



March 21, 2022

Mr. Terrence Cheng
President
Connecticut State Colleges and Universities
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Dr. Michael Rooke
Interim President
Connecticut State Community College
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Presidents Cheng and Rooke:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on March 3, 2022, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the substantive change proposal submitted by Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and Connecticut State Community College regarding the plans to consolidate the 12 community colleges in Connecticut into Connecticut State Community College and took the following action:

that the substantive change proposal be accepted and the System be advised to proceed with its plans to consolidate the 12 community colleges into Connecticut State Community College (CT State);

that, contingent upon the Commission's determination that the plans outlined in the substantive change proposal to assure CT State meets the *Standards for Accreditation* by July 1, 2023 have been successfully implemented, Connecticut State Community College be granted initial accreditation, effective July 1, 2023;

that CT State submit three progress reports between now and July 1, 2023 to document its success in achieving the goals and tasks it has established for the time period covered in each report;

that the first progress report be submitted by September 1, 2022 for consideration at the Commission's September 2022 meeting, the second report be submitted by February 10, 2023 for consideration at the Commission's March 2023 meeting, and the third report be submitted by June 1, 2023 for consideration at the Commission's June 2023 retreat;

that each report include:

- 1) an update on enrollment and budget projections for CT State, with attention to the institution's success in addressing the operating deficit;
- 2) an analysis of the impact of anticipated faculty and staff retirements and the institution's plans to ensure it has sufficient appropriately qualified personnel;

that the September 1, 2022 progress report also provide evidence of CT State's success in achieving the following:

- 1) With respect to Standard Two, *Planning and Evaluation*:
 - a) the strategic plan for CT State has been finalized and approved by leadership and the Board of Regents (BOR);
 - b) the Data Governance Council has completed its review of data products, selected a product, and begun work on the policy-making process for data standards, security, and auditing;
 - c) the integrated Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IE&P) structure, with functionally based Senior Directors, is being implemented;
- 2) With respect to Standard Three, *Organization and Governance*:
 - d) the governance structure for CT State has been launched;
- 3) With respect to Standard Four, *The Academic Program*:
 - e) the credit curriculum alignment process has been completed, and the aligned programs have been approved by the Board of Regents;
 - f) the Academic Program Review (APR) Procedure and Report Format and data forms have been finalized and a first draft of the APR plan has been developed;
 - g) the Alignment and Completion of Math and English (ACME) curricula proposals have been adopted into all CT State degree programs;
 - h) outcomes for the general education core, including outcomes for the embedded diversity requirement, have been finalized;
- 4) With respect to Standard Five, *Students*:
 - i) the Enrollment Management Plan has been updated, and marketing of the Pledge to Advance Connecticut (PACT) has begun;
 - j) the hiring of Guided Pathways advisors for all campuses has been completed;
 - k) the E-App, with all programs and locations, has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education;
 - l) progress has been made to review and implement recommendations regarding the student handbook, student activities and clubs, and the behavioral intervention procedures/operations for CT State;
- 5) With respect to Standard Six: *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*:
 - m) six Academic Deans have been hired and searches for 18 Associate Deans and two Assistant Deans have been launched;
 - n) an Interim Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been hired;
- 6) With respect to Standard Seven: *Institutional Resources*:
 - o) anticipated hires of communications staff (Web Services Specialist, Regional Marketing Directors) have been completed;
- 7) With respect to Standard Nine: *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*:
 - p) the academic transition website has been launched;
 - q) a logo for CT State has been selected;

that the February 10, 2023 progress report provide an update on progress to accomplish any tasks and goals not completed during the prior time period and also provide evidence of CT State's success in achieving the following:

