

Meeting of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the BOR
March 10 2023. 1pm

1. Approval of February 2023 Minutes
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Reports of Chair and Vice Chair
4. FAC Elections Committee Formation
5. CC Resolutions and statements
 - a. [Resolution on Restoring a Student Centered Campus](#) (Tunxis)
 - b. [Resolution on SB1105](#) (Capital)
 - c. Ed Tech council response to Charge (2/6/2023)
6. Update on Legislative hearings
7. Draft Comments to BOR and Legislature
8. Consolidation progress, governance, policy changes
9. Consortial Degrees
10. CSU leadership changes
11. Adjourn

Next Meeting: April 14

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Capital Community College Senate Resolution in Support of SB 1105

Whereas, the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee of the CT General Assembly has raised [Senate Bill 1105](#) *AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERCENTAGE OF COURSES TAUGHT BY PART-TIME FACULTY AT THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY- TECHNICAL COLLEGES*;

Whereas, the stated purpose of SB 1105 is to require a phased-in reduction of the percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty at the regional community-technical colleges;

Whereas, if enacted, SB 1105 would require the CT Board of Regents to enact a policy to permit not more than forty-five per cent of courses taught by part-time faculty on and after July 1, 2025, not more than thirty-five per cent of such courses on and after July 1, 2026, and not more than twenty-five per cent of such courses on and after July 1, 2027;

Whereas, SB 1105 is designed to fix the long-standing problem of over-reliance on adjunct faculty in our community college system;

Whereas, [research suggests](#) the rising numbers of part-time faculty, their poor working conditions, and the lack of support they receive from their institutions directly adversely impacts student success;

Whereas, adjunct faculty are systematically denied the opportunity to fully participate in and contribute to our college and academic community;

Whereas, our public higher educational system in Connecticut perpetuates [racialized austerity](#) and structural racism, wherein the utilization of part-time/non-tenure track faculty increases as the percentage of Hispanic and Black student body populations increase;

Whereas, SB 1105 would advance equity in our public higher education system by ensuring community college students are finally provided equitable access to full-time faculty as students in our state universities and University of Connecticut;

Whereas, the CSCU Board of Regents currently has a policy in place in the state university system that caps the percentage of courses taught by adjunct faculty at twenty percent, yet the CSCU Board of Regents has refused to enact such policy for our community colleges;

Whereas, SB 1105 would realize a goal of the CSCU 2030 plan to provide “enhanced investment in our faculty and academic innovation”;

Resolved, Capital Community College Senate fully supports SB 1105 as a necessary policy change to greatly improve the educational services we provide to our students and fix long-standing inequities in our workforce.

Resolution adopted by Capital Community College Senate on 3/1/23

Tunxis Community College Professional Staff Organization

Resolution on Restoring a Student-Centered College

Whereas current student payment plans do not meet the needs of Tunxis students;

Whereas the policy on dropping students for non-payment harms, not helps, Tunxis students;

Whereas rigid adherence to add-drop and overenrollment policies harm, not help, Tunxis students;

Whereas CSCC advertising practices are deceptive and may harm Tunxis students; now therefore, be it

Resolved that the Tunxis Community College Professional Staff Organization calls upon the Board of Regents to review and revise the aforementioned policies and practices, incorporating the solutions suggested below; now therefore, be it

Further Resolved, that the Tunxis Community College Professional Staff Organization calls upon the support of Tunxis Community College management in this endeavor.

We wish to highlight four areas of concern concerning maintaining a student-centered focus and upholding the institutional mission. The issues impacting Tunxis Community College students include payment plans that do not meet the needs of our learners, a change in policy surrounding dropping students for non-payment, add-drop and overenrollment policies, and a lack of transparency in CT State Community College Advertising. Whereas our guiding principle of “Open Communication” states “We welcome paradox and constructive conflict as we move toward consensus,” we hope that this proposed resolution is received in the manner that it is intended. We intend to shine a light on our concerns about the impact of existing policies and practices that pose barriers and don’t fully consider the needs of the students that we serve.

#1- Payment Plans Do Not Meet the Needs of Our Learners

Eight hundred and ten students completed the Holistic Student Support Survey at Tunxis Community College between January 6 and February 2nd. Of those students, sixteen students indicated “In the past month, I have been worried about having a secure and safe place to sleep” and fifty-four students responded, “In the past month, I have been worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more”. This means that 6.67% of our students who chose to complete the survey have food insecurity and 1.97% have housing insecurity. We enrolled 2861 students in the Spring semester, so if we were to apply the same percentages to the total Spring 2023 population it would account for 56 students with housing insecurity and 190 students with food insecurity. It is important to understand that nearly 250 students at Tunxis have admitted to us that they are struggling financially with regard to food and housing when we think about the concept of a payment plan. The intention of a payment plan at an institution of higher education is to spread out college fees into installments that you can pay over time. The benefit to the student is that this makes college accessible for those who would not otherwise be able to attend due to ineligibility for federal funding. The intended outcome is to reduce the burden on the student by making education attainable by paying small amounts over time. The payment plan at Tunxis does not accomplish this goal. Our payment plans expect a student to pay 40% of their tuition at the time they enroll in the plan in addition to a \$25 installment plan fee. This was taken directly from the Tunxis.edu website:

Please note:

There will be a minimum payment due upon enrollment. This payment will include 40% of your tuition and fees as well as a \$25 non-refundable payment plan enrollment fee. Two installments of 30% each will be due according to the below schedule.

