consortium

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fleury called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Following roll call, Chair Fleury declared a quorum present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Fleury called for a motion to adopt the meeting agenda as submitted; on a motion by Regent Cohen, seconded by Regent Balducci, the Agenda was unanimously adopted as presented.

OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

In addition to the eight speakers, the Board has received one letter. In accordance with FOI guidelines as amended during the pandemic, the communication was posted on the CSCU website immediately prior to the meeting start time and distributed to the Board in advance of the meeting. It is included as Attachment A.

The following individuals addressed the Board:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dept./Group</u>
Becca Pacileo	Gateway CC Student
Rakim Grant	SCSU Student
Dr. Audra King	CCSU Faculty
Matt Ciscel	CCSU Faculty
Katy Wiss	WCSU Faculty
Sinead Ruane	CCSU Faculty
Seth Freeman	Capital CC Faculty
Tony Rosso	SCSU Faculty

INTERIM CSCU PRESIDENT GATES' REMARKS

Spring COVID Update:

- The universities and colleges are making plans to be fully operational for the fall semester. This includes increasing the staffing over the summer and planning for more on ground classes and student activities and support this fall.
- CSCU is working with the state to provide COVID vaccines to CSCU university students starting the week of April 19 and will be doing the same for college students in early May. The more shots are in arms, the more fully operations can move ahead!
- Federal Funding/State Budget: The CARES act money (HEERF I) has been fully expended with a drawdown last week for lost revenue from fall 2020 in the community colleges. A second drawdown for lost spring revenue will be done over the summer which will largely exhaust the HEERF II institutional funds, leaving the third round of institutional funds available for a combination of lost revenue replacement and new initiatives to help students.
- The Appropriations Committee budget was passed on April 21st providing additional resources to CSCU.

CFO Ben Barnes' Comments:

- Actions on the State budget taken by the Appropriations Committee are pertinent to our priorities and are better than the original budget package proposed by the Governor.
- PACT (Pledge to Advance CT) - The budget provides surplus funds of \$14M in FY22 and \$15M in FY23. Permanent long-term funding mechanism still needs to be identified for PACT funding starting in FY24. A deficiency appropriation to reimburse community colleges the \$6 million in PACT funding that were committed from reserves was not included in the proposal.

- SERS (State Employee Retirement System) - The unfunded liability in the SERS system makes fringe benefit rates so extraordinarily high. It is a constant source of budgetary concern for CSCU, UConn and other outside agencies. The Appropriations Committee recommended using one-time surplus funds to support a payment for unfunded liability of fringe benefits that otherwise would be paid through tuition funds. Exact amounts will be reconciled over the next months.
- Federal funding community college project identification process from HERFF institutional funds - 9 separate groups of community college staff and leaders have been convened to develop proposals in areas designed to help students recover from the pandemic, including Professional Development, Mental Health, Technology, Enrollment Management, Facilities, etc.
 - o Regional presidents are managing a review process, working with System Office staff, to produce a prioritized set of recommendations from campus CEOs. The final decision-making will occur at the Regional President level.
 - o The package of recommendations will include a significant contingency/set-aside for lost revenue in the upcoming two years. Some projects will be recommended for funding right away.

Advocacy Update:

- Advocacy will continue for state funding and CSCU will work alongside legislators and the Governor on key pieces of legislation, including the early admit proposal for the universities, increased reporting of sexual misconduct, and mental health supports for our students.

Collective Bargaining Update:

- Discussions have continued with legislative leaders and the Governor's office on the status of our bargaining process. We appreciate the opportunity to share our goals in this round of bargaining and to assure them of our shared goal to reach a workable contract that supports our institutions, employees and most importantly our students.

