

DRAFT

NEASC Substantive Change Request

**Connecticut State Colleges and
Universities**

February 28, 2018

**Prepared for the New England Association of Schools and
Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education**

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NEASC Substantive Change Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) seeks approval from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) to consolidate its 12 individually accredited Connecticut community colleges (CCC) into a singly accredited College with 12 campuses, a consolidated organizational structure, and integrated administrative functions.

A structural change of this magnitude is necessary to address urgent problems facing the CCC and ensure their sustainable future. The community colleges' graduation rates are significantly below national benchmarks. Nine of the 12 institutions had graduation rates for first-time/full-time students below 15%. The CCC have also experienced steady declines in enrollment, from an all-time high of 58,228 in 2012 to 49,377 by 2017—a 15% decrease, largely due to decreasing numbers of Connecticut high school graduates, which are projected to continued declining for the next two decades.

Severe fiscal challenges have hampered the colleges' ability to address these problems. State funding for the CCC has decreased by 15.5% since FY 2016, at the same time that costs have continued to escalate. Tuition increases, which have been kept low to ensure affordability, have not been sufficient to offset decreases in state funding and increases in operating costs.

The current structure of 12 stand-alone community colleges presents inherent barriers to addressing these problems by encouraging competition among the colleges for scarce resources and by requiring each college to maintain duplicative administrative infrastructures. This duplication not only results in redundant expenditure of scarce resources but also creates barriers for students due to inconsistent practices and procedures from one college to the next

To address the need for structural change in the CCC, Mark Ojakian, President of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, launched the *Students First* initiative in April 2017 by recommending to the BOR the organizational consolidation of the 12 community colleges into one College with a single accreditation and 12 campuses statewide.

The vision of *Students First* is to create a dynamic community college that leverages talents and resources and focuses on helping students attain their individual educational goals while responding to community and state needs. The goals of the proposed community college consolidation are as follows:

1. To create a single NEASC accredited community college with 12 campuses, with clear and consistent practices and procedures. The consolidation calls for grouping the community colleges into three regions, each with four campuses. A Campus Vice President, who will serve as chief operating officer for each campus, will report directly to a Regional Vice President, who reports to a College President. Budgetary responsibility will lie with the Regional Vice

Presidents, which enables them to deploy resources where they are most needed to serve students. A new model for shared governance envisions the establishment of a Faculty/Staff Senate for the College with representation from all 12 campuses. A curriculum sub-committee of that Senate will review academic program proposals. With a common General Education curriculum and degree programs with one set of requirements, a single College will enable students to take courses on different campuses without concerns about course transfer or conflicting program requirements.

2. To improve student success by implementing proven strategies throughout the College. Guided Pathways will serve as the cornerstone of the *Students First* plan to improve student retention and completion. Guided Pathways provide structure, mileposts, and clear outcomes for each student's college experience. The pathways approach is geared toward helping more students efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market. Broadly representative teams of stakeholders are already engaged in planning the implementation of Guided Pathways throughout the College.
3. To institute clear enrollment management practices to address declining enrollment patterns. *Students First* will implement centralized Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) to integrate and coordinate best practices at the state, regional, and local levels. Implementing SEM will reverse enrollment declines through targeted recruitment of different student populations and improved retention of enrolled students. A Campus Director of Enrollment Management, who will be formally supervised by the Campus VP and have a dotted line relationship with a College VP for Enrollment Management, will oversee all enrollment management functions at the campus with current staff trained as Enrollment Management Specialists.
4. To provide seamless transition for students to the future single college. Consolidating the colleges will lead to a more consistent experience for students through fully integrated information technology systems: a single admissions application, a single financial aid process, a single billing process, a single student ID number, and a common course catalog. Network access will be generated from a single domain and used at any location, streamlining access to critical academic systems.
5. To maintain the uniqueness, identity and community connections of each campus. The proposed consolidation will preserve the unique identity of each campus in its community to ensure that it meets the needs of local students and employers. The Campus Vice President will have a primary responsibility for outreach to the local community, for local fundraising, and for ensuring the campus addresses community needs. Unique programs will remain at their current locations. Disciplinary teams of faculty will be charged with developing a common curriculum for any degrees that are offered on more than one campus, but individual campuses will offer specialized "options" for common degree programs. The 12 campuses' own foundation will not be affected by this proposed

consolidation. Any funds raised by the foundation will be controlled by the foundation and used to support their local priorities.

6. To ensure a financially stable and sustainable future for the state's community colleges. The *Students First* proposal for the community college consolidation will provide many opportunities to align and streamline administrative functions that are currently performed separately at 12 locations. Instituting a common set of administrative policies, procedures, and protocols will greatly simplify the student experience by eliminating confusion and removing barriers. Requiring fewer personnel to administer centrally many of the same functions now performed at all 12 campuses will also generate substantial savings to offset the impact of rising costs and declining state support. A detailed financial analysis of the proposed community college consolidation projects Net Savings of \$28 million by FY21. Most importantly, reducing personnel costs in key administrative areas such as information technology, administrative and fiscal affairs, human resources, and facilities management, leveraging technology where appropriate, and improving efficiencies in back office functions will safeguard critical resources devoted to student teaching and learning. None of the projected savings call for reductions in either Academic or Student Affairs. No faculty or student support positions will be eliminated, which ensures that *Students First* remains focused on student success and educational attainment.

The community colleges have operated since their inception with a significantly centralized administrative support infrastructure that will greatly simplify the process of further consolidating administrative and back-office functions in a single College. The Community College Implementation Committee has been formed to oversee the consolidation and to review recommendations from a range of committees. The *Students First* Academic and Student Affairs Community College Consolidation Committee will oversee the alignment of academic and student affairs policies and practices in the new College. A sub-committee has been charged with standardizing a streamlined enrollment experience that is aligned with Guided Pathways for the College. The Guided Pathways Task Force will oversee the integration of Guided Pathways throughout the 12 campuses. Plans have been established to minimize the impact of the consolidation on currently enrolled students, while at the same time removing barriers to student success as quickly as possible. Following submission of the substantive change proposal to the Commission in March 2018, the BOR anticipates Commission approval by the summer of 2018.

By removing barriers to student success, scaling best practices, streamlining administrative tasks, and aligning common procedures, this bold and unprecedented change will not only ensure that all 12 colleges remain open to serve their students and communities but also improve post-secondary degree completion and educational attainment throughout the State.

I. OVERVIEW OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) seeks approval from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) to consolidate its 12 individually accredited Connecticut community colleges (CCC) into a singly accredited College with 12 campuses, a consolidated organizational structure, and integrated administrative functions. This report makes the case that a structural change of this magnitude is necessary to address urgent problems facing the CCC and ensure their sustainable future. By removing barriers to student success, scaling best practices, streamlining administrative tasks, and aligning common procedures, consolidation will enable the CCC to improve post-secondary degree completion and educational attainment throughout the State. In contrast, as recent trends suggest, retaining the current structure may require more drastic retrenchment, such as program and college closures, and further compromise the mission of the CCC by limiting educational opportunities and outcomes of low-income, first generation, minorities and students with disabilities. .

Following an overview of the proposed substantive changes, this report will analyze the implications of the proposed changes for the NEASC standards, with particular attention to the six standards identified by the CIHE in its August 11, 2017 letter. This overview details activities in conformance with Connecticut General Statute section 10a-6(a)(5), which authorizes the BOR to implement a merger of the 12 institutions:

The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall: (5) merge or close institutions within the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College in accordance with criteria established by the board, provided (A) such recommended merger or closing shall require a two-thirds vote of the board, and (B) notice of such recommended merger or closing shall be sent to the committee having cognizance over matters relating to education and to the General Assembly

The Need for Change

The mission of Connecticut's community colleges focuses on three areas of commitment: access, affordability, and responsiveness to workforce and community needs. (The community colleges' mission is discussed below in the section devoted to Standard One: Mission and Purposes.) The commitment to access is exemplified by the open admissions policies of community colleges and the multiple ways colleges remove financial, physical, and academic barriers to entry. That access has resulted in entry and transfer into higher education by first generation, low-income, minorities, high-school dropouts, working adults, and others who face many barriers to participation in traditional higher education systems. CSCU strives to keep tuition and fee increases to a minimum in order to support the goal of affordability and access to all students. Community colleges provide access to the education necessary for both a productive life for individuals and promote economic wellbeing in the communities they serve. However, over the past five years, low graduation rates, declining enrollments, and structural budget deficits have undermined the ability of the CCC to fulfill their mission.

Low Graduation Rates

Nearly 60% of the most recent accreditation reports (comprehensive evaluations and interim reports) from the CIHE cite the need to increase “retention and graduation rates” at Connecticut’s community colleges. As NEASC points out in its letter of January 28, 2018, “9 of the 12 institutions had graduation rates for first-time/full-time students below 15% in the 2017 reviews.” Over the past five years, initiatives at the community colleges to increase student retention and completion have improved graduation rates, which have risen 2.9 percent overall. However, individual colleges’ graduation rates have not uniformly improved and, even with the improvements, “the percent of community colleges that were below 15% is significantly higher than in other New England states with multiple community colleges,” as NEASC also points out in its January 28 letter. On the one hand, the data suggest that the colleges are not consistently implementing strategies to improve retention and graduation. On the other hand, the data confirm that the colleges’ current approaches to student success produce only modest improvements and do not achieve the outcomes of peer institutions in the region. Bringing about sufficient improvement in student completion to meet statewide demands for post-secondary credentials will require the systematic and coordinated effort to scale best practices throughout all 12 community colleges, as outlined in this report.

Changing Enrollment Trends

Over the same five-year period, the CCC experienced steady declines in enrollment, from an all-time high of 58,228 in 2012 to 49,377 by 2017—a 15% decrease. This decline is largely attributable to a decrease in the number of Connecticut high school graduates. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Projections of Education Statistics to 2022, the total number of high school graduates in Connecticut is projected to decrease by 2 percent per year between 2010 and 2023. Data excerpted from the December 2016 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) report, “Knocking at the College Door” (see Appendix A), depict Connecticut public high school graduates at critical points in time:

| | Students | Change |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------|
| Peak (2010-11) | 38,854 | |
| Current (2017-18 estimated) | 36,292 | -7% |
| 10 years from Now (2027-28) | 30,497 | -16% |

Reductions in the number of high school graduates will mean fewer incoming freshmen each year. Approximately two-thirds of the new students enrolling in a community college over the last five years had been in high school in the same year. Concurrently, the number of postsecondary students who are 25 to 34 years old is projected to increase 20 percent, and students aged 35 and older will increase 23 percent between 2011 and 2022. To compensate for the loss of traditional-age students, the CCC will need to focus

increased attention on enrolling different student populations, as well as improving the retention of all student populations. These changes in demographic and enrollment patterns present unprecedented challenges that require structural changes and new business models.

Systemic Fiscal Challenges

In addition to the loss of tuition revenue from declining enrollments, the CCC have experienced both state appropriation reductions and cost increases for several years, most of which have been outside their control. As a result, 83% of the NEASC CIHE comprehensive evaluation or interim reports raise concerns about the adequacy of “financial resources to support [community colleges’] programs and services.” (See Appendix B for relevant comments from CIHE reports.)

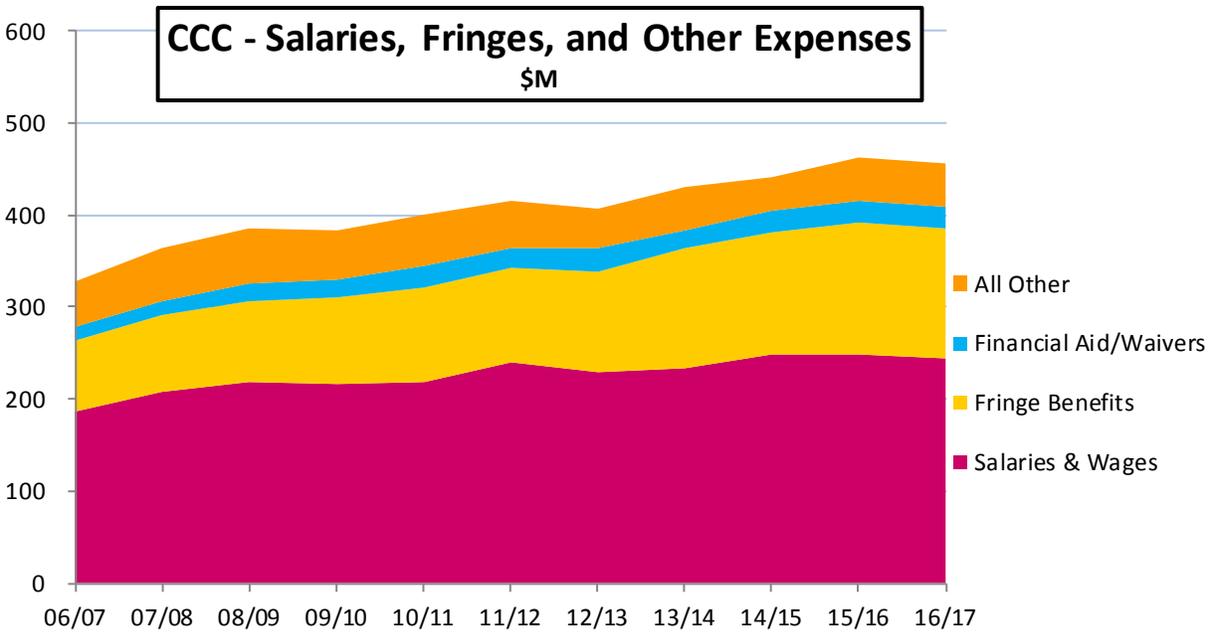
Over several years, the state of Connecticut has systematically reduced its allocations to all state agencies, including the CCC, as part of its strategy to mitigate billions of dollars in budget deficits. The table below shows the state funding of CCC since fiscal year 2015. Funding includes the direct amounts provided as General Fund to the colleges, and an apportionment of amounts received by the CSCU System as Operating Funds for specified purposes. The latter are shared among the constituent units of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), often as mandated by legislation, or if not, by using formulas.

| | FY15 | FY16 | FY17 | FY18 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| CCC General Fund Appropriation | 155,307,976 | 161,936,815 | 157,410,402 | 143,839,173 |
| Operating Funds/Shared Funds | 21,779,364 | 17,460,287 | 7,732,350 | 7,754,807 |
| Total CCC State Funding | <u>177,087,340</u> | <u>179,397,102</u> | <u>165,142,752</u> | <u>151,593,980</u> |
| <i>Year to Year Change</i> | | 1.3% | -7.9% | -8.2% |
| <i>4 Year Change</i> | | | | -14.4% |
| <i>3 Year Change</i> | | | | -15.5% |

The state also pays fringe benefits for those employees covered by the general fund appropriation which is estimated at about 80% in FY18. For every \$1.00 reduction in general fund appropriation, the CCC loses \$1.80 of funding. (See Appendix C for summary of fringe benefit costs.)

As the level of state support was decreasing, the CCC’s costs have steadily escalated. Over 80% of the costs incurred by the CCC are personnel expenses: salaries and wages and fringe benefits. In addition, 96% of employees are covered by bargaining unit agreements. The economic terms are generally negotiated by the state of Connecticut under coalition bargaining. These terms drive pay increases, job security, and fringe benefits, among other factors.

The following chart shows the costs incurred by the CCC over an eleven-year period:



This chart shows that while salaries and wages have increased slightly (and decreased in the most recent fiscal year due generally to attrition), the dollar value of fringe benefits has increased each year. The chart further illustrates the weight of personnel costs compared to overall spending.

The combination of these factors—declining state funding, wage increases mandated by collective bargaining agreements, and increases in fringe benefit costs—has led to an unsustainable fiscal model. Institutions are required to present break-even budgets each year; several have struggled to do so, and those that have managed are making difficult, undesirable decisions and cutting services needed by students.

To support the goals of affordability and access for all community college students, CSCU strives to keep tuition and fee increases to a minimum. The average increase over the past 5 years has been 3.5% per year, with the most recent fiscal year 2018 increase of 2.5%. Further, CSCU has also committed to a 2.5% increase in fiscal year 2019 to provide students and their families with more predictability in financing their education. However, as illustrated above, the revenue from limited tuition increases has not been sufficient to offset increases in the CCC’s operating costs. Without implementing structural changes to mitigate reduced state funding and rising costs, CSCU would be compelled to consider tuition increases that could threaten the affordability of college and limit access to low-income students.

The Rationale for Change

The current structure of 12 stand-alone community colleges presents inherent barriers to addressing the problems identified above. First, it establishes a competitive relationship among the colleges. The competition for resources, for students, and for programs inevitably hampers the colleges’ ability to collaborate and evolve collectively. Second, to

be individually accredited each of the 12 community colleges must independently demonstrate that it has the resources and infrastructure to comply with standards of accreditation, which requires staffing most of the same functional units (e.g., admissions, human resources, financial aid, marketing, institutional research, etc.) on 12 campuses.

This duplication not only results in redundant expenditure of scarce resources but also creates barriers for students. Under the current system, students must complete a separate application each time they want to take classes at one of the other colleges. They have to provide duplicate copies of high school transcripts, immunization records, previous college transcripts, etc. Common policies are not consistently implemented, and requirements for comparable degree programs are not fully aligned.

The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) Call Center, as part of its contract with CSCU, has collected information about the barriers students have faced transferring within the CSCU system, as well as evidence of other obstacles affecting community college students. Since June 2016, the call center has received over 119,000 inbound calls and made over 50,000 outbound calls. Students experienced difficulties with a wide number of processes, including applying for admission, providing transcripts, registering for classes, providing evidence of immunization, and processing financial aid applications. Inconsistencies in college websites compounded the problems. (A summary of the students' challenges is provided in Appendix D.)

With mounting evidence that the challenges facing the CCC cannot be overcome within the current structure, we propose to implement substantive changes to improve student retention and graduation, to attract and serve new populations of students, and to ensure a financially sustainable future for the CCC. Through operational efficiencies, scaling best practices, removing barriers to success, and strategic allocation of resources, students will be the ultimate beneficiaries of a new structure that is much greater than the sum of its parts.

Description of the Change: *Students First*

To address the need for structural change in the CCC, Mark Ojakian, President of CSCU, launched Phase One (the planning phase) of the *Students First* initiative in April 2017 by recommending to the BOR the organizational consolidation of the 12 community colleges into one College with a single accreditation and 12 campuses statewide.

In April 2017, President Ojakian appointed President Michael Rooke of Northwestern Connecticut Community College to chair a Community College Consolidation Committee made up of the 12 community college presidents to conceptualize the organizational consolidation of the 12 community colleges. This committee was charged with recommending a management structure for a single, accredited Connecticut Community College, with a savings target of \$28 million.