- 1) With respect to Standard Three, *Organization and Governance*:
 - a) governance elections at all 12 colleges have taken place;
- 2) With respect to Standard Four, *The Academic Program*:
 - b) academic policies and procedures have been aligned;
 - c) the second draft of the APR implementation plan, proposed APR cycle, and FAQ Sheet have been prepared;
 - d) progress has been made to rewrite consortium agreements and contractual arrangements to reference CT State;
 - e) the schedule and delivery methods of credit courses to be offered in Fall 2023 are being developed;
 - f) progress has been made to merge Perkins grant programs, high school partnerships, and dual enrollment programs;
- 3) With respect to Standard Five, *Students*:
 - g) consensus on common admissions operating procedures and staff roles has been reached;
- 4) With respect to Standard Six, *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*:
 - h) the faculty governance structure is operational;
 - i) the faculty handbook has been completed and distributed;
- 5) With respect to Standard Seven, *Institutional Resources*:
 - j) plans to provide professional development for admissions, financial aid, and student affairs staff are being implemented;
- 6) With respect to Standard Nine: *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*:
 - k) a single academic catalogue has been developed and a draft of the catalogue is available for use by students, faculty, and staff;
 - l) efforts to rebrand the System and colleges have been implemented;
 - m) the ctstate.edu website has been launched;

that the June 1, 2023 progress report include an update on progress to accomplish any tasks and goals not completed during prior time periods and also provide evidence of CT State's success in achieving the following:

- 1) With respect to Standard One, *Mission and Purposes*:
 - a) specific goals and benchmarks to chart progress in improving key performance indicators have been established;
 - b) progress has been made to incorporate the seven equity principles in all actions and to integrate equity, inclusion, and student success in planning and development at the local and state levels;
- 2) With respect to Standard Two, *Planning and Evaluation*:
 - c) a technology infrastructure to support CT State's research and information needs has been established, and a consolidated student information system has been launched;
 - d) college-wide policies for CT State applicant and student data collection have been developed;

- e) the eleven priority areas of the strategic plan have been moved into one of three meta-priorities, and key performance indicators for each meta-priority as well as a plan to assess achievement of the meta-priorities have been developed;
 - f) the plans, goals, and benchmarks of major college-wide initiatives have been incorporated into the strategic plan, and overarching institutional values have been developed for CT State;
 - g) an annual review process for the strategic plan has been developed;
- 3) With respect to Standard Three, *Organization and Governance*:
- h) the governance structure is operational, and operational groups and processes to support the matrix governance structure have been identified;
 - i) the review and revision of all academic, student, auditing, and financial policies have been completed, and a policy review cycle has been established;
 - j) a permanent president/CEO and provost/CAO have been hired for CT State;
 - k) a decision has been made about whether to reorganize the BOR Student and Faculty Advisory Committees and if so, the reorganization is in process;
- 4) With respect to Standard Four, *The Academic Program*:
- l) all APR materials have been finalized and posted on the CT State website;
 - m) progress has been made to move specialized accreditations to CT State;
 - n) alignment of the non-credit curriculum and of workforce development courses has been completed;
- 5) With respect to Standard Five, *Students*:
- o) plans for expanded and enhanced adult learner outreach and marketing have been implemented;
 - p) plans to improve services for non-traditional students have been implemented;
- 6) With respect to Standard Six, *Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*:
- q) all anticipated administrative hires (six Academic Deans, 18 Associate Deans, and two Assistant Deans) have been completed;
 - r) the academic structure, with faculty in college-wide departments based on disciplines and programs, has been launched;
 - s) the Guided Pathways advising model has been implemented and its effectiveness is being assessed;
- 7) With respect to Standard Seven, *Institutional Resources*:
- t) CT State's budget process has been developed;
 - u) the cost and revenue analysis of credit and non-credit academic programs has been completed and is being used to inform financial decisions;
 - v) the shared services model has been implemented;
 - w) a disaster and business continuity plan has been developed;
 - x) renovations at the colleges to accommodate the new shared services teams and new Guided Pathways Advisors have been completed;
 - y) IT services and staffing levels are sufficient to ensure the colleges' academic and administrative technology needs are being met;
 - z) student information systems are in place for transacting purposes;
 - aa) a strategy and target date for CT State library e-resource changes have been established;
 - bb) plans to pursue new partnerships and funding opportunities are being implemented;