Program Highlights:

- On April 16, 2021, 29 high-achieving students from the 12 community colleges were named to the Phi Theta Kappa All-Connecticut Academic Team. For the first time, the Board of Regents for CSCU will award each student a \$200 scholarship. This recognition is an outstanding achievement and the result of their hard work, leadership skills, and commitment. Professors Crystal Wiggins and Todd Bryda were recognized for the work as PTK Advisors.
- In-person and virtual commencement ceremonies start in early May. Thank you to all the campus teams who are working so hard to provide our graduating students with safe and celebratory events.
- On Monday, April 19, a press conference was held at Gateway Community College with representation from CSCU and partner private colleges with Governor Lamont to highlight the fact that safe, in-person classes, services and supports for students have begun again. It was stressed that it is time for students and potential students to fill out the FAFSA and register for classes.

BOR CHAIR MATT FLEURY'S REMARKS

Chair Fleury provided the following remarks:

- A note of appreciation to CFO Ben Barnes for his work to engage the community college community in determining the use of some of the pandemic relief funds. Exciting and impactful plans are in development. He has the Board's support in advancing the best of the plans.
- The Chair expressed concern about the destructive impact of misinformation that is causing people to draw conclusions that are not accurate or well-informed, among those are that members of the Board are untruthful, unaware of reality, and misguided. The Chair acknowledged that 100% agreement with all parties is unlikely. The Board is deeply cognizant of the disinvestment in public higher education broadly. The pandemic relief funding is providing a temporary reversal of this trend. CSCU for most CT students is the only opportunity they have to pursue academic dreams and walk away without crushing student debt. The idea that the Board's proposals have to do with reducing access to higher education is not accurate. The overhead expense in higher education is a critical challenge; parallel administrations with all the fixed costs must be addressed. The Board must pursue opportunities to control expenses while achieving higher levels of service to students (i.e. student to advisor ratios). We are negotiating in good faith at the bargaining table. Conversations should and will continue.
- Update on CSCU System President Search
 - My thanks to the Search Advisory Committee, the Board Search Committee, and community college, university and system office leaders who all provided valuable input into the process.
 - There is quite strong alignment between the perspectives of the Search Advisory Committee and the Board Search Committee.
 - We had targeted April 1st as the timeline for the selection of a final candidate. Assurance was given that we are on a very good path to select the best candidate. We expect to be in a position in the near future to announce a candidate for this role and begin contract negotiations.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a motion by Regent Budd, and seconded by Regent Howery, the March 25, 2021 meeting minutes were approved after a unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Fleury called for a motion on the Consent Agenda. On a motion by Regent Cohen, seconded by Regent Howery, the Consent Agenda was unanimously adopted.

Academic Programs

Discontinuations

Paramedic Studies - AS - Housatonic CC

Engineering Studies Concentration - BS General Studies - Charter Oak State College

Biological Sciences: Anesthesia - MS - Central CT State University

Modifications

Master of Fine Arts in Creative and Professional Writing - MFA - Western CT State University
[Modification of Instructional Delivery]

Social Services - AS - Capital Community College [Name Change to Human Services]
Social Service Aide - C2 Certificate - Capital Community College [Name Change to Human Services]
Social Services: Family and Child Studies Option - AS - Capital Community College [Name Change to Human Services, Family and Child Studies Option]
Social Services: Mental Health Option - AS - Capital Community College [Name Change to Human Services, Mental Health Option]
Emergency Medical Technician: Paramedic - AS - Capital Community College [Name Change to Paramedic Studies]
Emergency Medical Technician: Paramedic - C3 Certificate - Capital Community College [Name Change to Paramedic Certificate]
Paramedic: Emergency Medical Instructor Option - AS - Capital Community College [Name Change to Paramedic Studies: Emergency Medical Services Instructor]
Deaf Studies - C2 Certificate - Northwestern CT Community College [Modification of Instructional Delivery]
Interpreter Training Program - AS - Northwestern CT Community College [Modification of Instructional Delivery]
Master of Business Administration - MBA - Southern CT State University [Significant Modification of Courses/Course Substitutions and Addition of an Online Modality]
Spanish - 4 Concentrations: Teacher Certification 7-12, Hispanic Studies, Health and Human Service Professionals, Translation Studies - BA/BS - Southern CT State University [Significant Modification of Courses/Course Substitutions]
School Health Education - MS - Southern CT State University [Addition of an Online Instructional Modality]