President Ojakian also appointed a subcommittee of presidents and deans of administration and academic and student affairs to fine tune the model to ensure that it met both the needs of individual campuses and the requirements of NEASC and other professional program accrediting bodies. The subcommittee was also charged with developing functional duties for key positions and recommending enrollment management strategies. The subcommittee held meetings and discussions from May 1, 2017, through October 18, 2017. President Ojakian, on behalf of the BOR, sought an advisory opinion from CIHE in June 2017 and updated the NEASC staff about the subcommittee's recommendations on October 18, 2017, before delivering its proposal to the BOR on October 19, 2017.

The vision of *Students First* is to create a dynamic community college that leverages talents and resources and focuses on helping students to attain their individual educational goals while responding to community and state needs. The community college consolidation aims to achieve the following goals:

- create a single NEASC accredited community college with 12 campuses, with clear and consistent practices and procedures;
- improve student success by implementing proven strategies throughout the College;
- institute clear enrollment management practices to address declining enrollment patterns;
- provide seamless transition for students to the future single college;
- maintain the uniqueness, identity and community connections of each campus; and
- ensure a financially stable and sustainable future for the state's community colleges.

The following section outlines how the proposed consolidation will address each of the preceding goals of the vision for the *Students First* initiative.

One College with 12 Campuses

Central to the reorganization is the creation of a single College and a leadership team. The President, or CEO, will preside over the 12 college campuses. The College will have a Chief Academic Officer and a Chief Financial Officer, as NEASC requires. The consolidation calls for grouping the community colleges into three regions, each with four campuses. Three Regional Vice Presidents, who report directly to the President, oversee alignment with the central policies and mission but also focus on regional and local requirements. A Campus Vice President will serve as chief operating officer for each campus; each Campus Vice President will report directly to a Regional Vice President. Budgetary responsibility will lie with the Regional Vice Presidents, which enables them to deploy resources where they are most needed to serve students. (The organizational and governance structure of the consolidated community college is discussed in detail in the section devoted to Standard Three: Organization and Governance.)

The current annual budget for President's Office at the 12 community colleges is \$6,249,782, employing 35 FTE staff. The projected budget for President's Office at the consolidated College is \$2,336,250, employing 14 FTE staff.

Scale Student Success Strategies

For the last five years, the CCC have been actively engaged in a wide range of systemic strategies to improve student success. Under the direction of the Office of the CSCU Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, these initiatives have sought to overcome barriers to student success, to improve college completion rates, and to facilitate successful transfers.

For example, with the implementation of Public Act 12-40 to reform the delivery of remedial instruction at CSCU institutions, the number of students in developmental courses who pass college-level Math and English has risen by 60 percent since 2012. Following the initiation of the Transfer Articulation Policy (TAP) in 2012, 2600 students are currently enrolled in new 60-credit, TAP AA degrees in 26 majors that guarantee junior-status at a Connecticut state university for students who complete the degree. A Math Pathways initiative is currently underway to develop two new courses to support alternative math pathways, which will remove a significant barrier to success for students in non-STEM majors.

On a more limited scale, three Connecticut community colleges (Capital, Housatonic, and Norwalk) have joined the national community college Achieve the Dream (ATD) network, which focuses on data-driven decision making to guide student success; community colleges throughout the network have shown impressive improvements on such metrics as course completions, degrees awarded, and graduation rates (see Appendix E for data on the success of ATD programs).

Such initiatives, as well as other campus-based interventions, have contributed to the steady improvements in graduation rates at the CCC over the past five years. However, as noted earlier, such efforts have been either too narrowly focused or too limited in scope to bring about decisive improvements in degree completion and educational attainment throughout the CCC. Attaining that level of student success will require an unprecedented commitment to scale best practices in student success throughout the College—a goal we believe can only be achieved by implementing the structural changes envisioned by the *Students First* initiative.

In March 2014 the Board of Regents for Higher Education was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to establish a statewide Student Success Center, working across Connecticut's 12 community colleges, to help more low-income, first-generation and under-represented students complete college and earn degrees or certificates. Connecticut is one of only 17 states to establish these centers. Based at the CSCU System Office, the Student Success Center serves as a statewide hub to support access to, retention in, and graduation from college, promoting effective strategies to encourage persistence and degree completion. The Center has access to cutting-edge strategies

across the country and promotes coherence and cohesion between policy and best practices, fostering collaboration among college students, faculty, administrators and staff, to develop a culture of academic and personal success for students as they work towards degree and certificate completion.

In 2017, the CSCU Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs charged the Executive Director of the Student Success Center with developing an ambitious plan to implement proven student success strategies throughout the CCC, as called for in the vision for *Students First*. Following a year of consultation with faculty and staff throughout the 12 colleges, the decision was reached to adopt Guided Pathways as the cornerstone of the *Students First* plan to improve student retention and completion. The Student Success Center's work for the foreseeable future will be to ensure that students benefit from consolidation as a result of Guided Pathways implementation across the new single institution.

Guided Pathways are academic and career pathways that provide structure, mileposts, and clear outcomes for each student's college experience. Each pathway is based on a program of study that is aligned with specific employment goals and/or additional education. The pathways approach is geared toward helping more students efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market. Students are more likely to earn credentials if they choose a program and develop an academic plan early in their college experience, have a clear road map of the courses needed for their credential, and receive guidance and support to help them stay on track. Guided Pathways build on other systemic student success strategies mentioned above, including the Transfer and Articulation Policy and Math Pathways.

Because Guided Pathways touch on every aspect of the student experience, implementing this approach typically requires broad-scale institutional and systemic change. Aligning this work with the community college consolidation will improve educational experiences and outcomes for all students and support the state's efforts to create an educated workforce to address employers' unmet and emerging needs.

Several states and systems have seen Guided Pathways lead to measurable results. For example, since 2012, the Tennessee Board of Regents has been working with its 13 community colleges and five regional universities to implement pathways practices. The state has seen dramatic improvements in terms of both early momentum (students accumulating college credits and passing gateway courses in their first year) and completion rates (see Appendix F). One of the levers that provided strong incentives to improve student outcomes was the 2010 Complete College Tennessee legislation. The legislation established a new funding formula, which incorporates outcomes in lieu of enrollment. We believe that we can achieve comparable results by implementing Guided Pathways throughout the consolidated College.

A Guided Pathways Task Force has been established to oversee implementation. In addition, three subgroups of the Task Force have been formed to make recommendations for the three critical aspects of the initiative: Recruitment (enrollment management, onboarding, transfer and workplace pathways, etc.); Academic Choice (meta majors, program mapping and course sequencing, academic plans, course scheduling, etc.); and Support (advising, coaching, and mentoring; orientation, intervention, financial aid, career exploration, etc.). Each subgroup will comprise 25-30 faculty, staff, and students from each of the campuses with a special expertise or interest in the subgroup's focus areas. (Appendix J includes a description of the Guided Pathways committee structure and division of responsibilities.) In 2017-18, CSCU will also focus on institutional self-assessment via the Community College Research Center's Guided Pathways Scale of Adoption Self-Assessment tool. Colleges across the country use the tool to better understand what it takes to implement Guided Pathways, document how they currently approach key aspects of the student experience, and plan for improvements.

Strategic Enrollment Management

An integral part of the community college consolidation plan focuses on a centralized enrollment management strategy to integrate and coordinate best practices at the state, regional, and local levels. Through centralized Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), the College seeks not only to reverse enrollment declines through targeted recruitment of different student populations but also to improve retention of enrolled students. Recommendations for implementing SEM were developed by the subcommittee of the Community College Consolidation Committee and presented to the BOR on October 19, 2017 as part of the committee's Students First presentation.

Noting that SEM is not currently practiced at all 12 campuses, the consolidation subcommittee recommends that SEM be centrally designed and deployed to all 12 campuses, with customizations to accommodate specific campus demographics and programmatic needs. The subcommittee's recommendations envision streamlined enrollment processes to remove barriers to student access. The recommendations call for a centralized approach to data-mining and advanced analytics for use in policy development and the setting of multi-year goals and priorities linked to the CSCU Strategic Plan, as well as the use of conventional and dashboard reports to monitor progress on Key Performance Indicators. Enrollment management will be facilitated by moving Banner Services to a simplified, fully centralized database. The subcommittee also recommended merging the existing 12 Office of Post-secondary Education Identification Numbers to a single Title IV entity with a single program participation agreement, which would enable the College to leverage financial aid funds to strategically address college affordability.

To administer SEM the subcommittee recommends the appointment of a Vice President for Enrollment Management to preside over such a fundamental, yet critical component of what will help make this single institution successful for its students. The new position of College Registrar has also been proposed to monitor and help coordinate strategic course offerings to help students' degree progress throughout the College. At each

campus, a Campus Director of Enrollment Management will oversee all enrollment management functions; the Campus Director will be formally supervised by the Campus VP but have a dotted line relationship with the VP for Enrollment Management. The Campus Director position will be filled by an experienced staff member at each campus, who will take on an expanded function. These Enrollment Management Specialists will help to train and redeploy existing staff from admissions and financial aid to support students holistically, rather than they do now from different offices. This will leverage expertise and capacity during peak times, as has been successfully implemented on several campuses.

Following the subcommittee's recommendations, the Recruitment Architecture Subgroup of the Guided Pathways Task Force (see above) will be responsible for developing specific recommendations for implementing strategic enrollment management throughout the College.

Seamless Transition for Students

Consolidating the colleges will lead to a more consistent experience for students through more fully integrated information technology systems. There will be a single admissions application, a single financial aid process, a single billing process, and a single student identification number, which can be used at any location. Network access will be generated from a single domain and used at any location, streamlining access to critical academic systems.

Currently, each community college administers its own web site. As part of the consolidation initiative, the current patchwork of 12 individual community college sites will be replaced with one centralized site. A centralized web site will provide greater consistency, clarity, ease of use for prospective and current students to locate needed information, and will improve the overall ease of applying for financial aid and admission. The new College website will include a complete catalog of academic programs and courses, online application, links to all financial aid forms, information on transfer degree programs, and student support services, as well as links to campus websites with local information.

Preserve Local Campus Identity

Students First recognizes that the community college campuses have evolved to support very different regions and serve very different populations of students, and that differentiation of culture and identity will be maintained. Continuing to support all 12 campuses allows them to respond to the different workforce needs throughout the state. The Campus Vice President will have a primary responsibility for outreach to the local community, local fundraising, supporting the campus foundation, and ensuring the campus addresses community needs.

Since the colleges have developed programs with long-standing histories and identity for the communities that they serve, unique programs will remain at their current locations. To ensure seamless mobility for students among the campuses, disciplinary teams of

faculty will be charged with developing a common curriculum for any degrees that are offered on more than one campus. However, individual campuses may offer specialized “options” for common degree programs.

Each of the 12 colleges currently has its own foundation and regional advisory boards. The foundations are legally separate 501©(3) entities, and will be completely unaffected by this proposed consolidation. As part of the commitment to retain the local connections between campuses and the local community, it is important that these organizations continue to operate as they do now. The foundations will continue to operate in support of the local campus as they do now, raising funds to benefit students on their campuses. Any funds raised by the foundation will be controlled by the foundation and used to support their local campus. A working group of the 12 foundations has been established to identify challenges and opportunities going forward.

Ensure a Stable and Sustainable Financial Future

The consolidation of the current community colleges into one accredited entity will provide the benefit of shared fiscal resources among the campuses. The total amount to be invested in the College will have a greater impact than dividing it among 12 institutions. Over the years, funds have been allocated to the campuses based on a number of factors, including facility requirements and the number of students served. In the future, the College will have the flexibility to allocate resources to strategic priorities and to address needs within the College more equitably.

According to the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), three to six months of operating expenses should be maintained in reserves in order to provide an adequate “rainy day fund.” In FY16, the combined community colleges reserves were sufficient to cover less than one month of operating expenses. These figures vary considerably among the colleges. A few are very well positioned with reserves, but a few currently have negative balances in their reserve accounts. Managing the 12 funds as a single fund will greatly enhance the ability to allocate these resources strategically throughout the College and ensure that best practices and high quality student services are equitably distributed throughout the campuses.

Most importantly, reducing personnel costs in key administrative areas such as information technology and fiscal affairs, leveraging technology where appropriate, and improving efficiencies in back office functions will safeguard critical resources devoted to student teaching and learning. None of the projected savings call for reductions in either Academic or Student Affairs. No faculty or student support positions will be eliminated, which ensures that *Students First* remains focused on student success and educational attainment. In addition, no reductions are proposed for any of the following areas: Advanced Manufacturing, Foundations/Development/Institutional Advancement, and Public Safety.

The community colleges have operated since their inception with a significantly centralized administrative support infrastructure, particularly in their information technology support, including the student information system, online course management system, networks, phones, etc. Having this long history of a highly centralized support infrastructure will greatly simplify the process of further consolidating administrative and back-office functions in a single College.

Planning for consolidation of the community colleges has also benefited from recent previews on a smaller scale of how consolidation can positively impact students and increase efficiency, while realizing substantial financial savings. In anticipation of the community college consolidation, the CSCU leadership elected not to replace two retiring community college presidents but rather to ask two sitting presidents to serve as presidents of two colleges each: President Lombella is currently President of both Asnuntuck (ACC) and Tunxis (TXCC) and President Broadie is currently President of Housatonic (HCC) and Gateway (GCC).

In addition to sharing a President, ACC and TXCC have leveraged resources across the two campuses in an effort to create efficiencies and maximize vacancy management. For example, ACC provided additional compensation to members of the TXCC IT staff to supplement the work of its recently departed Information Technology Director. This resulted in a projected savings of approximately \$165,000 in salary and fringe benefits. In addition to IT, similar arrangements have been put in place in the departments of enrollment management, continuing education, payroll, institutional research, and academic affairs. With projected annualized savings of slightly less than \$1 million, the two colleges are filling vacant faculty positions.

The two colleges have also shared best practices. Via the use of streamlined processing, analytically driven enrollment modelling, financial aid deployment, and marketing strategies, ACC led the system by a wide margin in fall 2016 (+18.5%) in terms of FTE enrollment growth. Many of those same strategies were applied at TXCC in advance of the fall 2017 semester. As a result, TXCC led the system in enrollment growth at nearly 5%, or roughly 6.5% above system average, reversing a five-year enrollment decline of over 20%. This enrollment growth at TXCC projects to generate nearly \$1 million in gross revenue gains (via tuition and mandatory fees) for FY18. This projected revenue has proven essential in managing budgetary priorities and positioning the college to better withstand the significant fiscal cuts that have been ongoing as part of the current biennium.

Housatonic and Gateway currently share the positions of President, Dean of Administration and Institutional Effectiveness, and Associate Dean of Marketing and Communications, for combined annual savings of \$775,000. Other shared administrative positions in grants, accounts payable, and financial aid have resulted in an additional \$135,000 in annual savings. By capitalizing on their joint purchasing power, the two campuses have saved been \$40,000 and \$50,000. Housatonic's printing jobs are now completed at Gateway, at a savings of over 25% per job. This sharing of personnel and

resources has developed a stronger partnership and alignment of the two campuses, making for better synergies and collegial ties.

The partnering of Housatonic and Gateway has also resulted in a strategic aligning of best practices that have led to improvements on both campuses and benefits to our students. The Allied Health areas have opened up a whole new world to both Gateway and Housatonic students. Gateway and Housatonic have partnered on a joint Surgical Technology program, with the aim of having Gateway offer a satellite program of the Housatonic program. The program will share a common plan of study and curriculum, and each college will admit 20 students for a total enrollment of 40 students. This collaboration is unique in that Gateway and Housatonic have also partnered with Yale-New Haven Hospital to offset some of the cost of the program. YNHH agreed to hire and fund the \$75,000 Clinical Coordinator position for the program, which will be shared by both college sites. The Housatonic Surgical Technology Program Coordinator will also be shared by Gateway, creating a structure that promotes a model of shared resources, collaboration, and cost-savings. The most significant outcome of this partnership and shared model is the benefit to students because each site has the ability to offer a program with high workforce demands. The two campuses have also leveraged video conferencing technology to offer a business course on both campuses that originally did not have sufficient enrollment to be taught on either.

The *Students First* proposal for the community college consolidation will provide many more opportunities such as these to align academic offerings and streamline administrative functions that are currently performed separately at 12 locations. Instituting a common set of administrative policies, procedures, and protocols will greatly simplify the student experience by eliminating confusion and removing barriers. Requiring fewer personnel to administer centrally many of the same functions now performed at all 12 campuses will also generate substantial savings to offset the impact of rising costs and declining state support. These projected savings will ensure that any necessary tuition increases are nominal and do not deprive students of access to college. We summarize below the ways that consolidation in specific functional areas will benefit students, improve services, and save money.

Information Technology (IT)

Centralizing the management of routine/system-wide tasks in areas such as Finance and Accounting, IR, IT, HR, and Financial Aid will provide strategic opportunities to manage scarce resources with greater efficiencies and allow campus-based personnel to be repurposed to improve institutional effectiveness. And the necessary means to achieve effective centralized management of routine/system-wide tasks, is the merger of IT enterprise components into a single operating unit and managed under a single reporting restructure, under the auspices of a shared IT governance structure.

The system will move to a standardized use of technology at the administrative and enterprise level to ensure system availability at a lower cost on a 24-hour basis. The

standardization of systems, hardware, non-academic applications and work process eliminates costly customizations, reduces operating costs and eliminates non-standard workflows. This will allow the system to use less staff to maintain IT applications and hardware. Under the college consolidation plan, campus IT staff would report to their respective functional areas at the system office and work in unison and under the authority of the System CIO to address enterprise-level technical issues at the 12 campuses. Gaining consensus among 12 campuses on upgrades and technological solutions is nearly impossible, costing the students valuable resources and taxpayers dollars. The only functions that will report directly to the campus administration in the future are those related to academic computing, desktop support and media services. Appendix G presents the proposed *Students First* IT Structure, Staff, and Governance model.)

Under our current structure, our database is split 13 ways to accommodate a unique “view” for each college that does not release any other college’s data, and a “system view” for the System Office to view all data for all colleges. A single community college would have a business need only for a single view of the data, which would cut down on IT hours to maintain the structure, although the data could still be disaggregated by campus, as needed. The community college consolidation will enable other areas of the system to be addressed in a similar fashion, notably admissions, registration, finance, and accounts receivable.

The one-college model will also facilitate and accelerate the sharing of knowledge and content expertise across campuses. While emerging student success software platforms are not a “silver bullet,” their effective use in retention and completion strategies has become common practice. Currently, the 12 community colleges use a myriad of systems with varied levels of success. In the one-college model, the ability to identify and procure appropriate systems, at scale pricing, and to provide prerequisite training will be an asset that can be leveraged by all campuses.

A substantial portion of the proposed infrastructure is already in place and will be fully completed by July 2018 through an investment of \$30 million in capital funds. From 2018 to 2019, the operation of policy and procedures will be tested to ensure the goals and objectives are met, through a quarterly assessment. Modifications will be made as necessary, and the new enterprise system will be fully functional for July 2019. Regardless of the accreditation process, the system needs to move to this consolidated IT enterprise structure to create efficiencies and improve support to the academic mission.