- 8) With respect to Standard Eight, *Educational Effectiveness*:
 - cc) student learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and assessment measures for all CT State programs have been established;
 - dd) a system-wide assessment community of practice is operational;
 - ee) policies and procedures to support consistent and coherent data collection, analysis, and reporting have been established and implemented;
 - ff) a digital platform for assessment data collection and analysis has been selected;
- 9) With respect to Standard Nine: *Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*:
 - gg) the final AY2024 CT State catalogue – that includes goals, objectives, learning outcomes, and course outlines for all programs – has been launched;

that a comprehensive evaluation of Connecticut State Community College be scheduled for Fall 2025;

that, in addition to the information included in all self-studies, the self-study prepared for the Fall 2025 evaluation give emphasis to the institution’s success in:

- 1) implementing the initiatives outlined in the “Actions Planned After July 2023” sections of the substantive change proposal;
- 2) achieving its enrollment and budget goals;
- 3) engaging faculty and staff in the new governance structure;

that the following currently scheduled reports and evaluations be delayed pending the Commission’s review of the progress reports submitted by CT State:

- 1) Fall 2022 comprehensive evaluations of Middlesex Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, and Three Rivers Community College;
- 2) Fall 2022 progress report to be submitted by Gateway Community College;
- 3) Spring 2023 comprehensive evaluation of Northwestern Connecticut Community College.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

The substantive change proposal submitted by Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) and Connecticut State Community College (CT State) was accepted and the System advised to proceed with its plans to consolidate the 12 Connecticut community colleges into Connecticut State Community College because the plans outlined in the proposal are consistent with the *Standards for Accreditation* and demonstrate that, if those plans are successfully implemented, CT State will be in substantial compliance with the Standards as of July 1, 2023. Therefore, the decision to grant Connecticut State Community College accreditation effective July 1, 2023 is contingent upon the Commission’s determination that the plans outlined in the substantive change proposal have been successfully implemented.

The Commission commends CSCU and CT State for the progress that has been made on the consolidation of the 12 community colleges into a single institution since the 2017 announcement of the Students First Initiative. Mission and vision statements have been adopted and are posted on the consolidation website. A 50-member CT State Executive Strategic Planning Council, comprising faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders, has begun work to develop a strategic plan based on the six themes that emerged from an analysis of the individual colleges’ plans. Through a multi-year process that, at its “peak” involved 468 faculty, staff, administrators, students, and foundation members and included “almost two years of leadership team meetings with hundreds of stakeholders,” a governance structure has been developed. In May 2020, the

Board of Regents (BOR) appointed an interim President, interim Provost, interim CFO, and Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; a search is underway for a permanent President, and a search for a permanent CAO will begin following the appointment of the President. Through the efforts of the Aligned Program Review Committee, with representatives from all 12 community colleges, 67 aligned academic programs have been approved by the BOR; 142 programs are in the “endorsement” phase; and 48 programs are scheduled for review by Spring 2022. Six workforce programs have also been aligned. A 21-25-credit CT State general education core was approved by the BOR in May 2020, and the Alignment and Completion of Math and English Work Group has presented a proposal for a “redesign” of developmental education in those two disciplines. In addition, 24 “major” academic policies have been reviewed, and proposed revisions have been presented to the BOR. The efforts of the Holistic Student-Support Redesign Work Group led to the adoption of a Guided Pathways (GP) Advising model; in Fall 2021, GP advisors were “fully implemented” at three of the 12 colleges. All colleges are using CRM Recruit to support admissions and prospect management, and all are administering financial aid programs under a “common procedural manual.” CT State has consulted with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems to benchmark staffing levels with “comparable colleges,” and CT State’s Associate Vice President of Teaching and Learning has “reconstituted” the 12-college Teaching and Learning Council which has developed a “tactical plan” for the Teaching and Learning Division. A shared services model for “many back office and processing functions” has been implemented, and Human Resources has been reorganized into a Center of Excellence model that “standardizes and streamlines HR policies, procedures, and functions.” The Framework Implementation and Review Committee, comprising more than 70 faculty members, has proposed draft student learning outcomes within the general education framework that are being reviewed system-wide, and an Assessment Advisory Committee that includes five faculty members and the three regional institutional research directors has been convened. A timeline for the development of uniform materials to be used in academic program review has also been established. Finally, the CT State website project was launched in 2018.