New Programs

Clinical Documentation Improvement - C3 Certificate - Charter Oak State College
Business Administration: Sport Management Option - AS - Gateway Community College
Integrative Biological Diversity - MS - Southern CT State University
Curriculum and Instruction - MS - Southern CT State University

Faculty Awards

Honorary Degrees - ECSU

Delegation of Authority for Conferring Honorary Degrees for 2021 Commencement Ceremonies

Low Completers Report

Recognizing the CSCU Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All-Connecticut Academic Team

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED ON CONSENT

Discontinuations:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the discontinuation of a program Paramedic Studies (CIP Code: 51.0904 / OHE# 017999) leading to an Associate of Science at Housatonic Community College, effective May 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the discontinuation of a program General Studies with a Concentration in Engineering Studies (CIP Code: 24.0101 / OHE# 001805) leading to a Bachelor in General Studies at Charter Oak State College, effective Summer 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the discontinuation of a program Biological Sciences: Anesthesia (CIP Code: 51.3804 / OHE# 003033) leading to a Master of Science at Central Connecticut State University, effective Spring 2021.

Modifications:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Creative and Professional Writing (CIP Code: 23.1032 / OHE# 011247), specifically a change in modality from hybrid to online modality - leading to a Master of Fine Arts at Western Connecticut State University.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Social Services (CIP Code: 44.0701 / OHE# 002972), specifically a name change to Human Services - leading to an Associate of Science at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Social Service Aide (CIP Code: 44.0701 / OHE# 002491), specifically a name change to Human Services Certificate - leading to a C2 Certificate at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Social Services: Family and Child Studies Option (CIP Code: 44.0701 / OHE# 019513), specifically a name change to Human Services: Family and Child Studies Option - leading to an Associate of Science at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Social Services: Mental Health Option (CIP Code: 44.0701 / OHE# 006047), specifically a name change to Human Services: Mental Health Option - leading to an Associate of Science at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Emergency Medical Technician: Paramedic (CIP Code: 51.0904 / OHE# 002596), specifically a name change to Paramedic Studies - leading to an Associate Science at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Emergency Medical Technician: Paramedic (CIP Code: 51.0904 / OHE# 002585), specifically a name change to Paramedic Studies - leading to a C3 Certificate at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Paramedic: Emergency Medical Instructor Option (CIP Code: 51.0904 / OHE# 006044), specifically a name change to Paramedic Studies - leading to an Associate of Science at Capital Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Deaf Studies (CIP Code: 05.021123.1032 / OHE# 002725), specifically a change in modality to online - leading to a C2 Certificate at Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Interpreter Training Program (CIP Code: 16.1603 / OHE# 004253), specifically a change in modality to online - leading to an Associate of Science at Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Master of Business Administration (CIP Code: 52.0201 / OHE# 002970), including the addition of online modality - leading to a Master of Business Administration at Southern Connecticut State University.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - Spanish (CIP Code: 16.0905 / OHE# 000636) - specifically the fusing of the B.S. and B.A. degrees into one B.S. with four concentrations at Southern Connecticut State University.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the modification of a program - School Health Education (CIP Code: 13.1307 / OHE# 000623), specifically the addition of online modality - leading to a Master of Science at Southern Connecticut State University.

