



Thank you distinguished Chairs and members of the Bonding Subcommittee. My name is Greg Gray, and I am President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, 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 here today with Erika Steiner, our CFO, Keith Epstein, our VP for Facilities, Infrastructure and Planning, Joe McAuliffe, our Interim CIO, and Kyle Thomas, our Legislative Program Manager. Together, we are happy to be here to discuss with you Transform CSCU 2020, a combined package of \$60 million in new capital expenses and \$60 million in new operational support, that will allow our institutions to improve access for students across every demographic, enhance the services we provide our students from admissions to graduation, and align our academic programs with current and future workforce needs – all with an eye toward unparalleled quality.

I want to begin by first thanking Governor Malloy, who indicated to me very quickly after I began this job last July, that he was prepared to move forward with an ambitious plan to join our institutions together through the use of common technology and system planning efforts that will allow us to leverage the individual strengths of our 17 unique institutions better than ever before. Though the operational dollars are a key feature to this proposal, I will focus my remarks on our bonding requests, and I will be happy to answer any questions you have on either topic.

Transform CSCU 2020 includes \$60 million in new bond authorizations. The plan also calls for the inclusion of \$20 million in existing community college bonds that are being reauthorized for quicker access while maintaining their original purposes, and \$14.5 million that the State Bond Commission just approved at the end of February, for a total of \$94.5 million. These funds are targeted to support several efforts, ranging from vital to transformational. I will start with the latter.

First, the plan before you calls for \$20.5 million in IT improvements in FY 15. The Bond Commission approved the first \$500 thousand just days ago, and the proposal before you includes the rest. These funds, that are a down payment on funds we will request in a future session once several major planning efforts are complete, will support an IT audit and the first steps toward restructuring our entire IT system. This system is outdated, inefficient, and has been neglected for several years.

A new business enterprise system allows us to link all 17 institutions together through back office technology and will in turn allow us to rethink how services are provided to students. Here are some of our goals that are not possible without this investment:

- Streamlining the admissions process so that a student can fill out one application, and have those materials processed and sent to their institutions of interest.
- Unifying our financial aid process, so that counselors have more time to spend with students, and so that a student can utilize their financial aid more readily wherever they may be taking credits in our system.
- Allowing for students that take credits at multiple institutions to be classified as full-time, thus opening the door to maximum amounts of state and federal aid.
- Building a course registration system that allows a student to instantly register for a class, whether or not it is at the student's institution or at another institution, including online at Charter Oak. This will reduce time to degree.
- Improving our counseling to students, by building degree pathways into our system and alerting counselors automatically when a student takes courses outside of that path. This will reduce student registration errors, but allow for students to take courses off their path should they wish.
- Seamlessly linking campus libraries and wireless technology through common student IDs.

We are also investing in classroom technology, to improve the instructional experience. The Bond Commission just approved \$13.5 million, and an additional \$26 million is in the proposal before you. These funds will be used to build up as much classroom space as possible to a minimum technological standard that will allow instructors to utilize in-classroom computer and audio visual equipment, including:

- Microphones for audio capture and amplification
- Flat screen or projector display screens
- Smart board or touch screen technology
- Lecture capture systems
- Computer system at lectern
- Interactive telecommunication systems
- Ubiquitous WiFi across campus, and
- Providing for the IT infrastructure improvements necessary to support these technologies

Additionally, it is our goal to outfit some rooms at each of our institutions with a higher level of technology. Imagine that there is a professor at Eastern with a particular interest and expertise in some small facet of history, and who teaches a course on the matter. That experience should be available to our other students statewide, and by outfitting each campus with compatible video communications equipment, it can be. Students from Danbury will be able to take that course while sitting in a classroom as though they were in Willimantic.

Third, the proposed funds before you allow us to engage, for the first time, in a system-wide academic and facilities master plan. As I toured each of the 17 institutions across the state, I spoke about centers of excellence at our state universities and about career clusters at our community colleges that align programming with what DECD and DOL believe to be the top growth industries in Connecticut. When our new provost arrives in just ten days, he will begin the process of developing a comprehensive academic master plan that carefully considers input from stakeholders at each of our institutions. This academic planning effort will inform our next generation of facilities needs. Our goal is not to dramatically increase the size of our plant, but to make sure that the spaces we have are best equipped to teach students in these in-demand career areas. We expect to return to you next session with the results of this planning effort to ask for your support.

Quickly, I want to mention one facility that we do know we need, and for which we are asking you to fund as part of Transform C SCU 2020. That is the advanced manufacturing expansion facility for Asnuntuck Community College. The expansion will allow this successful program to increase its capacity not only to accept certificate students, but to retrain workers that are at risk of being displaced as companies retool their operations and shift into higher-tech manufacturing processes.

Recently, Asnuntuck partnered with UTC to provide 280 hours of training to 60 students at risk of being displaced. The \$3000 cost per student, only \$11 per student per hour, was entirely covered by the company. These workers remain on the job today because of the ability of Asnuntuck to provide this service.

Finally, for the facilities we do have, we have identified deferred maintenance needs exceeding \$500 million over the next decade, and \$29 million in this proposal will be targeted at the most pressing issues, likely lowering our ongoing energy costs in the process.

I want to stress in closing that while this proposal before you is ambitious, it is but the first initial phase in what I hope will be, and believe can be, a long-term partnership with the legislature in making the upfront investments we need to improve the operations at our 17 institutions with the primary goal of serving Connecticut students better.

I appreciate your time and attention, and I look forward to your questions.