Despite the many accomplishments achieved to date, however, substantial work remains to be done between now and July 1, 2023 to assure Connecticut State Community College will be in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation* by that date. The substantive change proposal provides extensive details about the tasks to be accomplished and the goals to be achieved. To monitor CT State’s progress in implementing its ambitious plans to achieve compliance with the Standards, the Commission requests three progress reports between now and July 1, 2023. The timing of the submission of the reports is “mapped” to the implementation timeline included in the substantive change proposal: the September 2022 report will enable CT State to provide evidence of its success in accomplishing the goals and tasks it has specified for Spring and Summer 2022; accomplishments for Fall 2022 will be discussed in the February 2023 report; and Spring 2023 accomplishments, in the June 2023 report.

The Commission requests that each of the three progress reports include updates on two matters related to our Standards on *Students; Institutional Resources; and Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*.

The substantive change proposal contained detailed, multi-year enrollment and budget projections for CT State. The Commission appreciates that these projections have been revised over time, most recently in light of the impact of the pandemic, and we note that the budget forecasts include operating deficits through 2028. We understand that the enrollment projections are based on three “components” – baseline enrollment, the impact of the PACT program, and increased retention. Plans to address the deficit include reliance on reserves and seeking increased funding from the state. We ask that each of the progress reports to be submitted between now and July 1, 2023 include an update on enrollment and budget projections, with attention to the institution’s success in addressing the operating deficit. In making this request, we seek evidence that CT State: “sets

and achieves realistic goals to enroll students who are broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve” (*Students*, Statement of the Standard) and that “its resources are sufficient to sustain the quality of its educational program and to support institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future” (*Institutional Resources*, Statement of the Standard). These reports will also enable CT State to demonstrate that its “multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students” (7.6), and that it “implements a realistic plan for addressing issues raised by the existence of any operating deficit” (7.14).

The proposal also notes that CSCU anticipates “many upcoming retirements,” including retirements of full-time faculty, as a result of changes being made to state retirement benefits. The Commission understands that planning is therefore taking place “across all colleges to anticipate the impact of retirements on operations” and is gratified to learn that all replacement positions “have been and will continue to be aligned to the future organizational structure” of CT State. We look forward to receiving, as part of each progress report, an updated analysis of the impact of these anticipated faculty and staff retirements on staffing at CT State as well as information about the institution’s plans to ensure that it “employs sufficient and qualified personnel to fulfill its mission” (7.1), that it “supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff” (*Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*, Statement of the Standard), and that it has “an adequate number of faculty and academic staff, including librarians, advisors, and instructional designers, whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes” (6.2).

The list enumerated on page 2 of this letter specifies the goals and tasks Connecticut State Community College has indicated will be accomplished in Spring and Summer 2022. Through the progress report to be submitted by September 1, 2022, the Commission seeks evidence of CT State’s success in implementing this phase of its plan to demonstrate the institution’s fulfillment of the expectations articulated in these portions of the *Standards for Accreditation*:

Institutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The institution systematically collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness (2.2).

The institution plans beyond a short-term horizon, including strategic planning that involves realistic analyses of internal and external opportunities and constraints (2.3).

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity (*Organization and Governance*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution offers collegiate-level programs consisting of a curriculum of studies that leads to a degree in a recognized field of study and requires at least one year to complete (4.1).

Programs leading to degrees or other awards have a coherent design and are characterized by appropriate breadth, depth, continuity, sequential progression, and synthesis of learning. Coherence is demonstrated through learning goals, structure, and content; policies and procedures for admission, retention, and completion; instructional methods and procedures; and the nature, quality, and extent of student learning and achievement (4.3).

