Thank you Chair Donofrio, President Gray and fellow regents.

I am honored to be here to present alongside my colleagues.

In the inaugural meeting of the FAC in January 2012, we specified that our first priority was to establish structures and processes for the FAC to act effectively in bringing faculty concerns to the Board and to act as window for the Board into the views of faculty. Since then, we believe we have made important and substantive contributions to the governance of the system especially in regards to TAP, developmental education, and strategic planning, but our first priority has remained unchanged. The FAC is now in its second term as newly elected FAC members joined the committee last January. The new members are discovering, recognizing and articulating the same uncertainties regarding the role of the committee in representing more than 5000 teaching and administrative faculty in our advisory role to this Board.¹

My comments today are organized in two broad areas: I will present a set of practical proposals to strengthen the collaboration between faculty and the Board; and to present faculty priorities in moving forward under Transform CSCU 2020. We are not expecting any Board action today, but for actionable items we request these be referred to the appropriate subcommittee for consideration.

**Collaboration and Board/Faculty Relations**

In general, the relationship between faculty and Governing Boards might be described as one of mutual incomprehension.

While there are always individual exceptions to general claims, this mutual incomprehension is not unique to Connecticut, but seems endemic to systems like ours across the country. I believe it is rooted in the structural conditions that define our respective positions, our distinct responsibilities in advancing student learning and success, and a lack of clarity regarding our respective contributions in a system of shared governance.

I have come to see this board, both as a collective and individually to a person, as being comprised of dedicated and engaged citizens who responded to a call to public service and who act as the responsible fiduciary for this system. I am, however, uncertain how many of my

¹ All references to faculty in this document include both teaching and administrative faculty.
colleagues would recognize the essential function you responsibly perform in the service of public higher education in this state.

Faculty are also deeply embedded in shared governance in their daily practices. The structures, processes, and culture of democratic participation saturate our workplaces like few others in the US. As such, faculties are often anxious and apprehensive regarding board intents that sometimes appear secret because governing boards are spatially and socially removed from the ongoing governing structures at place on a campus.

Reducing this mutual incomprehension is a necessary condition for this system to operate at its highest potential. Working in concert rather than at cross purposes, faculty and the board can collaborate on advancing the system’s mission, we can bring a united voice to the legislature, we can improve the effective execution of board and administrative policy, and we can stay focused on our core mission: student learning and success.

A few weeks ago, I attended a conference – the first annual--on shared governance for the SUNY system that was organized and attended by faculty, students, trustees, and administrators. Nancy Zimpher, the Chancellor for the SUNY system, focused her welcoming remarks onsomething once said to her: “collaboration moves at the speed of trust.”

In the initial days of Dr. Gray’s presidency of the system, he repeatedly stated that one of his first goals was to restore integrity to the system. Building trust, respect, and transparency between faculty and the Board is integral to such a restoration.

The FAC is dedicated to this task and we hope and intend to continue to engage in ongoing dialog toward this goal. At this time, we have three specific proposals we would like to share:

1. **Board visits to Campus Governance Bodies.**

   The FAC recognizes that there are many substantive and ceremonial demands for each of you, but we would like the Board to consider organizing ongoing speaking and listening tours out to each campus on roughly a yearly basis. We envision small teams of two or three board members who would report to faculty on the campuses on Board priorities, intents, and processes, and would listen to faculty interests, concerns, and hopes for the system.

2. **Faculty Service on Board Subcommittees**

   The FAC requests that the Board consider having members of the faculty advisory committee serve on Board subcommittees as voting members. At the SUNY Conference on
Shared Governance last month, the keynote speaker was Rick Legon, the President of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. His remarks focused on the complicated relationship between faculty and governing boards. He was clear that he did not endorse having faculty serve as voting members of governing boards – and we are not asking for that here – but he did recommend that boards put faculty on subcommittees as voting members.

As you know, the vast majority of decisions on the subcommittees are arrived at through consensus. An occasional dissenting faculty vote would not overturn decisions, but it would inform the Board of the minority opinion and so strengthen cognizance in decision making. Certainly having FAC members serve on the subcommittees would increase the FAC’s own awareness of the intentions, priorities, and policies of the Board, which would enable us to function more effectively in representing and informing faculty across the system.

3. **CSCU Conference on Research, Scholarship, Teaching and Governance**

The FAC would like the Board to consider initiating an annual system-wide conference on faculty research, scholarship, teaching and governance. At the ASA meeting in March, the committee approved internal research grants for faculty at CSU. In the accompanying discussion, Regent Harris expressed an interest in following up on the results of the research projects. We also briefly discussed the possibility of reinstating a CSU research conference, which used to be an annual event. Similarly, an annual conference on teaching and assessment for CSU was abandoned after the merger.

The FAC envisions a two-day conference in the spring organized by personnel from the system office and a representative faculty group. In addition, to panel presentations and posters on faculty research and scholarship, we could create opportunities for faculty to address matters of teaching and governance. If such a conference had been held this spring, for example, round table discussions could have been organized for faculty at the community colleges to compare ideas, results, and problems in creating a general education curriculum consistent with the TAP framework. Faculty could also have come together to review the new pilot programs to address PA 12-40, and compare structures and rates of success in the new embedded courses. The conference might also bring together leadership from campus governance bodies to discuss matters of mutual interest. Perhaps the Board would be interested in holding a meeting, which might include the distribution of faculty awards. Holding the poster session just prior to the Board meeting would provide an opportunity for individualized conversations between Board members and faculty on their...
research and scholarly interests. In deference to our Chair, we might call it, CSCU Innovations.