	Summer 2022:	Fall 2022:
40% Deposit:	Upon Enrollment	Upon Enrollment
30% Installment Payment 1:	06/22/2022	09/14/2022
30% Installment Payment 2:	07/20/2022	10/05/2022

Sample Payment Plan Breakdown FALL 2022:				
	12 Credits No labs/studios	9 Credits No labs/studios	6 Credits No labs/studios	3 Credits No labs/studios
Tuition:	\$ 2,088.00	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 1,044.00	\$ 522.00
College Service Fee:	\$ 262.00	\$ 207.00	\$ 151.00	\$ 107.00
Student Activity Fee:	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
Transportation Fee:	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00
Total Cost Before Payment Plan:	\$ 2,410.00	\$ 1,823.00	\$ 1,245.00	\$ 679.00
Installment Plan Fee:	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Deposit 40%:	\$ 964.00	\$ 729.20	\$ 498.00	\$ 271.60
Total Down Payment:	\$ 989.00	\$ 754.20	\$ 523.00	\$ 296.60
Installment 1 due 09/14/2022:	\$ 723.00	\$ 546.90	\$ 373.50	\$ 203.70
Installment 2 due 10/05/2022:	\$ 723.00	\$ 546.90	\$ 373.50	\$ 203.70
Total Cost For Payment Plan:	\$ 2,435.00	\$ 1,848.00	\$ 1,270.00	\$ 704.00

Using the example of a student enrolling in 12 credits for the Fall 2022 semester, the student would be responsible for a \$989.00 down payment. If we look at the population that we serve, it is unreasonable to assume that our students can pay \$989 out of pocket followed by two additional installments of \$723.00 a piece (\$1446.00) within a 21-day window. Our for-profit competitors offer students the opportunity to pay in equal monthly installments. When a for-profit institution offers students payment options that are more flexible than a public community college, we need to assess our practices and reflect on how we can better meet the needs of our students. When we look at our guiding principle of “Excellence: We value continuous improvement and growth in every area of college life. We value collaboration, cooperation, teamwork, innovation, and creative problem-solving in our continuous improvement efforts. We value the courage to take risks and provide leadership”.

Benefits

- We will become more accessible to students if we have payment plans that provide lower payments and a longer window of repayment
- We will be upholding the Tunxis Community College mission that we “offer its students a quality, yet affordable education in an accessible and supportive environment, fostering the skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex world”

Concerns

- We are preventing vulnerable populations from accessing education which is the antithesis of our mission
- We are not living up to our guiding principles of “Respect: We treat others fairly and with dignity. We value and honor each other in our diversity” because we are not providing an opportunity for students who do not qualify for funding assistance to pursue their education at the same level of access as our students who do qualify for federal funding.

Recommendation

- We propose that the 1st 40% payment be replaced with a flat dollar amount equal to the cost of 1 credit + the Student Activity Fee (\$180 + \$10= \$190) This added to the \$25 fee that is needed to start the payment plan would bring the total upfront cost to the student to \$215, regardless of the number of credits in which they enroll.
- We propose that we create a workgroup reflective of all student-facing offices on campus to brainstorm how the payment plan can be extended over a longer period to provide students with an opportunity to pay for their courses.
- We propose that we consider on-campus employment opportunities for students that could reduce the amount of tuition owed by the student (student worker positions)

#2- Change in Policy Surrounding Dropping Students for Non-Payment

Our guiding principles state, “Responsibility: We value institutional and individual accountability, defined as doing what needs to be done in a timely manner and competent manner. By acceptance of personal responsibility for our own actions and decisions, we help to create a college at which we are proud to work.” When we examine the statement “doing what needs to be done in a timely and competent manner” it infers that the faculty and staff at the college have the latitude to competently make decisions in a manner that maintains a student-centered approach and does not cause a detriment to the institution. In a situation where a student enrolls in a course, attends the course, and then gets dropped for non-payment, the professionals working directly with students should be able to assess if a student can continue in the course if a partial payment is made within 24 hours of the drop. We propose that students make a \$150 or 10% payment (whichever amount is lower) within 24 hours to get re-enrolled, as that is a good faith commitment to paying the institution and is a reasonable amount for the students we serve. This has been the practice at Tunxis Community College in the past and we request that the BOR policy be revised to permit this practice to be reinstated.