The current annual budget for Information Technology at the 12 community colleges is \$14,350,378, employing 114 FTE staff. The projected budget for Information Technology at the consolidated College is \$10,157,363, employing 85 FTE staff.

Institutional Research and Assessment (IR)

Sixty-six percent of recent CIHE accreditation reports point to shortcomings in the use of data for continuous improvement by the community colleges. (See Appendix B.) To

ensure that our organizational structure responds to increasing demands for data supporting a wide array of educational, managerial, and policy decisions, we propose to designate the Office of Research and System Effectiveness (ORSE) as the Chief Data Office for the consolidated College. A comprehensive institutional research function spread across a single college with multiple campuses could increase efficiency while encouraging a more comprehensive and consistent approach to producing data-based management information.

The proposed reorganization envisions a redeployment of community college IR personnel. Campus IR personnel would report directly to ORSE and, simultaneously, have a dotted line reporting relationship with their respective campus leadership. As members of the same staff, IR professionals will have assignments in one or more functional/excellence teams. These teams of two or more individuals will perform the cyclical/routine tasks previously done individually by the 12 colleges. (The role of the functional teams is discussed further in the section on “Educational Effectiveness.”)

Existing staff would continue to serve their respective campuses for those tasks that are unique to the campus and/or that require local knowledge. Some ad-hoc campus-specific requests, such as labor market data or alumni marketing lists, could be directed to the appropriate functional/excellence team, thus freeing up the IR professional on campus to perform other tasks. Cost efficiencies will be achieved primarily through recent and anticipated attrition, and by reducing reliance on part-time employees at the campus level. The new organizational structure will enable a higher level of service to be delivered with fewer resources.

The current annual budget for Institutional Research at the 12 community colleges is \$2,660,013, employing 23 FTE staff. The projected budget for Institutional Research at the consolidated College is \$1,443,750, employing 11 FTE staff.

Financial Aid Services

The proposed consolidation of the 12 community colleges into a single institution presents significant opportunities to enhance the student experience with financial aid by streamlining administrative functions, modeling a single, effective way to comply with Title IV regulations, and refining our level of customer service to the students we serve.

At present, the U.S. Department of Education considers each of Connecticut’s 12 community colleges an individual entity, featuring unique Office of Post-Secondary Education Identification Numbers (school codes). This consolidation would permit creating a single organizational structure for financial aid while simultaneously meeting the federal Administrative Capability regulation required to participate in any Title IV, HEA program under 34 CFR 668.16.

Students who complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for financial aid are required to list each institution separately, to signify where they would like their financial aid application sent. Since each institution is able to provide its own unique financial aid package to applicants, the same student may receive different awards

at different institutions from the same FAFSA despite the institutions belonging to the same system. Following consolidation, students would have to list only a single community college code. This would in turn yield only one financial aid package yet allow the student to take the courses at whichever campus location suits their needs.

Historically, only 1% of community college students (approximately 520 students) attend more than one of our institutions during a single term. By eliminating barriers facing students who apply to more than one community college, consolidating financial aid may encourage more students to take courses at multiple locations and, by extension, improve graduation rates by increasing course availability.

The consolidation of the 12 colleges into one accredited institution provides a unique opportunity to aggregate institutional aid, and thereby allow for more strategic distribution of aid to students most in need. Some of the colleges have independently determined that their established methodology for distributing institutional aid did not necessarily get funds to students who required aid to attend college. By adjusting the criteria for providing aid, they were able to shift resources to more students with genuine need, which resulted in net enrollment increases since many of the students who did not necessarily require aid still enrolled. The ability to consolidate institutional aid will further the ability to strategically distribute support where most needed.

Using these funds more strategically will support more students, increase enrollment, and therefore increase tuition and fee revenues under a single College. Implementing this strategy at Asnuntuck Community College resulted in substantial enrollment increases. An analysis of their institutional grant use over the past five years (2012-13 through 2016-17) has yielded exceptional results. For example, while the average institutional grant award has decreased by 67% over the past five years, the number of recipients has increased 210%. During that same timeframe, fall FTE has increased 13%, fall headcount has increased by 16%, and spring headcount has increased by 5%. In tandem with removing internal roadblocks and student barriers to providing access to financial aid, and increasing awareness of available federal student loans, this particular college has reaped the benefits of using financial aid dollars in a more strategic manner. Systematically employing this strategy across the 12-campus could dramatically improve enrollments throughout the College.

Migrating to updated versions of our student-information system, complete with additional communication and advising tools, will allow for a full leverage of technological assets to meet the needs of both new and prospective students. Functions that are currently maintained by each campus could be automated, including packaging, satisfactory academic progress evaluations, file transmissions to both federal and 3rd party agencies, and required reporting to affiliated agencies.

Since 2000-2001, the Financial Aid Services unit at the CSCU system office has performed routine, administrative tasks for the colleges to streamline processes and alleviate back-end office work, which frees staff at the colleges to devote more time to working with students (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Student-Aid-Streamlined/46959>;

http://www.comnet.edu/finaid/Documents/College_Board_Report.pdf p. 14-15). However, other processes such as calculating Satisfactory Academic Progress, packaging, and Institutional Student Information Record corrections are maintained locally and are completed at the discretion of each institution. If tasks such as these were added to our off-peak schedule and performed more uniformly, a single College would be able to develop a more structured routine with estimated time savings of approximately 30-40 hours per week, depending on the time of year. Required reporting to affiliated agencies would no longer have to be done twelve separate times, but only once. As such, a reduction in time and effort to create and deliver such reports could be reduced as much as 80% simply by eliminating multiple reporting from multiple colleges.

The new Vice President of Enrollment Management will supervise the System Office financial aid professionals who currently support the colleges. Certain functions that are repeatable will be managed centrally (such as FAFSA verifications), and the central office will be responsible for policies, procedures, and training/updates to law, freeing financial aid staff on the campuses to devote more time to student-facing activities.

Administrative Services and Finance

Administrative Services and Finance will undergo the most extensive reorganization through consolidation because the colleges already share a common enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. All data-driven activities can be processed and managed centrally.

Each college currently has a Dean of Administration who serves as the chief financial officer of the Institution. He/she maintains support staff and clerical support. As the leadership and financial officer under the consolidated College will be centrally located, the campus positions become redundant. The consolidated College's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position will replace the 12 Deans of Administration and their support staff. The new position of Associate Dean of Campus Operations will be added to serve as the business manager at each campus.

The CFO will be the principal person responsible for finance, accounting, budgeting, payroll, and other traditional CFO roles. The CFO will be supported by a Controller and seven additional support staff coming from the current System Office; in addition, two support staff and three budget officers will be added to the organization. The reorganization adds to the campuses a Bursar and a Purchasing/Financial support person to facilitate local requirements and data transfer to the central office.

The current annual budget for Administrative Services at the 12 community colleges is \$8,815,827, employing 64 FTE staff. The projected budget for Administrative Services at the consolidated College is \$8,118,973, employing 49 FTE staff. The current annual budget for Finance at the 12 community colleges is \$11,098,332, employing 85 FTE staff. The projected budget for Finance at the consolidated College is \$3,989,453, employing 30 FTE staff.

Facilities Management

Following consolidation, CSCU Facilities Management will continue to manage day-to-day functions of the capital program for the campuses and expand its services to oversee and guide campus management on operating requirements. Five of the six current campus-based management positions will be eliminated, but all maintenance employees will remain at the local campuses reporting to the Associate Dean of Campus Operations. The Associate Dean reports to the Campus Vice President, with a dotted line communication relationship to the CSCU VP of Facilities for facilities related matters.

Adding to the three current Facilities Project Managers at the CSCU System Office, one new Facilities Project Manager position will be created for the College, who will have reporting responsibility to the VP of Facilities at the CSCU System Office, as currently occurs. The four Project Managers' expanded role will include general oversight of operations at each campus to ensure that short- and long-term needs, goals, and quality standards are met; they will also support the Associate Dean of Campus Operations on operating requirements.

The current annual budget for Facilities/Maintenance at the 12 community colleges is \$17,460,641, employing 182 FTE staff. The projected budget for Facilities/Maintenance at the consolidated College is \$15,883,480, employing 169 FTE staff.

Human Resources (HR)

Under the existing organizational configuration, HR services are both fragmented and redundant. Human resources offices are located on each of the 12 campuses, as well as at the System Office. The administration of HR is largely decentralized, with the exception of collective bargaining agreements, which are negotiated by the System Office. No revisions to the collective bargaining structure or process are contemplated by this initiative.

To ensure consistency in policy implementation, to increase efficiency, and to reduce redundancy, campus HR offices will be reorganized to report to HR at the CSCU System Office, but campus HR administrators will have a dotted line to the College President. Staff will remain on campus to handle local matters, but staffing will be organized by areas of expertise such as benefits, labor relations, etc., and will be available to all campuses as needed, through central management. All hiring decisions will be made at the local campus level.

Recommendations concerning HR staffing levels are based on industry standards, as well as research into other HR consolidations, notably in the proposed consolidation of the seven separately accredited colleges of the University of Maine. The literature acknowledges a conventional ratio of one HR FTE staff member per 100 FTE employees. (Variations in the ratio are largely dependent upon the degree to which an organization has embraced automation.) This is the standard that Maine endorsed and the one that was used to develop an allocation plan for HR within the College.

The current annual budget for Human Resources/Payroll at the 12 community colleges is \$7,543,694 employing 58 FTE staff. The projected budget for Human Resources/Payroll at the consolidated College is \$4,364,229, employing 49 FTE staff.

Marketing

Currently, the 12 colleges independently market themselves to compete for student enrollment and to promote visibility and community engagement. In the consolidated College state marketing will be focused on attracting students to any campus, whether based on geography, programs offered, or schedules available. There will be one marketing lead on each campus and one graphic specialist to ensure local requirements are met, materials are produced for events, and community needs are addressed.

Marketing will be centrally managed for the College by the Director of Marketing & Public Relations, under the Vice President of Enrollment Management, to ensure integrated strategies for recruitment and retention. In addition, a College webmaster will also work with the CSCU webmaster on matters relating to maintenance and overall brand and message consistency of the College website.

The current annual personnel budget for Marketing at the 12 community colleges is \$4,203,095, employing 36 FTE staff. The projected personnel budget for Marketing at the consolidated College is \$2,389,072, employing 25 FTE staff.

Continuing Education

Currently the community colleges offer an array of continuing education, enrichment and workforce development training to interested youth and adults. In partnership with local school systems, employers, workforce investment boards and professional associations, colleges design and provide training opportunities ranging from a few weeks to a year in length. Many of these programs result in postsecondary credentials, industry certifications, licensure and academic credit and most importantly employment in key state industries. These programs are coordinated in a variety of ways by the campuses, with some having significant staff and resources while others have more limited resources and therefore limited offerings. Under the consolidated model, modifications will be made to the management of continuing education programs. The leadership and staff for continuing education will be coordinated regionally, with staff at large and medium campuses supporting the smaller campuses to leverage resources, expertise, and capacity. Further refinement of this model will be determined during implementation.

The current annual budget for Continuing Education at the 12 community colleges is \$7,615,632, employing 76 FTE staff. The projected budget for Continuing Education at the consolidated College is \$6,651,044, employing 70 FTE staff.

Implementation Process and Timeline

This substantive change proposal will be delivered to the Commission by March 16, 2018, seeking commission approval by the summer of 2018. In anticipation of this approval, a

number of planning teams will be formed, the most critical of which will be the *Students First Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASA Consolidation Committee)*. (See Appendix H for the Letter of Appointment to the Committee.) The 52-member committee is comprised of elected faculty and student campus representatives, presidential appointees, and volunteers based on their particular skills, experiences, interests, and affiliations. This committee will develop a process to form the necessary faculty disciplinary groups to review curriculum and ultimately identify which programs would be common within the institution. Several other implementation teams have been formed, such as the Guided Pathways Task Force, and the TAP Framework Implementation Review Committee (FIRC), to guide the transition to a single institution and establish consistent processes. The College Consolidation Implementation Committee (CCIC) has also been formed to review and respond to the recommendations from the ASA Consolidation Committee and the Guided Pathways Task Force. These teams were formed in February 2018 and will continue their work through the 2018-2019 academic year. (Appendix I presents the College consolidation committee structure and includes the charge and membership for the committees formed to plan, implement, and review the College consolidation.) Recommendations from the CCIC will be forwarded to the CSU President. Those plans that require BOR approval will be forwarded to the appropriate BOR committee.

Searches to fill new or modified positions would be conducted after submission of the substantive change report. The most critical positions to be filled are those at the senior level (i.e., President, Provost/Associate Vice President, and the Chief Financial Officer). These positions will be needed first to begin filling the other key organizational positions, such as the three Regional Vice Presidents and Campus Vice-Presidents who will lead the implementation of the new campus structures. The CEO, CAO, CFO, and staff will be located in a dedicated space for the College separate from the CSU System Office. Regional and Campus Vice Presidents will have offices at campuses in their regions. Conversations with CSU facilities are underway to inventory space.

We request commission approval to notify students in fall 2018 that students planning to graduate by June 30, 2020, will follow the curriculum in place when they matriculated and have their degree or certificate conferred by the original college in which they enrolled. Students graduating on or after July 1, 2019, will continue to be bound by the degree requirements in place when they matriculated, but their degree or certificate would be conferred by the College. This process would remain in effect until faculty groups agree upon common sets of requirements for degree and certificate programs, including common general education requirements across the 12 campuses. Faculty groups will initiate their work on degree alignment in the spring 2018 semester and complete their alignment of programs by the end of the spring 2020 semester.

The revised curricula will closely match existing program requirements and comply with the 60-credit requirement for “normalized” programs. Students who opt to complete their original program of study would have up to six years to fulfill the requirements, or they could “re-declare” to one of the modified programs, which could shorten their time

to degree completion. Course substitutions and independent studies will be utilized on individual campuses to help students meet new requirements, which will minimize any additional expense. The only anticipated additional costs would result from having to run under-enrolled classes to meet student needs, but it is not possible to predict the financial impact of those accommodations.

Timeframe for Consolidation of Connecticut Community Colleges

| Date | Process Step |
|--------------------------------|---|
| June 2017 | Compilation of 12 CC Mission/Vision statements by BOR staff (completed) |
| November 2017 | Council of Presidents presented draft Mission/Vision referred to FAC/AC groups for action (email) (completed) |
| January 2018 | Appointment of Students First Community College Consolidation Committee (completed) |
| January 2018 | Appointment of Guided Pathways Task Force recruitment, support, and choice subgroups (completed) |
| February 2018 | Formation of College Consolidation Implementation Committee (completed) |
| February 2018 | Draft Mission/Vision Statement sent to FAC, SAC, campuses for feedback (completed) |
| February 2018 | Draft Mission/Vision Statement sent to Council of Presidents for feedback (completed) |
| March 2018 | Obtain feedback on draft Mission/Vision |
| March 2018 | Submit Draft Mission/Vision to BOR ASA Committee |
| March 2018 | Request approval from CSCU BOR on revised Mission/Vision |
| March 2018 | Submit Substantive Change Report to CIHE-NEASC |
| Spring 2018 | Guided Pathways groups charged with developing meta-majors and parameters for program mapping |
| Spring 2018 | General Education work group tasked with developing common general education |
| Spring 2018-March 2019 | Faculty groups charged with curriculum alignment |
| Spring 2018-Spring 2020 | Guided Pathways Task Force subgroups develop recruitment, support, and choice architectures (See appendix) |
| Fall 2018 | Notify students planning to graduate by June 30, 2020 |
| AY 2018-2020 | All current degree/certificate programs continue |
| May 2019-Fall 2019 | Approval of revised curriculum |
| May 2020 | Approval of modified curriculum |
| May 2020 | Approval of College catalog |
| July 1, 2019 | New Leadership Structure in place |
| October 2019 | Revised programs built into Banner S.I.S |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| AY 2019-2020 | Students recruited into revised programs for fall 2020 start |
| Through June 2019 | All diplomas awarded containing the current 12-college names |
| Beginning July 2020 | All diplomas awarded by the College |
| By end of spring 2020 | All students will be enrolled in newly revised degree/certificate programs |

II. MISSION AND PURPOSES (Standard One)

As part of the consolidation process, a critically important and necessarily early step has been to develop a statement of mission and purpose for the new institution, as defined in standard 1.

The current Connecticut Community College Mission Statement reads as follows (<http://www.ct.edu/regents/mission>):

As part of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) system, the twelve Connecticut Community Colleges share a mission to make excellent higher education and lifelong learning affordable and accessible. Through unique and comprehensive degree and certificate programs, non-credit life-long learning opportunities and job skills training programs, they advance student aspirations to earn career-oriented degrees and certificates and to pursue their further education. The Colleges nurture student learning and success to transform students and equip them to contribute to the economic, intellectual, civic, cultural and social well-being of their communities. In doing so, the Colleges support the state, its businesses and other enterprises and its citizens with a skilled, well-trained and educated workforce.

Revising the Mission

On November 6, 2017 President Mary Ellen Jukoski asked the presidents if they would consider the draft mission and vision statement prepared by BOR staff for the new College. The consensus was that the draft was good but the group determined that the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) of the BOR and Academic Council should be charged with this task, which was later charged to the ASA Consolidation Committee. The ASA Consolidation Committee began working on the consolidated mission statement at its first meeting on February 2, 2018. Each of the 12 community college mission statements were examined for commonality and best practices in current mission and vision statements were researched. The committee reviewed the mission statements of similar sized institutions and reached consensus that "...more recent planning practice limits the mission to its primary function. The mission statement is stripped down to a very short, basic statement of purpose." (Hinton, K. E. (2012). *A Practical Guide to Strategic Planning in Higher Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for College and University Planning.) The committee finalized such a statement and has sent it out to each college for review and feedback. The ASA Consolidation Committee will reference this new mission and vision as it develops the consolidation implementation plan.

The proposed mission and vision was widely distributed to the Community College Council of Presidents, Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), Student Advisory Committee (SAC) and campus wide for feedback.

After considering and incorporating feedback, the committee submitted the following proposed mission and vision statements to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BOR for approval at its March 5, 2018, meeting. Pending full BOR approval on

March 8, 2018, the revised mission statement will be included in the final substantive change report to NEASC in March 2018.

The following is a draft proposal for the Community College of Connecticut¹ Mission Statement and Vision Statement, based on existing CSCU Community College mission and vision statements, best practices in mission and vision statements, mission and vision statements from similar large U.S. community colleges, and contributions from the ASA Consolidation Committee members.

The Community College of Connecticut Mission

The Community College of Connecticut provides access to academically rigorous and innovative education and training focused on student success. The College supports excellence in teaching and learning, makes data-informed decisions, promotes equity, and advances positive change for the students, communities, and industries it serves.

