



# Board of Regents

## Meeting Minutes

Student Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 @ 10:30am

Conducted Via WEBEX

Meeting Video Posted to YouTube

### Attendance:

(ACC) Claudia Cupe

(CCC) Absent

(GCC) Nylevet Elias,

(HCC) Antonia Oglesby,

(MCC) Cypress Cox

(Middlesex CC) Absent

(NVCC) Absent

(NWCT CC) Absent

(Norwalk CC) Absent

(QVCC) Absent

(Three Rivers CC) Allen Lyon

(TXCC) Absent

(CCSU) Kelli Parady,

(ECSU) Matthew Driscoll,

(SCSU) Brandon Lovene, (WCSU) Audrey,

(Charter Oak) Teddy Wang

Ben Barnes

Angelo Simoni

Pam Heleen

1. **Meeting called to order by Chair Nielsen @1035am**
2. **Declaration of Quorum:** (Overall Quorum not met; no voting can occur)
  - a. Universities: Yes
  - b. Community Colleges: No
3. **Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes:**
  - a. 3/3/2021 (Not Approved- Due to quorum constraints)
  - b. 2/17/2021 (Not Approved-Due to quorum constraints)
4. **Guest Speakers**
  - a. Ben Barnes
    - i. Angelo requested that Ben Barnes speak to the committee and provide information. Specifically, he spoke about tuitions and fees throughout the system. Mr. Barnes indicated that the colleges and universities to include Charter Oak State College froze their tuition and fees with a few minor exceptions to that decision. One exception details an increase on the U-

PASS fees for the schools that are currently partnered with the program (No change to the institutions that lack access to sufficient public transport: ECSU, Northwestern, Naugatuck Valley, and perhaps a few more). The students at affected institutions will see an increase to their student fees as it is a mandatory fee. The U-PASS option is a statewide program that consists of an unlimited use bus pass as well as Metro-North, and public trains throughout Connecticut. This pass is not for use with third party transportation or private services such as taxis. The fee increased from \$20 to \$40 per student. There is no refund to students who choose not to use this service.

- ii. Mr. Barnes also discussed the changes in meal plans as a means of decreasing the price students pay for college. He indicated the new tier system coming to fruition at CCSU that was driven as a response to COVID restrictions and needs on the campus.
- iii. Adjustments are also being made regarding the online fees. During the onset of the Pandemic, the online learning fees were waived. There is currently conversation to decrease online fees moving forward.
- iv. Making more money available to students through financial aid through use of federal funding. Payments have gone out on two separate occasions to eligible students as refunds for fees. There is more discussion to be had detailed additional grants and money for the institutions to ensure the students are taken care of. There is more money to give away to assist students. Mr. Barnes would like suggestions from the SAC as to how the money should be distributed. There is about 150million dollars in funding (for two more academic years). Approximately 60million dollars has already been given away. With roughly 30million last Spring. There have been declines in enrollment. 90million dollars more to give away for students. There should be some announcements in the next 2 months about financial assistance for the Fall Semester. Mr. Barnes requested ideas from the SAC on how the money should support the students as it is intended to help the students.
- v. Kelli Parady (CCSU) asked if the Student Government Associations (SGA) could cover the increased U-PASS fees. Mr. Barnes indicated that was up to the institution because those are student-controlled funds. She additionally requested information about the implementation of Guided Pathways. How will that work and what would it look like. Also, if the money is used now, what will happen to the money originally put a side for the initiative. Mr. Barnes indicated that the CCSU system has adopted Guided Pathways. It is a suite of interventions that is intended to improve

outcomes and retentions in community colleges. It is an evidence-based approach by community college systems throughout the country. It has a lot of support from academics nationally who are focused on Student Success Community College. one of the most visible and frankly most expensive parts of the suite of policies deals with case management approach.