Faculty Priorities in Moving Forward with Transform CSCU 2020

The FAC and faculty across the system are dedicated to student learning and success and believe that this is the core of our mission. We also believe there is broad support for an initiative grounded in the priorities of access, affordability and excellence. The FAC has identified five qualities of our academic mission that we believe should be emphasized as we bring change to our institutions. The five qualities are not intended as specific critiques of any of the items on President Gray’s list of objectives for Transform CSCU 2020, but as elaborations of what we have gathered from conversations amongst ourselves and across our campuses.

1. **Promote economic growth and an educated citizenry; promote workforce development and a richer cultural life**

   The FAC supports the development of technical programs tied to specific workforce needs. We support identifying and documenting the ways our institutions contribute to the economic growth of the state. We support the development of professional and vocational programs. We support faculty across the system who modify programs mindful of the skills and experiences that will launch students into successful careers.

   Yet, the total value of a higher education ought not to be reduced to economic growth and the size of the salaries earned by our graduates. Our institutions also contribute to the richness of the state’s cultural, social, and political life in ways that are less easily quantified. Even more importantly, improving literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, cultural capital, and imparting the knowledge and values of a liberal arts education are also necessary and vital job skills. A recent report from American Association of Colleges and Universities demonstrates that students who complete four-year degrees in liberal arts programs often
find successful and well-paid careers on par with those who complete professional programs.²

Every time a report or document gets written or spoken that refers to the economic health of the state and workforce development that does not include the other critical features of our mission, you can be sure that a large fraction of the faculty across the system believe they are being left out of the framing of the mission.

The FAC recognizes that much of our legislature, our students, and prospective students are particularly interested in programs that promise economic growth and develop specific career skills. We support such programs as well, but believe the Board and the system administration should not get lulled into creating a false dichotomy, and should correct the bias rather than reinforcing it.

2. The Role of on-line education.

The FAC supports expansion of on-line education especially in graduate programs and in the development of programs that capture new markets and new students, who might be unable or unlikely to pursue higher education through traditional means. We do not recommend, however, replacing, substituting, or transitioning traditional course offerings to on-line course offerings. Several large-scale and comprehensive studies comparing on-line courses with on the ground courses have been recently conducted by Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University. They have found that, “While all types of students in the study suffered decrements in performance in online courses, some struggled more than others to adapt: males, younger students, Black students, and students with lower grade point averages.”³

² See http://www.aacu.org/leap/nchems/index.cfm
3. **Maintain the separate missions of the community colleges, the state universities, and Charter Oak**

When the Board of Regents was established in 2011, the legislature was clear in its intent that the separate missions of the community colleges, the state universities, and Charter Oak should remain distinct. Among faculty, there is overwhelming support to maintain those separate missions. We recognize and appreciate efforts to integrate and align our distinct functions through TAP or other policies, but that appreciation does not extend to a vision of a common catalog, or to a full integration with 17 branch campuses of a single institution.

4. **Increase the Proportion of Courses Taught by Full-Time Faculty**

The FAC appreciates that this Board recognizes the importance of full-time faculty, and has expressed a general lack of interest in meeting our fiscal challenges by increasing the use of part-time faculty. We simply want to underscore this point. Over recent years, we have continued to see steady increases in the number of courses taught by part-time faculty. While adjunct faculty are able and dedicated teachers, this increase puts further strain on the functions of full-time faculty in serving as student mentors and advisors, in designing and assessing curricula, in engaging in research and scholarship, and in participating in its governance responsibilities.

In a recent BCG report, the authors wrote that to reduce costs “colleges and universities are relying on a core of full-time research professors who are supported by a part-time teaching staff.”


5. **Curriculum planning must remain at the campus level**

The FAC endorses the TAP policy and is eager to see it move forward in the months ahead. We are pleased that a full-time TAP Program Manager has been appointed, and that Lauren Doninger from Gateway and Deb Weiss from SCSU were recently named Co-Chairs of the reconstituted TAP Implementation and Review Committee. They will provide important continuity as they served ably as the Co-Chairs of the TAP Framework Committee.
Once completed, the TAP framework and the major pathways will provide transparent academic directions to students across Connecticut that will reduce costs to students and the state by ensuring that students are not taking credits that they do not need. TAP, however, still has its complications and will require excellent academic advising. It will not likely provide “total seamless transfer,” as called for in “Transform.” We need to allow students to move across our institutions with greater transparency, but effective pedagogy requires that faculty on each campus be able to design their own programs based on the expertise of their colleagues and their assessment of student learning.

In moving forward with Transform CSCU 2020, innovations need to be effective solutions to real problems. We certainly can improve the quality of education and increase student success, but new innovations should build on the strengths already in place. Amidst all the turmoil since the merger of our system, faculty have been working hard and achieving considerable success transforming the state of Connecticut, one student at a time.