The Community College of Connecticut Vision

The Community College of Connecticut will be recognized for exceptional student success, educational leadership, and transformative collaboration with business and industry, government, educational, and key stakeholders while advancing diverse opportunities for Connecticut’s citizens and communities.

The new mission statement places emphasis on student access and success, which moves from the communication of the mission statement to the ongoing measurement of mission achievement. The new mission statement will inform strategic planning, data management analytics, evaluation and assessment, and continuous quality improvement.



¹ The name “Community College of Connecticut” has been provisionally adopted by the ASA Consolidation Committee. A final name will be subject to approval by the BOR with input from all community college stakeholders.

The proposed mission statement is guiding the decisions of the ten work groups of the ASA Consolidation Committee as they prepare for CIHE approval to consolidate. Substantive reduction is expected in the number of separate degree programs offered, while the quality of support services will be maintained as a result of this consolidation. Reductions in the combined authorized degree programs for the new College result from the deletion of inactive programs or the consolidation of similar or duplicative programs into one. Institutional consolidation will facilitate the offering of expanded educational opportunities through the new College and will significantly enhance student support and advisement. Implementing Guided Pathways throughout the College will increase the focus on individual student support and advisement and enhance the fulfillment of the College's academic mission.

The proposed revision of the mission offers a vision of what the College could become and expresses the values that will guide the College throughout the consolidation and implementation of *Students First*. The mission statement frames our commitment not just to teaching our students but also to serving communities, and the state, which is consistent with the CSU CCC Mission Statement.

Documenting Legal Authority

The legal authority to revise the mission of Connecticut's "regional community-technical colleges" is explicitly vested in the Board of Regents for Higher Education by the Connecticut General Assembly. Sections 10a-72(b) and 10a-6(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes concern the development, review and approval of mission statements for the regional community-technical colleges. The respective sections read as follows:

§ 10a-72 (b) Subject to state-wide policy and guidelines established by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the board of trustees shall (2) Develop mission statements for the regional community-technical colleges: The mission statement for the regional community-technical colleges shall include, but need not be limited to the following elements: (A) The educational needs of and constituencies served by said colleges; (B) the degrees offered by said colleges, and (C) the role and scope of each institution within the community-technical college system, which shall include each institution's particular strengths and specialties;

§ 10a-6 (a) The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall: (6) review and approve mission statements for the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College and role and scope statements for the individual institutions and campuses of such constituent units.

Evaluating Fulfillment of Mission

All of the colleges currently undergo a five-year review of mission and purpose and strategic planning. Within the first five years of the single College, a more comprehensive review of mission and purpose will take place, with broad stakeholder input from

students, community groups, businesses and the general public, to ensure that the mission and purposes provide appropriate guidance for planning, evaluation, and resource allocation. This five-year strategic planning process will then continue to refine our approach to fulfilling the mission and review its fulfillment at each campus location.

III. PLANNING AND EVALUATION (Standard Two)

The Planning Process

On June 20, 2013, the Board of Regents approved the mission, vision and goals for the system (<http://www.ct.edu/regents/mission>). This strategic planning marked the beginning of a new era---one committed to harnessing the coordinated strengths of the 17 institutions comprising four universities, 12 community colleges and the state online college to create a system greater than the sum of its parts.

Five goals framed the overarching system plan:

1. Successful 1st year experience
2. Student success
3. Affordability and sustainability
4. Innovation and economic growth
5. Equity

The plan itemizes detailed priorities. Just as important it provides context for the kind of system we seek to become. The plan articulates these principles but also describes specific steps to fulfill the goals. Moreover, it details specific metrics to chart progress.

Due to the instability of CSCU leadership, the strategic plan has not been fully implemented. The first President of the CSCU, Dr. Robert A. Kennedy, resigned in October 2012; Dr. Philip E. Austin, former President of the University of Connecticut, served as interim President until June 2013. A national search for a new president resulted in the board's appointment of Dr. Gregory Gray, effective July 2013. Dr. Gregory Gray announced his intention to resign in August 2015.

Mark Ojakian was appointed President of CSCU on September 28, 2015, and charged by the Board of Regents for Higher Education to implement a strategic plan to put the system on a predictable and sustainable path for the future.

Since the adoption of the system's original Strategic Plan, several factors required adjustments to accommodate changing realities. Enrollment in the Connecticut Community Colleges dropped 15.2 percent in the last five years, head count enrollment fell from 58,228 in 2012 to 49,377 in 2017, the number of Connecticut high school graduates is projected to drop 26 percent between 2011-12 and 2031-32, , and state appropriations have dropped by 12.4 percent since 2015. Between 2016-2017 fiscal years alone, appropriations fell by \$35.7 million (5.9%).

Since the start of President Ojakian's tenure in September 2015, constituent participation has been wide ranging and highly representative of all stakeholders. On listening tours during his first quarter as president, he heard opinions about the system's strengths and its challenges. He convened the college presidents to identify strategies to address ongoing fiscal and enrollment issues. He met regularly with the Board of Regents' Faculty

and Student Advisory Committees about their concerns and ideas for improving the system. He encouraged public comment at all Board of Regents meetings to ensure that faculty, staff and students had an opportunity to share their viewpoints.

After research into other state models and careful deliberation and with the approval of the BOR, President Ojakian launched the planning phase, Phase One, of the *Students First* initiative in April 2017. After the Board's endorsement of the consolidation strategy, President Ojakian conducted town hall meetings on each campus to hear from faculty, staff and students about their concerns.

Additionally he met with the college presidents to kick off the Community College Consolidation Committee, led by President Michael Rooke, to determine the best path toward one centrally managed college. A subcommittee of the presidents and deans of administration and academic and student affairs was established to fine-tune the model to ensure it met the needs of both individual campuses and NEASC standards and other professional program accrediting bodies. As part of their planning, the Consolidation committee researched other institutions with a single accreditation and multiple campuses, such as Miami Dade College, the Community College of Rhode Island, and Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, for insights into organizational and governance structures and staffing levels; they also consulted with the University of Maine System, which is undergoing a similar consolidation

After the proposal for the consolidated College was presented to the BOR, President Ojakian and President Rooke hosted two virtual town hall meetings—one for faculty and staff and one for students—to review the proposed changes and answer questions. In addition, an electronic feedback survey provided an opportunity for interested stakeholders to offer their comments, questions and suggestions. Over 300 individuals (127 faculty, 116 staff, 46 students, 4 Foundation Board members and range of other respondents including alumni, taxpayers/citizens, retirees, and a parent) submitted feedback on the survey which was reviewed and incorporated into subsequent plan adjustments. The majority of comments were supportive of the recommendations. Some expressed opposition to consolidation, while others offered suggestions for achieving even greater efficiencies and savings. In response to questions raised through the survey and town hall meetings, two “Frequently Asked Questions” documents were prepared and widely distributed. Opportunities to address the Board were also made available at its regular meetings over the course of the year with a number of speakers coming forward at those meetings with comments and concerns.

The BOR endorsed the proposed organizational structure for a singly accredited College with three regions and 12 local campuses in December 2017 (see Board resolution in Appendix J). These bold decisions are unprecedented in the history of American higher education. The BOR's decisions were influenced by long-term and ongoing environmental scanning of the past, current, and prospective economic and governmental conditions, as well as state-level and national concerns about key issues. These include degree completion rates, educational attainment levels of the workforce,

public demand for higher education opportunities, tuition costs, cutbacks in governmental expenditures, and increased efficiencies.

Phase Two of *Students First*, which was launched in January 2018, focuses on developing a detailed plan for aligning 12 campuses into a single accredited community college with clear, consistent practices, policies, and procedures that provide a seamless transition for students, while maintaining the uniqueness, identity and community connections of each of the 12 campuses.

The ASA Consolidation Committee is charged with developing the implementation plan as it relates to academic and student affairs on the 12 community colleges. The committee held its first meeting on February 2, 2018, to address its first charge of developing a mission statement for the one College, as discussed in the previous section. At its first meeting, the committee also proposed to establish ten work groups to fulfill its charge. (The proposed work groups are identified in Appendix I.)

The process for consolidating academic programs will be modeled on the highly successful process developed to implement the Transfer Articulation Policy (TAP) for over 20 majors, as described later in the section on “Faculty Participation” in Standard Four: Academic Program.

Supporting and Evaluating Planning

As described above, the proposed designation of the Office of Research and System Effectiveness as the Chief Data Office for the College will provide the resources needed to support planning and evaluation efforts at the College. As members of system-level functional teams, IR staff from the campuses will be responsible for gathering, compiling, and reporting on data related to the 12 campuses.

Data on such variables as enrollment, persistence, graduation, and employment will be collected annually and centrally analyzed to monitor progress on the strategic goals of the *Students First* initiative. Audited financial statements will be analyzed to evaluate the realization of projected savings. Using common rubrics, campus-based assessments of student learning outcomes will be compiled and compared to identify opportunities for program improvements across the campuses.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE (Standard Three)

Reorganization and Governance Responsibilities

The Board of Regents for Higher Education (“BOR” or “board”) is the board of trustees for the regional community-technical colleges in Connecticut and shall continue to serve as the board of trustees for the consolidated college. Upon favorable review of the Substantive Change document submitted to the Commission, the BOR will seek technical and conforming legislation with the Connecticut General Assembly to clarify that the BOR is the governing board over the consolidated college. This legislation will also clarify that the consolidated college is a constituent unit of the State of Connecticut and part of the state system of higher education. It is anticipated that this legislation will be introduced in the 2019 legislative session with an effective date of July 1, 2019.

Board Composition

The BOR shall in the future state continue to consist of 19 members who are distinguished leaders of the community in Connecticut and reflect the state’s geographic, racial and ethnic diversity. Nine members of the board are appointed by the Governor. Four members of the board are appointed by the majority and minority leaders of both houses of the Connecticut General Assembly. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Student Advisory Committee serve as members of the board. The Commissioners of Education, Economic and Community Development, Public Health and Labor, along with the chairperson of the Faculty Advisory Committee, shall serve as *ex-officio*, nonvoting members of the board.^[1] The organizational structure of the governing board for the newly created institution will retain the same requirements for its composition responsibilities and duties of the existing governing Board as referenced above.

Committee Structures and Responsibilities

The BOR bylaws^[2], committee structures and responsibilities are not affected as a result of the consolidation of the colleges. All roles and responsibilities of the BOR will be unaltered in the future state. Additionally, two advisory bodies, the Student Advisory Committee^[3] and the Faculty Advisory Committee^[4] will continue to assist the board in performing its statutory functions. The BOR will continue to act as the board of trustees^[5] for the College and will administer the College, plan for the expansion and development of the institution, and confer such certificates and degrees as are appropriate to the curricula of community college.

[1] CGS 10a-1a. https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1

[2] Board of Regents Bylaws <http://www.ct.edu/regents/bylaws>

[3] CGS 10a-3 https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-3

[4] CGS 10a-3a https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-3a

[5] CGS 10a-72 https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185b.htm#sec_10a-72

With respect to personnel management, the Board shall continue to retain the authority to appoint and remove the President (Chief Executive Officer) of the institution in the future state. The Board also employs the faculty and other personnel needed to operate and maintain the institution and sets the compensation structure for personnel, establishes terms and conditions of employment and prescribes their duties and qualifications.

Advisory Bodies

The Student Advisory Committee² and the Faculty Advisory Committee³ assist the board in performing its statutory functions and consist of representation from the Connecticut State Universities, the community colleges, and Charter Oak State College. The Chair and Vice-chair of each advisory committee serve on the Board. Faculty and students from the consolidated College will continue to have representation on each of these advisory bodies.

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities President and Staff

A President of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (“CSCU” or “System”) serves as the chief executive officer of the System who administers, coordinates, and supervises the activities of the Board in accordance with the policies established by the Board^[6]. The President has responsibilities for the following:

- Implementing the policies and directives of the Board and any additional responsibilities as the Board may prescribe,
- Implementing the goals identified and recommendations made by the Planning Commission for Higher Education,
- Building interdependent support among the Connecticut State University System, the College and Charter Oak State College,
- Balancing central authority with institutional differentiation, autonomy and creativity, and
- Facilitating cooperation and synergy among the Connecticut State University System, the College and Charter Oak State College.

Under the direction of the President is an executive staff responsible for the operation of the CSCU. This shall not change in the future state.

Mark E. Ojakian has served as President of CSCU since September 2015. His responsibilities as chief executive officer for the CSCU will be unchanged by the proposed community college consolidation. As the senior administrator for CSCU, he will supervise the new President of the College as he does now with the college

² CGS 10a-3 https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-3

³ CGS 10a-3a https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-3a

^[6] CGS 10a-1b https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1b

presidents. With the hiring of new positions for the College, the roles and responsibilities of some members of the CSCU President's executive staff—notably those of the CFO and CAO—will undergo some changes. Additionally, the Human Resources, Institutional Research and Assessment, Information Technology and Facilities staff will have new responsibilities for centralized services provided to the College. Updated roles and responsibilities will be clarified through the development of new job descriptions for these positions. The Human Resources Committee of the BOR will approve job descriptions for the new administrative positions in spring 2018.

Governance of the College

President

The newly created College will have a Chief Executive Officer, with the title of President, in accordance with standard 3.11. The President will report directly to the CSCU System President and be appointed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education. The President will provide leadership for the College and oversee all operations of the 12 campus locations, through an administrative structure.

The individual appointed to lead this new College will play a critical role to the success of this institution through its formative years. The Board will engage in a thorough search process to attract and recruit a candidate of superior leadership skills. President Ojakian has encouraged applications from qualified and capable candidates within the existing organization. Once the President has been selected, he or she will be responsible for assembling a senior leadership team, as described below.

The President will have six senior direct reports:

- College Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
- College Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President for Enrollment Management
- three Regional Vice Presidents

Provost and Vice President

The Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs will serve as the chief academic officer for the College, in accordance with Standard 3.14. He or she will serve under the direction of the President and be responsible for all academic and student affairs of the new institution. The Provost will work closely with the College faculty/staff senate on academic policies and curricular matters within the college. The Provost will also be required to work closely with the academic and student affairs deans across the 12 campuses, and will have dotted line supervisory oversight of these deans. The campus deans will guide faculty input at the local level for the development of new courses and proposed academic programs, as well as hire and evaluate faculty. The Provost will

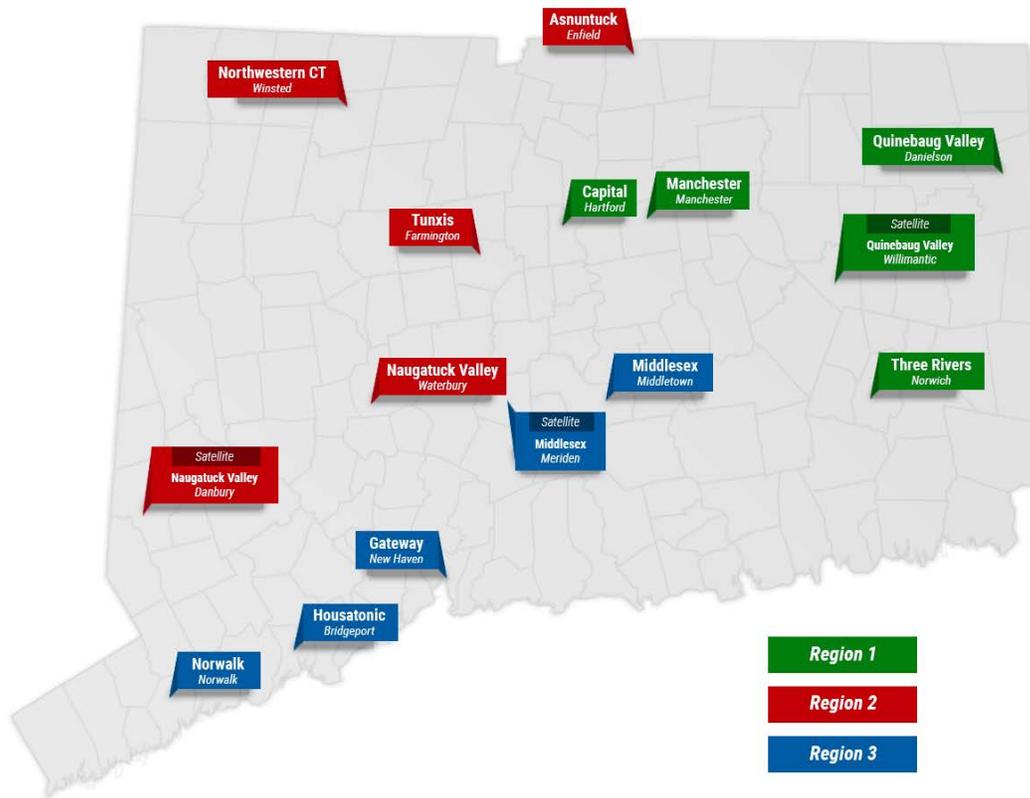
ensure that all newly proposed or revised academic programs comply with the relevant policies of the BOR and ensure that the College has the resources to support such programs. The Provost will also have responsibility to work closely with the CSCU System Provost in preparing policies and curriculum items for presentation to the relevant committees of the BOR.

Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will report directly to the President and have budgetary oversight over the institution and ensure that campuses utilize their resources in a responsible manner. The CFO will have three regional budget managers who will work closely with the respective Regional Vice Presidents to deploy budgets that ensure the campuses can operate effectively. The CFO will also be responsible for accounting, accounts receivable and payable, grants administration, and other responsibilities as customary for this position.

Regional Vice President

For the purposes of governance, the College will be divided into three regions, each representing four campuses. Factors, such as proximity, student headcount, and complexity of programs and campuses, were considered to ensure balance among the regions. The following diagram shows the campus locations within the three regions, as well as the locations of three satellite campuses. Partnerships are encouraged across regions as well as within, depending on program offerings, workforce needs, etc.



In consultation with the BOR and CSU President, the President of the College will conduct searches for three Regional Vice Presidents to oversee the campuses in each region. The primary role of the Regional Vice President will be managing the budget, overseeing the overall strategic direction of the region, supervising Campus Vice Presidents (see below), and ensuring that the region aligns with the overall direction of the institution as a whole. The colleges have a fifty-year history of functioning independently, so it will be critical that the Regional Vice President encourage collaboration and cooperation across campuses. With responsibility for four campuses, the Regional Vice President would be expected to spend at least one day per week on average at each campus.

Vice President for Enrollment Management

The Vice President for Enrollment Management reports to the College President. This position will provide leadership for all aspects of enrollment strategy and services. He or she will promote a student-centered strategic vision plan to ensure the College attains enrollment and retention goals. The VP for Enrollment Management will coordinate all enrollment activities across the three regions, through staff on each campus in financial aid, registrar, admissions and marketing departments. This position will have responsibility over institutional enrollment and financial aid, leveraging data, systems, economic studies, and partnerships to advance the institution and its mission.