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs (4.6).

Graduates successfully completing an undergraduate program demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English; the ability for ... quantitative reasoning (4.15).

The general education program is coherent and substantive. It reflects the institution's mission and values and embodies the institution's definition of an educated person and prepares students for the world in which they will live (4.16).

The institution has an orderly and ethical program of recruitment and admission (5.3).

The institution demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in the institution's academic program, including specifically recruited populations (5.6).

The institution provides advising and academic support services appropriate to the student body (5.10).

Student financial aid is provided through a well-organized program (5.13).

As appropriate, the institution provides co-curricular activities and supports opportunities for student leadership and participation in campus organizations and governance (5.15).

The institution has identified, published widely, and implemented an appropriate set of clearly stated ethical standards to guide student services. Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered (5.18).

The institution supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff (*Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*, Statement of the Standard).

Compatible with its mission and purposes, [the institution] addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion among its faculty and academic staff and assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve those goals (6.5).

The institution employs sufficient and qualified personnel to fulfill its mission (7.1).

The institution demonstrates the effectiveness of its policies and procedures in ensuring the reliability of its technology systems, the integrity and security of data, and the privacy of individuals (7.25).

In presenting the institution to students, prospective students, and other members of the public, the institutional website provides information, including information about student success, that is complete, accurate, timely, readily accessible, clear, and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution (*Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure*, Statement of the standard).

The list enumerated on page 3 of this letter specifies the goals and tasks Connecticut State Community College has indicated will be accomplished in Fall 2022. Through the progress report to be submitted by February 10, 2023, the Commission seeks evidence of CT State's success in implementing this phase of its plan to demonstrate the institution's fulfillment of the expectations articulated in these portions of the *Standards for Accreditation*:

The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them (3.2).

The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise (3.15).

The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded (*The Academic Program*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs (4.6).

If the institution depends on resources outside its direct control (for example, classrooms, information resources, information technology, testing sites), a written agreement ensures the reasonable continued availability of those resources (4.10).

The institution offers required and elective courses as described in publicly available print and digital formats with sufficient availability to provide students with the opportunity to graduate within the published program length (4.35).

Courses and programs offered for credit off campus, through dual enrollment, through distance or correspondence education, or through continuing education, evening, or weekend divisions are consistent with the educational objectives of the institution. Such activities are integral parts of the institution and maintain the same academic standards as courses and programs offered on campus (4.46).

The institution has an orderly and ethical program of recruitment and admission (5.3).

The institution ensures that individuals responsible for student services are qualified by formal training and work experience and organizationally placed to represent and address the needs of students effectively (5.17).

Responsibilities [of faculty] include... participation in policy-making, course and curricular development, ... and institutional governance (6.2).

In a handbook or in other written documents that are current and readily available, the institution defines the responsibilities of faculty and other members of the instructional team; the criteria for their recruitment, appointment, retention, evaluation, promotion, and, if applicable, tenure; and policies for resolving grievances (6.8).

The information published by the institution on its website is readily accessible and sufficient to allow students and prospective students to make informed decisions about their education. The institution's public website includes the information specified elsewhere in this Standard (9.17-9.25) (9.11).

All forms of print and digital communications officially representing the institution are consistent with catalogue content and accurately portray the conditions and opportunities available at the institution (9.14).

The list enumerated on pages 3-5 of this letter specifies the goals and tasks Connecticut State Community College has indicated will be accomplished in Spring 2023. Through the progress report to be submitted by June 1, 2023, the Commission seeks evidence of CT State's success in

implementing this phase of its plan to demonstrate the institution's fulfillment of the expectations articulated in these portions of the *Standards for Accreditation*:

The mission of the institution defines its distinctive character, addresses the needs of society, identifies the students the institution seeks to serve, and reflects both the institution's traditions and its vision for the future. The institution's mission provides the basis upon which the institution identifies its priorities, plans its future, and evaluates its endeavors (1.1).