New Programs

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the licensure of a program in Clinical Documentation Improvement (CIP Code: 51.0707, OHE# TBD) - leading to a C3 Certificate at Charter Oak State College; and grant its accreditation for a period of seven semesters beginning with its initiation, such initiation to be determined in compliance with BOR guidelines for new programs approved on or after April 3, 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the licensure of a program in Business Management: Sport Management Option (CIP Code: 31.0504, OHE# TBD - one for on ground/hybrid, one for online) - leading to an Associate of Science at Gateway Community College; and grant its accreditation for a period of seven semesters beginning with its initiation, such initiation to be determined in compliance with BOR guidelines for new programs approved on or after April 3, 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the licensure of a program in Integrative Biological Diversity (CIP Code: 26.1307, OHE# TBD) - leading to a Master of Science at Southern Connecticut State University; and grant its accreditation for a period of seven semesters beginning with its initiation, such initiation to be determined in compliance with BOR guidelines for new programs approved on or after April 3, 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the licensure of a program in Curriculum and Instruction (CIP Code: 13.1202, OHE# TBD) - leading to a Master of Science at Southern Connecticut State University; and grant its accreditation for a period of seven semesters beginning with its initiation, such initiation to be determined in compliance with BOR guidelines for new programs approved on or after April 3, 2020.

Acceptance of Selectees for Board of Regents Faculty Awards

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education accepts the campus-based nominations for the Teaching Awards (CSU), Teaching Awards (CCC), Research Awards and the Scholarly Excellence Awards as the respective recipients of those awards for the 2010-21 academic year, and

That the Board of Regents for Higher Education accepts the recommendations of the respective selection committees for the Teaching Award (CSU), Teaching Award (CCC), Research Award, Scholarly Excellence Award and the Adjunct Faculty Teaching Awards as the respective recipients of the System Awards for the 2020-21 academic year.

Approval of Nominations for Honorary Degrees

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education approve the nominees for an honorary degree, as presented below, according to the guidelines in the Board policies presently in effect granting honorary degrees to honor a person for unusual and exemplary accomplishments and to advance the work and reputation of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities.

Honorary Degree Nominations for 2021 Commencements

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Nominee</u>
Eastern Connecticut State University	Mark Boxer Maryam Elahi Jeffrey A. Flaks

Delegation of Authority for Conferring Honorary Degrees for Commencement Ceremonies 2021

WHEREAS, the CSCU Policy 1.3 - Granting Honorary Degrees approved on March 15, 2012 via Board Resolution 12-019 provides for honorary degrees to be awarded to honor persons who advance the work and reputation of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; and

WHEREAS, the Policy further states that all honorary degrees are granted by the Board of Regents upon the recommendation by the University or College President, and conferred by the Chairperson of the Board of Regents or by a Regent designated by the Chairperson; and

WHEREAS, based on concerns for the ongoing pandemic and social distancing during the hooding ceremony, the Board of Regents delegates the authority for conferring honorary degrees to the University and College Presidents for the 2021 Commencement ceremonies; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the University and College Presidents are authorized to confer honorary degrees for the 2021 commencement ceremonies.

Academic Program Review Low Completers

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education accept the submission of the academic program review low completers report by the CSCU institution for the 2019-20 academic year as defined by the Board's Low Completer policy.

Recognizing CSCU Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All-Connecticut Academic Team

WHEREAS, it is central to the mission of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) to engage students in educational experiences that prepare them to continue their academic pursuits and begin careers, well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the state's workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents for Higher Education embraces an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, leadership, and career development; and

WHEREAS, the All-Connecticut Academic Team is one of the All-USA Community College qualifying teams sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges and academic programs; and

WHEREAS, each student selected for the All-Connecticut Academic Team is earning an associate degree, maintains a 3.5 GPA or higher and is involved in campus activities; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 - 2021 All-CT Academic Team includes 29 outstanding CSCU Community College students:

