



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Testimony by Gail Coppage
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My name is Gail Coppage, and I am Director of Innovation & Outreach for the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the governing body of the state's 12 community colleges, four state universities, and Charter Oak State College, the state's only fully-online public college. I am pleased to provide comment on **Senate Bill 305: An Act Concerning Funding for the "Dream It. Do It." Manufacturing Pipeline Program.**

The BOR, with the leadership of Dr. Gray, is creating a transformational plan so that ConnSCU will continue to be accessible and affordable to our students, and a major contributor in the development of our state's economic growth, business expansion, and workforce development efforts.

As you are aware, the Board of Regents for Higher Education (back in 2011) was provided the responsibility to responsibly manage and steward \$17.8M in State Bond funds for the expansion of three new Advanced Manufacturing Centers at three new community colleges, as the result of leadership, guidance and support by Governor Malloy and the State Legislature. The three new centers: Housatonic (Bridgeport), Naugatuck Valley (Waterbury), and Quinebaug Valley (Danielson) were up and running in less than six months and under budget. This model program was successfully replicated from the manufacturing program at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield. The state has made a significant investment in the creation of the three new Advanced Manufacturing Centers and we are appreciative and value the understanding on the part of the Governor and legislature to support the critical importance of engaging students early in the educational pipeline.

The BOR is very supportive of the continued work, success and guidance of the "Dream It. Do It." initiative statewide. The work of this initiative in the last year has included a successful statewide "Manufacturing Mania" event which showcased manufacturing for students with specific hands-on experiences in team building activities that replicate the manufacturing process from concept to design to fabrication to quality control. Because of the strong promotion of the "Dream It. Do It." initiative, more than 14,000 students, over 500 educators, more than 370 parents and family members and supported by more than 350 industry leaders state-wide have enjoyed the opportunity to learn more of the opportunity for a career in manufacturing.

Since 2011, the Connecticut "Dream it. Do It." initiative has led efforts to attract the next generation of the manufacturing workforce by continuing to create a positive awareness of the educational and career pathways that lead to rewarding careers in today's manufacturing.

That work is critically important to us in our role insuring that the four Advanced Manufacturing Centers continue to see stronger interest and engagement from new and existing community college students, faculty and staff, workforce investment boards, community organizations and regional manufacturers.

The “Dream It. Do It.” team is an active participant in the BOR led Statewide Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Committee (SAMAC), a diverse state-wide group responsible for the continued oversight of the program. Efforts to bring a credentialing effort to scale across the system of Advanced Manufacturing Centers is now moving forward in the second year of the new operation with clear interest, support and involvement by key stakeholders involved with “Dream It. Do It.” on a state-wide level.

These programs would not be successful without the strong engagement and support of Connecticut’s manufacturers, and the “Dream It. Do It.” initiative only further strengthens our efforts across the state to better support our manufacturers and grow Connecticut’s economy.

The BOR recently received a national award: The Society for College & University Planning’s (SCUP) **National Integration and Innovation Award** for the three new Advanced Manufacturing Centers. Our new effort, initially guided by the Governor and legislature was called an “American Success Story” and one initiative that should be modeled nation-wide.

Senate Bill 305 provides the opportunity to build upon the success of the State’s investment in and continued commitment to manufacturing. By focusing on the skilled manufacturing pipeline, the Connecticut “Dream It. Do It.” initiative will enable Connecticut’s manufacturers to attract the skilled talent they need to grow and succeed in today’s global market.

Thank you.