Campus Leadership

Campus Vice President

The Campus Vice President (CVP) reports to the Regional Vice President and will be the chief operating officer of the college campus and any associated satellite campus locations. He or she supervises, through an executive team, all faculty and staff on that campus. The CVP is accountable to ensure that all Board policies and all federal and state laws and regulations are observed, and that the campus provides a safe, welcoming environment for the students and the general public. The CVP approves all campus hiring decisions in consultation with the Regional Vice President. The CVP plays the lead role in handling all external relations within the local community, which typically includes liaising with community foundations and serving on boards of local non-profits and the chamber. The CVP, working closely with and under the supervision of the Regional Vice President, ensures that campus operations align with those of the College. (A proposed Organizational Chart for the College Leadership is in Appendix K.)

Campus Academic Leadership

Consolidation will also establish a consistent structure for academic leadership at the campus level. Currently, there is considerable variation from one college to the next in terms of structure. There will be no change to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who serves as the chief academic officer of each of the colleges. However, depending on the college, administrators who report to the Dean include department chairs (11 of 12 colleges) and program coordinators (all 12 colleges), some have division directors (9 of 12 colleges), and some have Associate Deans of Academic Affairs (2 of 12 colleges).

Belonging to the same collective bargaining unit as other faculty, the department chair's responsibility for evaluating their colleagues may complicate labor relations issues. In contrast, division directors are permanent, full-time employees, who work 35 hours per week on 12-month contracts; but, as members of the same collective bargaining unit as are the faculty, they raise the same labor relations issues as do department chairs. Moreover, in the colleges without division directors, department chairs perform many of the functions of the director.

The new proposed campus academic leadership structure will continue to have a Dean of Academic Affairs as the chief academic officer of the campus, reporting to the Campus Vice President. The Dean will oversee all academic operations at the campus. Each campus will also have Associate Deans, who will be directly responsible for supervising and evaluating full-time faculty and managing the academic programs within their respective divisions. Currently, 11 of the 12 colleges have department chairs, who are full-time faculty with reassigned time from teaching to perform administrative duties. Our analysis from the fall 2016 semester indicates that there are 62.3 FTE faculty positions dedicated to administrative reassigned time across the 12 colleges. That reassigned time removes our most talented faculty from the classroom, increasing our reliability on adjunct faculty to educate our students. By moving away from a department chair model to

that of an associate dean model, those 62.3 FTE faculty positions would be back in the classroom teaching students.

The number of Associate Deans will be dependent on the size of the campus: four Associate Deans for large campuses (over 2,500 student FTE), three for medium-sized campuses (1,000-2,500 student FTE), and two for small campuses (under 1,000 student FTE). Associate Deans would primarily be responsible for supervising full-time faculty, but they would also serve as administrative liaisons to students. Working 40 hours per week on 12-month contracts, Associate Deans would provide more extensive, continuous service than in the current model. As management-level positions, Associate Deans would be attractive to those seeking upward mobility. Associate Deans will be required to be familiar with and have appropriate academic credentials for the disciplines within their respective unit.

As part of this reconfiguration of academic leadership, the position of department chair will be reviewed, redefined, and possibly eliminated as we implement this new structure. This review will determine who hires supervises and schedules the part-time faculty. The model under consideration would have the Dean as the chief academic officer, an Associate Dean providing direct oversight of full-time faculty and managing programs, and program coordinators and academic discipline coordinators hiring, scheduling and supervising part-time faculty.

The table below shows the current FTE academic leadership staffing among the 12 colleges versus the anticipated future state FTE academic leadership staffing for the College. Both current and anticipated counts include all relevant department chair, division director, and associate dean level positions, as of the AY '16-'17. FTE calculation for department chairs and program coordinators includes all pro-rated reassigned time, expressed as a full-time equivalent (FTE) position.

Academic Department Leadership Staffing, Current vs Future State

| Campus | Current FTE Dept Chair Staffing | Current FTE Division Director Staffing | Current FTE Program Coord. Staffing | Current FTE Associate Deans Staffing | Future State Dept Chair FTE | Future State Prog. Coord. FTE | Future State Assoc. Dean FTE |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Asnuntuck | 1.6 | 0.0 | 3.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3.60 | 2.0 |
| Capital | 4.2 | 2.0 | 7.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 8.20 | 3.0 |
| Gateway | 5.6 | 1.0 | 14.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 15.40 | 4.0 |
| Housatonic | 4.0 | 0.0 | 1.8 | 1 | 0.0 | 3.00 | 4.0 |
| Manchester | 16.8 | 3.0 | 10.9 | 1 | 0.0 | 12.13 | 4.0 |
| Middlesex | 0.0 | 2.0 | 8.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 8.80 | 3.0 |
| Naugatuck Valley | 5.9 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 2 | 0.0 | 6.20 | 4.0 |
| Northwestern CT | 2.6 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 1.80 | 2.0 |
| Norwalk | 8.0 | 2.0 | 6.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 8.13 | 4.0 |
| Quinebaug Valley | 2.6 | 0.9 | 2.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 3.00 | 2.0 |
| Three Rivers | 5.2 | 1.0 | 6.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 7.40 | 3.0 |
| Tunxis | 5.8 | 0.0 | 4.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 5.20 | 3.0 |
| | 62.3 | 15.9 | 72.7 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 82.9 | 38.0 |
| | Total 154.8 FTE | | | | Total 120.9 FTE | | |

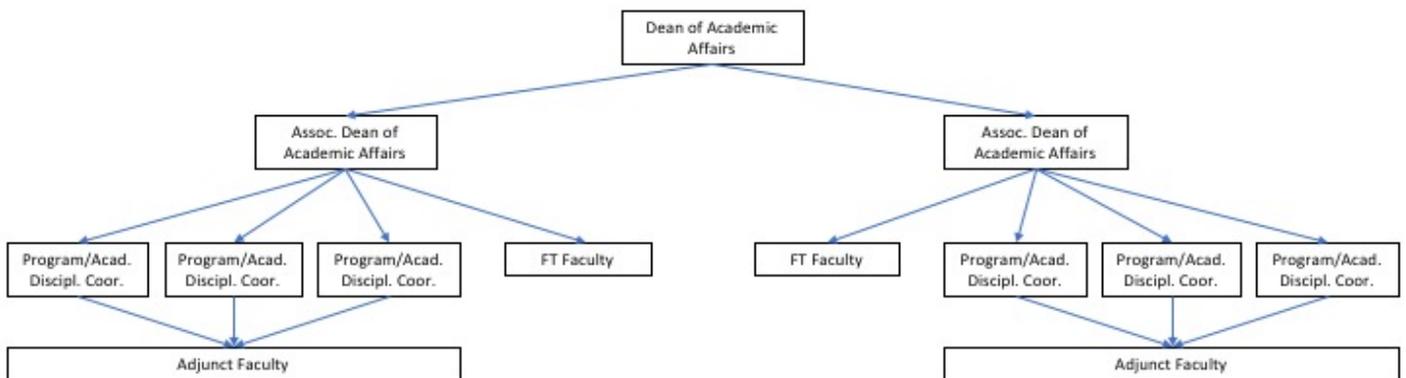
The chart shows that once we have implemented this change in organizational structure for all academic departments, the FTE academic leadership staffing will decrease from 154.8 FTE to 120.9 FTE across the 12 campuses. Department chair reassigned time will be eliminated, and an additional 10.2 FTE academic discipline coordinators will be hired from among the full-time faculty to supervise the part-time discipline faculty. These coordinators typically receive one course release per semester.

The 62.3 FTE reassigned time given to department chairs will revert back to classroom teaching, thereby increasing the number of full-time faculty teaching among the

campuses: 62.3 FTE full-time faculty equates to 1,869 credit hours per academic year, equivalent to over 623 three-credit course sections per year.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 academic year, searches would be conducted to fill the Associate Dean positions where needed, with department chairs continuing in their existing role until such positions are filled. Department chair positions are yearly, appointed positions, therefore these can be modified or eliminated annually. Once searches are complete, likely by July 1st, 2020, the department chair roles would be eliminated and replaced with the coordinators supervising adjunct faculty, hiring adjuncts, and scheduling courses.

The new structure is shown in the diagram below:



Shared Governance

Shared governance with faculty and staff is vitally important to the success of the new institution. We envision the creation of a new model for participatory governance, with faculty and staff representation from each campus, and an alternate member also elected by the campus governance body. The ASA Consolidation Committee will work with the BOR’s Faculty Advisory Committee to develop a process to establish such a body and ensure that representation continues over time. This body will have an advisory role on curricular matters and academic policies. The community colleges have a long history of sharing governance jointly with faculty and professional staff at the campus level, and this

will continue. The Faculty/Staff Senate would form committees, notably a Curriculum Committee, also made up of elected representatives from all 12 campuses that would review proposals as they are brought forward from disciplinary teams or from local campuses. The reviewed proposals would then move to the full Faculty/Staff Senate for endorsement and elevation to the institutional provost for review, and then ultimately up to the Academic & Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents, and the full Board. A similar framework is under consideration for College-wide student governance as well.

Effectiveness of Structure and Governance

Measures for gauging the effectiveness of the new College structure and its system of governance will be fully integrated within the operation of the College. Annual personnel evaluations of College administrators, including President, Provost, Chief Financial Officer, Regional Vice Presidents, and Campus Vice Presidents, will explicitly focus on the effectiveness of the new organizational structure and incorporate recommendations for improvements. The Office of Research and System Effectiveness will also track metrics keyed to goals of the new structure, which includes the Critical Success Factors of retention, graduation, and gainful employment, as well as increases in the number of students attending more than one campus and its impact on degree completion. Financial Services will also closely monitor the impact of the new organizational structure to determine where projected savings have been achieved and where additional savings may be realized.

The existing community colleges currently share a common evaluation procedure for all faculty and staff, including adjunct faculty that ensures quality of instruction and services to students. The Board has also developed human resource and administrative policies that govern employee conduct. The College will maintain control over academic quality, primarily through the oversight of the President, through the Provost, and Academic Deans at each of the 12 campuses and satellite locations.

In accordance with standard 3.18, the College will manage centrally all relationships with external partners who provide support services for students or academic services. The institution will establish policies to develop contracts and memoranda with such external partners, and review these agreements periodically to ensure that they meet the needs of the institution as well as the standards of the Commission. This includes agreements for sharing of academic space at remote sites, agreements with high schools in the delivery of dual enrollment courses, and credentialing of high school teachers who teach dual enrollment courses for the community college, as well as partnerships with community organizations in delivering developmental education programs. Since the 12 colleges now each manage those external partnerships independently, a comprehensive review and inventory would be needed to determine the extent and scope of those partnerships.

V. ACADEMIC PROGRAM (Standard Four)

Overview of Academic Programs

The CCC currently offer over 760 academic degree and certificate programs in a range of disciplines including allied health and nursing, business, computer science, engineering technology, liberal arts and sciences, and human/public service. A minimum of 60 semester credit hours and a maximum of 68 semester credit hours are required in an approved program for an associate degree. Community colleges may offer Board approved “options” within a “parent” program as long as the option does not alter more than 15 semester hours of the parent program requirements. The CCC currently offers 22 “CSCU Pathway Transfer Associate in Arts Degrees” in different fields, which provide students direct transfer with “junior year status” to the four Connecticut State Universities and Charter Oak State College. (A complete listing of academic degree and certificate programs can be found in Appendix L.) Programs that have a colon in the title are options off a parent program. Colleges regularly add and terminate programs, following established BOR policies.

In addition to the credit level associate degrees and certificate programs, the community colleges currently offer over 470 “non-credit” certificates. These non-credit programs, which are offered through the Continuing Education departments at each College, offer professional development, career training and specialized technical training. “Completion” and “Proficiency Certificates” are offered to students in numerous areas including: administrative services, business, banking, computer science, health/medical, hospitality management, legal assistance, manufacturing, real estate, technology and more. (A listing of current non-credit programs is included in the Appendix M.)

While there are currently 760 certificate and degree programs, many of these are duplicated and very similar in nature. For instance, there exists Criminal Justice A.S. degrees at 9 institutions in the system, an AS in Criminal Justice-Corrections at one, an AS in Criminal Justice: Corrections Option at another, and other similar variances. In this example, 18 different versions of Criminal Justice degrees or options can be consolidated to one general degree, and 7 differentiated options. Based upon this model, 434 degree programs may be consolidated to approximately 225-250 including various degree options. The number will vary based upon the uniqueness of a college program and may fluctuate based upon industry need and faculty specialization.

Alignment of Academic Policies and Practices

The implementation phase of *Students First*, Phase Two, requires bringing 12 campuses into alignment as a single accredited community college with clear, consistent practices, policies and procedures that provide a seamless transition for students while maintaining the uniqueness, identity and community connections of each campus.

Faculty policies and procedures at the 12 community colleges are currently governed by a common Board Policy Manual, although there are differences in the way individual colleges have implemented certain policies. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the BOR and the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges and the American Federation of Teachers details personnel policies that cover all aspects of faculty work, including such topics as rights and responsibilities, workload, evaluation, promotion, professional development, and termination. Community college faculty work will continue to be governed by the Board Policy Manual and by the CBA following the consolidation. Individual colleges have developed Faculty Handbooks that incorporate faculty policies and procedures; inconsistencies among the handbooks will need to be reconciled following the consolidation.

The ASA Consolidation Committee has been charged with working out the details of consolidating academic and student affairs on the 12 campuses. Specifically, the committee will provide guidance on the alignment of academic programs, assessment, policies, procedures, institutional data, websites, catalogs and other relevant issues to campus constituents.

Consolidating Academic Programs

A review of all currently offered degree programs will be overseen by the ASA Consolidation Committee. Review will be comprehensive beginning with a focus on prerequisite requirements and the general education core, which must be standardized. There will be broad input from all affected stakeholders: students, staff, faculty, and community partners.

Programs will be classified as “common,” which requires that they share a common curriculum and program requirements wherever they are offered; “differentiated,” which allows for up to 15 credits of variation for specialized options; or “unique,” which indicates that the program is offered at a single campus. Disciplinary faculty will need to review degree and certificate programs across the 12 colleges that have the same, or similar, title to develop a common curriculum and program requirements. The faculty groups will be charged with agreeing on a common curriculum for all commonly titled degrees.

However, in keeping with the commitment to preserve the uniqueness of individual campuses within the College, campuses may offer differentiated “options” within common degree programs. With 45 of the 60 credits common to the common degree, 15 credits, or five three-credit classes, would be allowed in areas that are appropriate to the needs of the student, the local community or workforce, or the expertise of the local faculty.

Program outcomes as stated in the 12 current college specific catalogs will be consistent with the College’s revised mission and goals and information posted widely for students. There will be a standardization of placement scores, prerequisite requirements, student learning outcomes, and program-specific outcomes. A number of additional working groups of the ASA Consolidation Committee are being formed to work with the

placement test council, PA 12-40 Advisory Committee, and faculty workgroups to standardize placement scores, and prerequisite requirements. Faculty Discipline review groups will begin fall 2018 to consolidate and review student learning and program specific outcomes.

Faculty-driven Curriculum Alignment

Multiple faculty groups will be convened in spring 2018 to work on aligning the curricula for the College. Many of these groups exist already. Twenty-five faculty work groups have already worked on the Transfer Articulation Pathways from the 12 community colleges to the Connecticut State Universities. The consolidation of academic programs will be able to replicate the model adopted and refined for meeting the goals of the Board of Regents' Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP). As it is currently set up, the TAP model has three replicable components.

- **Work Groups** composed of faculty members from each campus; they are focused on a specific task requiring their disciplinary expertise and their knowledge of the individual campuses.
- **A Review Committee** composed of faculty members from each campus; they are focused on the more global task, and their work requires expertise in the larger issue (such as curriculum, transfer and articulation, general education, assessment, or pedagogy); the Committee's charge is to interpret the larger policy goals of the system, to develop methods for implementing them, and to review the outcomes of the Work Groups to ensure readiness for the system-wide approval process. The Faculty Implementation and Review Committee (FIRC) is the faculty group with general oversight of the Transfer Pathways and responsible for reviewing and approving compliance within each pathway. This group would be the ideal group to develop a common general education core for the new institution, based on the existing transfer core competencies that all 12 colleges currently have.
- **Co-Managers**, a faculty member from a Connecticut State University and one from a community college; they facilitate the Work Groups by coordinating meetings, providing information, suggesting processes, gathering input from all managerial and faculty constituencies, maintaining a timeline, and overseeing the implementation.

This model affirms CSCU's reliance on faculty governance in curricular matters, a bedrock principle for CSCU faculty and one which they safeguard.

The curriculum at the College will be designed and maintained through similar networks of faculty governance: disciplinary workgroups, a Curriculum Review committee comprising representatives from each community college, and faculty manager(s). As with TAP, administrators will set policies, guidelines, and expectations; faculty will design

the curriculum and its content. Building on existing TAP processes, the curricular integration can move forward at the same time as the consolidation.

The co-chairs of the ASA Consolidation Committee will develop a timeline for completing the program design, which began during the spring 2018 semester. The initial work will focus on the General Education core, the 22 TAP majors, the Nursing A.S. degree, the College of Technology programs, and the A.A.S degree programs. These areas all have some degree of commonality and can be completed in a shorter timeframe. A workgroup of the ASA Consolidation Committee will develop parameters for the coherent program design that can then be used by disciplinary Faculty Work Groups moving forward. As there are no plans for faculty to work during the summer, consolidation efforts focused on the larger programs, such as Criminal Justice, Business Administration, etc. will begin in fall 2018. This will require substantial faculty involvement that can be achieved by utilizing contractual Additional Responsibility time for the 2018-19 academic year, which was used successfully in developing the Transfer Articulation Pathways.

The faculty manager(s) will coordinate and facilitate communication across all 12 campuses. (Board Resolutions pertaining to TAP are found in Appendix N.) Aligned degree programs will need to be reviewed by a newly created College Faculty and Staff Senate and reviewed by the BOR's Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

Programs with Specialized Accreditation

Each of the 12 campuses currently offers degree programs with specialized accreditation. A total of 54 academic programs currently offered by the community colleges are accredited by 17 organizations. The accredited programs include 52 degree programs and two certificates. One degree program is accredited by two organizations. Seven of the programs are singularly accredited. Ten other accrediting organizations have granted their accreditation status to 47 community college programs. The most common program is Early Childhood Education, offered by each of the 12 community colleges, which is accredited individually by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Likewise, in nursing, we have six campuses that have separately accredited nursing programs.

Fifteen of the accrediting organizations have responded to our inquiries about the impact of the proposed community college consolidation on their accreditation. These 15 organizations have accredited 51 of the 54 community college programs with special accreditation. Assuming no unfavorable changes in the programs' faculties, curriculum, facilities and resources, the responding organizations foresee no impact on the programs' accreditation status. Most of the respondents require an official notification through a report or substantive change document with assurance of no adverse programmatic changes. Such notifications should be filed before or shortly after the consolidation. Four of the organizations noted that their accreditation would be contingent upon regional accreditation of the consolidated Connecticut Community College.