Sally Dejesus, Asnuntuck Community College
Miriam Hintz, Asnuntuck Community College
Deanna Savoie, Asnuntuck Community College
Vincent Walter, Asnuntuck Community College
Laden Hoxha, Capital Community College
Holly Johnson, Capital Community College
Ashley Ayala, Gateway Community College
Larysa Dubrovska, Gateway Community College
Margaret Gaughran, Gateway Community College
Joshua Lamoria, Gateway Community College
Daniela Roldan, Housatonic Community College
Geeta Khade, Manchester Community College
Gideon Osei Bonsu, Manchester Community College
Nadia Zuniga, Manchester Community College
Eva-Larue Barber, Middlesex Community College
John Howell, Middlesex Community College
Irving Amaral, Naugatuck Valley Community College
Lisa Marschall, Naugatuck Valley Community College
Julia Henrickson, Northwestern Connecticut Community College
Madison Peladeau, Northwestern Connecticut Community College
Erin Sullivan, Northwestern Connecticut Community College
Emily Kempa, Norwalk Community College
Jack Waters, Norwalk Community College
Rowan Coleman, Quinebaug Valley Community College
Breana Weidele, Quinebaug Valley Community College
Jean Charles, Three Rivers Community College
Weili Li, Three Rivers Community College
Naomi Benningfield, Tunxis Community College
Madelyn Bourassa, Tunxis Community College

WHEREAS, Madison Peladeau of Jackson, Mississippi and a student at Northwestern Connecticut Community College was also named a Coca-Cola Academic Team Silver Scholar and will receive a Coca-Cola Foundation scholarship; and

WHEREAS, Professors Todd Bryda and Crystal Wiggins devoted their time and expertise in preparing the students for selection; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Board of Regents for Higher Education hereby recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of the students of the 2020 - 2021 All-CT Academic Team and their advisors.

ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Action Item: Accreditation of a Licensed Program

RESOLVED: That the Board of Regents for Higher Education grant accreditation of a licensed program in Theatre Arts (CIP Code: 50.0501 OHE # 018729), leading to an Associate of Arts at Capital Community College, with the understanding that the Connecticut State Community College degree program to which this program most closely aligns be reviewed by the Board in fall 2024.

Regent Harris reported that this appeared as an Action Item because the ASA Committee wanted to review the program after 7 semesters as it has a history of low enrollment to ensure that it is a viable, sustainable program. In addition, the documentation had to be re-written to reflect the fact that in 7 semesters, there will be One College and this program will be aligned with that.

A motion to approve the resolution was made by Regent Harris and seconded by Regent Cohen. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Regent Harris reported:

- The annual Faculty Teaching and Research Awards are usually presented in person. The monetary award recognizes our very impressive faculty members both for their outstanding and innovative teaching and their scholarly work. This month, the Consent Agenda included the announcement of the nominees and the winners. Recognition of the winners will be made formally at the May BOR meeting.
- Congratulations were echoed to the All CT PTK Academic Team. This remarkable group of student leaders maintain at least a 3.5 GPA.

David Blitz asked for an update from Dr. Gates on mandatory vaccination requirements for faculty, staff, and students for the return to campus in the fall. Dr. Gates indicated we are waiting for further clarification from Legal and the issue is under advisement. She would follow-up with Professor Blitz outside of the meeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Regent Cohen reported:

- **Policy on Remote Work** - aka Telecommuting, for M/C employees
 - Our staff has been remote working, but implemented suddenly for all employees to protect their health and safety during COVID.
 - For the post COVID era, our committee is discussing:
 - what telework is and is not
 - what jobs lend themselves to this work,
 - how employees can qualify for teleworking,
 - what employee and employer responsibilities would be for the duration of an employee's telework approval,
 - maintaining security of CSCU information, networks and any loaned equipment,
 - protocols for evaluation of employees during the period of their telework etc.
 - The plan going forward is to develop information based on input from the committee and from supervisors on the campuses and in the System Office for how a telework policy could be successful. The committee will then discuss the feedback and a proposed draft policy.

- **Shared Services**
 - The committee heard updates on the implementation of Shared Services for IT and Finance (agenda packet beginning on page 117).
 - At the next committee meeting, an update on shared human resources services will be presented.
 - The committee also expects to receive a follow-up report on employees who have been moved into shared services for system entities.

