

To: RAK

From: Colleen

Re: Higher Education Consolidation Committee

Date: January 20, 2012

- Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Candelaria and members of the Committee. It's a pleasure to be here today, and I appreciate your continued partnership on these herculean tasks before us.
- If the first few weeks of 2012 are any indication, this year is sure to be a productive and busy one at the Board of Regents.
- Since our last meeting, the three boards of the community college and state university system, as well as Charter Oak State College, have finished their work, and I'd like to thank them for that.
- Our final regents were appointed, including, importantly, our student regents – Alex Tettey of Manchester Community College and Michael Fraser of Western Connecticut State University. They bring a unique and important voice to the board and we're glad to have them with us.
- Our senior leadership team has been formed, and I'm pleased to say, are working extremely well with our colleagues in both former system offices. I'll speak a bit more about our senior staff a bit later.
- I am finishing my 17-campus meetings this week. I have found them to be a productive day of meetings with leadership, faculty, staff, students and community leaders and legislators to better understand the differing needs and focuses on our campuses.

- And we've had one very big addition to our Connecticut State Colleges and Universities family since we last met – I'm pleased that Dr. Mary Papazian has agreed to be our new President at Southern Connecticut State University.
- Dr. Papazian will assume her new position in just about a week– on February 1 – and I'm thrilled to welcome her here.
- On a personal note, I'm honored that the Board of Regents has recommended me to the Governor for a permanent appoint, and he has in turn, indicated he will do so when session begins next month.
- As you know, starting in July, we began to review the staffing structures, expenditures and outside contracts associated with each of the former systems, in preparation for the formal consolidation on January 1.
- What we found was, in some cases, two or three of a specific work function or position. I think you'd all agree that we don't have the room in the budget for those kinds of duplicative appointments and inefficiencies.
- Two weeks ago, we began the process of eliminating 24 positions, both vacant and filled, at the Board of Regents.
- I want to be clear – these decisions were made as a result of the merger and not based at all on the quality of work of the people who were in these positions.
- To be sure, I'd like to thank each and every one of them for their hard work and service to Connecticut's higher education community.
- Because, in many cases, the notice period is as long as 12months, these savings won't be realized immediately. But we're also reviewing the

contracts that the Board of Regents inherited from the former systems with an eye toward cost savings and greater efficiency.

- In addition, as we're working through the wrinkles in this new organization, we're moving closer toward permanently filling a very key role – our Chief Financial Officer.
- We hope to have that position filled by March 1.
- If you'll turn to the organizational chart provided to you, you will see that we have a direct and responsive chain of command stemming from our Board of Regents through our senior leadership team and the campus Presidents.
- The team we've assembled has a broad mix of experience, strengths, skill sets, and, importantly, they work well together and are truly becoming the staff upon which I rely.
- Drs. Feroe and Levinson, the VPs of the state universities and community colleges, respectively, are interim. These types of positions take time to conduct a search for and they both have graciously agreed to serve on an interim basis, and perhaps longer, depending on the result of the search.
- Our Chief Information Officer is also an interim for the same reason – Wendy Chang is a capable and dedicated public servant who has the technical know-how to help integrate the community college and state university technology.
- In terms of savings to be realized, my goal remains taking the identified savings from personnel and other expenditures we inherited– which I am pleased to tell you will meet or exceed the \$4.3 million Mike Meotti spoke

about last year – and redirect them back to the campus to hire additional faculty, direct student support staff and invest in our students' success.

- Last week, the Board of Regents met and there was a consensus on moving forward with a hiring freeze on the campuses, except for faculty and direct student support services.
- Campuses seeking to fill other positions outside of these parameters will need to make their case as to why they need this position filled, and perhaps most importantly, do they have the money in their budget to fill it.
- This is not an attempt to place onerous restrictions on the Presidents, or to tie their hands with bureaucratic red tape. But it is an attempt to ask two simple questions and get the answers directly from the campuses – Why do you need this position? And do you have the money to pay for it?
- Lastly, you can refer to the schedule of meetings we provided in your packet. The full Board of Regents had meetings in December and January and will meet at least 5 more times this year.
- These are in addition to the Academic & Student Affairs, Audit and Finance & Administration Committee meetings, which are already active and moving forward on a number of substantive policy issues.
- I wanted to take a moment and thank each of you for your suggestions, thoughts and comments along the way. I feel as though we're making substantive progress, but we still have much more to do.
- I'm happy to take any questions you may have.