Benefits

- Students who have already engaged in the course will receive credit for the work that was completed instead of being dropped with nothing to show for the effort already exerted
- For a course that has a lower engagement or lower enrollment, classmates will benefit from having another engaged student in the course discussions and group work
- It builds goodwill with students. They feel like staff and faculty have heard their individual needs/concerns/financial limitations and have been supported in reaching a favorable resolution

Concerns

- Students may feel like the faculty member isn’t supportive of them returning to the class for an academic reason
- Students may feel that their advisor isn’t able to help advocate for them and creating distrust in the relationship
- Students who are still enrolled in the class will not benefit from hearing about the experiences of the students removed from their class which can impact the quality of the course discussion

Recommendation

- The Staff and Faculty working directly with the student should have permission to work in conjunction with the business office and financial aid to re-enroll a student who has been dropped from a course prior if payment is made within 24 hours of the drop.

#3- Add/Drop and Overenrollment Policies

For many years, and indeed until this semester, Tunxis faculty had broad discretion to accept, on a case-by-case basis, students into sections that were fully enrolled or had exceeded the so-called “three hour rule” for add-drop purposes. The pertinent faculty member would approve, or not, a student request; the pertinent DC would approve, or not, the faculty member’s request to enroll the student; and the Academic Dean would approve, or not, the DC’s recommendation. In most cases, the latter two would simply endorse the faculty member’s decision. In this manner, each semester a significant number of students were accommodated, to their benefit as well as to the benefit of the College.

The recent diktat from System Office replaces decentralized, local, informal but informed decision-making with enforcement of a uniform policy that harms, not helps students. One assumes many students who were turned away this semester were not interested in taking a late-start (i.e. accelerated) or a seven-week (even more accelerated) section, this assuming such a section was available for them to enroll in, or perhaps could not take such a section due to their work schedules or other commitments. Until the recent past, faculty would have found a place for many of these students because that is what faculty do and because faculty possessed the autonomy to make such judgments. Now, we are informed that we cannot accommodate students in this fashion because it is unfair and inequitable to do so and because this imposes additional work on staff members. We deem this ridiculous and unacceptable.

Concern

- Students are hampered, not helped, by centralized decision-making and inflexible policies

Recommendations

- Hire additional staff for Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, Records, and Financial Aid
- Modify the current add/drop and overenrollment policies to allow faculty to make exceptions and assist students
- Exercise common sense and honor the spirit, not the letter, of existing policies

#4- Lack of Transparency in CT State Community College Advertising

Our guiding principle of “Integrity” states that “We avoid silence when it may mislead; we seek root causes and solve problems.” It has been brought forward to the attention of leadership that the omission of facts or in this instance “silence” surrounding the lack of caveats used in CT State advertisements is playing a role in students enrolling at Tunxis under the misconception that they do not need to pay for their education. We are marketing to an uneducated population by nature of the work

that we do at a community college, which means that we should be expected to fully educate our prospective students at every opportunity. Engaging in marketing practices that do not note with an asterisk ***Restrictions apply** leaves the institution open to potential claims of deceptive marketing practices. The Federal Trade Commission states that “an ad is deceptive if it contains a statement-or omits information- that:

- Is likely to mislead consumers acting reasonably under the circumstances -or
- Is “material”- that is, important to a consumer’s decision to buy or use the product

(<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/advertising-faqs-guide-small-business>)

Benefits

- Adding language to clarify that not everyone who attends a community college will qualify for free tuition should minimize the number of people who believe that it is fully funded
- We should see a decrease in the number of students dropped for non-payment because they don’t believe that they owe any money, despite receiving a bill
- Adding in a small disclaimer will ensure that we are not in violation of the FTC’s Deception Policy Statement
- By adding in a disclaimer, we will be adhering to our guiding principle of “Respect” which is that we “Treat others fairly and with dignity”. Instead of taking the approach that students “should have known that they will owe money” we are respecting the fact that many of our students are first-generation and do not have the benefit of an experienced guardian to walk them through the overwhelming process of enrolling in college.

Concerns

- Omission of facts
 - There are no disclaimers on the ads themselves that indicate that students need to meet the criteria to qualify for free tuition
- Misleading wording/ misleading price claim
 - Using language such as “Debt-Free College”, “1 School. 12 Campuses. 0 Dollars.”, and “Believe it! Free Community College in CT”

Recommendation

- We propose that all CT State Community College Advertising add a disclaimer that “Restrictions Apply” or “Speak with an admissions counselor today to see if you qualify” to make it clear or prospective consumers that there are criteria that need to be met to qualify for this benefit.