- **Digital Archiving.**
 - Governance records have significant value. The CSCU System Office and our colleges and universities need to preserve all our public records and make access to them available to the public.
 - Since CSCU establishment in 2011, there has not been a coordinated merging/consolidation of resolutions and relevant documents into a single searchable database. That means currently there is no systematic way for an employee or the general public to create/search for issues and actions addressed by the Board.
 - Pam Heleen, Associate Director of Board Affairs, and Patrick Carr, the Program Operations Manager for the CSCU Library Consortium, are overseeing how to archive BOR materials for their long-term preservation.
 - The proposed solution is to use Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA), administered by the University of Connecticut Library. It serves the entire state by providing educational and cultural institutions with an online repository of more than 2.5 million digital resources.
 - Use of the archives is free.
 - The archives comply with key standards and best practices for data preservation and management.
 - These archives are authorized by the Connecticut State Archives for storage of permanent records
 - CTDA is a partner with the Digital Public Library of America, which is a well-known online repository used by researchers and students everywhere to access the digital resources of libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions.
 - This project plans to involve students from Southern CT State University's Master's degree program in Information and Library Science. We are grateful to Dr. Brian Real, Assistant Professor of Information and Library Science at Southern, who oversees internships and is working now to recruit one or more unpaid interns this summer to begin execution of the project.
 - The project will establish a formal relationship with CTDA through an MOU and there is free CTDA training that will assist in organizing data and creating searchable and sorting protocols.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 11:19 a.m. on a motion by Chair Fleury, seconded by Regent Cohen, the Board voted to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion concerning the appointment, employment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of a public officer or employee and collective bargaining. Chair Fleury announced that no votes would be taken in Executive Session and that the meeting will be immediately adjourned following Executive Session. Chair Fleury directed CSCU Interim President Jane Gates and Chief of Staff/Board Secretary Alice Pritchard, Ben Barnes, and Ernestine Weaver to remain with the Board in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Fleury declared the meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Submitted,

Alice Pritchard
Secretary of the CT Board of Regents for Higher Education

Attachment A
Letters from the Public

Dear members of the Board of Regents,

My name is Campbell Mitchell. I am a student at Western Connecticut State University. I am writing today as a social sciences major, one of the programs currently up for review as a low completion major, in order to highlight what I believe are the unsung virtues of the program, and the importance of focused interdisciplinary programs more broadly. While it is naturally disappointing that few students are applying and graduating as social sciences majors, this is not surprising given that few students coming out of high school are familiar with social sciences as a field. To that end, discussions of terminating majors, or cutting resources, because of low completion become self-fulfilling prophecies, as students are less likely to switch to a major that is in danger of being cut. No student wants to find themselves at registration time in their senior year unable to meet their graduation requirements because there are no sections of required courses in which to enroll because of budget or faculty cuts. As a student currently in the midst of registration, I can attest that this is no mere hypothetical.

Despite these challenges, I maintain that the social sciences program is worth keeping, and its elimination would be a major disservice to both current and future students. A broad interdisciplinary approach offered by the social sciences program gives students the opportunity to apply different methods to a variety of challenges, which are in turn applicable to a diverse range of career fields. This knowledge of the wide applicability of a social sciences degree was part of my own reasoning for applying to the major specifically, as opposed to a more specialized or popular major. The mission statement for CSCU emphasizes the diversity of student needs, and the importance of exploring a wide variety of influences to global problems and social justice. The promotion of heterogeneous approaches to learning and research as found in the social sciences program and others like it is crucial to fulfilling these ends.

The problems of the 21st century, the problems that Connecticut students must be equipped to solve, demand a rigorous cross disciplinary approach. The events of the past year, including the pandemic, the economic crisis, and the protests against racial injustice, demonstrate the acute need for future leaders to be equipped with an interdisciplinary perspective and skillset. These systemic, intersectional challenges demand solutions which draw upon a variety of fields from across the social sciences, and require students able to understand, explore, and empathize with a variety of perspectives. The social sciences major program is uniquely positioned to meet these needs, and to advance the mission of the university. I fear that the elimination of the social sciences major would be a step backwards for the university mission and a true disservice to its students.

Sincerely,

Campbell Mitchell