- vi. There are lower ratios of students with advisors so that they recommend as the National Standard for high quality advisement from community colleges 250 student per advisor and some campuses were many times above that. In this suite it would require the hiring of more advisors. It is his view, shared by many practitioners from around the country suggest that this program assists in registration and pursuit of a degree or program easier. Increasing retention and less dropouts and attempting more credits because there is General agreement in the industry that taking more credit improves the likelihood that you will complete your degree or certificate as it improves the academic performance. If successful, higher retention rates, more credits attempted and completed, thus increased revenue. CT Community Colleges supplies a high amount of Pell Grant money that often covers tuition and fees for those who qualify. The goal is to use the federal funds to help us staff up to the appropriate numbers of advisors so that we can have some more intensive advising program that will in turn over a couple of years allow those advisors to increase our overall enrollment. The goal is 250 advisors. A lot of effort goes into putting the program into effect. Likely to use the Federal money to do it quicker, offices, training, startup costs and more. It will likely cost nearly 20million dollars. Before the Federal Grant money, the BOR was looking to transform the campuses in threes by year but now may have the option to do it quicker. Potentially room to invite in Steve McDowell, financial aid especially knowledgeable about how the FASFA and financial aid system. He is currently involved in those discussions. The team would very much welcome students as they go forward. The Universities are individually deciding how to spend that money as they are much more autonomous and more ability to process their own funds and distribution of funds. SAC to potentially form a sub-committee to discuss allocation of funds.

- b. Sean Bradbury

## **5. Unfinished Business**

- a. Governing Documents Revisions Update

- i. While no permanent action could take place there was much conversation surrounding quorum – hence the discussion revolved around addressing the quorum allocations in the By-Laws.
- ii. The consolidation of the Community Colleges will likely change the makeup and the composition of the SAC in the next 18 months. This needs to be considered in a potential By-Law revision. That said, the pressing issue is quorum as no voting can occur without it.

## 6. New Business

### a. Mental Health Resources Project

- i. Chair Nielsen spoke of her visit to Assunpink Community College for a meeting with Claudia. They indicated it was excellent conversation and she wanted to bring part of this conversation back to SAC regarding Mental Health Resources throughout the system. She identified that there is a big difference between the different community colleges and what's available to students in terms of Health Resources. Some of the schools have a small office with some counselors available and referrals to local organizations directly. Other colleges have a page on the website that gives a hotline and maybe a list of resources where students have to kind of self-direct. With Students First the system is forming potentially one of the largest community colleges in the country. As the SAC can provide some guidance and suggestions to the system office at Board of Regents about how they can create a strong and equitable mental health program for the consolidated Community College
- ii. Requests for thoughts on what mental health resources look like on each campus. Matt (ECSU) indicated there was talk of these issues on his campus. Only one counselor to meet with students, hiring freeze topic? Chair Nielsen indicated the situation at the Universities is kind of its own beast but if we if we provided expectations from a student perspective to the Board of Regents for the Community College we could create a recommendation to pass on to the Universities. Jocelyn (HCC) indicated their campus is partnered with the Jed Foundation, mental health awareness program that students can get involved. She participates in it, they train students on how to be there for one another and how to kind of Mentor others if there is a mental health crisis and how to direct them in the right direction with the kiosk that we're trying to get on campus pretty strong mental health awareness throughout the year actually on campus during our during one of our first weeks in the fall semester we would have a mental health check ins. The intent is to have service dogs at the event. We would have lot of active participants through the counseling

center. The Jed Foundation seems to be catching a lot of the colleges and universities in Connecticut right now. Chair Nielsen (WCSU) indicated that WCSU is reviewing a pitch from them currently and might be adopting it. We can research the positive feedback on the program. or something similar that could be something that we recommend to the system's office to look at for the larger Community College.

- iii. Sherry in the chat mentions that ACC doesn't have any Mental Health Counselors on campus
  - iv. Gateway Community College has a wellness center, but resources and accessibility are limited due to the lack of counselors
  - v. Since the consolidation is in process perhaps we as a body and maybe what we could do also as we could look at one of since we know that we're heading towards the possibility of this massive Community College we could look at what the enrollment for that and compare it to another similar system in the country and identify their current Mental Health capabilities. Perhaps this research would allow us more data to formulate a recommendation from SAC.
- b. Next meeting: Student Feedback. Potential formation of a special meeting to continue the conversation on funding and mental health options. Bring back information from your campuses if possible. Additionally, a quick conversation via email regarding meeting times as quorum has been an issue.

**7. Secretary Appointment - (Unable to hold vote due to lack of quorum)**

**8. Open Floor**

- a. Matt Driscoll (ECSU) discussed a Title IX issue on his campus. He further mentioned that a special investigative team was brought in to ensure policies were handled accordingly. It will likely play out through the summer into the fall.

**8) Meeting called to a close at 1138am.** Chair Nielsen indicated the team did a great job today and reminded them to think about the information that was presented today. Of note, Chair Nielsen mentioned the potential for a Special Meeting to be called before the next scheduled meeting.