



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Testimony by Dr. Robert A. Kennedy
Interim President
Board of Regents for Higher Education
Before the Appropriations Committee
February 21, 2012

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the committee, thank you for your time today. For the record, my name is Bob Kennedy and I am the Interim President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, which governs the 17 Connecticut State Colleges and Universities in our state. I am here to speak about the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year '13 Mid-term Budget Adjustment, which includes a roughly \$18 million cut to the Board of Regents, Charter Oak State College, the community colleges and state universities.

In this economy, any reduction in funding is difficult to absorb, particularly after recent rescissions, but we understand the dire need to balance our state's budget honestly and send a message that Connecticut is serious about getting its fiscal house in order.

Out of the \$18 million budget adjustment to the Board of Regents system, about \$11.2 million will impact the four state universities, and roughly \$6.5 million will impact the 12 community colleges. In addition, Charter Oak State College received a \$240,000 cut under this proposal. While significant, these reductions are not unexpected, and the universities and colleges have spent a good deal of time planning the actions that will be needed to address the cuts. Moving forward with energy efficiency projects, rebidding existing contracts and moving more services online are a few examples of the way in which our colleges and universities are already dealing with reduced funding.

In January, the Board of Regents agreed to move forward with a hiring freeze on the campuses, except for the faculty and direct student support services, such as counselors. This is another tool at our disposal as we work with the campuses to manage their budgets in light of these new adjustments, while keeping student learning and success as our ultimate goal.

Aside from the campus level cuts, the central office will also incur a slight reduction in funding. This money is separate and aside from the \$4.3 million in savings we've identified due to duplicative position eliminations within the central office. At the same time, we are aggressively reviewing the contracts we inherited from the former systems with an eye toward cost-savings and efficiency. For example, we've recently made the decision to part ways with a lobbying firm that the former Connecticut State University System retained in Washington, for a savings of about \$100,000. In the larger context of our state's fiscal issues, that may seem inconsequential, but in reviewing all of our contracts – including the extremely large volume and dollar amount associated with our information technology contracts – we believe we'll be able to continue to run our new organization in a more streamlined and cost-efficient way.

We stand willing to work with you, the Governor's Office, and sister state agencies as we continue the FY13 budgetary process, with an eye toward redirecting central office savings back to the campuses to help mitigate some of the impact of these budgetary adjustments.

I am happy to take any questions you might have. Thank you.