Programs such as these will go through the same alignment of a common, or relatively common, curriculum process, and then seek to move the 12 separate accreditations to a single accreditation. The faculty disciplinary groups that have specialized accreditation will be tasked with working with the accrediting body to move to a single accreditation as soon as can reasonably be accommodated. (Appendix O lists all of the accredited programs offered by the 12 community colleges.)

General Education

A goal of the consolidation is a common General Education core that faculty will need to develop and approve. CSCU's Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) includes a 30-credit, competency-based General Education component. In order to accommodate the different general education requirements at the 12 community colleges, only 24 of those credits share the same competencies/knowledge areas: Written Communication (6); Scientific Reasoning (3); Scientific Knowledge and Understanding (3); Historical Knowledge and Understanding (3); Quantitative Reasoning (3); Social Phenomena Knowledge and Understanding (3); and Aesthetic Dimensions (3). The other six credits of competencies are drawn from Quantitative Reasoning; Historical Knowledge and Understanding; Social Phenomena Knowledge and Understanding; Aesthetic Dimensions; Oral Communication; Continuing Learning and Information Literacy; or Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking. This TAP model will provide the basis for General Education at the College.

A General Education working subgroup of the ASA Consolidation Committee is working with the TAP Framework and Implementation Review Committee (FIRC) to develop a common General Education core for all degree programs during the spring 2018 semester. This core will likely be a subset of the TAP Framework 30 transfer core with similar aligned competency/knowledge areas. To accommodate career-based programs and A.A.S. degrees, the General Education core is anticipated to be 21-24 credits.

The workgroup will report back to the broader ASA Consolidation Committee with a General Education proposal, which will be forwarded to each college for endorsement/approval. The proposal will be shared with each campus by May 2018 with expected endorsement/approval by October 2018, to be followed by review and approval by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BOR and final approval by the BOR.

Guided Pathways

As the disciplinary Faculty Work Groups focus on aligning curricula, members of the Choice Architecture Subgroup of the Guided Pathways Task Force will begin developing the pathways framework for students. The Subgroup is initially charged with developing meta-majors to guide students in their choice of a major. The Subgroup will also work with faculty in designing a common First-year Experience for students, as well as program mapping and course sequencing.

Dual Enrollment Programs

With the implementation of the NEASC Policy on Dual Enrollment Programs approved in March 2014 by the Commission, CSCU, on behalf of the BOR, submitted a plan to the Commission on August 22, 2014, outlining its commitment and adherence to the new policy. The accompanying cover letter, signed by all 12 community college Presidents, committed the system "...to aligning our programs with NEASC standards such that each college will 'guarantee that the institution selects, supervises and evaluates' all dual enrollment instructors by the fall of 2015." The Commission approved the "2014-15 Faculty Standards Phase-in for CT Community College Dual Enrollment Programs" (the Plan). Eleven of the 12 community colleges have some form of a Dual Enrollment program. Quinebaug Valley Community College is the exception. Those 11 colleges have followed the Policy guidelines. Some smaller programs partner with only two or three high schools, whereas larger ones partner with 10-17 schools, but all "...select, supervise and evaluate..." and provide professional development opportunities for the high school faculty. There is currently a mixture of how the programs are funded, supervised, and evaluated. Some programs are funded by Perkins money, some by grants, others are college funded.

The high school faculty are vetted for appropriate credentials and experience by college officials. College faculty or staff provide the oversight and classroom evaluations as mandated by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and professional development opportunities as required.

Dual enrollment programs will continue to be administered at the local campus and will all conform to common College-wide policies, standards, and practices that adhere to the NEASC Policy on Dual Enrollment Programs. The new College will adhere to the NEASC Policy on Dual Enrollment Programs. Working closely with academic officers on the campuses, the Director of Educational Opportunity at the CSCU System Office will continue to have oversight of dual enrollment programs, as he has since 1998.

Common Course Numbering System

In 2003, the community colleges adopted a common course numbering system that continues today. Courses that have 80% consonance of content carry the same designator, number, title, and number of credits. Faculty in the disciplines determine what courses are common. In some cases, commonality is defined in terms of content; in others, in terms of outcomes.

Although the community colleges have a common course numbering system, a course with the same title may have different prerequisites and learning outcomes, and often cover different topics, from one college to the next. This often presents problems for students intent on transferring courses between campuses.

One of the charges for the disciplinary Faculty Work Groups will be to review course prerequisites, course learning outcomes, and common content to ensure an appropriate

level of consistency among commonly numbered courses. Modifications proposed by the disciplinary Faculty Work Groups will be subject to review and approval by the College’s Curriculum Committee, Faculty and Staff Senate, College Provost, Academic Council, the BOR’s Academic and Student Affairs Committee, and finally the entire BOR. The goal is to compile a single catalog for the College listing all courses and programs.

Grading Policies and Procedures

The grading policies for the community colleges are outlined in the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges *Policy Manual*. The relevant policies are *Grades* [3.5], the *Granting of an Incomplete* [BOT policy 3.5.1] and *Administrative Transcript Notations – letters other than A-F* [BOT policy 3.5.2]. The 12 community colleges have a common grading system (see Appendix P). The BOR has also established common policies for the community colleges concerning Satisfactory Academic Progress (Appendix Q) for financial aid and Academic Honors (Appendix R). These policies will remain in effect for the consolidated College.

As part of the consolidation, the ASA Consolidation Committee will review practices at the 12 campuses to ensure that grading policies are being consistently implemented.

Academic Support Staffing

The chart below shows a side-by-side comparison of the current academic affairs support staff, by campus; and the future consolidated institution. The chart includes full-time equivalent staff positions and salary plus fringe benefit costs for both. The right column shows the difference between the current and consolidated state for both FTE and salary/fringe benefits.

Academic Affairs Support Staffing, Current vs Future State

| Campus | Current | | Future | | Delta FTE | Delta Salary+FB |
|--------|---------|----------------|--------|----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | FTE | Salary+FB | FTE | Salary+FB | | |
| AS | 53.1 | \$5,285,127.73 | 51 | \$5,005,964.60 | (2.00) | \$(279,163.13) |
| CP | 45.5 | \$5,235,160.70 | 45 | \$4,975,297.53 | (1.00) | \$(259,863.17) |
| GW | 69.7 | \$6,156,014.74 | 70 | \$6,156,014.74 | 0.00 | \$- |
| HO | 49.7 | \$4,596,443.11 | 50 | \$4,596,443.11 | 0.00 | \$- |
| MA | 56.1 | \$5,788,404.08 | 56 | \$5,788,404.08 | 0.00 | \$- |
| MX | 29.9 | \$3,567,897.55 | 29 | \$3,427,824.51 | (1.00) | \$(140,073.04) |
| NK | 65.1 | \$6,861,937.80 | 65 | \$6,861,937.80 | 0.00 | \$- |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| NV | 76.2 | \$7,253,397.82 | 76 | \$7,253,397.82 | 0.00 | \$- |
| NW | 23.1 | \$2,917,004.65 | 23 | \$2,917,004.65 | 0.00 | \$- |
| QV | 19.1 | \$2,132,046.29 | 19 | \$2,132,046.29 | 0.30 | \$- |
| TR | 23.9 | \$2,347,864.40 | 23 | \$2,135,060.53 | (1.00) | \$(212,803.87) |
| TX | 33.8 | \$3,972,248.18 | 28 | \$3,265,296.79 | (6.26) | \$(706,951.39) |
| Institution | N/A | N/A | 3 | \$551,250.00 | 3.00 | \$551,250.00 |
| | | | | | | |
| Total | 545.1 | \$56,113,547.05 | 537.1 | \$55,065,942.45 | | \$(1,047,604.60) |

This table represents academic support staffing in the following areas: Academic Affairs, Advanced Manufacturing, Continuing Education, , and the NVCC Danbury campus. The slight reductions in staffing (less than 2%) reflect savings from shared positions between Tunxis and Asnuntuck and reductions in Continuing Education due to consolidated services.

The three academic support positions included in the new leadership structure are shown in the bottom row as “institution.” These positions include the new Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Officer, the new position of College Registrar, and the position formerly held by the Executive Director of Retention, which is now held by the Interim Executive Director of the Student Success Center and Academic Initiatives, who will be solely dedicated to supporting *Students First*.

Assurance of Academic Quality

The College is committed to evaluating the quality, integrity and effectiveness of its academic programs through multiple forms of assessment. These include and will continue to include both formal and informal program reviews, institutionalization of the learning/program outcomes, continuous institutional assessment of all outcomes, and program-specific accreditation.

The Board of Regents (BOR) regulates the structure and content of degrees. All degrees are in a recognized field of study and must include a general education component comprising at least one third of the 60-degree credits. Courses in the major and related areas constitute the remainder of credits. The BOR Policy to Normalize Credit Hours for Associate and Baccalaureate Degree Programs required all institutions to develop and implement a review process for each Associate and Baccalaureate degree program with the goal of normalizing the number of credits at 60 and 120 credit hours, respectively. The policy mandated a communication plan to inform students of the consequences of taking credits beyond those required for graduation. The Policy to Normalize Credit Hours for

Associate and Baccalaureate Degree Programs was approved by the BOR October 16, 2014 and became effective fall 2017. (The BOR Normalization Policy is found in Appendix S.)

The credit hour is the basic unit of the curricula and is defined as a one hour of faculty – directed classwork with the expectation that there is a minimum of two hours of out-of-class study over an approximately 15-week semester per hour of credit. Students are informed to expect to spend an equivalent amount of work as required for other academic activities established by the institution, including labs, internships, practica, studio work, and other non-classroom based academic activities leading to the award of credit hours. This will not change in the College. Currently, college-based curriculum committees review course proposals for appropriateness of credits. Evidence of adherence to the credit hour rule is provided in all course proposals that explicitly identify the number of credit hours, number of class hours per week, and the number of laboratory hours per week. In the College, a process will be developed to assure that curricula continue to be reviewed and vetted to maintain the integrity of the credit hour.

Development of courses, programs, or certificates is and will remain the responsibility of the faculty, and supported by feedback from academic program reviews, advisory boards, employers, and community members. That process will be need to be developed for the consolidated College. How that process will look will be determined by workgroups convened by the ASA Consolidation Committee in concert with faculty across the system. Any degrees, stand-alone certificates, and program modifications that are considered substantive changes (15 credits or more) will continue to be approved by the BOR.

The BOR currently approves degree programs through a comprehensive process that includes data on program needs, learning outcomes (both general education and programmatic), and employment opportunities for graduates. There is no expectation this will change in the College. Following approval, programs will be administered by the appropriate campus-based faculty in accordance with College and BOR policies.

At the campus level, the Dean of Academic Affairs/Dean of Academic and Student Affairs will remain responsible for academic oversight and integrity and to assure the quality of academic programs. Program review is required per BOR policy every seven years. Advisory boards review curricula, serve as resource for labor market trends, offer recommendations for improvement of facilities and resources, act as liaisons for workplace experiences/internships/practicum, and provide input for program review. There is no expectation that this will change.

The College's principal evaluation focus will be on the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of its many programs. The College will endeavor to evaluate that effectiveness through planning, resource allocation, implementation, and systematic assessment for the improvement of academic offerings and student learning and standards set by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The specific metrics to demonstrate effective and on-going program assessment will be determined in consultation with the ASA Consolidation Committee in concert with faculty and Office of Research and System Effectiveness.

VI. STUDENTS (Standard Five)

The College will enroll approximately 52,000 students in credit-bearing programs, and 30,000 students in non-credit programs. Approximately six out of ten students will be of traditional college age, while the remaining 40% will be non-traditional in terms of age. The majority, approximately 56% to 59%, are likely to be female. When compared to the ethnic distribution of the entire state of Connecticut, the student population of the new college will be disproportionately minority and/or multi-racial (about 47%). This pattern of diversity will be maintained in the new College. The fall 2017 community college enrollment indicates that two groups grew in both absolute numbers and percentage of the student population. Those two groups were Hispanic/Latino students and students that reported being of two or more races. In fact, Hispanic/Latino students represent 26.4 % of the student population. This level of Hispanic/Latino representation will qualify the new community college for Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status, a federal program designed to assist colleges or universities in the United States that attempt to assist first generation, majority low income Hispanic students. The consolidated College's HIS status will help to address the opportunity/achievement gap that exists throughout the State.

The achievement gap in the State of Connecticut is a staggering one. For students who attended Connecticut public high schools and began college, the graduation rate is 24.4% for black, 21.4% for Hispanic, and 53.8% for white students. Similarly, only 19% of Connecticut's economically disadvantaged students who attend college earn a college degree, as compared to 54.2% of their more advantaged peers. The College will expand educational opportunities and improve educational attainment for Hispanic students through programs and activities funded by the Title V federal program.

<https://ctviewpoints.org/2016/09/20/closing-connecticuts-real-achievement-gap/>

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE>

(Demographic information about community college students is located in Appendix T.)

Alignment of Student Policies

In Phase Two of *Students First*, a work group of the ASA Consolidation Committee will focus on the alignment of Student Affairs policies to ensure consistency throughout the College. This work will simultaneously provide an opportunity to consider new and revised policies that will better serve students.

Supporting Students during the Transition

A high priority during the transition to a single accredited College with a set of shared programs will be to accommodate the needs of students currently enrolled in community college programs, as well as those of students who enroll during the transition. To help

advisors and students during the transition, a framework will be established to ensure that students can complete their programs without additional obstacles. The proposed approach will minimize the impact on students during the three-year (2019-2021) process of consolidating academic programs.

With Commission approval, we propose that the requirements for all current degree programs remain in effect for currently enrolled students until degrees for the College have been modified and approved. Students will have up to six years to complete the requirements for the degree programs in which they are currently enrolled.

Individually accredited institutions would continue to award their respective degrees through June 30, 2020. Any students who complete their degrees or certificates beginning July 1st 2020 would have the name of the new College on their respective diplomas. Upon approval, modified degree programs would be built into our student information system. By December 2020, we estimate that all incoming students will enroll in the modified programs. (The stages of the transition are outlined below.)

| Date | Process Step |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Spring 2018 - March 2019 | Faculty groups charged with curriculum alignment |
| Spring 2018 - March 2019 | TAP Framework Implementation Review Committee (FIRC) tasked with common general education |
| AY 2018-2020 | All current degree/certificate programs continue |
| May 2019 | Approval of modified curriculum |
| September Fall 2019 | Modified programs built into Banner Student Information Systems (SIS) |
| AY 2019-2020 | Students recruited into modified programs for fall 2020 start |
| Through June 2020 | All diplomas awarded containing the current 12-college names |
| Beginning July 2020 | All diplomas awarded by the College, however, varied in curriculum |

Admissions & Enrollment

In our current structure, each of our 12 community colleges individually manages enrollment procedures, which may vary considerably from one institution to another. While the basic steps for application are similar across all institutions, the application timelines, registration schedules, and payment deadlines are different at each institution. Students comparing one of our community colleges to another are likely to be confused by inconsistencies.

As community partners in the State of Connecticut, each of our colleges are open-access institutions for all applicants who meet established criteria, including an admission

application (with a one-time \$20 fee), proof of high school graduation (or equivalency), submission of official college transcripts (if any), and proof of required immunizations (measles, mumps, and rubella) per state requirements. Students whose applications have been processed are invited to their institution for placement testing in math and English. All colleges utilize the College Board's Accuplacer test, but they have not adopted uniform cut scores. In addition, multiple commonly accepted measures of skill level are also used to remove the need for testing and to expedite the advising and registration process. These multiple measures include CLEP/AP/DANTES scores, SAT/ACT scores, high school transcript or GED information, and others as approved by the BOR. Students who wish to take courses across multiple institutions must apply separately to each college and may be placed in different level courses. This holds true for students who transfer from one community college to another. In some cases, courses taken at one community college will not transfer to another community college, owing to differences in prerequisites, requirements, competencies, and outcomes.

Our system also offers a Fresh Start policy to eligible students (Appendix U). Under this academic amnesty policy, students who have not attended college for a period of two or more years and who have a poor academic record may be able to refresh their Grade Point Average (GPA) and improve their academic record. Candidates for Fresh Start are required to meet with a college official to determine their academic status for re-entry into the college. Of note, the Fresh Start policy does not apply to a student's academic history for financial aid and the calculation of Satisfactory Academic Progress. However, students may apply for a waiver from the Financial Aid Office and work to develop an academic plan to attain satisfactory progress. This policy will remain in effect following consolidation

In Phase Two of *Students First*, the Recruitment Architecture subgroup of the Guided Pathways Task Force is charged with standardizing a streamlined, consistent enrollment experience that is aligned with Guided Pathways for the single college. As our 12 colleges are consolidated into a single entity with multiple campus locations, the student experience, particularly for those who take courses across multiple institutions, will significantly improve. With a single admissions process for the 12 campuses, we anticipate an increase in the number of students who take courses at multiple locations. Students who apply and are accepted to the new institution will work with Enrollment Management Specialists to assist with admissions, course registration, and financial aid.

Adequacy and Credentialing of Student Support Staff

Each of the 12 community colleges are staffed with credentialed personnel who have the education and experience to address the diverse needs of students who attend the community colleges across the state. The colleges have structures in place to ensure that all student services professionals have the appropriate credentials and experience for positions within student affairs. These include system-wide job descriptions, specifying educational and experience levels required for each position; codified procedures for

search committees comprised of faculty, staff, and students; and the posting of position announcements to encourage the broadest applicant pools possible.

As the following table illustrates, there will be no change in the level of student support following the consolidation of the community colleges. With the exception of reductions at Tunxis, which shares positions with Asnuntuck (as described in the Overview), expenditures for Student Affairs staff will be the same before and after consolidation.

Student Support Positions comparison, Current vs Future State

| Campus | Current | | Future | | Delta FTE | Delta Salary+FB |
|--------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | FTE | Salary+FB | FTE | Salary+FB | | |
| AS | 9.9 | \$1,120,847.62 | 10 | \$1,120,847.62 | 0.00 | \$- |
| CP | 27.3 | \$3,418,340.73 | 27 | \$3,418,340.73 | 0.00 | \$- |
| GW | 53.4 | \$5,263,321.82 | 53 | \$5,263,321.82 | 0.00 | \$- |
| HO | 36.4 | \$3,835,821.35 | 36 | \$3,835,821.35 | 0.00 | \$- |
| MA | 50.6 | A \$5,326,810.62 | 51 | \$5,326,810.62 | 0.00 | \$- |
| MX | 18.6 | \$2,273,990.29 | 19 | \$2,273,990.29 | 0.00 | \$- |
| NK | 40.2 | \$5,103,535.01 | 40 | \$5,103,535.01 | 0.00 | \$- |
| NV | 32.9 | \$3,549,356.03 | 33 | \$3,549,356.03 | 0.00 | \$- |
| NW | 14.4 | \$1,858,072.82 | 14 | \$1,858,072.82 | 0.00 | \$- |
| QV | 16.8 | \$2,014,880.12 | 17 | \$2,014,880.12 | 0.00 | \$- |
| TR | 31.4 | \$3,701,893.65 | 31 | \$3,701,893.65 | 0.00 | \$- |
| TX | 42.8 | \$4,892,435.72 | 40 | \$4,701,642.14 | (2.29) | \$(190,793.58) |
| Institution | N/A | N/A | - | \$- | 3.00 | \$- |
| Total | 374.8 | \$42,359,305.78 | 372.5 | \$42,168,512.20 | | \$(190,793.58) |

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical standards and policies concerning students and student services are currently detailed in a web-based Student Handbook that is common to the 12 community colleges. The handbook details student rights and responsibilities and specifies student conduct and grievance procedures, as well as information that will be included in a student's permanent record and policies regarding retention, safety and security, and the disposal of records. The ASA Consolidation Committee will recommend to the BOR which policies and standards should remain in effect following consolidation and propose updated language to reflect the consolidation of 12 colleges into one.

