



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Testimony by Elaine Clark
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Board of Regents for Higher Education
Connecticut State Colleges & Universities
Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
Bonding Subcommittee
March 1, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Boukus, and members of the committee, my name is Elaine Clark and I am the Vice President of Real Estate, Facilities and Infrastructure Planning at the Board of Regents for Higher Education. The Board of Regents governs the four state universities, 12 community colleges and Charter Oak State College, the state's only fully-online, public institution.

I am here today with Bill Bowes, our system's Chief Financial Officer, who will help me answer any questions you may have.

Upon instructions from the chairwomen of this committee, staff at the Board of Regents has provided you with specific information regarding the status of all authorizations, allocations and unallocated balances.

The total amount of funding available to be cancelled, either because bids were favorable, or because certain elements of work were eliminated, is just over \$2.2 million.

Please note that while a substantial portion of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities' outstanding authorizations have not been allocated, most are in progress. These outstanding authorizations are either in the design, bidding or contract approval phases, or they have been submitted to the State Bond Commission and await inclusion on an upcoming agenda.

Through a thorough, independent inventory of the existing space on both the state university and community college campuses, several themes have arisen, which inform our requests for bonding funds for our campuses.

First, a positive trend: Because of prior investment in new space and major renovations across our campuses, the "clock has been re-set," so to speak, and over 50% of ConnSCU's physical footprint is less than 25 years old.

Secondly, however, many of our campuses continue to be extremely crowded, and we cannot allow the positive trend I just mentioned to reverse. Two of the four state universities and eight of our twelve community colleges exceed the peer system average in terms of campus density, impacting custodial operations, wear-and-tear on campus facilities and the life cycles of building components. Specific to the community colleges, of the eight campuses that exceed the peer system average, four are categorized as "high density" and four are categorized as "extreme density." Campus density measures take into account faculty, staff and student usage and need.

Lastly, and this helps to illustrate why a continued investment in our infrastructure is necessary, there is a significant dearth of spending into existing space to help ensure it meets the needs of our students, faculty and staff. The ConnSCU system currently has a backlog of \$836 million in maintenance and other costs to support existing space. Deferring “keep-up” costs now will have a detrimental impact down the road as building and facilities begin to wear down and lose their value, monetarily and in terms of how they may be used on the campuses.

We would be remiss if we did not thank the Governor, Legislature and the Bond Commission for authorizing and allocating \$8.9 million in funding for the three new manufacturing centers at Housatonic, Quinebaug Valley and Naugatuck Valley Community Colleges. Despite a very aggressive timeline, the centers were launched in time for the Fall 2012 semester, and students have begun their second semester. The target enrollment for the three new schools was 150 students and I am pleased to report that we have exceeded that number by about 14 students. Approximately \$3 million remains from the Spring 2012 allocation. The disposition of these remaining funds, together with the second \$8.9 million, will allow us to continue expansion efforts and/or construct an additional manufacturing facility at the three community colleges to help meet workforce and enrollment need.

As you know, bond funds for the community colleges may be used for alterations, renovations and improvements, as well as for construction. In total, \$12.4 million has been authorized for alterations, renovations and improvements to facilities, including fire, safety, energy conservation and code compliance. Most projects addressing these issues are in progress, as indicated in the memoranda submitted to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, although some have been reserved for emergencies, and unanticipated issues. These reserved funds are critical to meeting ongoing campus needs.

Prior to the inception of CSUS 2020, general obligation bond funds were authorized for several university projects, including the East Campus infrastructure design at Central Connecticut State University and the design for Lyman Hall and renovations at Buley Library, both at Southern Connecticut State University. The status of these projects was also addressed in the above-referenced memorandum.

We understand the need to invest in projects that represent a return on investment in terms of the number of students we are able to serve and the quality of education with which we serve them. When portions of a project have proven unnecessary or bids have come in under cost, we have identified those funds and offered them back to the state. We appreciate the wise investment the legislature has historically made in our colleges and universities and respectfully request that it continue. I am happy to answer any questions you may have on specific projects across our system.