Institutional research is sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The institution systematically collects and uses data necessary to support its planning efforts and to enhance institutional effectiveness (2.2).

The institution ... establishes feasible priorities, and develops a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives (2.4).

The institution has a demonstrable record of success in using the results of its evaluation activities to inform planning, changes in programs and services, and resource allocation (2.8).

[The institution] demonstrates administrative capacity by assuring provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component (*Organization and Governance*, Statement of the Standard).

The board, administration, staff, faculty, and sponsoring entity understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in the institution's official documents and are provided with the appropriate information to undertake their respective roles (3.1).

The institution's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies are clear and consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them (3.2).

The board appoints and periodically reviews the performance of the chief executive officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution (3.10).

The institution's chief academic officer is directly responsible to the chief executive officer, and in concert with the faculty and other academic administrators, is responsible for the quality of the academic program (3.14).

Faculty have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise (3.15).

The system of governance makes provisions for consideration of student views and judgments in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest (3.16).

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs under institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control (4.6).

Courses and programs offered for credit off campus, through dual enrollment, through distance or correspondence education, or through continuing education, evening, or weekend divisions are consistent with the educational objectives of the institution. Such activities are integral parts of the institution and maintain the same academic standards as courses and programs offered on campus (4.46).

The institution demonstrates its ability to admit students who can be successful in the institution's academic program, including specifically recruited populations (5.6).

The institution ensures a systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services designed to provide opportunities for enrolled students to be successful in achieving their educational goals. The institution provides students with information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their educational success (5.7).

The institution systematically identifies the characteristics and needs of its student population and then makes provision for responding to them (5.8).

The institution supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff, who, in structures and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning (*Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship*, Statement of the Standard).

All faculty are appropriately integrated into the department/division and institution (6.1).

The institution's system of academic advising meets student needs for information and advice compatible with its educational objectives. The quality of advising is assured regardless of the location of instruction or the mode of delivery (6.19).

The institution has sufficient human, financial, information, physical, and technological resources and capacity to support its mission (*Institutional Resources*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution's multi-year financial planning is realistic and reflects the capacity of the institution to depend on identified sources of revenue and ensure the advancement of educational quality and services for students (7.6).

The institution ensures the integrity of its finances through prudent financial management and organization, a well-organized budget process ... (7.12).

Opportunities identified for new sources of revenue are reviewed by the administration and board to ensure the integrity of the institution and the quality of the academic program are maintained and enhanced (7.15).

The institution has sufficient and appropriate information, physical, and technological resources necessary for the achievement of its purposes wherever and however its academic programs are offered. It devotes sufficient resources to maintain and enhance its information, physical, and technological resources (7.21).

The institution provides access to library and information resources, services, facilities, and qualified staff sufficient to support its teaching and learning environments and its research and public service mission as appropriate (7.22).

The institution ... has disaster and business continuity plans and recovery policies and procedures that are regularly evaluated and updated (7.25).

The institution effectively uses information technology to ensure its efficient ability to plan, administer, and evaluate its program and services (7.26).

Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful evidence about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and improvement, resource allocation, and to inform the public about the institution (*Educational Effectiveness*, Statement of the Standard).

The institution provides clear public statements about what students are expected to gain from their education, academically and, as appropriate to the institution's mission, along other dimensions (e.g., civic engagement, religious formation, global awareness). Goals for students' education reflect the institution's mission, the level and range of degrees and certificates offered, and the general expectations of the larger academic community (8.2).

Assessment has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty and appropriate staff (8.3).

The institution uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures to understand the experiences and learning outcomes of its students, employing external perspectives including, as appropriate, benchmarks and peer comparisons (8.5).

The results of assessment and quantitative measures of student success are a demonstrable factor in the institution's efforts to improve the curriculum and learning opportunities and results for students (8.8).