Evaluation of Student Services

To assess and evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of student services, the College will regularly and systematically administer various instruments of such measures as student satisfaction, engagement, success, and career readiness. These include an annual graduate survey, a student satisfaction inventory, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), as well as program-based/college-based assessments, and anecdotal information. The data collected will serve to inform decisions to continuously improve service to students.

VII. TEACHING, LEARNING AND SCHOLARSHIP (Standard Six)

Faculty Composition

Faculty categories in the community colleges are clearly defined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges and the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges and the American Federation of Teachers. These include Professors (442), Associate Professors (139), Assistant Professors (122), Full-time Lecturers (30), Instructors (51), and Part-time Lecturers (3,248). A total of 4,032 faculty members are currently employed by the Connecticut Community colleges (see Appendix V for breakdown by college).

Full-time Faculty Staffing

The chart below shows full-time faculty staffing at all 12 community college campuses from fall 2016, using the most recent IPEDS data. The chart also compares these data to comparable IPEDS data from a range of community colleges, some comparable in size to the proposed College. The chart also presents faculty staffing levels as of AY 15-16 versus the expected faculty staffing levels in the consolidated College. As can be seen, the number of full-time faculty remains unchanged, a primary premise of the *Students First* proposal. However, there would be an eventual decrease in adjunct faculty levels, due to changes in responsibilities of department chairs, as explained in the discussion of Organization & Governance, as well as a new change in the Collective Bargaining Agreement increasing faculty teaching load to 15 credits per semester.

Full-time & Adjunct Faculty Staffing, Current vs Future State

| College | Current State | | | | | | Future State | | | % FT |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| | FT Faculty | PT Faculty | TOTAL Faculty | % FT | '15-'16 FTE | FTE Per FT Faculty | FT Faculty | PT Faculty | TOTAL Faculty | |
| Asnuntuck | 25 | 98 | 123 | 20% | 987 | 39 | 25 | 96 | 121 | 21% |
| Capital | 63 | 126 | 189 | 33% | 1990 | 32 | 63 | 124 | 187 | 34% |
| Gateway | 102 | 398 | 500 | 20% | 4483 | 44 | 102 | 395 | 497 | 21% |
| Housatonic | 81 | 238 | 319 | 25% | 3043 | 38 | 81 | 235 | 316 | 26% |
| Manchester | 103 | 310 | 413 | 25% | 4176 | 41 | 103 | 307 | 410 | 25% |
| Middlesex | 44 | 140 | 184 | 24% | 1829 | 42 | 44 | 138 | 182 | 24% |
| Naugatuck V. | 101 | 252 | 353 | 29% | 4133 | 41 | 101 | 249 | 350 | 29% |
| Norwalk | 95 | 242 | 337 | 28% | 3759 | 40 | 95 | 239 | 334 | 28% |
| Northwestern | 28 | 65 | 93 | 30% | 812 | 29 | 28 | 63 | 91 | 31% |
| Quinebaug V. | 30 | 89 | 119 | 25% | 906 | 30 | 30 | 87 | 117 | 26% |
| Three Rivers | 68 | 213 | 281 | 24% | 2475 | 36 | 68 | 211 | 279 | 24% |
| Tunxis | 60 | 214 | 274 | 22% | 2493 | 42 | 60 | 212 | 272 | 22% |
| TOTAL | 800 | 2385 | 3185 | 25% | 31086 | 39 | 800 | 2356 | 3156 | 25% |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Miami Dade, FL | 753 | 1963 | 2716 | 28% | 48705 | 65 | | | | |
| Ivy Tech, IN | 1282 | 3562 | 4844 | 26% | 58393 | 46 | | | | |
| Lone Star, TX | 884 | 3077 | 3961 | 22% | 47665 | 54 | | | | |
| CCRI, RI | 313 | 505 | 818 | 38% | 9189 | 29 | | | | |
| Bunker Hill, MA | 148 | 664 | 812 | 18% | 8673 | 59 | | | | |
| CUNY Bronx, NY | 215 | 306 | 521 | 41% | 8374 | 39 | | | | |
| Peer Total/ Avg | 3232 | 9107 | 12339 | 26% | 163952 | 51 | | | | |

The column labeled '15-'16 FTE is the official FTE student enrollment for the 2015-2016 academic year. The column labeled **FTE per FT Faculty** in the table above provides an apples-to-apples comparison value of the FTE enrollment of students in fall 2015 per full-time faculty member. This measure gives us a sense of how many full-time students there are for every full-time faculty member. The 12 Connecticut campuses range from 29 to 44 students per full-time faculty member, with a mean of 39 students/faculty member. Our comparison group of large colleges around the U.S. and the Northeast show that these institutions have a somewhat higher number of students per faculty member, ranging from 29 to 81 students/faculty member, with a mean of 51 students/faculty member. In fact, one, Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, MA, has double the number of students per faculty member. One of the clear strengths of the Connecticut Community College system are the excellent faculty and our favorable staffing levels relative to the number of students. The *Students First* proposal makes no changes to full-time or part-time faculty levels across any of the 12 campuses.

Currently, the Board of Regents for Higher Education requires a master's degree or its equivalent for a faculty appointment to the community colleges. All full-time and part-time faculty members must meet this Board of Regents standard. To date, the individual colleges have been required, as a condition of their accreditation, to document that their teaching faculty possess the appropriate qualifications. For the transition to one community college, the ASA Consolidation Committee will recommend college-wide procedures for ensuring that teaching faculty are appropriately qualified.

All faculty receive periodic review. Full-time, tenure-track faculty are eligible for promotion through an evaluation and advancement process defined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The process for evaluation of faculty is well understood and has the support of the faculty. Criteria for promotion include teaching, community and college service, professional development, and academic leadership. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the BOR and the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges and the American Federation of Teachers requires a Promotion Committee at each college to review each application and make recommendations to the President who forwards his/her recommendations to the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents has final approval. Any changes in this procedure will need to be negotiated with the bargaining units, although there is presently no intention to change the practice of campus-based promotion committees.

Teaching and Learning

Faculty at the community colleges primarily focus on teaching, which is a major consideration for tenure and promotion decisions. Courses are delivered at a variety of times and formats, including lecture, lab, seminar and online. Class size tends to be small and large lecture courses are an exception at all colleges. Programs and courses have clearly articulated learning outcomes that have been developed and assessed in consultation with national standards and, where appropriate, advisory boards, accrediting

bodies, and employer needs. Although assessment practice varies by college, programs and disciplines, through the program review process and focused assessment activities, regularly use the information gathered from assessment to redesign course content and delivery. Through adoption of common transfer pathways that include common General Education, the system has developed a system-wide assessment protocol that lays the groundwork for assessment in a consolidated college. Consolidation into a single college will provide an opportunity to more easily share assessment practices and to develop and implement best practices.

Faculty regularly participate in professional development opportunities to improve classroom teaching. The Center for Teaching, which is organized both on the system and college level, provides multiple opportunities, system-wide and at individual colleges, for professional development. These opportunities are available to full- and part-time faculty. Each full- and part-time faculty member has a yearly allowance to pay for specific professional development activities. Colleges also regularly sponsor faculty to attend professional development activities. Although research is not integral to the mission of the community colleges, faculty across the curriculum regularly assign research projects to their students.

In most cases, students are taught by a variety of faculty in each discipline and program. Variation in the size of colleges and programs can limit students' exposure to multiple faculty points of view in courses or programs that have limited or lower enrollment. By removing obstacles to students taking courses on more than one campus, consolidation will increase students' exposure to a variety of faculty members.

One of the charges for the Choice Architecture subgroup of the Guided Pathways Task Force will be to work with faculty to develop a plan for ensuring that teaching and learning support Guided Pathways. An April 2017 report from the Community College Research Center, "Implementing Guided Pathways," indicates how teaching and learning must support Guided Pathways:

In the pathways model, faculty assess whether students are mastering learning outcomes as they progress through a program. Program learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements for success in further education and employment in a related field. Faculty use the results of learning outcomes assessments to improve the effectiveness of instruction in their programs. Colleges track mastery of learning outcomes by individual students, and the information is easily accessible to students and faculty. To ensure that students are learning, colleges work to ensure that teaching is effective. A key focus of teaching in the pathways model is attention to collaborative, active learning that is relevant to the student's field of interest. This includes teaching and learning in the classroom as well as learning

that takes place outside the classroom, such as through internships or service learning.⁴

Academic Advising

Currently, all students have access to advising services, but specific models differ across the 12 colleges. In general, program coordinators and discipline chairs serve as primary advisors for students in their programs. At most schools, professional advisors and faculty share responsibility for advising students who have not declared a program major or who are general studies or liberal arts majors. All students have access to advising services, but ratios of advisors to students is much too high. The consolidation into one college will lead to student support redesign following best practices as outlined by Guided Pathways principles.

The 25-member Support Architecture subgroup of the Guided Pathways Task Force has been charged with recommending an academic advising model for the College that will support the goal of improving student retention and completion. Integral to Guided Pathways is a common, holistic, proactive advising experience for all students that extends from intake advising through graduation and includes both academic and career planning. The subgroup will conduct research on best practices and present recommendations concerning policies, technology, staffing, and funding to the Guided Pathways Task Force and eventually to the ASA Consolidation Committee for consideration.

⁴ Davis Jenkins, Hana Lahr, and John Fink, *Implementing Guided Pathways: Early Insights From the AACC Pathways Colleges*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, (April 2017), p. 2.

VIII. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES (Standard Seven)

The savings from consolidation will result primarily from eliminating administrative and duplicative positions across the 12 colleges, in areas such as Information Technology, purchasing, payroll, facilities and human resources, but not on positions that directly impact students. The *Students First* proposal has always been committed to safeguarding student-facing positions, particularly full-time faculty and student support positions.

Library Resources

Staffing levels have steadily decreased in most libraries over the past 10 years, while demand for information literacy instruction, research consultations, and other types of student support have steadily increased. Many libraries have had to make difficult choices to reduce open hours (especially on weekends), to limit participation in campus governance activities, and to curtail value-added services such as classroom instruction and faculty research support.

The libraries overall are redesigning facilities and research services to support modern information seeking behaviors. The libraries have been working collaboratively for the past two years on implementing a common Library System. The CSCU Integrated Library System went live January 9, 2017. CSCU has approved hiring a full-time and permanent Program Manager for the Library Consortium Operations and an IT professional for FY18. The IT professional will ensure the consistency of the Library System at all institutions and provide technical support to institutions.

As technology tools and methods for acquiring and managing information resources evolve, roles and expectations for library staff are also changing. The implementation of the integrated system and the college consolidation provide an opportunity to consider resource acquisition services from a central location. Individual libraries would maintain selection and curation responsibilities, but the technical work involved in acquiring and describing materials (both physical and electronic) could easily be achieved in a centralized environment, allowing the staff in the libraries to be redeployed in direct service to students.

Traditionally, Information Literacy and Reference services have been delivered face-to-face, making them extremely resource intensive. In response to decreased staffing and limited hours of operation, the libraries are exploring ways to deliver the services virtually. One of the options under consideration is subscribing to a live, 24/7 chat reference service to supplement the service the library provides. Librarians would be able to follow up with students who needed additional help when the library reopened. Digital learning modules on information literacy could also be developed for integration in the first-year curriculum.

Financial Resources

Schedule 1-5 represent the financial changes envisioned in the college consolidation (see Appendix W). There are no faculty included in these schedules. All other impacted employees are captured in this analysis, and the source of data is the FY2017 total payroll dollars, by person, by job designation.

Data are provided for each functional department by campus, including both dollars and FTE Headcounts as follows:

1. Schedule 1 – Current department salaries and fringe benefit costs and department FTE headcounts
2. Schedule 2 – Impact of reductions due to the reorganization
3. Schedule 3 – Subtotals
4. Schedule 4 – New positions added, by function, the campuses and to the Institution central management team. Also noted are transfers into the new college from the current System Office who will support the college; these additions are neutral to the consolidation as they currently support the twelve community colleges.
5. Schedule 5 – The new structure

During consolidation, no reductions are projected for the following departments,⁵ which directly support students, community, and safety:

- Academic Affairs
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Community and Economic Development
- Center for Corporate Media
- Danbury Campus
- Foundations/Development/Institutional Advancement
- Grants
- Public Safety
- Student Affairs

The following functional areas have been removed from the current campus structure because they will cease to exist in their current configuration. These functions have been extensively reorganized with new positions and new reporting lines under the college consolidation. Some new positions are added to the campuses and others will be included in the College central office.

- Administrative Services
- Finance

⁵ The only exceptions are at the Tunxis campus, which has shared positions with Asnuntuck rather than fill selected vacancies.

- Human Resources/Payroll
- Institutional Research
- Marketing
- President's Office

The following functions reflect more moderate reorganization, which may move leadership responsibilities into the College central office, or share resources among campuses:

- Facilities/Maintenance
- Information Technology
- Continuing Education

For all areas being reorganized, Sheet 4 shows the new positions added to the campuses and/or the College central office. Those that are not impacted by the reorganization are expected to function in the future as they do now. There may be different lines of reporting, however.

Schedule 6 (Appendix X) shows FY17 Actual result, FY18 Projections, and estimates for FY19 – FY22. This schedule illustrates a five-year projection for the Connecticut community colleges (1) if we do nothing and (2) with the College Consolidation under *Students First* layered in.

The assumptions included in this high level analysis are as follows:

- State funds provided through FY18 are actual. State funding for FY19 has been adjusted as proposed by the Governor's mid-term report dated 2/5/18. State funding is assumed flat going forward. We believe that this is a neutral position, given the state's economic situation but also the commitment by the Governor and legislators to support higher education.
- State provided fringe benefits from FY19 through FY22 are assumed at the same recoupment percentage as FY18, but also assumed a 2.45% annual rate increase based on past experience.
- State Operating Fund appropriations include support for developmental education and for outcomes-based funding. We assume flat funding for these two initiatives going forward.
- Tuition and fees are assumed to be impacted by a 2.5% rate increase per year, offset partially by a 1.25% enrollment decline annually.
- Wages are assumed to be flat during the period that SEBAC has provided for zero increases and no layoffs. In FY22, when SEBAC's wage freeze ends, we assume a 5.5% increase in salaries and wages.
- Fringe benefit expenses are assumed at a 2.5% annual increase based on prior experience.

The annual savings included in Schedule 6 assume that the cost reductions will mimic our actual FY17 attrition rate for those departments that will be reorganized. The financial projections assume that there will be a layoff in FY21 of non-bargaining unit

employees who are not in the future state organization plan. For FY22, when the SEBAC job protections end, the projections assume an additional layoff, arriving at the intended future state and full savings level in FY22.

While the consolidation makes a big impact on fiscal sustainability, additional measures will be required to avoid erosion of unrestricted reserves and to rebuild a healthier “rainy day” fund. Some of these measures include:

- Savings coming from the System’s second strategy for system-wide administrative savings will accrue to the benefit of the colleges. For example, consolidated purchasing is expected to generate savings from volume purchasing and better negotiating power. Further, the plans for consolidation include ultimately partnering with UConn and UConn Health to combine the purchasing power of public higher education in the state. Other areas include reductions in System Office administration (pending SEBAC provisions), reductions in facilities overtime, etc.
- Additional sharing of services among campuses. It became apparent during the sharing of interim presidents in the current fiscal year that sharing of personnel between two sites does not deteriorate services. We will look for additional opportunities.
- Right-sizing of certain infrastructure in IT (e.g. use of copy machines, cell phones, etc.) are expected to generate savings.

Information Technology Resources

Currently all campuses receive enterprise services centrally for network, student, finance and financial aid systems, on line learning system, system security and firewall, which will be maintained. And all student-facing technology services will remain locally managed and directed, such as academic computing, media services, and instructional design.

The restructuring of IT into a single operating unit, managed under a single reporting structure and recognized as the IT Enterprise will ensure that the planning and implementation of systems that support academic programs can be delivered with consistent quality, and the transfer of data will occur seamlessly and in a timely fashion. This new IT Enterprise will insure there is consistency in assessing, planning, prioritizing, and reporting of information technology service delivery, using resources in an effective manner.

IX. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (Standard Eight)

Consolidation of Institutional Research (IR) Functions

One of the advantages to the proposed restructuring of IR is that all 12 campuses share the same integrated database system (Banner), which enables common activities to be conducted in an environment of shared resources. All data collection, analyses, and reporting will follow the same protocols as before, except they will require fewer personnel for analysis and reporting. A state-of-the-art data warehouse is under development to facilitate decision support, assessment, and improvement initiatives for the 17 CSCU institutions (see below). The CSCU System is moving to standardized data elements within baseline functions of the ERP suite.

The IR activities for all campuses are being consolidated into a single IR operation. All IR professionals will be part of the same staff reporting to the CSCU Office of Research & System Effectiveness. Access to Banner and the IRDB (Institutional Research Database for the community colleges) will enable IR staff to contribute to the functional/excellence teams being established across all 12 campuses.

The following are some proposed functional/excellence teams, although others may be envisioned in the future:

1. Data Governance Team – This team is responsible for ensuring high quality data in current and future databases, including populating a single data warehouse (or data marts) where frozen data from all institutions will eventually reside.
2. Data Report/ Analytic Report Writers – Technical writers that produce and maintain scripts/queries/ data blocks to produce numbers for “standard” reports that are requested on a regular basis. Analytic writers that produce illustrated system and campus-specific reports with findings and implications. This team also pulls the data together for a variety of accountability reports.
3. Survey Experts – Manage and administer The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), New Student Advising & Registration survey (NSAR) and other student surveys, Graduate Surveys, Employer Surveys, and Perkins Web Survey. Develop, administer and analyze surveys for special initiatives.
4. Policy Analysis & Evaluation/ Preschool through 20 and Workforce Information Network (P20 Win) (<http://www.ct.edu/p20win>) – Will work to inform the formulation of higher education policy and provide analyses that evaluate the effectiveness of existing policy; will also support connections between CSCU and major policy groups such as SHEEO, NASH, Complete College America, Jobs for the Future, and Achieving the Dream. The Team will support the program manager for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (P2o WIN - the Preschool

through Twenty Workforce Information Network) to leverage the utility of this valuable data resource.

5. Predictive Analytics/Advanced Statistical Services – Predictive analytics and other technical tools, such as dashboards, will be developed by this team to provide decision support to enrollment management, student advisement, policy evaluation, and a variety of student success initiatives.
6. Data Support for Various Campus Offices – Examples are Continuing Education – non-credit marketing lists, The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reporting, Development - Alumni marketing lists, HR - Affirmative Action Plan data, and Financial Aid – Max Hrs., Students not meeting satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes (NotSAP), etc.

Fewer IR personnel will be needed to perform the tasks of the functional teams. For instance, each of the 12 institutions presently submit IPEDS data individually, with each institution accessing the same ERP system (Banner). If a functional team has access to the data for all 12 campuses in Banner, IPEDS submissions can be accomplished by three individuals instead of the 12 that perform the task now. This will relieve others from that responsibility, freeing them to address other cyclical activities, as well as ad hoc requests from their “home” campus. Existing staff will continue to serve their campuses for those tasks that are unique to the campus or that require local knowledge.

Student and Alumni Surveys

Survey research will continue to be a tool employed to inform decisions related to improving student success. The following are examples of surveys used by all 12 campuses:

| <u>Survey</u> | <u>Survey Specific Notes</u> |
|--|---|
| The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) | A well-established tool that helps institutions focus on good educational practice and identify areas in which they can improve their programs and services for students. Administered during the spring to mostly returning students, CCSSE asks about institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. |
| The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) | SENSE serves as a complementary piece to the CCSSE and provides a broader |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>focus on the student experience. Administered during the 4th and 5th weeks of the fall academic term, SENSE asks students to reflect on their earliest experiences (academic and services-related) with the college.</p> |
| Annual Graduate Survey | <p>This survey employs an instrument developed and used by the IR professionals serving each of the 12 campuses. Recent graduates are queried about their present employment situation, how they rate their college education as preparation for employment, plans for future education, and ease of transferring credit, among other items that might facilitate educational and service improvement and measures outcomes.</p> |
| Ad Hoc Service Satisfaction Surveys | <p>A variety of surveys will be employed to assess the effectiveness of different student services. For instance, student advisement, where students will be asked to evaluate a recent visit to the advisement center, and have the student rate the value of the visit, the knowledge level, empathy, and overall satisfaction with the advisor.</p> |

Employment Data

Employment data are reported to a large extent via P20 WIN, which was created to securely link education and workforce data to provide answers that can facilitate long-term economic development through the improvement of education programs and workforce alignment. The link provided here (<http://www.ct.edu/p2owin/data>) shows relationships between Connecticut community college credentials and the Connecticut labor market. A complete summary of the data and high-level findings can be found in the [Summary Report \(pdf\)](#); also see the 2016-2017 Legislative Report card (<https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/pubs/LRC2016.pdf>). All co-op placements and internships are coded as specific courses in the Banner system and will be tracked on a semester by semester basis by program/major.

Commitment to Data Collection

With the endorsement of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BOR, CSCU President Mark Ojakian recently committed to develop a system-wide data warehouse. The CSCU Data Warehouse will be a valuable resource for both institution and system office staff who manage operations of our institutions, who complete required reporting, and who work to support student growth. Administrators and staff from the System Office need access to data from all CSCU institutions in order to manage the operations of the CSCU System; however, not all System Office Staff need access to all institution data. Likewise, institutions need access to their own institution's data at a detailed level, but institution specific staff generally do not need access to the same level of information from the other institutions in the CSCU system.

A request for information technology bond funds is being prepared for the work to proceed. This is a critical investment because community college leadership will need to access comparable information about performance across the campus locations. The data warehouse will enable consistent regular reporting for student success activities, accountability, enrollment management and program development. The data warehouse will expedite routine and standard reporting, which should free up institutional research time to conduct more specific analyses for the benefit of the institution. Information from ad-hoc reports and data analysis will help illuminate best practices to drive improvements in student persistence and completion. With common data standards, the warehouse will also bring enhanced capability to understand where there are achievement gaps that could be addressed through college-wide program and policy improvements. The development of a CSCU data warehouse is a big step forward and will position the College to maintain and continuously improve its academic programs to better serve students and the community.

It is anticipated that the data warehouse will be completed in the summer of 2020 (see timeline attached). The development cost of the data warehouse is estimated to be at most \$1 million, given the rapidly changing technology and pricing associated with this type of resource. This is considered a capital expense for which CSCU will request bond funding. Consequently, this expense will not compete for existing operating expenses.

Outcomes Assessment

The College engages in academic outcomes assessment at the programmatic and course levels, as well as within key divisions of each campus. Many of the evaluative systems are state-wide Board of Regents mandated, such as the course evaluation process, program review template, and faculty evaluation process.

CSCU has instituted significant new structures for academic outcomes assessment, such as the adoption of the Student Achievement Measure (SAM) and identification of Critical Success Factors (CSF), and it is making progress in embedding regular assessment procedures across campuses. Particularly promising results have been obtained from several CSCU institutions' participation in the Multi-States Collaborative, through which

interdisciplinary teams of faculty use American Association of Colleges and Universities VALUE rubrics to assess General Education outcomes. This methodology is optimally suited for assessing competencies in the community college's General Education component of the Transfer Articulation Policy (TAP).

Sixteen key performance indicators (KPI) related to student success for fall 2013 through fall 2016 cohorts at all institutions have been gathered for the first time as of November 2017. These KPI include data for all first-time (full- and part-time) students regarding levels of overall annual credit attainment, single semester credit attainment, college-level math and English completion, levels of overall course attempts, and semester-to-semester persistence. These KPI, modeled after those being used across other states, will yield short-term as well as longitudinal data that are appropriate for the mission of the College and provide useful and clear measures of student success.

The use of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) with associated metrics to benchmark mission achievement will further demonstrate the proposed college's commitment to outcomes-based accountability. The CSFs for the College will consist of the following measures of persistence and completion: retention, graduation, and gainful employment rates. Annual reviews at the campus level will evaluate progress toward the CSFs, analyze success against metrics, and discuss any required changes. These data-driven discussions will be used to review institutional effectiveness and use information from all levels of the community college to engineer student success. Annual benchmarks will be established with an emphasis on constant quality improvement (Critical Success Factors Chart-Appendix Y).

In order to augment the limitations of IPEDs data, the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) will also be used. As previously noted, implementing Achieving the Dream (ATD) throughout all campuses will institutionalize data-driven decision making. The use of CSFs, along with associated metrics for benchmarking mission achievement, will demonstrate the College's commitment to outcomes-based accountability and model best practices for assessing student learning. Evaluation will be handled through a centralized Institutional Research operation.

Focus will be placed on assessment as an integrative process that involves mastery of course outcomes, student progression through General Education, and finally, success in a specific program of study. At the course level, the College will offer transparent and clearly articulated statements of student-learning outcomes; expectations for institutional benchmarks will be set through the College's General Education goals and their assessment plans.

The new institution will use a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures to understand the experiences and learning outcomes of its students through such measures as

- Surveys (see examples above)

- IPEDS Feedback Reports that will provide the new institution with a context for examining data submitted to IPEDS. Reports are intended to be useful to institutional executives; in addition, use of these data may help improve data quality and comparability.

These metrics will help to develop a more comprehensive idea about student progression and help identify points where interventions may lead to improved student outcomes through strategic planning and budgeting. Data from the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) data will be used to benchmark student progress and completion data against similar institutions.

X. INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (Standard Nine)

Commitment to Integrity and Transparency

The College shall operate with integrity and promote high ethical standards in order to manifest its values and reach its goals in a manner consistent with the CSCU System Code of Conduct for Regents, Employees and Volunteers, adopted by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) on October 19, 2017, as well as the BOR/CSCU Code of Student Conduct, adopted March 13, 2014, revised June 16, 2016.

The College, as an institution governed by the BOR under the administrative auspices of the CSCU, aspires and commits to the highest standards of integrity. All members of the institution's community are bound by state, federal and local laws and board policies. To further facilitate community member compliance, the Code of Conduct for Regents, Employees and Volunteers was created and adopted. Notably, it does not provide any new requirements, but succinctly provides a compendium of ethical requirements, resources, and links to laws and policy relevant to compliance with ethical standards and the values principles held by the CSCU.

The Code of Conduct for Regents, Employees and Volunteers defines community members broadly to include the Board of Regents for Higher Education as both an institutional board and as individuals; all faculty, staff, and independent contractors within the jurisdiction of the board; and all volunteers or other representatives when speaking or acting on behalf of the Board, CSCU, or any of its composite institutions. This Code, which was the product of more than a year of discussion, was developed with input from faculty, staff, and administrators, and is evidence of an atmosphere where institutional leadership and members of the community openly consider issues of integrity so that collectively they can understand and assume their responsibilities in the pursuit of integrity.

The Code of Conduct for Regents, Employees and Volunteers encompasses policies to ensure academic honesty among its leadership, as well as provides standards to address intellectual property rights, the avoidance of conflict of interest, privacy rights, and fairness and respect in dealing with students, faculty, and staff. The students however, are required to adhere to their own Code of Conduct, which addresses all the above issues, along with providing greater detail on addressing appropriate social behavior and conduct.

CSCU and its institutions hold the pursuit of knowledge and learning through reasoned argument, scholarly inquiry and human creative expression essential to the mission of CSCU. CSCU's orientation is to provide avenues to gain knowledge and advance learning in all of its forms. This includes maintaining appreciation for reasoned arguments to support claims of truth, the scientific method, the rigor of scholarship, the variety of human languages and cultures, and artistic expression in all of its forms. To support the pursuit of knowledge and learning as a core value, CSCU is committed to academic freedom, intellectual honesty, professional standards and scholarly inquiry. In addition,

faculty collective bargaining unit agreements state that all faculty are entitled to academic freedom in conducting research, publishing results, and instructing students.

The College shall exist pursuant to an enactment by the Connecticut General Assembly just as its predecessor institutions were established. In accordance with State law, degrees from the institution are conferred by the BOR. The BOR is authorized by the State of Connecticut to review and approve recommendations for academic programs. As the BOR is the Board of Trustees for the Community College, it is also authorized to confer degrees and certificates.

Respecting diversity and equal employment opportunity provides community members the same privileges, rights, and responsibilities regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability or other protected characteristic. Anti-discrimination policies are adhered to and practiced in the areas of recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, discipline and advancement. The CSCU President is fully committed to promoting the principles of affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as providing the intellectual and moral leadership to promote equity and diversity.

The College shall manage its programs, administrative operations and interactions with students in an open, fair and consistent manner. For instance, to manage academic programs, the governance structure involves a number of committees and councils of both administrative and teaching representatives that are involved in the conception, development, approval, and monitoring of the academic programs. To manage the College's data, it uses Banner to maintain admission, registration, financial aid, advising, placement testing, and scheduling services. Network access is provided to staff, faculty and students through a unique identification number and password. Use of Banner adheres to FERPA guidelines to protect student information. Further, with regard to financial aid administration, the College adheres to a code of conduct to ensure the consistent, fair and equitable distribution of available funds in order to provide financial assistance to eligible students.

The College will be responsible for all activities that carry its name and will establish consistent policy and guidelines regarding sponsored activities, political activities and facilities rentals to assure a distinction between the activities it sponsors and those that seek use of the campus as a venue.

The College will publicize through its website, campuses, catalog, handbooks, classrooms, and syllabi its integrity and responsibility and its policies and procedures for the resolution of grievances brought by faculty, staff and students. The process to file complaints and grievances is and will continue to be widely shared in many media, as is the opportunity to appeal. The College expresses its commitment to students through brochures available throughout campuses and distributed by staff and faculty; the Student Handbooks; posters; academic integrity policies provided in the Code of Student Conduct and reprinted on course syllabi and student orientation. The College expresses its commitment to faculty and staff through collective bargaining agreements, grievance

procedures, the Code of Conduct for Regents, Employees and Volunteers, policies against discrimination, harassment, and workplace violence; policies in support of Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, ADA/ Section 504 Compliance and new employee orientation. (Links to the codes and policies referenced in this section can be found in Appendix Z.)

Centralized Web Site for the College

CSCU's web presence at the system administration and the community college levels will be substantially redesigned and reconfigured for the CSCU community college consolidation. This change will be phased in over a period of months during or immediately following the consolidation implementation date. It will reflect a substantial change in how people access college-related information via the web. The website will be built on the Transfer Ticket model (<http://www.ct.edu/transfer/tickets>).

Currently, each community college administers its own web site. As part of the web consolidation initiative, the current patchwork of 12 individual community college sites will be replaced with one centralized site, located at **ct.edu**. This will require a substantial re-design, with **ct.edu** becoming the main portal to all centralized services related to the College. A centralized web site will provide greater consistency, clarity, ease of use for prospective and current students to locate needed information, and will improve the overall ease of applying for financial aid and admission.

The following Community College sections will be accessible at the centralized **ct.edu** site:

- Academic programs, courses and descriptions
- Online application (one) for all college campuses
- Financial aid information and links to all aid forms
- “Transfer Ticket” (TAP, CSCU's *Transfer Articulation Policy*) information related to CSCU Pathway Transfer Associate Degrees and benefits for the Connecticut Community College students.
- Other Support Services
- Community College campus landing pages
- Community College campus site templates

(See Appendix AA for a graphical depiction of the design discussed here.)

Among the objectives for the re-design are improving overall functionality and ease of use for all visitors, including current and prospective community college students, faculty, staff and alumni, and the public at large. This effort will deliver the best user experience possible by providing:

- Increased clarity and navigational ease—it is critical that the site be intuitive and clear, providing prospective and current students the information they seek with productive navigation tools, requiring fewer steps to the information sought

- Greater responsiveness—site functions will operate smoothly and quickly for visitors, with tools guiding visitors to information and support they seek
- Increased efficiency— the envisioned design creates pathways that are direct, require minimal steps, and provide simplified search tools that promote friendly onboarding
- Greater consistency in look and feel across the site—a consistent design allows visitors to learn and navigate across all campus sites in a simplified, homogeneous pattern. In turn, functionality will remain consistent for users with different devices and access points
- Compliance with accessibility standards—The web sites will be fully compliant with all usability and accessibility standards providing ease of use for all types of visitors
- Greater focus on students and student needs—The site’s design and construction will be guided by the vision of a positive user experience for our current and prospective students, and delivering on that vision

The centralized services located on the **ct.edu** home page will be powered by a database, overseen and maintained at the College level. The landing pages on **ct.edu** will facilitate immediate access to all of the information students (or prospective students) need to review program and course descriptions and schedules, access financial aid information and forms, and apply.

Specifically, the centralized database powering **ct.edu** facilitates immediate visitor access to the following resources:

- The master College course list and availability status, pinpointing where and when courses are being offered. As a result, visitors will not have to search 12 sites to access this information
- Master list of all programs and certificates
- Courses, course descriptions and course availability offered at the 12 campuses
- A single online application for the College, along with support documentation and online help resources
- Master financial aid documents along with support documentation and online help resources
- Master inquiry information—the information database that supports the site’s Search and Help functionality

College Campus Web Sites

Enrolled students and members of the public may need access to information related to local events, campus conditions, announcements, and social media platforms. Campus websites will be created and maintained to house such campus-specific content. These sites will be populated and maintained by campus staffs, and are expected to include (among other resources):

- Emergency notifications relating to campus-based conditions or closures;

- Campus events of interest to students and the public (concerts, art exhibits, sporting, charity and community events, speeches, etc.);
- Campus social media posting/presentation, including access to campuses' Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat sites;
- Campus-specific overview, including campuses' "About..." pages, providing visitors with information related to each campus' unique character and qualities;
- Information related to micro-recruiting efforts, enabling prospective students to schedule a visit to the campuses and take a tour of its facilities and property.

Regardless of how visitors arrive at *ct.edu*, or the campus websites (i.e., search engine, direct link, referral page, etc.), the path will be transparent to the user and the data will be more quickly accessible. Together, the *ct.edu* site and the campus sites obviate the need for any other College web sites. As a result, no regional sites will be housed.

Project Activities Planned or Underway

To achieve the re-design objectives, CSCU administration has already launched an internal planning and design process, which will lead to the ultimate transition to a redesigned web presence. From a strategic level, the redesign and launch processes will consist of 7 following critical steps along the planning, design and implementation phases. (See Appendix BB for a detailed list of project activities and a timeline for implementation.)

Informing Students, the Public, and Other Stakeholders

Creating awareness of the new sites, their purposes and uses, will be critical to public acceptance and use. Achieving broad awareness will determine how successful the sites will be in operation, and how satisfied visitors will be, once there. To promote awareness, two separate but related marketing campaigns will be launched: an internal campaign designed to inform current students, faculty and staff, and an external campaign designed to inform, media, the public, and CSCU stakeholders. The launch of these campaigns will begin in April 2019, and will be timed to provide for the maximum number of impressions prior to the launch of the re-designed sites. To that end, the campaigns will exploit as many channels as possible, including promotional activities and events, public service announcements, on-camera and on-air interviews, editorial board meetings, social media, and some print advertising.

Plans for Print Publications

To benefit from economies of scale and promote consistency of message and design, print publications for the College will be developed and produced centrally, and made available for campus distribution. As indicated above in the Centralized Web Site for the College section, there will also be a digital version of the program and course catalog available on

the site. It is not anticipated at this time that local supplements will be necessary, and no regional version will be produced.

Drafting and printing of all academic publications will be the responsibility of staff in Academic Affairs, who will periodically, or as needed, revise and update the catalogue.

All of the information described above will be available on the **ct.edu** site, and through links on the College campus sites. Campuses are free to make hard copy versions available to interested students and other stakeholders throughout the campuses. It is expected that campus administrators will also share printed versions with high school administrators, as well as at college fairs and other recruitment opportunities.

XI. INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS IN CONSOLIDATION PROPOSAL

The current community college presidents collectively and individually have had the opportunity to provide input and feedback throughout the process beginning with a Presidential retreat in May 2017. The discussions with the Consolidation subcommittee, chaired by Michael Rooke, President, Northwestern Connecticut Community College have been regularly shared with the presidents for feedback and comment. These include the organizational charts for the proposed College as well as the financial and position savings developed by Erika Steiner, System VP for Finance. Dr. David Levinson and Dr. Mary Ellen Jukoski, two currently serving community college presidents, have been members of the Consolidation subcommittee.

On February 26, 2018, the College Consolidation Implementation Committee (CCIC) convened. The eleven member committee consists of four presidents. The committee is co-chaired by Dr. David Levinson. (Information about the CCIC charge and its members is included in Appendix I.)

All of the community college presidents have also had an opportunity to review the complete substantive change proposal prior to its submission to NEASC.