The institution is responsible for all activities that are sponsored by the institution or carry its name. These activities are compatible with the institution's mission and are administered within its organizational structure. The institution assumes responsibility for the appropriateness and integrity of such activities (9.7).

The institution's catalogue describes the institution consistent with its mission statement and sets forth the obligations and responsibilities of both students and the institution (9.17).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2025 is consistent with Commission policy. In addition to the information included in all self-studies, Connecticut State Community College is asked, in the self-study prepared for the Fall 2025 evaluation, to give emphasis to its success in three matters.

We ask that the Fall 2025 self-study provide updates on CT State's success in accomplishing the tasks outlined in the "Actions Planned After July 2023" sections of the substantive change proposal. Implementation of those plans will provide evidence of CT State's continuing efforts to fulfill the *Standards for Accreditation* and will demonstrate that the institution has "a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning" (2.5).

In addition, the Commission asks that the Fall 2025 self-study give emphasis to CT State's continued success in achieving its enrollment and budget goals. We recognize that achievement of these goals will require the institution's sustained attention over time; hence, we ask for an update in Fall 2025. Our standards on *Students* and *Institutional Resources* (cited above) will provide guidance for these sections of the self-study.

The third area of emphasis for the Fall 2025 self-study is related to our standard on *Organization and Governance*. As noted in the substantive change proposal, since 2017, 713 individuals have participated in consolidation activities “of some form (e.g., committee/work group, alignment, feedback, endorsement),” with 468 serving on committees or work groups. The proposal further notes that full-time faculty comprise nearly two-thirds (63%) of total participants and almost half (49.1%) of committee/work group members. The Commission takes favorable note of this level of involvement but also appreciates CSCU’s candid acknowledgment that the plans for consolidation have created a “significant degree of apprehension” and that its communication about the consolidation has been “inadequate.” We are, therefore, gratified to learn that CSCU and CT State are committed to “increased communication” and that they intend to promote more faculty and staff participation in “collaborative and comprehensive approaches.” The Fall 2025 self-study will afford CT State an opportunity to report on its success in this matter, as evidence that its “system of governance involves the participation of all constituencies and includes regular communication among them” (3.2).

Finally, the Commission asks that the scheduled evaluations and reports noted on page 5 of this letter be delayed pending the Commission’s review of the progress reports submitted by CT State. Assuming the plans outlined in the substantive change proposal are successfully implemented and CT State becomes operational as an accredited college on July 1, 2023, the accreditations of the 12 now-separate community colleges will be relinquished. The effective date of those relinquishments will be determined following the Commission’s review of the June 2023 progress report.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the report submitted by Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and Connecticut State Community College and hopes its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet during its deliberations with the two of you and Matt Fleury, Chair, CT Board of Regents for Higher Education; Miah LaPierre-Dreger, Interim Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, Connecticut State Community College; Kerry Kelley, Interim CFO, Connecticut State Community College; Alison Buckley, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Connecticut State Community College; and G. Duncan Harris, CEO, Capital Community College. We appreciate your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of your constituencies. Consistent with Commission policy, we will inform the chair of the governing board of the System of this action by sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Matt Fleury in a few days. You are free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission’s action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



George W. Tetler

GWT/jm

cc: Mr. Matt Fleury
Dr. William Brown, Gateway Community College
Ms. Michelle Coach, Asnuntuck Community College

Ms. Cheryl DeVonish, Norwalk Community College
Dr. Lisa Dresdner, Naugatuck Valley Community College
Dr. G. Duncan Harris, Capital Community College
Dr. Karen Hynick, Quinebaug Valley Community College
Dr. Mary Ellen Jukoski, Three Rivers Community College
Dr. Steven Minkler, Middlesex Community College
Dr. Darryl Reome, Tunxis Community College
Dr. Michael Rooke, Northwestern Connecticut Community College
Dr. Dwayne Smith, Housatonic Community College
Dr. Rob Steinmetz, Manchester Community College

Enclosures – Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions