

Dear NECHE Commissioners,

We want to thank the Commission for its guidance as we merge our 12 community colleges into a single accredited institution. Despite the current disruption of COVID-19 to our system, our campuses, and most importantly to our students, we are moving forward with our plans and we appreciate the opportunity to share this update.

As the Board of Regents (BOR) recognized in 2017, Connecticut's community colleges are challenged by fiscal instability, declining enrollments, and unacceptable student outcomes. That has not changed in the intervening years. Our state allocations have not kept up with rising costs, our student performance numbers, for retention and completion, have not improved, and enrollment continues to decline. The need to implement a systemic solution is clear and well underway. By consolidating the 12 separately accredited community colleges into a single accredited college, we can bring the improvements to scale at a cost that is manageable, along with building a 21st century college that benefits from the substantial research on community college student success that has arisen since the turn of the century.

For leadership at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), the primary focus for the last year has been developing the organizational structure and governance for the single accredited college including administrative, academic, and student affairs functions. We've also been engaging faculty and staff in curriculum alignment efforts and in the design of a new model for providing holistic student supports. Additionally, staff from the campuses and system office are working together to design shared services in information technology, human resources, fiscal affairs, and facilities. And most recently, at the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Regents, the future college was named Connecticut State Community College and its interim leadership team was appointed with Dr. David Levinson being selected to serve as Interim College President. These actions enable the merged college to begin to stand separate and apart from the CSCU system office where its initial planning has been conducted.

We are excited by what we've accomplished this year and welcome the opportunity to provide further details on our progress and the work to come with the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Fleury".

Matt Fleury,  
BOR Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Ojikian".

Mark E. Ojikian,  
CSCU President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Levinson".

Dr. David Levinson,  
Interim CSCC President

**Connecticut State Community  
College**

# **Progress Report**

June 5, 2020

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary of the Response to the Commission’s July 2019 Letter	3
Introduction	6
Response to the July 2019 Letter from the Commission	8
Standard 3: Organization and Governance	8
Standard 4: The Academic Program	10
Standard 5: Students	11
Standard 7: Institutional Resources	13
Maintaining accreditations of 12 community colleges during the transition	17
Current Progress	19
Comprehensive Transition Plan Timeline	31

# Executive Summary of the Response to the Commission's July 2019 Letter

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities last submitted an update to the Commission in April 2019. Since that time, the Board of Regents has named the college Connecticut State Community College (CSCC), appointed both permanent and interim leadership, and made significant progress on a number of fronts. This summary addresses in brief the five areas that were specifically requested by the Commission's July 2019 response. The remainder of the report expands on that summary, details the progress made since the previous update, and provides a comprehensive timeline.

## Standard 3: Organization and Governance

The Commission asked for an update regarding administrative capacity, specifically plans to establish a “centralized academic administration office of sufficient capacity to support 12 campuses,” and the role of the faculty in curriculum and other areas related to their responsibility and expertise.

**Administrative Capacity:** Since the update of April 2019, CSCU has developed a detailed draft of the organizational chart for CSCC that demonstrates dedicated capacity to fulfill the essential functions of a College of 80,000 students. ([See appendix A](#))

CSCC is organized based on three major considerations:

1. NECHE standards regarding administrative capacity
2. Attention to the essential functions of a College of 80,000 students
3. Benchmark institutions of similar size and mission

**Role of the Faculty:** Faculty are organized first by academic discipline and then by Areas of Study ([See appendix A page 3](#)). All curriculum and related decisions will be developed within this structure – primarily composed of faculty – led by the CSCC Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Curriculum under the direction of the CSCC Provost.

## Standard 4: The Academic Program

The Commission asked for further clarity on how CSCC will ensure that programs are consistent with CSCC's mission and how it will ensure “comparability and consistency of learning outcomes for any academic program to be offered at multiple locations.”

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**Consistency with the College mission:** The structure of the CAO's cabinet demonstrates the College's ability to fulfill its academic mission. As noted above, the faculty are brought together to develop and oversee the curriculum. The CAO and the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Curriculum are accountable for ensuring that programs and policies align with CSCC's mission and strategic plan.

**Curriculum consistency and alignment across multiple campuses:** The organization of faculty by discipline and Area of Study at the single college level and a governance process that fits within that structure ensure that curriculum will be developed in common across the campuses. Faculty are responsible for developing and delivering curriculum and discipline-specific Associate Deans assume primary responsibility for evaluating faculty. Since Associate Deans have deeper experience in the specific discipline curricula, they have the expertise to effectively evaluate consistency across the campuses and within academic disciplinary practice.

The CAO's cabinet dedicates capacity, in the form of the Associate Vice President of Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning and staff, to support assessment of all academic programs and policies.

## Standard 5: Students

The Commission asked for further detail on how CSCC will "ensure the success of its students," more specifically how it will offer a "systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services" as well as provide students "information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their educational success."

**Providing services:** The organizational structure of CSCC, and specifically of the area led by the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, brings many back office and processing functions currently performed at the 12 colleges to the CSCC office, thereby freeing staff on the campuses to spend more time in direct contact with students.

**Providing Guidance:** The past decade has seen the proliferation of research documenting what works best to ensure the success of community college students, but practices are usually inconsistently applied. CSCC's organizational structure facilitates the consistent adoption of best practices at scale. It provides capacity for professional development and reporting lines are

structured in a way that designates clear points of accountability to ensure best practices are being used.

## **Standard 7: Institutional Resources**

The Commission asked for further detail on how CSCC will meet the Commission's standard on Institutional Resources, specifically, how increased financial stability can be achieved at the same time that there are no reductions in student-facing positions and a significant increase in centralized administration.

CSCC's organization supports financial sustainability, first by securing back-office services through an efficient, shared-services model and second, through a strong administration that is effective in academics, enrollment management, and student success. The resulting enrollment growth can sustain the College while we advance our mission of access and equity. The current organization has produced small colleges, many of which do not have the ability to operate, much less thrive, without the shared resources that the system has been able to provide so far. Those shared resources have been drained under the 12-college system by duplicated costs and fragmented, ineffective efforts at enrollment management and student success.

### **Continued accreditation of the 12 colleges**

The Commission asked for assurance that the process for transitioning to CSCC will not affect the ongoing continued accreditations of the 12 colleges.

The transition to Connecticut State Community College will not affect the ability of each college to maintain its accreditation beyond challenges they already face ([See appendix B](#)). The functions and services that shift to the single college structure during the transition will not conflict with specific NECHE standards. Functions that fall within the NECHE standards, such as the role and responsibilities of the CEO and CAO, and the role and responsibility of the faculty to determine the curriculum for the current colleges, will not change during the transition in any way that jeopardizes the accreditations of the currently separately accredited colleges.

# Introduction

Under the direction of the Board of Regents (BOR), CSCU leadership has been leading the effort to consolidate our colleges into a more sustainable and higher performing institution for our state and students. We are merging our 12 campuses into a modern college, Connecticut State Community College (CSCC), with resources focused on student success, academic excellence, and fiscal sustainability, shaping an entirely different experience our students deserve and our society and economy demand. It is a structure redesigned to meet the needs of students, rather than forcing students to adjust to whatever colleges offer to them.

Although it is critical that we reduce administrative costs, there is little hope of sustainability if we do not provide better outcomes for our students, which in turn leads to better financial stability. We are making changes in key areas to address challenges and barriers to student success and build a stronger college for Connecticut. We are working to reduce administrative costs, capture the savings from attrition, and establish shared services to centralize, streamline, and improve the efficiency of routine functions across the 12 institutions. We are implementing nationally proven best practices in student success through initiatives such as Guided Pathways and other strategies recommended by Achieving the Dream to bolster student supports and address our equity gap.

CSCC is a 21st century college for 21st century students, with a mission designed to provide each student, regardless of background or geography, with the tools to attain their personal and educational goals and prepare them for competitive jobs in the Connecticut economy. CSCC provides a better student experience - easy to enroll, pay for, and with a clear path to completion. CSCC is a college designed to make services available when and where students need them. The course schedule will be student-centered with classes in a variety of formats and at a variety of times. Academic support will be available when and where students need it and technology will improve the student experience through regular contact and interventions. A single college, rooted in equity, removes persistent barriers to historically underserved students by delivering the wraparound services each student needs to reach their goals., The CSCC organization has prioritized attention to food and housing security, tutoring, transportation, tech support, childcare, affective engagement and more. These services, provided both centrally by the college and locally by the campuses, ensure students have consistent support tailored to their individual circumstances.

This reimagining of higher education for Connecticut, built on best practices that have been successful in other states, will result in dramatic improvements in degree completion and economic mobility, particularly for low income and non-white students. Students will have the options they deserve to make informed decisions about their future - non-credit training, academic credentials and degree programs, and transfer options - and our graduates will become the active citizens and well-educated workforce to sustain Connecticut into the future.

This update is divided into three sections. The first addresses the four standards that were articulated in the Commission's July 2019 letter as they relate to CSCC: Standard 3: Organization and Governance; Standard 4: The Academic Program; Standard 5: Students; and Standard 7: Institutional Resources. It also addresses the Commission's request to address the continued accreditation of the existing 12 community colleges during the transition. The second section provides an update of our current progress. The third section provides a working timeline that outlines at a high level the steps we are taking to accept our first student application to CSCC in October 2022 and enroll students in the semester starting in August 2023.

# Section I: Response to the July 2019 Letter from the Commission

## Standard 3: Organization and Governance

The July 2019 letter from the Commission notes that the single accredited college needs to demonstrate sufficient “administrative capacity by assuring provision of support adequate for the appropriate function of each organizational component” (Statement of Standard Three).

Since the last CSCU submission in April 2019, and in consultation with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), we have developed a comprehensive draft organizational structure for the single college for academic and student affairs as well as for administration ([See appendix A](#)). We have benchmarked CSCC’s structure against those of other institutions with similar numbers of students to ensure we have adequately accounted for the capacity necessary to operate a college of 80,000 students. With 141 administrative positions, CSCC falls on the low side of total administrative positions when benchmarked against comparably sized institutions, such as Ivy Tech in Indiana, Broward College in Florida, Lone Star College, and Houston Community College, the last two in Texas. Based on their publicly available organizational charts, these institutions range from 154 to 167 comparable administrative positions.

The first page of the chart shows, at high level, the full governance structure of the CSCU system. The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) governs the entire Connecticut State College and University system and sets policy for all institutions. The Board’s mandate to merge the 12 community colleges into a single accredited community college set the direction and expectations for this consolidation.

The Board has been closely and continuously involved in the Students First planning and implementation process, reaffirming in December 2019 the principles that must be ensured through this consolidation effort in keeping with the mission/vision of the community college ([See appendix C](#)). When CSCC is accredited, the BOR will have oversight of a single community college, rather than the 12 loosely federated colleges it oversees today. This reduction in the total number of institutions will enable the Board to be more effective and strategic in its role and respond more quickly to the needs of students state-wide.

The proposed CSCC organizational structure relies upon a collaborative working relationship with the CSCU system office, strong statewide coordination and quality assurance through the CSCC central office, regional leadership to promote synergies, resource development and strategic partnerships across campuses, and direct teaching, learning, support services for students at the

campus level. The organizational structure demonstrates the supervisory relationship between the CSCU President and the CSCC President. It also shows the relationships between the CSCC President and his/her leadership team including the Provost, Chief Finance Officers and Regional Presidents.

The academic and student affairs structure describes the role of the CSCC leadership team, particularly the Associate Vice Presidents of Academic Programs and Curriculum, of Teaching and Learning, and of Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning, in assuring the quality of the curriculum for all students statewide and supporting the professional development of faculty and staff who serve those students. This structure ensures that CSCC delivers on the NECHE standards while leveraging the resources of the CSCU system. In accordance with Standard 3.14 “the institution’s chief academic officer is directly responsible to the chief executive officer [College President], and, in concert with the faculty and other academic administrators, is responsible for the quality of the academic program. The institution’s organization and governance structure assure the integrity and quality of academic programming however and wherever offered.”

The July 2019 letter from the Commission also asks for clarity on the role of the faculty at CSCC in curriculum and other areas related to their responsibility and expertise. As the Organizational Chart shows, the faculty are organized first by academic discipline and then by Areas of Study ([See appendix D](#)). All curriculum and related decisions will be developed within this structure – primarily composed of faculty – led by the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Curriculum. A shared governance workgroup with elected members invited from each college is considering several proposals, all of which are consistent with the CSCC Academic Affairs structure. The Board of Regents is particularly focused on shared governance and ensuring that, per Standard 3.15, 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.

**Note on the role of CSCC leadership during the transition:**

Until the appointment of a CSCC leadership team on May 14, staff supporting the work of consolidation reported within the CSCU system office. With the appointment of the leadership team, we began a second phase that separates CSCC administration from the system office. The reporting lines for all CSCC staff, permanent and interim, now all lead to the CSCC interim President who reports to the CSCU President. These appointments and this structure provide the capacity we need to complete the work of consolidation.

In Academic Affairs, during the transition, three interim Associate Vice Presidents report to the interim Provost and provide much needed capacity to lead the consolidation work. For instance, the interim Associate Vice President for Academic Programs and Curriculum is leading the work to align curriculum into the single CSCC catalog. As CSCC programs and courses become finalized, this role will evolve to focus on to accountability for the continued quality of programs and curriculum.

Other roles are being filled as needed to lead consolidation tasks and to prepare for more operational roles for CSCC. As CSCC moves closer to enrolling its first students, interim roles will be converted to permanent hires and other administrative positions will be filled as needed through searches. The present academic leadership at the 12 separately accredited colleges will continue to fulfill their current roles until CSCC accepts its first students.

While the full implementation of the Academic Affairs structure for CSCC will come online at the time of transition from the 12 colleges to CSCC, the structure of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs is already playing a role for the 12 colleges by providing essential strategic support to the colleges in the areas of enrollment, admission, financial aid, and advising. This area is developing and implementing shared services-type models to address key areas of student success that must be improved and that will be implemented as appropriate within a system of 12 independently-accredited colleges. Permanent appointments are being made in the near term for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. By filling these positions and adopting practices across the 12 colleges, we begin to operate, in these key areas, as one college.

## **Standard 4: The Academic Program**

In its July 2019 letter, the Commission asks for further clarity on how the College will ensure that programs are consistent with the College's mission and how it will ensure "comparability and consistency of learning outcomes for any academic program to be offered at multiple locations."

CSCC leaders are responsible for identifying programs that will be offered statewide in pursuit of the mission of the College and for the creation of a single catalog to be used by students on all campuses. Students will be able to begin the majority of programs at any location; the exception will be a selected number of competitive admission programs.

The academic structure at CSCC puts the responsibility for quality assurance and professional development at the college level rather than at the campus level as it is today. Faculty serve as members of statewide discipline departments, much as campus wide departments currently operate. Many functions currently met by department chairs and division directors at each campus are met at CSCC by associate deans within CSCC departments and by discipline leads on the campuses. The latter perform functions, such as hiring adjuncts, which are best performed at the local campuses. The statewide departments regularly monitor, review, and assess courses and programs following NECHE standards. Program review per BOR policy and assessment also occur at the college level. This model ensures that faculty retain "primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum" (Standard 3.5). Dedicated capacity, in the form of an Associate Vice President of Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning, provides technical and other support for the assessment of the curriculum in addition to enhanced institutional research capacity.

The curriculum for Connecticut State Community College is being developed by faculty across the state who will, as part of the alignment process, develop learning outcomes for programs and courses. We have learned a great deal about how to assess outcomes across institutions through our work with the 30 credit general education portion of the CSCU transfer pathways. With the implementation of CSCU's Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP), faculty developed a common 30 credit general education transfer core that includes outcomes for each category within that core. TAP's Framework and Implementation Review Committee (FIRC), with representatives from every college, developed a process to assess general education outcomes across institutions to ensure that courses are consistently delivering, and students are meeting, the specified outcomes at all schools. Each college submits an annual report to FIRC that forms a basis for evaluating how well students are meeting outcomes and for each college to consider any adjustments that might be necessary. The organization of faculty from all campuses by discipline and program at the college level will facilitate this kind of assessment process. In addition, currently, each college controls its curriculum and there is not total alignment of student learning outcomes in commonly named and numbered courses or in programs. A single curriculum with fully aligned course and program outcomes, and discipline faculty working together across the campuses will further facilitate the assessment of student learning. The Associate Vice Presidents of Academic Programs and Curriculum, Quality Assurance Strategic Planning, and Teaching and Learning and their staffs will work together to provide capacity for support of assessment.

In addition to providing a more consistent and higher quality experience for students, a consolidated academic structure enhances our ability to meet burgeoning workforce needs in Connecticut, a task central to the mission of the community college and a problem that plagues the state today. While there is a great need for trained workers by large employers in the state, at the present time no single college can fulfill these needs. Regional Workforce Development Officers will immediately work to address this as a statewide problem of capacity and deploy resources where needed in order to satisfy employment needs. In addition, their strategic relationships with workforce, economic development and business groups will help secure much needed revenue for the campuses in their regions.

## **Standard 5: Students**

In its July 2019 letter, the Commission asks for further detail on how the College will "ensure the success of its students," more specifically how it will offer a "systematic approach to providing accessible and effective programs and services" as well as provide students "information and guidance regarding opportunities and experiences that may help ensure their educational success."

Students First focuses on maximizing scarce resources so that we can deepen investments in student-facing positions, increase student success, and address our equity gap. We are in better position to meet this standard as a single college than we can currently as 12 separately accredited

colleges by maximizing investments in best practices and ensuring consistency of student experience regardless of campus. The organizational structure of CSCC brings many back office and processing functions currently performed at the locally to the College office, thereby freeing staff on the campuses to spend more time in direct contact with students.

Students First focuses on maximizing scarce resources so that we can deepen investments in student-facing positions, increase student success, and address our equity gap. We are in better position to meet this standard as a single college than we can currently as 12 separately accredited colleges by maximizing investments in best practices and ensuring consistency of student experience regardless of campus. The organizational structure of CSCC brings many back office and processing functions currently performed locally to the College office, thereby freeing staff on the campuses to spend more time in direct contact with students.

The past decade has seen the proliferation of research documenting what works best to ensure the success of community college students and, at CSCC, we are adopting those practices in partnership with expert organizations and other colleges across the country. By bringing many redundant back office and processing functions, specifically in the areas led by the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, to the CSCC office, we are freeing staff on the campuses to spend more time in direct contact with students and with their peers as part of learning cohorts. This organizational structure ensures the consistent adoption of best practices at scale. Not only does it provide capacity for professional development, in the form, for instance, of a dedicated Associate Vice President of Teaching and Learning who is responsible for coordinating professional development, it is structured to provide clear lines of accountability for application of best practices. Reporting lines are structured in a way that designates clear points of accountability to ensure best practices are being used.

CSCC provides additional student support through a robust student affairs structure focused on consistent and engaging experiences for our 80,000 non-credit and credit students statewide. Associate Vice Presidents responsible for financial aid and Title IV compliance, admissions and outreach, enrollment and retention and student success promote implementation of best practices throughout CSCC, ensure compliance, provide professional development, and utilize metrics to drive improvements in service delivery to students.

For example, under the Associate Vice President of Student Success Management, the structure of advising at CSCC illustrates how support for students incorporates best practices and the capacity, professional development, and accountability to effectively implement these best practices. The reporting lines ensure clear accountability for the consistent practice of guided pathways advisors. Since all lines report to a single position, there is a consistent practice. At the same time, communication across regions encourages the sharing of specific successes and challenges as well as promotes an understanding of differences in context at the various campuses.

Our primary strategy to address the unacceptable performance shortcomings of our colleges is the implementation of Guided Pathways at scale with a strong emphasis on addressing the equity gap. We have established a plan to continue this ramp-up over time so that ultimately more than 100 additional advisors will be hired. At the present time, advising offices are severely understaffed and financially under-resourced. There are approximately 760 students for every full-time equivalent (FTE) professional advisor in the system; this far exceeds the median U.S. two-year institution advising ratio of 441:1, and the Board of Regents ideal ratio of 250:1 as stated in its FY20/FY21 biennium expansion budget (Board of Regents, 2018; Carlstrom and Miller, 2013). The CSCU community colleges' current ratio limits advisors' capacity to provide all students with the attention and services they need. The addition of many more advisors, allowing for a significant redesign to our advising model based on national best practices, is an important correction to the current situation, which NECHE has cited as an area of concern at several of our individual colleges. (See appendices [B](#) and [E](#))

## Standard 7: Institutional Resources

The Commission's July 2019 letter asks for further detail on how CSCC will meet the Commission's standard on Institutional Resources, specifically, how increased financial stability can be achieved at the same time that there are no reductions in student-facing positions and a significant increase in centralized administration.

In addition to its original intent to reduce administrative costs, the design of the nascent College is the best way to address the fiscal stress resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, and to meet the needs of fast-growing numbers of dislocated and unemployed residents. This has been and will continue to be accomplished through the transition to a single, accredited CSCC while continuously preserving each college's compliance with Standard 7.

CSCC will be organized to achieve financial sustainability, which will be accomplished in two ways: by providing back-office services through an efficient, shared-services model; and by creating a strong administration that can be effective in enrollment management and improving student success. Both efforts are projected to lead to higher overall enrollments and increased tuition revenue. During the transition we are ensuring that each existing accredited college has the resources and staff necessary to manage those resources in accordance with Standard 7. At the same time, we are supplementing the capacity of the colleges with new resources in key areas, especially enrollment management, advising, and back-office support.

Maintaining the status quo of 12 separate colleges with high overhead costs and poor completion, retention and success rates is financially unsustainable. State appropriations for the community colleges have not kept pace with the cost of operating the colleges including mandated salary increases, and the catastrophic loss of revenue that the State has experienced because of the

pandemic makes it more likely that state assistance will drop in the coming years. Tuition increases cannot offset flat or decreasing state funding and increasing operating costs without sacrificing the affordability which is the hallmark of Connecticut's commitment to access and equity.

As a result of these constraints, the existing colleges have experienced significant fiscal stress, with four out of 12 having negative reserves (as measured by unrestricted net assets, adjusted for pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability). The existence of system-level reserves provides these institutions with tenuous financial stability, but the pandemic will likely exacerbate this drawdown of reserves. The following table demonstrates the strain on existing reserves that is worsening under the current operating model:

<b>Connecticut Community Colleges:</b>			
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>			
<b>FY 19 Actual and FY 20 Projected</b>			
	<b>Actual UNP</b>	<b>Projected Results</b>	<b>Projected UNP</b>
	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>
Asnuntuck	606,602	306,920	913,522
Capital	(4,841,348)	(4,049,074)	(8,890,422)
Gateway	(4,355,733)	(1,437,438)	(5,793,171)
Housatonic	10,232,482	(1,585,732)	8,646,750
Manchester	5,335,361	(0)	5,335,361
Middlesex	1,124,871	(954,367)	170,504
Naugatuck Valley	4,951,444	(65,501)	4,885,943
Northwestern	(391,148)	(103,069)	(494,217)
Norwalk	1,853,066	(696,605)	1,156,461
Quinebaug Valley	7,160,965	152,412	7,313,377
System Office	11,597,353	(206,007)	11,391,346
Three Rivers	7,711,834	(811,637)	6,900,197
Tunxis	(787,674)	702,670	(85,004)
<b>CCC Total</b>	<b>40,198,075</b>	<b>(8,747,428)</b>	<b>31,450,647</b>

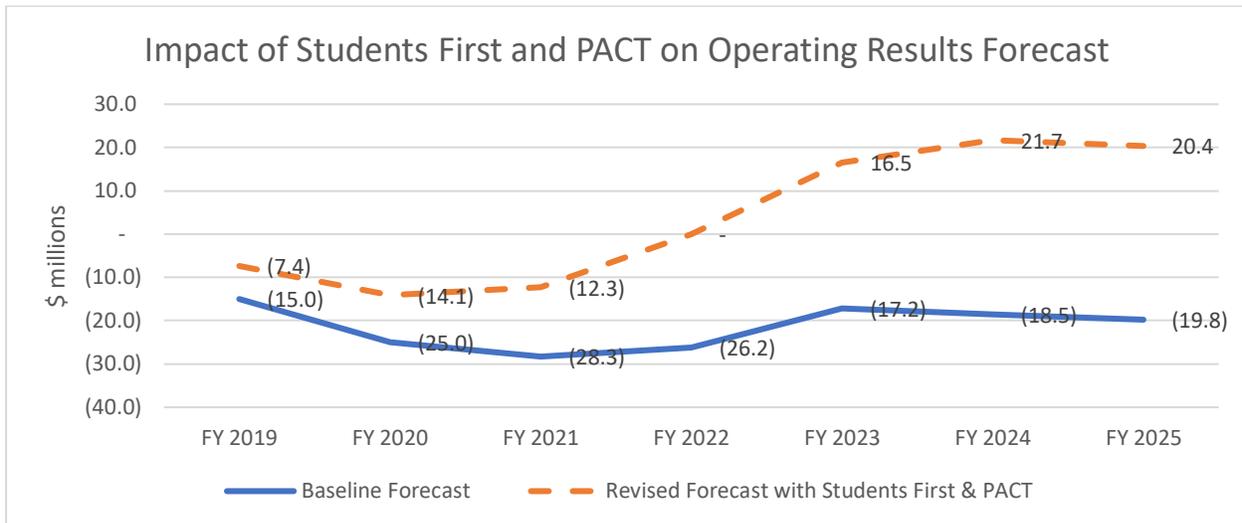
Compounding these fiscal challenges, the number of public high school graduates, who make up approximately 66% of community college first-year students, has declined by 7% since its peak in 2010 and is projected to decline by an additional 8% in the next decade. The drop in high school graduates has resulted in enrollment declines at many of the community colleges, with associated declines in tuition revenue through the current school year. Now, the changes in the economic environment, including spiking unemployment, may lead to rapid growth in demand for the education that Connecticut's community colleges offer. These fast-changing circumstances, and the accompanying uncertainty, demand the shared resources and consistent administrative response that the CSCC organization offers.

Students First depends on streamlining administrative functions and personnel to enhance the college's fiscal sustainability. Originally, the plan called for \$23 million in savings from various non-student-facing functions, including workforce reductions. That target remains realistic, although the means for achieving it have changed to rely on attrition rather than staff reductions through layoffs. The plan has already produced annual net savings of \$10.9 million in FY 2020 through attrition in administrative positions. One example of this attrition is the position of Dean of Administration. Upon vacancy all but three have been replaced with Associate Deans of Campus Operations. We are also continuing to realize significant attrition as we fill shared services positions in IT, HR, and Payroll and Purchasing with existing campus employees while leaving prior positions vacant.

This savings through attrition has allowed campuses to direct their scarce resources from administration toward teaching, learning, and student support services. The annual fiscal impact of Students First is projected to grow to \$24 million in 2023 and thereafter, including both administrative savings and improved revenue from enrollment growth, and net of expenses in enrollment management and academic administration. Without this improvement, the community colleges would face a structural deficit of approximately \$20 million annually. This would have led to depletion of reserves as soon as FY 2021, had attrition savings achieved to date not been realized. Furthermore, the 5-year projections for the colleges show that the fiscal position will be positive by 2023 with the implementation of Students First and PACT (Plan to Advance Connecticut), a "last-dollar", debt-free student financial aid program enacted by the CT legislature and approved by the BOR at its December 19, 2019 meeting.

These numbers are based on the expectation of a 25% increase in enrollments by 2023. This projected level of growth is reasonable based on the combined enrollment projections for the PACT free college program and the anticipated improvement in retention due to the enhanced advising component of Students First. It is even more achievable in the context of an economic downturn which seems likely to persist during this transition period. These projections also depend on sustained staff attrition in FY 21 through FY 23 that will produce between \$5 and \$6 million in additional recurring savings per year. This can be accomplished with the equivalent of 30-50 full-time equivalent employees each year who retire and are not replaced. Based on the age of our workforce and an incentive built into our statewide collective bargaining agreement that encourages

retirement before June 30, 2022, this projected rate of attrition is likely to be met during this transition, even while we continue to fill positions in the faculty, student services, and other areas necessary to sustain quality during a period of growth.



During the transition to CSCC, we are balancing constrained resources in order to ensure adequate funding for the individual 12 colleges while at the same time investing in the necessary infrastructure for CSCC. This balance is critical to ensuring that campuses have the resources necessary to sustain their educational programs per the NECHE standards while at the same time allowing the Board of Regents to make strategic investments to put the CSCC on the path to success. While this does result in some duplication of costs during the transition, these upfront costs will diminish as CSCC moves toward accreditation. The spending plan for the fiscal year that begins in July 2020, which is under consideration by the Board of Regents in June, includes a significant reallocation of costs previously contained in the System Office back to campuses and into the new CSCC budget, as shown below.

**Budgeted Spending**  
(\$ millions, FY2021 proposed)

	FY 2020	FY 2021
System Office	35.3	2.9
CSCC	0.0	35.8
12 Campuses	461.7	500.1

Among the costs included in the CSCC budget are the Interim President, CFO, and CAO, Regional Presidents and fiscal staff, expanded enrollment management staffing, and the first phase of implementation of holistic case management advising. During the transition period, the interim

leadership will assume responsibility for the transition to single accreditation while the permanent Regional Presidents and Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs are already providing essential strategic support to the colleges in the areas of enrollment management, operations and technology, and pandemic response. This additional support is critical to the fiscal stabilization that is a pillar of Students First.

In order to ensure that the consolidation of back office functions, including Human Resources, IT, Payroll, Purchasing and Accounting occur without impinging on the control of resources required under Standard 7, we are transitioning to a shared services model. Under this approach, each campus pays for specific services provided by central units, based on service level agreements and overseen by a governance committee on which the colleges have representation. Moreover, critical decision-making regarding use of resources, hiring, and deployment of staff remain with the Campus CEO during the transition. For additional details regarding these shared services, see [appendix F](#).

## **Maintaining the accreditations of the 12 community colleges during the transition**

Finally, the Commission's July 2019 letter asks for assurance that the process for transitioning to CSCC will not affect the ongoing continued accreditations of the 12 colleges.

The current 12 colleges will remain under the leadership of the CSCU President and the campus CEOs/Presidents to assure that individual colleges continue to comply with NECHE standards. (Appendix). Effective July 1, 2020, the reporting structure will change so that the campus CEOs/Presidents will report to the Regional Presidents who report to the CSCU President. This change promotes greater collaboration among the campuses and stronger operational support from the Regional Presidents. However, there will be no changes to the authority of the campus CEO/President who, per Standard 3.12, will be responsible for effectively managing the institution and for allocating resources to fulfill its purposes. They will work closely with the Regional President and their Regional Chief Budget officers to identify ways to leverage resources together to better serve students in collaboration with their sister colleges in the area.

For instance, through regional collaboration, colleges in the North-West region held a joint recruitment fair for adjunct faculty, combining efforts and resources to secure instructors. In other examples, the Regional Presidents have been promoting replication of best practices across their regions and securing resources from external sources to fund projects across campuses, regions and the state. The Family Economic Security Program (FESP) that was initially created at Norwalk Community College has now been adopted at Housatonic and Gateway community colleges; all three are part of Region Three- Shoreline-West. Similarly, the Connecticut Department of Labor signed a memorandum of understanding that provides assistive technology to the four

colleges in Region Two – North-West (Asnuntuck, Naugatuck, Northwestern, and Tunxis) for workforce training. After seeing how easy it was to work with the Regional Presidents rather than 12 separate colleges, the Department of Labor identified additional resources that could be utilized statewide. These types of efforts expand the opportunities we can provide our students and do not diminish the role of individual campus leaders to meet the mission of their school and the system.

In addition to ensuring there is no role or authority confusion between the future college and the current 12 college leaders, the Regional Presidents will be working with the colleges who are scheduled for accreditation reviews to bolster their efforts to meet the standards where any concerns might exist. As NECHE has noted, most of the colleges have fiscal challenges and room for improvement on student success; so the Regional Presidents are focused on identifying resources that can stabilize the colleges' financial positions and bolster enrollment and completion efforts. System-wide we have invested over \$2 million in the 12 colleges' participation in Achieving the Dream which seeks to implement best practices in student success. Despite the challenging fiscal times, this investment was made to improve student outcomes, which has a positive impact on students.

Furthermore, the Chief Academic Officer at each college remains responsible, per Standard 3, for the quality of the academic program. All college CAOs serve on the Academic Council and ensure that the governance processes are followed both on their campus and with the Board of Regents. The academic leadership team at CSCC is establishing the consolidated college structure, roles and functions and is not engaged in operational matters of the 12 independent colleges. Having said that, strong collaboration and communication among the academic leaders at the campus and the interim team at CSCC are encouraged as we move through the transition phases. As more work is done to establish CSCC, it will be imperative that roles and responsibilities are clear and, when questions arise, that they are dealt with quickly so that the NECHE standards can be adhered to by both the current leadership and the leadership of the future college.

## Section II: Current Progress

This section updates the progress we have made within NECHE standards. We have only included standards for which we have taken significant steps

### Mission and Purposes: Standard One

One of the first accomplishments of the transition work was the development of the CSCC Mission and Vision statement. After a rigorous process of vetting, the statement was approved by the full Board on March 9, 2018.

The Community College of Connecticut\* Mission

*The Community College of Connecticut provides access to academically rigorous and innovative education and training focused on student success. The College supports excellence in teaching and learning, makes data-informed decisions, promotes equity, advances positive change for the students, communities, and industries it serves, and awards associates degrees and certificates.*

The Community College of Connecticut\* Vision

*The Community College of Connecticut \*will be recognized for exceptional student success, educational leadership, and transformative collaboration with business and industry, government, educational, and key stakeholders while advancing diverse opportunities for Connecticut's citizens and communities.*

The revised Mission and Vision express the values that guide CSCC and frame a commitment not limited to teaching students, but also to serving communities and the state, which is consistent with the CSCU Strategic Goals. The statement will inform strategic planning, data management analytics, evaluation and assessment, and continuous quality improvement. The statement also informs all aspects of the current work on consolidation described in this document.

\*On May 14, 2020, the Board of Regents named the college Connecticut State Community College

### Planning and Evaluation: Standard Two

The newly named CEO, CAO, CFO, and three Associate Vice Presidents, in combination with the previously hired Regional Presidents and the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, form the initial cabinet for CSCC. Part of the role of this cabinet is to lead the development of the first strategic plan for CSCC.

## Organization and Governance: Standard Three

At its May 14, 2020 meeting, the Board of Regents named the new college Connecticut State Community College (CSCC). Dr. David L. Levinson was designated as the Interim President. In addition, the following leadership was named:

- Dr. Michael Rooke, president of Northwestern Connecticut Community College, becomes interim Provost.
- Kerry Kelley, fiscal and program policy section director at the Office of Policy and Management, becomes interim Chief Financial Officer.
- Dr. Tanya Millner, interim CEO at Manchester Community College, becomes interim Associate Vice President for Teaching and Learning.
- Dr. Francine Rosselli-Navarra, Professor of Psychology at Manchester Community College, becomes interim Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Curriculum.
- Michael Stefanowicz, interim Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs becomes interim Associate Vice President of Higher Education Transitions.

In close collaboration with Dr. Alison Buckley, CSCC's Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, the new interim team has already begun work to prepare the future college for opening. Searches for permanent positions in Enrollment Management and Student Affairs are in process now.

During the transition period, the interim Provost and CFO, the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, and other members of the academic and student affairs team for CSCC will report to the interim President. The naming of the single college and the leadership team is an important step in separating CSCC from the CSCU system office and allowing for growing autonomy and authority of the institution's leadership and design. The interim leadership team will focus on the consolidation of CSCC, while the 12 campus CEOs and CAOs operate their institutions per standards 3.12-3.19.

CSCU's Vice President of Facilities is working with the state of Connecticut to identify possible office space to locate the CSCC. Initial discussions are underway to locate the new leadership team and staff in New Britain, Connecticut. The project is estimated to take at least 70 weeks, putting us at a late fall 2021 move in date. We will update the Commission on these plans as they move forward but understand this too is an important step in establishing the autonomy of the single college.

Three Regional Presidents were hired on July 1, 2019 and have been working closely with College CEOs/Presidents to identify and replicate best practices, share and secure resources, and address common challenges. Because they are currently supporting the 12 colleges, effective July 1, 2020, the Regional Presidents, who report directly to the CSCU President, will assume direct supervisory responsibility for the campus Presidents/CEOs. This will promote greater collaboration and

coordination, more consistent implementation of system initiatives, as well as building on the strong supervision and support provided by the Regional Presidents. The Regional Presidents will report to the President of CSCC when it becomes operational and maintain their supervisory responsibility for the campus CEOs.

The Regional Presidents have been particularly instrumental in working to address budget issues for the coming fiscal year, in preparing the campuses to offer online courses and services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in leading Steering Committees to help the 12 colleges plan for reopening in the fall.

As college presidents have retired or left the system, they have been replaced by interim Campus CEOs. During the transition, college CEOs have the same authority and responsibility to meet Standard 3. On May 14, 2020, the BOR named five permanent CEOs at Capital, Gateway, Housatonic, Manchester, and Middlesex Community Colleges, who will begin their terms in June or July of 2020. Searches will begin in November 2020 for Asnuntuck, Naugatuck Valley, Norwalk, Quinebaug and Tunxis Community Colleges where we have current interim leadership. These searches will help to stabilize the current colleges, providing leadership during and after the transition to the single college.

A shared governance workgroup, with elected members from each college, was formed in 2018 and charged by the CSCU Provost to craft “a proposal on how to operationalize. . . communication, collaboration, and mutual accountability between administration, faculty, staff, and students which advances excellence in the operation of CSCU institutions and ultimately to provide to the single college its governance structure.” The work of the Shared Governance committee is ongoing; they are considering several proposals to submit to the College Consolidation Implementation Committee (CCIC). The Board of Regents is particularly focused on shared governance and ensuring that, per Standard 3.15, 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. Now that CSCC’s President, CAO, and CFO are identified, they can be added to the work group and the proposal can continue to be finalized after receiving public comment.

As noted earlier, while we are re-imagining the single college and transitioning to that consolidated structure, the CSCU President, Regional Presidents and college Presidents/CEOs will ensure the campuses maintain their commitment to the NECHE standards.

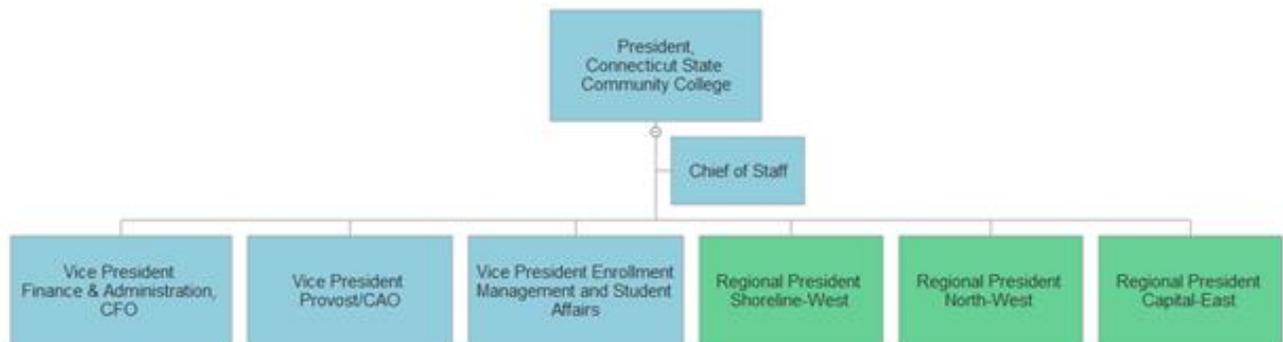
## Overview of the Academic and Student Affairs Organizational Charts

In preparation for the single accredited college, draft plans for the academic and student affairs Organizational Chart have been created and shared with all 10,000 college and university campus leaders, faculty, and staff on May 15th. The CSCC leadership team is meeting with existing statewide functional groups called councils and any other interested groups to discuss the charts in detail and solicit their thoughts and ideas before finalization as part of the substantive change proposal. The draft organizational charts, a video presentation, and a slide deck are available on our [website](#), which includes an email address for submission of questions. A FAQ document will collect and address those questions in the coming weeks and be shared widely as well.

The charts illustrate the academic and student affairs organization of CSCC beginning with a high level view of the CSCU system office and moving through the CSCC President's cabinet to campus positions. It does not include all staff, for instance administrative support, at the college office or on the campuses.

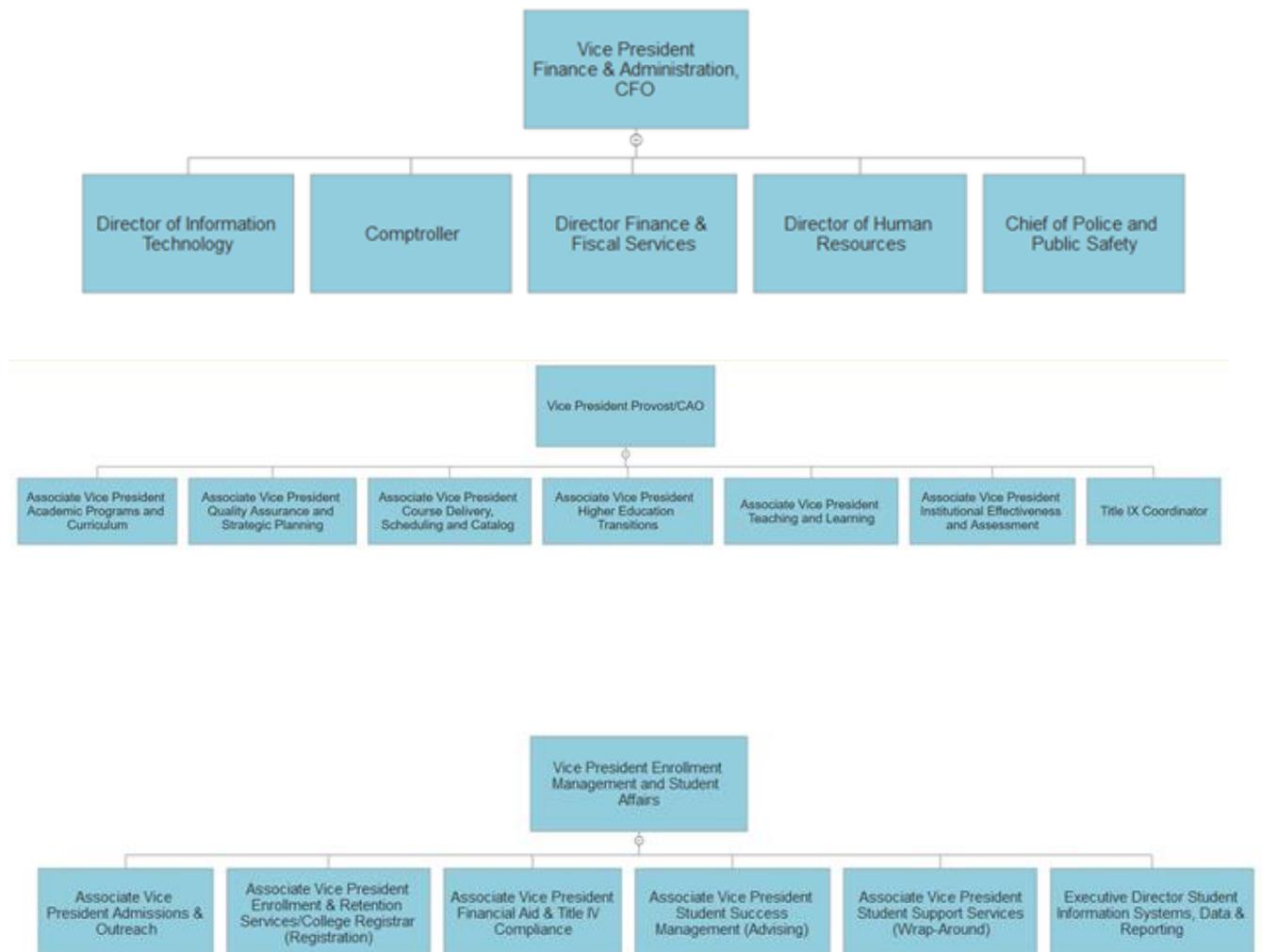
### First level

The first level of administration at CSCC comprises the President's cabinet, which includes Vice Presidents of Finance and Administration (CFO), of Academic Affairs (Provost and CAO), and of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, as well as three Regional Presidents.



## Second Level

Each Vice President's cabinet designates positions for specific functions and represents one of the most significant changes from current structures. In the current 12 colleges, many of these functions are dispersed with many administrators and staff taking on multiple roles. The positions in these cabinets provide capacity and accountability for specific functions necessary for CSCC.

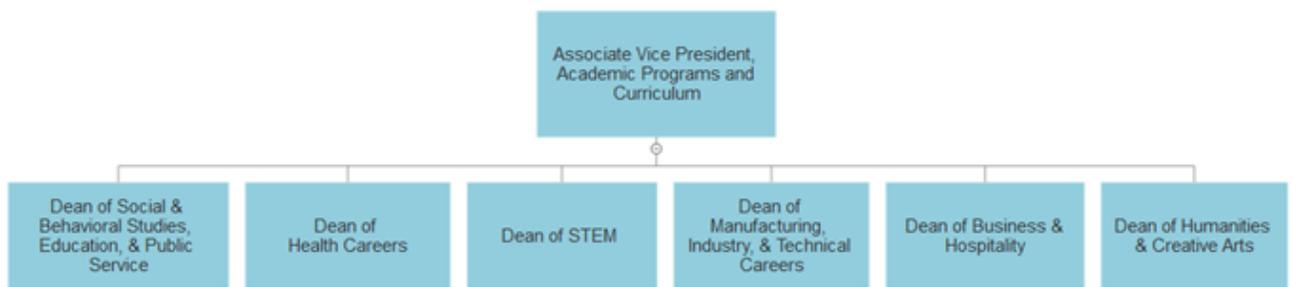


### Third Level

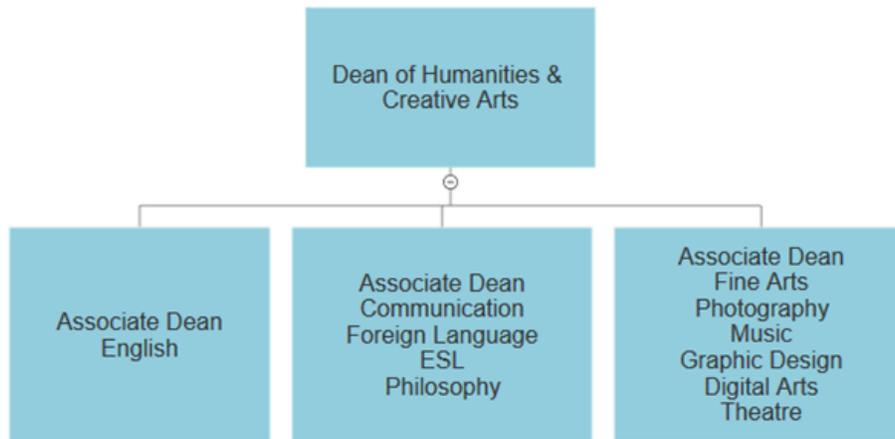
Most of the administrative positions in the second level are supported by staff who specialize in specific functions at CSCC. Below are examples, two from Academic Affairs and one from Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, which illustrate how CSCC devotes sufficient capacity to functions and how the administration at the college office relates to faculty and staff on the campuses. Academic Affairs follows a college office model, whereas Enrollment Management and Student Affairs takes more advantage of CSCC's regional structure.

### Academic Affairs

The Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Curriculum oversees the six Deans of Areas of Study:



Each of these Deans oversees multiple academic departments, each of which is led by an Associate Dean who performs many of the functions of current department chairs and division directors. These Associate Deans provide direct supervision and support for full-time faculty in these college-wide departments. Some of these departments house a large, single discipline or program, others combine several smaller, related disciplines or programs.



Administration is housed at the college office whereas faculty are housed at a campus. As noted below, this structure supports a single catalog of programs and courses and ensures communication among discipline faculty across the campuses. Faculty leads and program coordinators on the campuses perform functions that are best met locally, such as the hiring and evaluation of adjunct instructors.

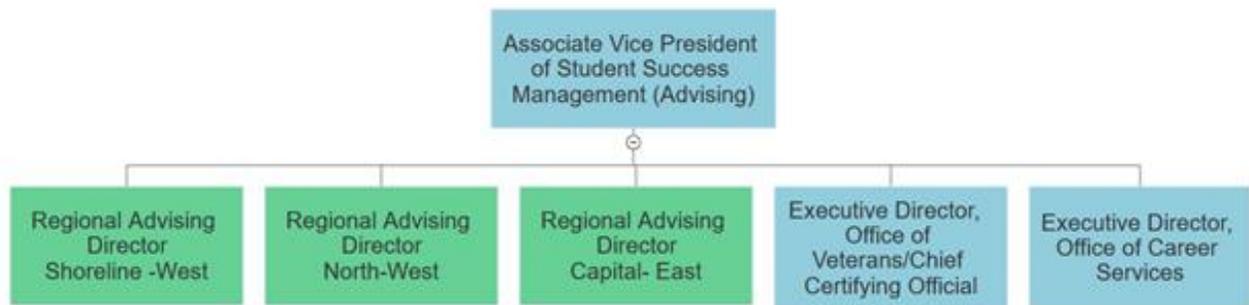
The Associate Vice President of Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning oversees and provides critical technical support for regional and specialized accreditation, program review, and strategic planning by dedicating specialized capacity.



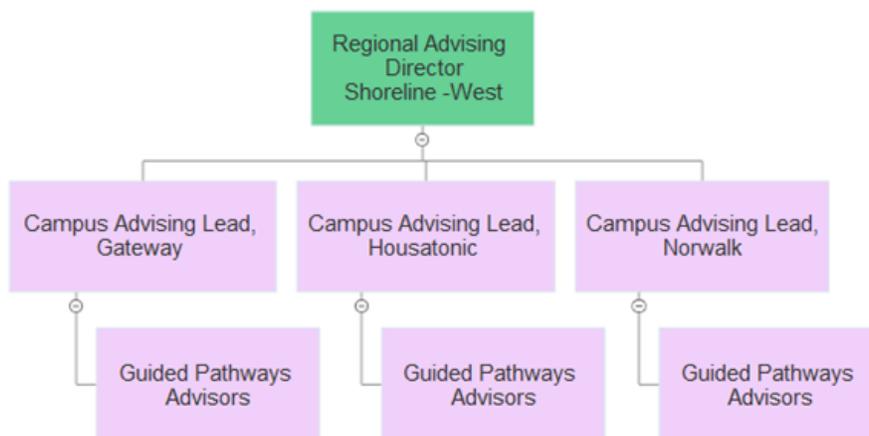
Because the work of these directors intersects, they work closely with one another as well as with other college office staff and administrators, faculty, and staff on the campuses.

## Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

The area of the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs takes advantage of the regional structure and is structured more vertically than Academic Affairs. Under the Vice President, for instance, the Associate Vice President of Student Success Management (advising) directly supervises both central (Executive Director Office of Veterans / Chief Certifying Officer and Executive Director Office of Career Services) and regionalized staff (Regional Advising Directors).



The Regional Advising Directors in turn supervise advising staff at the campuses in their region.



This structure provides for campus level supervision and for attention to local context, while at the same time assuring that best practices are used across the campuses with reporting lines that flow up through the Regional Directors to the AVP. The advising model, as well as training and professional development, is consistent across the campuses --- ensuring comparable services are provided to each student. Elements of Admissions and Outreach; Enrollment, Retention and

Retention Services / College Registrar; and Financial Aid and Title IV Compliance follow this regional model.

## Regional Presidents

The Regional Presidents assume responsibility for the regional budget and workforce development as well as for supervising the campus CEOs. Each has a cabinet comprising the campus CEOs, a Regional Chief Workforce Officer, and a Regional Chief Fiscal Officer.



This regional approach has distinct advantages for managing the budget as well as for CSCC's relationship to industry in the state. For example, industry and workforce boards will be able to collaborate within a region or more easily across the campuses with this regional coordination of workforce development. For the complete charts, [see appendix A](#).

## The Academic Program: Standard Four

The curriculum for the college is currently being developed and aligned by faculty discipline groups. Three large curriculum alignment kickoff events were held for faculty to learn about the alignment process, ask questions, and meet with their discipline-specific colleagues throughout the system. Many of the faculty invited to the first of these events had previously been involved in curriculum work for the transfer articulation pathways. In fall 2019, the list of faculty members invited to participate in the curriculum alignment work was broadened by searching each community college's website, noting the contact individuals for each discipline, and confirming the updated lists with college Presidents, CEOs, and Academic Deans. Faculty on the list received an email inviting them to participate and faculty were also encouraged to invite any other faculty members who were interested.

To encourage even broader involvement of community college faculty throughout the system, the curriculum alignment leadership team sent an email in late-Spring 2020 to full- and part-time faculty

members inviting them to participate in their discipline-specific alignment work groups. Interested faculty members completed a short survey confirming their willingness to participate as well as their academic disciplines. The survey received 280 responses and 71%, or 198 faculty members, said they were willing to participate in curriculum alignment.

This alignment work requires faculty to develop common curricula, outcomes, pre-requisites, and course numbers, providing the coherence sought in standard 4.3. The curriculum alignment work is expected to be completed by December 2020.

From May 2018 to December 2019, the General Education workgroup, including elected members from each college, developed a proposal for a common General Education core. After considerable public comment and revisions to align with a previously developed transfer core, the final proposal passed through the transitional governance structure and was sent to each college for feedback and an endorsement vote utilizing current local governance procedures. This is a 21-24 credit core that will be the basis for all programs in the single college and was designed to meet both career program and transfer programs. In April 2020, the General Education workgroup reviewed the votes taken on campus and notices received from campuses which chose not to vote, as well as feedback gathered on numerous campus visits and sent the final proposal forward, with a detailed report of the full process and summary of the votes and feedback. The transitional governance structure approved the proposal. On May 14, 2020, the BOR approved the General Education Core for CSCC.

## **Students: Standard Five**

Since 2018, the Student Success Center at the system office has been engaged in implementing guided pathways reforms in partnership with Jobs for the Future and a number of other national partners. This work has gathered together hundreds of faculty and staff to engage in designing and implementing national best practices in support of students. In 2019 the CSCU Success Center began a three-year, \$2.3 million agreement with Achieving the Dream (ATD) that allows all 12 CSCU community colleges to be part of the ATD network and receive support from nationally recognized ATD coaches. Consolidation offers us the opportunity to adopt and scale best practices for all students, regardless of background and location.

Guided Pathways will be accelerated with commitment of \$1.9 million this year. This investment will support the implementation of a Holistic Case Management Advising Model beginning at three campuses this summer with all remaining campuses coming onboard in the following two academic years. Dozens of Guided Pathways Advisors will be hired and deployed to our campuses in the next fiscal year. We have established a plan to continue this ramp-up over time so that ultimately over 100 additional advisors will be hired. This policy supports not only an increase in the number of advisors, but a redesign of how we deliver advising. Each student will have a dedicated advisor who follows them from admission to completion of goals and serves as a case manager, tracking

successes and addressing needs as they arise. That advising work will be supported by using a comprehensive student success technology platform. Faculty will continue to serve in their roles as academic advisors as students make choices and pursue their specific academic goals. This model will be initiated at the 12 colleges and then continue to serve students under the aegis of CSCC beginning in the fall of 2023. ([See appendix E](#))

## **Institutional Resources: Standard Seven**

The transition to financial sustainability is well underway. Shared human resources, purchasing, information technology, enrollment management and finance services are in place, and will be explicitly reflected in the colleges' budgets for the first time this summer. During the transition, each college will continue to control its own institutional resources, while increasingly benefiting from cost-effective support funded jointly with the other colleges in the system.

## **Educational Effectiveness: Standard Eight**

CSCC has enhanced capacity to assess student learning. Faculty from throughout our current 12 community colleges are collaborating to develop common student learning outcomes (SLOs). Although the community colleges previously adopted common course numbering, there was no agreement on SLOs. This has been especially noticeable in developmental education, both math and English sequences, which has caused great confusion throughout the state and has raised the ire of legislators for some time.

CSCC will have a Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness reporting to the Provost. In the meantime, regional institutional research directors were hired in October 2019 to help facilitate data collection and analysis across regions. These staff also manage a campus IR function and work closely with staff from the other colleges in their region to support planning and leverage expertise. Currently, regional institutional research directors continue to have a solid line direct-reporting relationship with their respective campus leaders. At CSCC, the regional institutional research directors supervise the campus IR liaisons and report directly to the VP of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to ensure CSCC has the capacity to conduct strategic academic, finance and other resource planning. At the same time, they provide support for campus-level decision making.

Through the establishment of Centers of Excellence focused on areas such as data governance and report writing, assessment, survey research, and policy analysis, CSCC will have the capacity to collect, report and deploy analytics in ways that we cannot in our present structure. CSCC also has capacity to perform assessments at multiple levels (statewide, regional, and local) along with

triangulated research methodologies and modalities. The Interim Provost will also establish an Assessment Council to begin the work of defining measures of student success.

In addition to Achieving the Dream's impact on teaching and learning, we are leveraging the initiative to improve our assessment of educational effectiveness. Our partnership with ATD helps colleges identify emerging needs and ways to improve practices across the full spectrum of capacities required for whole-college reform. Our involvement in ATD will improve our institutional research capacity.

### **Union Leadership and faculty and staff participation**

Finally, the Commission is aware of the statement issued by the faculty and staff union leadership (The 4Cs, FTCT 1942 (AFT), CSU-AAUP, SUOAF, and AFSCME) of the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) which stands united in opposition to the consolidation efforts.

In December, union leadership supported the disengagement of faculty and staff from the planning process. When members ask to be removed from committees, their requests were honored, with the exception of faculty who had committed to participating through their contractual additional responsibilities. Despite union leadership urging and campus resolutions to withdraw from the work, many faculty and staff have opted to continue their participation in the planning process or engage in the work for the first time, both formally and informally. We continue to monitor the various planning committees and work groups to strive for representation by all campuses and relevant stakeholders. We have encouraged members to continue their contributions, invited participation from those not previously involved in the work, and welcomed volunteers who have asked to be engaged.

At the direction of the governing body and in execution of the duties as management of the system, CSCU has moved forward with the faculty and staff who have engaged while at the same time offering opportunities for all faculty through their campus internal governance to review and provide feedback on proposed changes. Additionally, planning staff have offered and held round table discussions with faculty on campuses to provide overviews of the planning efforts and to address questions and concerns and have attended Academic, Student Affairs and other Council meetings to share updates and solicit input. In addition, the Regional Presidents have had open forums as well as regular office hours on each campus to allow faculty and staff to raise questions and concerns and get more detailed information about the planning process. President Ojakian was invited monthly to provide updates and respond to questions at the Student Advisory Committee. These conversations have been very positive and have allowed for an open exchange of information.

## Section III: Comprehensive Transition Plan

### Timeline

As we build CSCC, there are a number of activities that must take place to be ready to admit our first student in October of 2022 and begin our first semester of instruction in August 2023. Below is a high-level listing of the activities underway and planned for in advance of the submission of a substantive change proposal to NECHE in early 2022. These activities include organization of the shared services model and agreements discussed in Standard 7, key hiring required to establish the academic and student affairs structures discussed in the update on Standard 3, as well as establishment of technology tools, policies, etc. for the CSCC. By far the largest piece of work to be done over the two years is the alignment of curriculum into a single catalog for students across the state.

Further refinement of these next steps happens on a regular basis and the timeline is adjusted as needed to allow for needed flexibility and responsiveness to stakeholder input. The section below provides a summary of changes that will happen in each phase along with bullets on activities in key areas.

### Students First Transition Phases and Activities

#### Prior to Spring 2020

To date, the focus has been on setting the foundation for the consolidation of the colleges into the single accredited institution. Committees were established to oversee the consolidation process with representation from various stakeholders and to provide a forum for discussion of key transition challenges and opportunities. Procedures were created to guide committee work on design of a new advising model, alignment of curriculum, proposal of shared governance models, etc. Permanent positions were filled to lead college campuses and the enrollment management and student affairs function for the colleges. Lastly, on May 14, the Board of Regents named CSCC and its interim leadership team to concentrate efforts on preparing for the substantive change proposal and the new college.

Detailed list of activities:

- Established administrative savings metrics
- Developed strategic human resources plan

- Filled positions for the single college, for system shared services, and for the new campus administrative structure:
  - VP of Enrollment Management
  - Three Regional Presidents
  - Promoted three campus IR Directors to Regional IR Directors
  - VP of Purchasing
  - Interim College VP of IT
  - Campus CEOs as needed
  - Replaced Deans of Administration with Associate Deans of Campus Operations through attrition
  - Combined Academic and Student Affairs Deans through attrition
- Created and filled positions for transition to the new college and implementation of Guided Pathways
  - Two Co-Leads for Consolidation of Academic and Student Affairs
  - Two managers to focus specifically on alignment of curriculum
  - Seven managers to focus specifically on Guided Pathways planning and policy development.

Accomplishments, committees and workgroups developed or formed to work on Students First:

- Established student success KPIs, adopted by Board of Regents
- Engaged all 12 community colleges in Achieving the Dream and established coordinating council for ATD work with 24 college representatives
- Created and staffed a broad range of committees to tackle issues central to the transition to the single college
  - Students First College Consolidation Implementation Committee
  - Students First Academic and Student Affairs Consolidation Committee
  - Mission/Vision workgroup
  - Shared Governance workgroup
  - Catalog/Policy Audit workgroup to identify BOR and community college policies that need to be updated or adopted to support CSCC

- Program Alignment Guidelines and Templates workgroup
- Faculty Discipline workgroups
- Aligned Program Review Committee
- Catalog workgroup
- Students First Guided Pathways workgroups/committees
  - Choice Architecture - established Areas of Study (meta-majors) policy
  - Recruitment Architecture - established onboarding and communications structures (including subgroup Website and Streamlined Application)
  - Holistic Student Support Redesign - established Holistic Case Management Advising policy and Guided Pathways Advisors structure
  - Alignment & Completion of Math and English – recommended policy and practice to facilitate the alignment of appropriate math and English requirements with programmatic, transfer, and workforce needs as well as student completion of college level math and English within the first year.
  - First Year Experience - developed College and Career Success 101
  - Program Maps & Academic Plans - established Guided Pathways program maps
- The Board of Regents hired 5 permanent CEOs
- The Board of Regents named the Connecticut State Community College
- The Board of Regents named the Interim Connecticut State Community College President
- Interim positions filled for Connecticut State Community College for the new campus administrative structure
  - CFO
  - CAO
    - Associate Vice President of Programs and Curriculum
    - AVP of Teaching and Learning
    - AVP Higher Education Transitions
- Core General Education proposal approved by Board of Regents

## June to December 2020

Under the leadership of the CSCC Interim President and his team, significant work is slated to be underway during this phase including development of a new student information system for the single college, a shared governance model proposal, filling of additional interim and permanent positions in the future college to lead efforts in enrollment management and student affairs, completion of curriculum alignment for a single college catalog, refinement of the academic organization structures through feedback with stakeholders, academic planning in the design of future academic departments, and marketing of the future college with new nomenclature and a logo.

Detailed list of activities:

- Develop student and community communication plans
- Develop service level agreements and centralized administrative structures for IT, HR, and Fiscal Affairs
- Develop IR functional team structure
- Develop plan for reorganization of workforce development and business and industry services regionally and locally
- Deliver through the Students First Academic and Student Affairs Consolidation Committee and Guided Pathways Task Force:
  - Program and course templates for single college catalog
  - Proposal on shared governance model for single college submitted to interim College President
  - Draft policy on alignment and completion of math and English submitted to Board of Regents for approval
- Develop, in collaboration with Ellucian, a plan for implementing a single Banner system for student and finance data including degree audit system. Begin to prepare student data for transition.
- Implement Ellucian CRM Recruit to provide a single prospect management tool and online admissions application (12 college version of this launched June 2020)
- Conduct logo contest and work with campus groups on nomenclature and marketing of new college
- Fill permanent positions for the single college, for system shared services, and for the new campus administrative structure

- Move current system office Banner Information Systems and Financial Aid staff to key comparable positions in the college
- AVP of Financial Aid
  - Hire Regional Director, Associate Director and Specialists to support implementation
  - Develop Financial Aid Service Level Agreement (SLA) to provide administrative support.
- AVP of Admissions
  - Hire Director of Admissions Operations and communications team
  - Develop SLA to centralize administrative admissions tasks
- AVP of Enrollment and Retention
  - Reorganize campus structure to deliver strategic enrollment management
- AVP of Student Success Management
  - Hire Regional Advising Directors
  - Develop SLA to implement Holistic Case Management Advising (HCMA) model
    - Identify HCMA training partner for all new Guided Pathways Advisors
  - Identify Student Success software platform
  - Hire first round of campus leads for Advising and Guided Pathways Advisors to begin roll out of new advising model
- Hire College Marketing Director to implement marketing plan
- Provide training for staff transitioning to new roles in administrative areas

## **January-December 2021**

During this phase in addition to the activities underway from the prior period, efforts will focus on developing a new Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and developing plans for bridge and transition programs, dual enrollment, prior learning assessment, and first year experience. Additional staff will be hired as Guided Pathways Advisors in the second year of the roll out of the new advising model along with training and software to support their direct work with students.

Detailed list of activities:

- Permanent positions filled for the single college, for system shared services, and for the new campus administrative structure
  - Hire permanent Campus CEOs
  - Hire second round of campus leads for Advising and Guided Pathways Advisors to begin roll out of new advising model; continue comprehensive Guided Pathways Advisor training and related software rollout
- Build student information system
- Develop training and implementation plan for enrollment “one-stop shops” on each campus
- Technology build outs and staff training
- Interim College President begins implementing new shared governance structure
- Ongoing review of aligned program and course proposals and vetting of general education courses
- Develop new Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to coordinate college-wide professional development and provide teaching resources and supports for faculty and staff
- Develop plans for CSCC coordination of bridge and transition programs, dual enrollment, prior learning assessment, and first year experience

## **January-December 2022**

During this phase, a substantive change proposal will be developed for NECHE so that CSCC can secure its accreditation before admitting its first student in October 2022. Key to this timeframe will also be the hiring of the permanent President of CSCC who will be on hand for the final preparations to open the single college. Work begun in prior phases will culminate here with the implementation of single college admissions process, student services fully operational in new organizational structure, deployment of early phases of the new SIS, and hiring of additional permanent positions for CSCC leadership.

Detailed list of activities:

- Fill permanent positions for the CSCC, system shared services, and the new campus administrative structure
  - College President
  - College Provost/CAO
  - Associate Vice Presidents reporting to the College Provost
  - Deans, Associate Deans, and Directors reporting to the College Provost
  - All positions in the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs
  - AVP of Student Support Service to design the integration of wraparound supports to ensure all students have the tools for the success they need at an individual level
  - Title IX/Student Conduct officer
  - Third round of campus leads for Advising and Guided Pathways Advisors to begin roll out of new advising model; continue comprehensive Guided Pathways Advisor training and related software rollout
- Establish Office of Postsecondary Education Identifier (OPEID) and federal reporting requirements for the single institution
- Obtain US DOE Program Approval
- Service Level Agreement for VA services goes into effect
- The CSCC academic catalog is live and the academic redesign is fully scaled
- Student Services are fully aligned to support the single institution.
- ISIRs (student aid applications) are imported to a single OPEID
- Develop and submit substantive change proposal to NECHE (April, September, or December in consultation with Commission)
- Implement single admissions application in 10/2022
- Continue work on Banner SIS
- Develop plans for single point coordination of tutoring, library, and accessibility support services
- Preliminary roll out of Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Celebrate admission of first students to the new college

## **January-August 2023**

During this final phase of transition, plans for operations of the new academic structure can be finalized with meeting schedules, populating of the governance committees, and roll out of additional marketing of the soon to be open CSCC.

Detailed list of activities:

- Develop schedule of course offerings for Fall 2023
- Fully deploy CSCC SIS and continue training as needed
- Develop standard meeting schedule for academic departments, divisions, and governance committees
- Preliminary meetings for new faculty departments and Areas of Study divisions
- Populate governance committees
- Full roll out of Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning
- Conduct permanent searches for any remaining leadership positions
- Marketing campaign with CSCC logo and new promotional materials

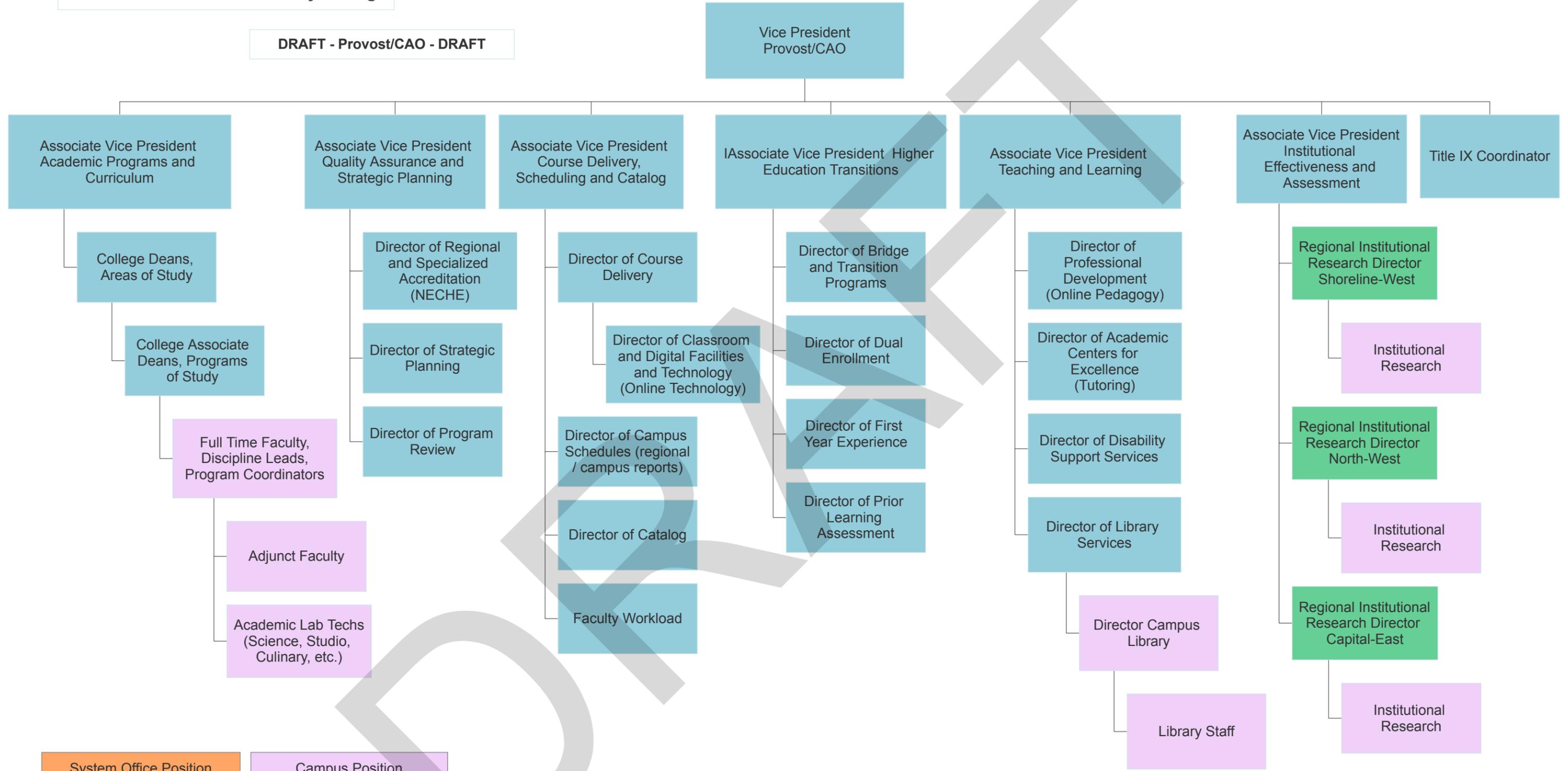
APPENDIX A:

# **Organizational Charts**



**Connecticut State Community College**

**DRAFT - Provost/CAO - DRAFT**

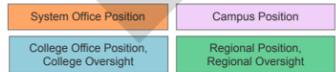
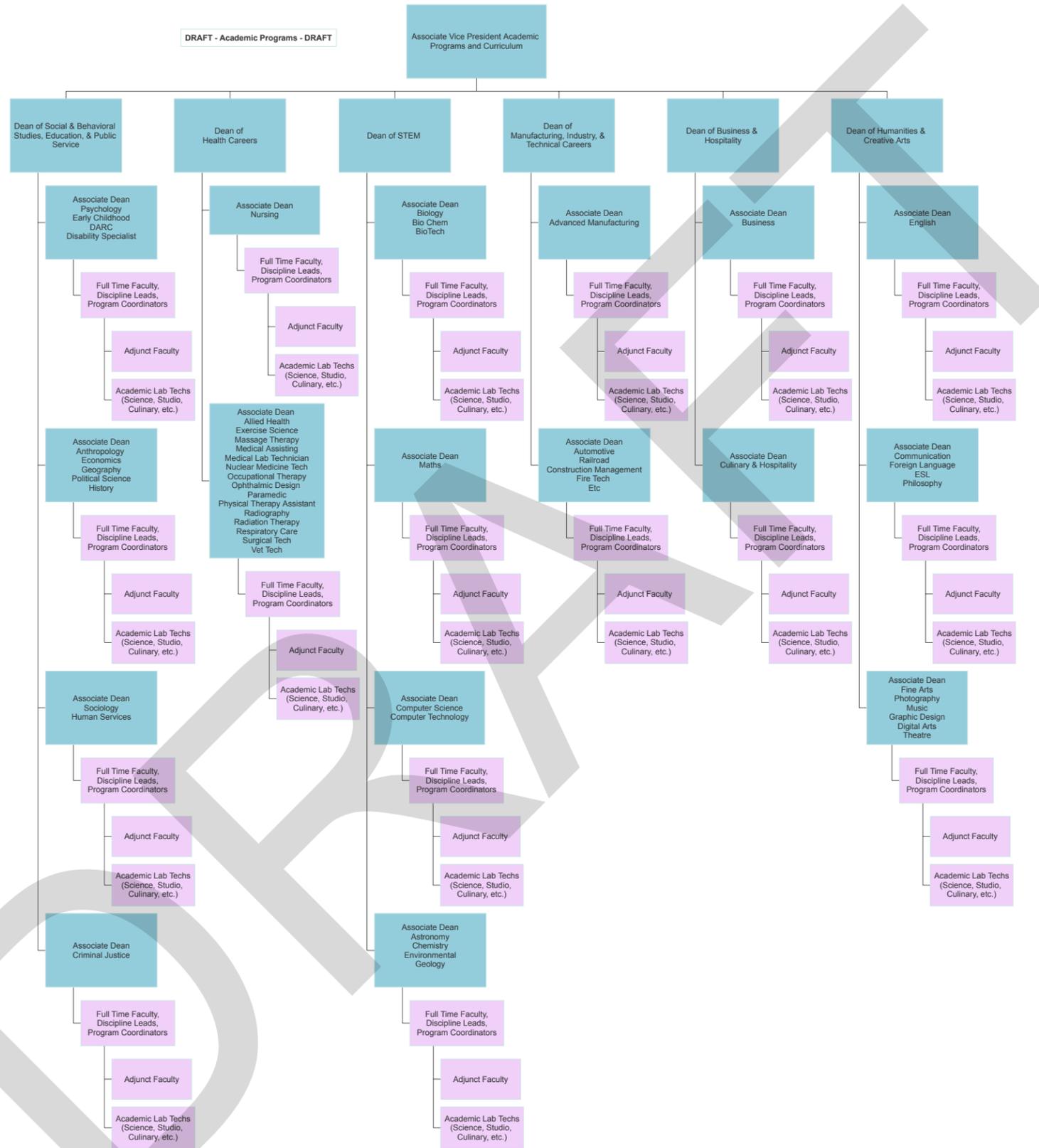


System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

Connecticut State Community College

DRAFT - Academic Programs - DRAFT



\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

**Connecticut State Community College**

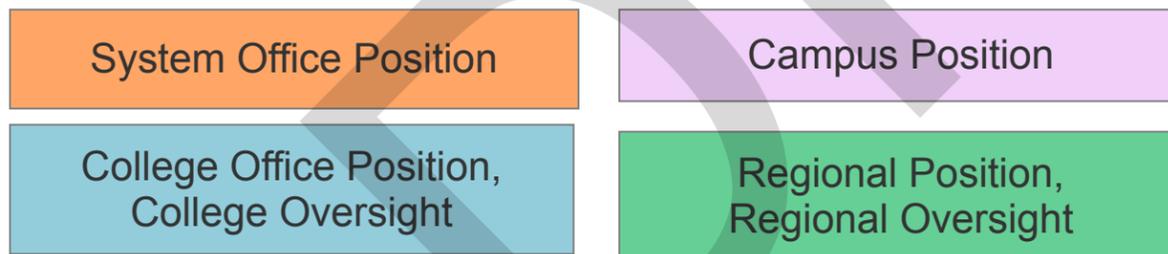
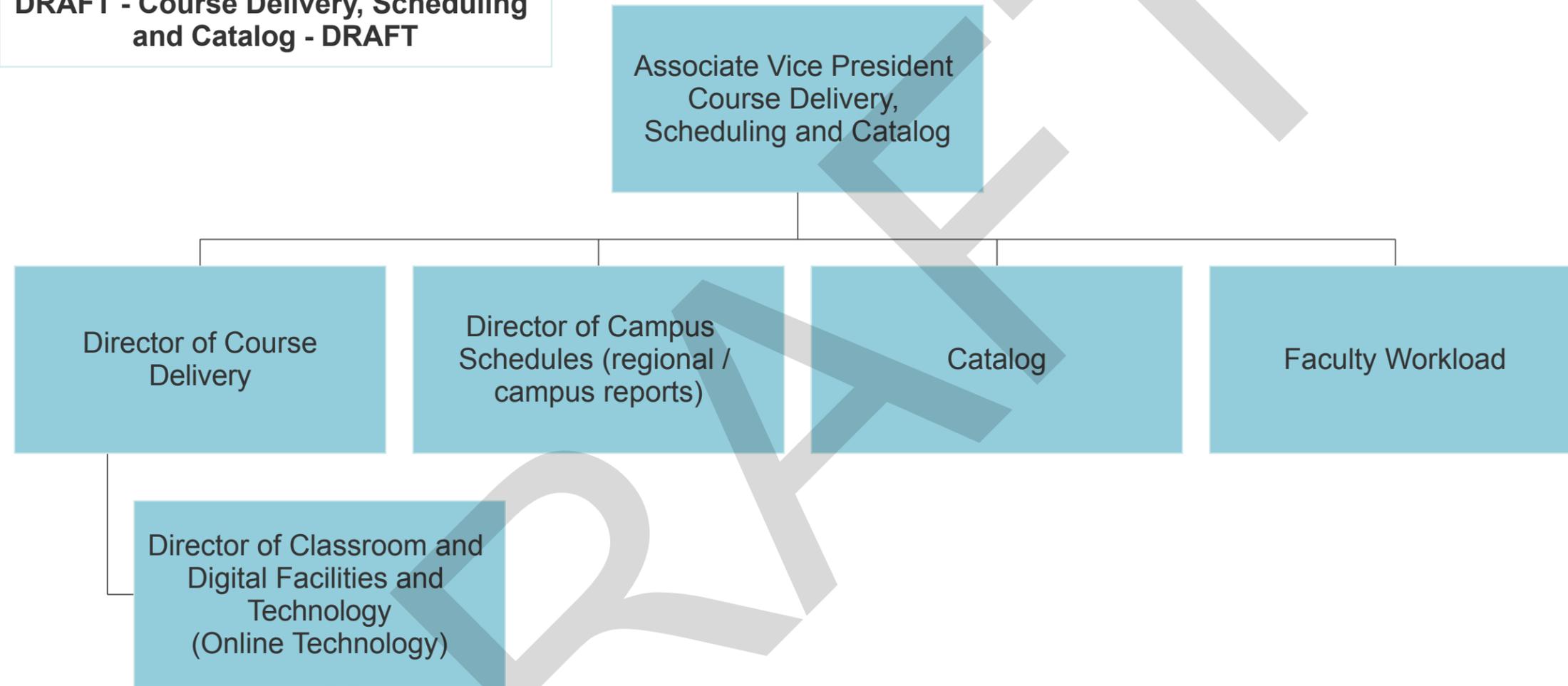
**DRAFT - Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning - DRAFT**



\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

# Connecticut State Community College

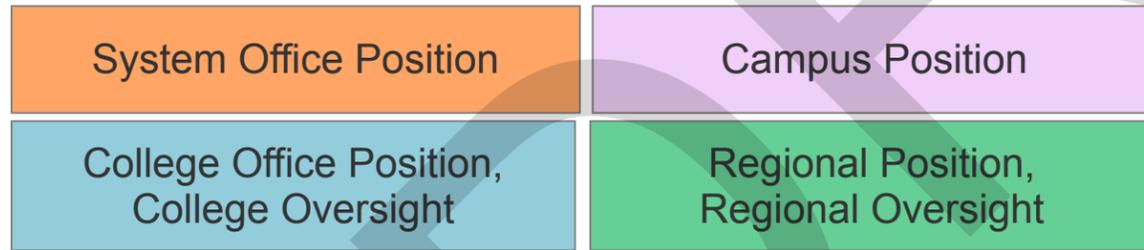
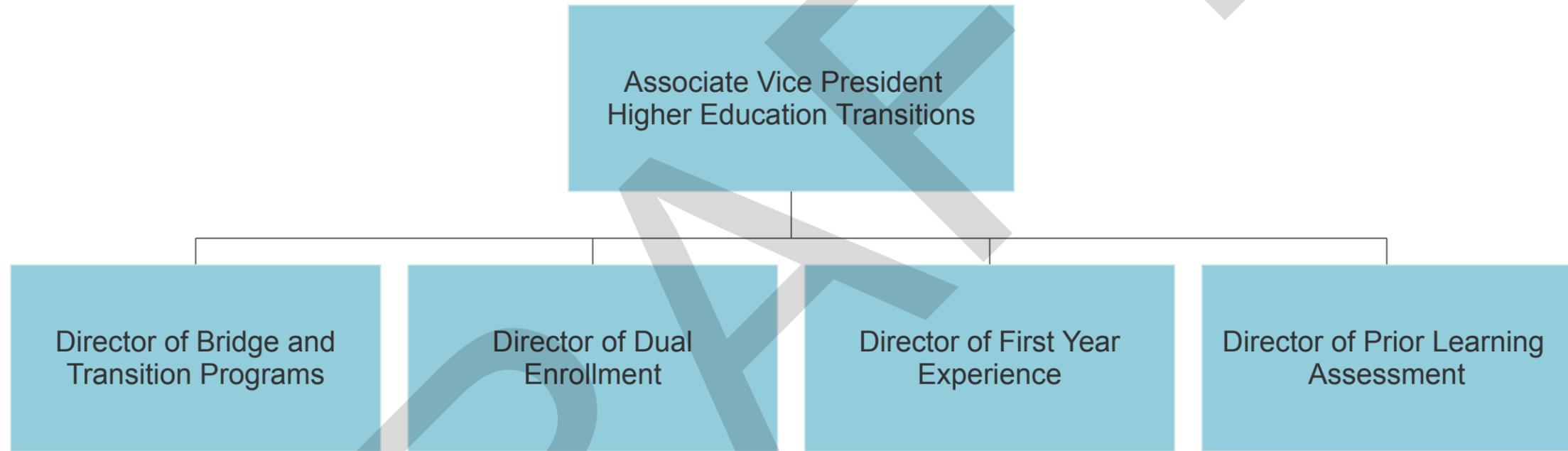
**DRAFT - Course Delivery, Scheduling and Catalog - DRAFT**



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**Connecticut State Community College**

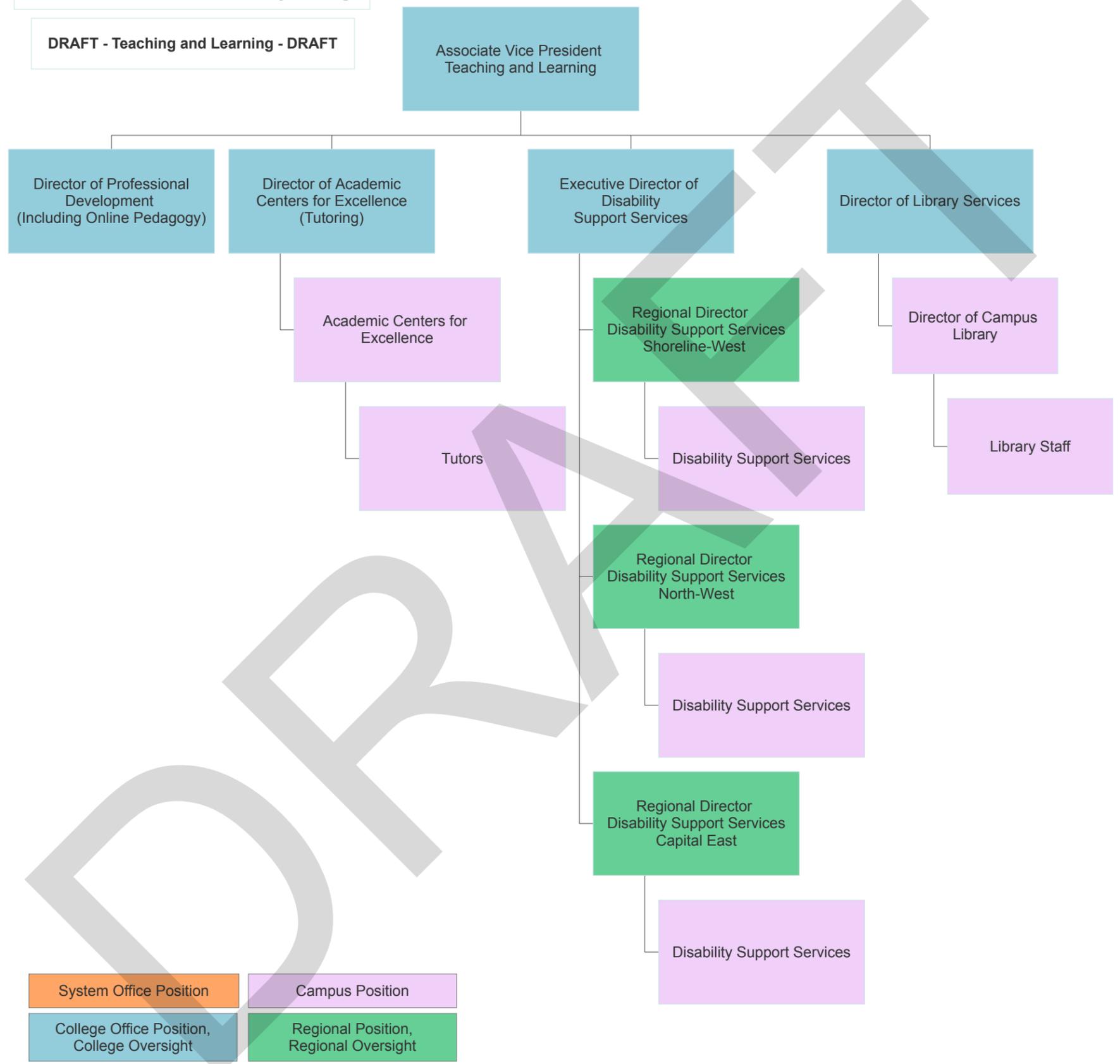
**DRAFT - Higher Education Transitions - DRAFT**



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**Connecticut State Community College**

DRAFT - Teaching and Learning - DRAFT

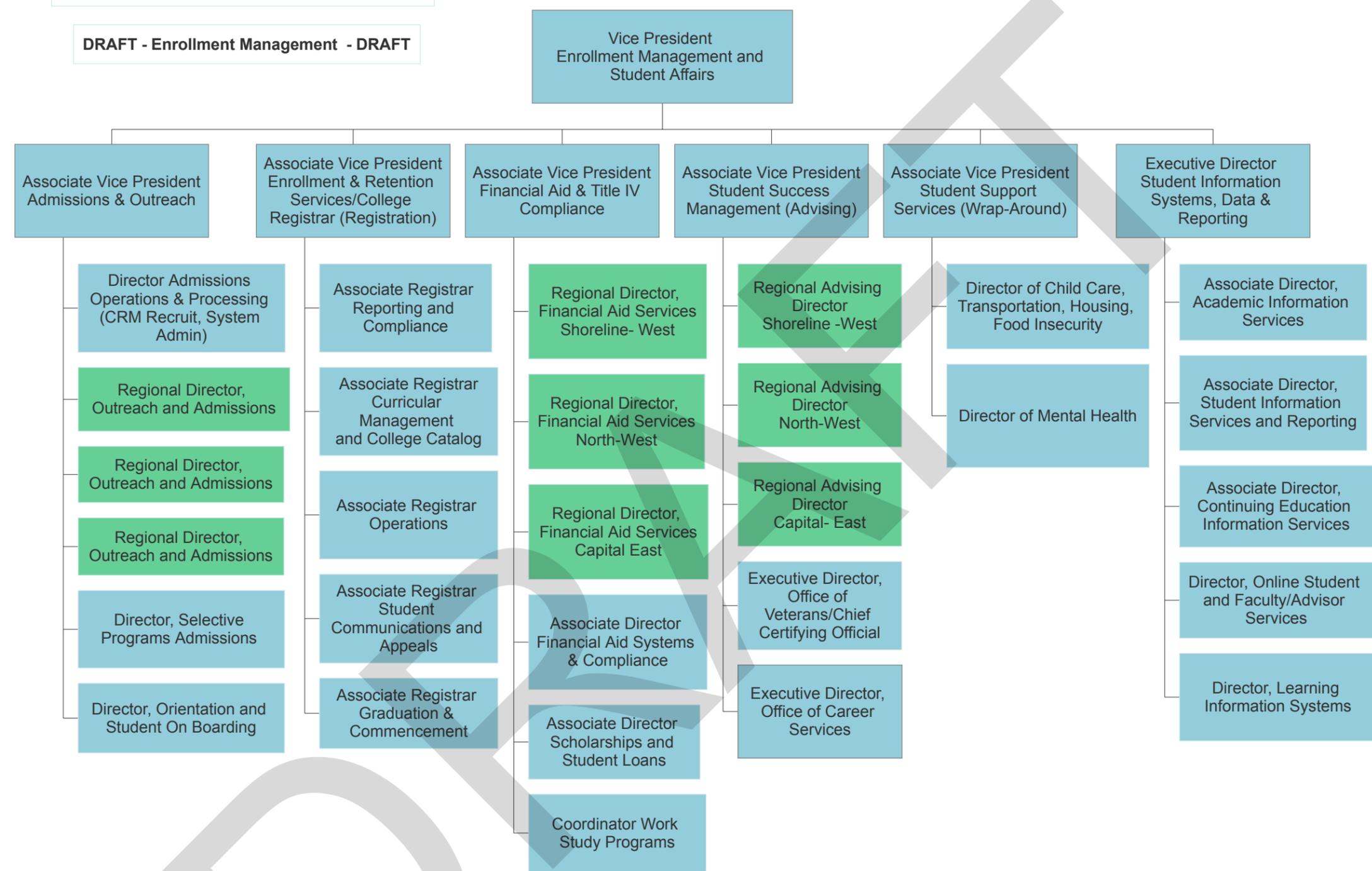


System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft will be included across the final college structure.

**Connecticut State Community College**

**DRAFT - Enrollment Management - DRAFT**

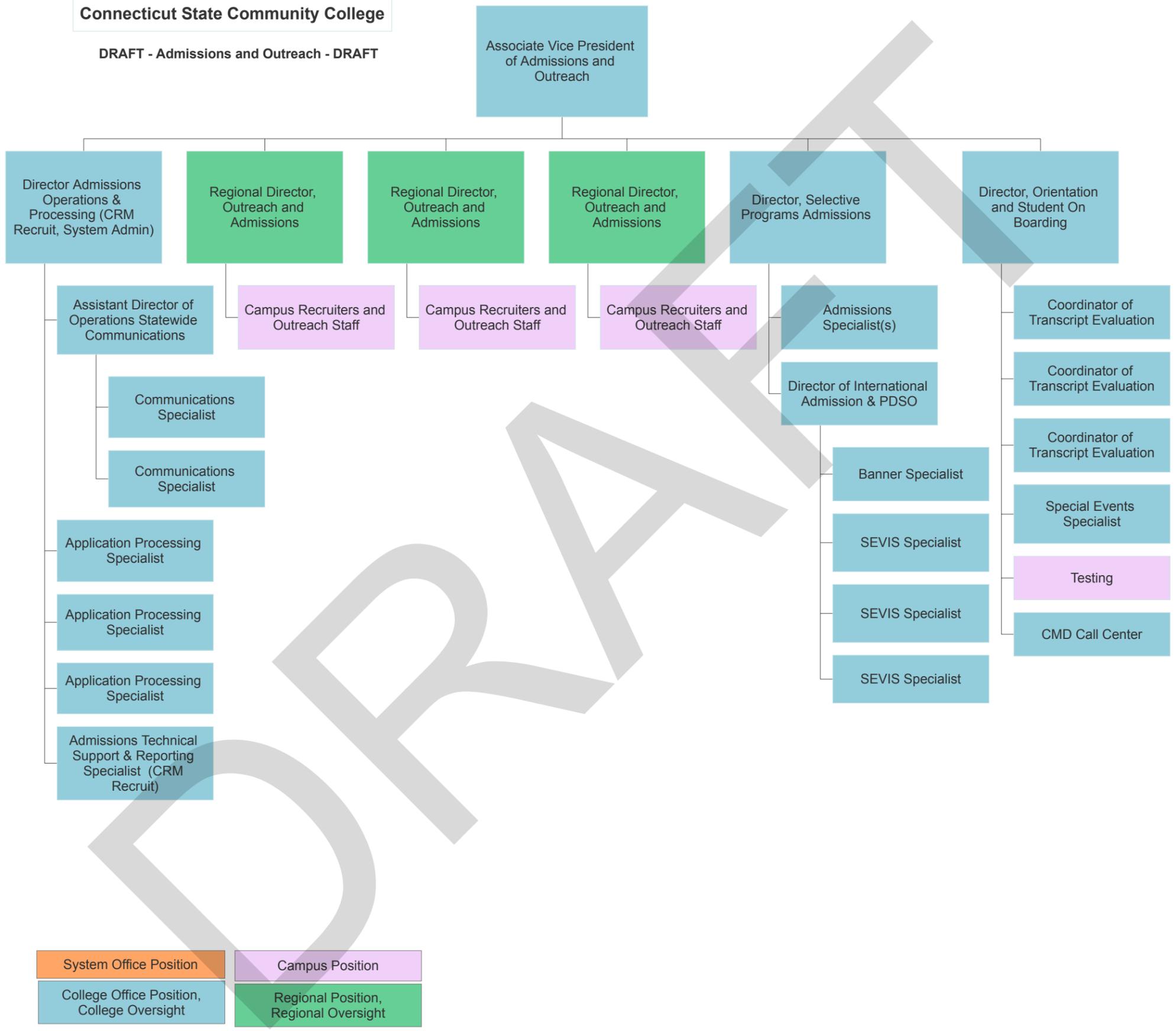


System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

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**Connecticut State Community College**

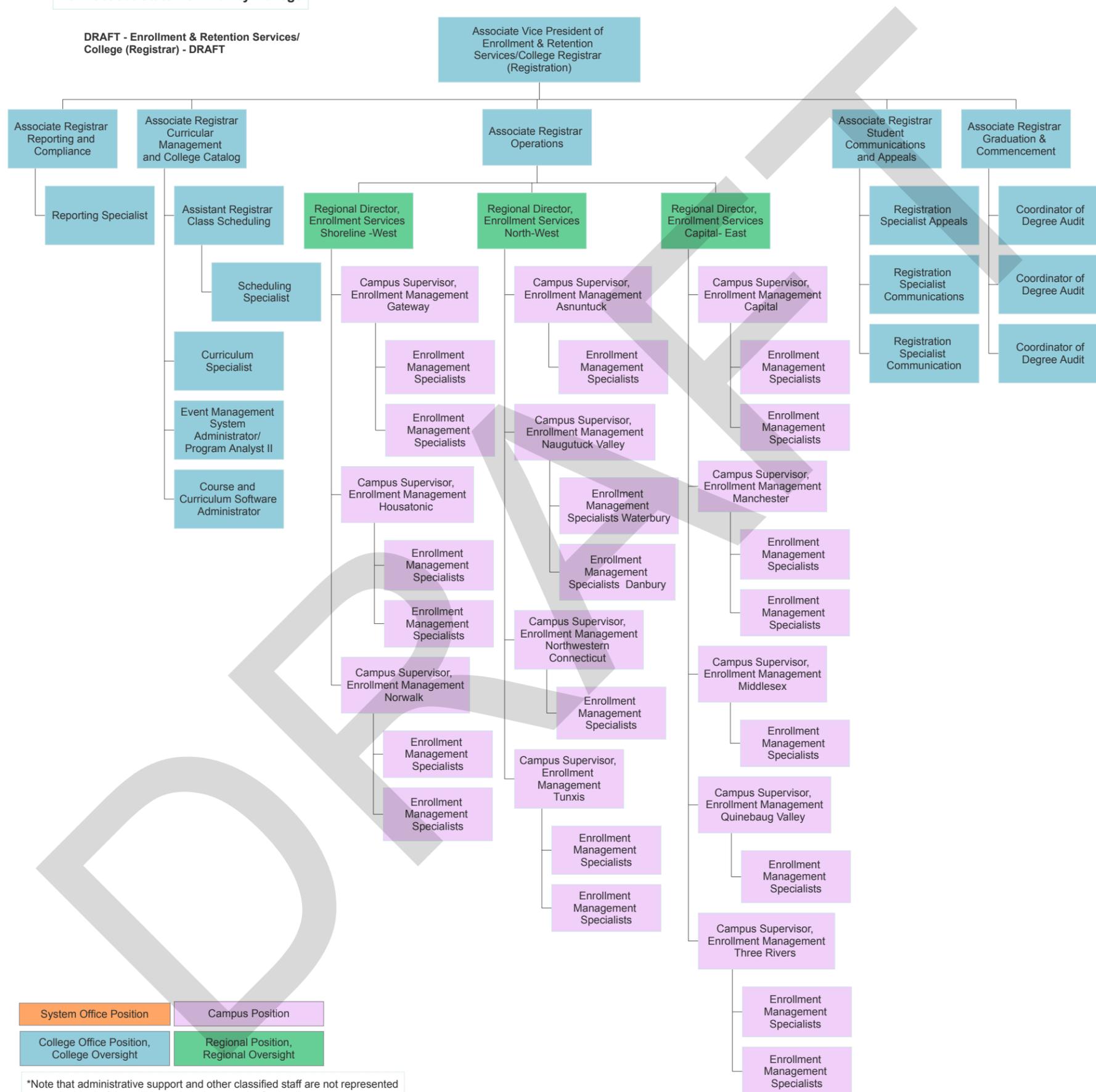
DRAFT - Admissions and Outreach - DRAFT



\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

**Connecticut State Community College**

**DRAFT - Enrollment & Retention Services/  
College (Registrar) - DRAFT**



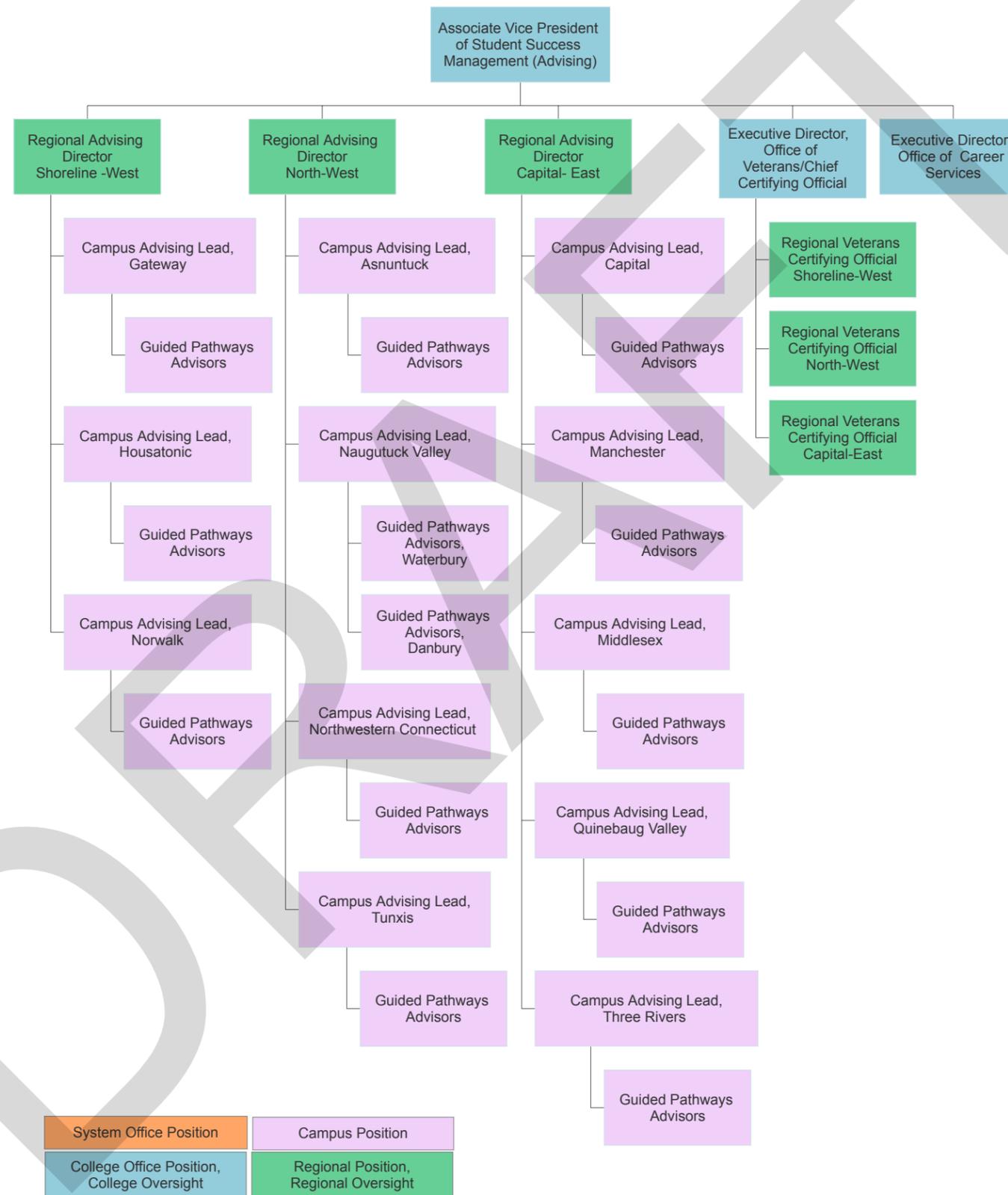
System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.



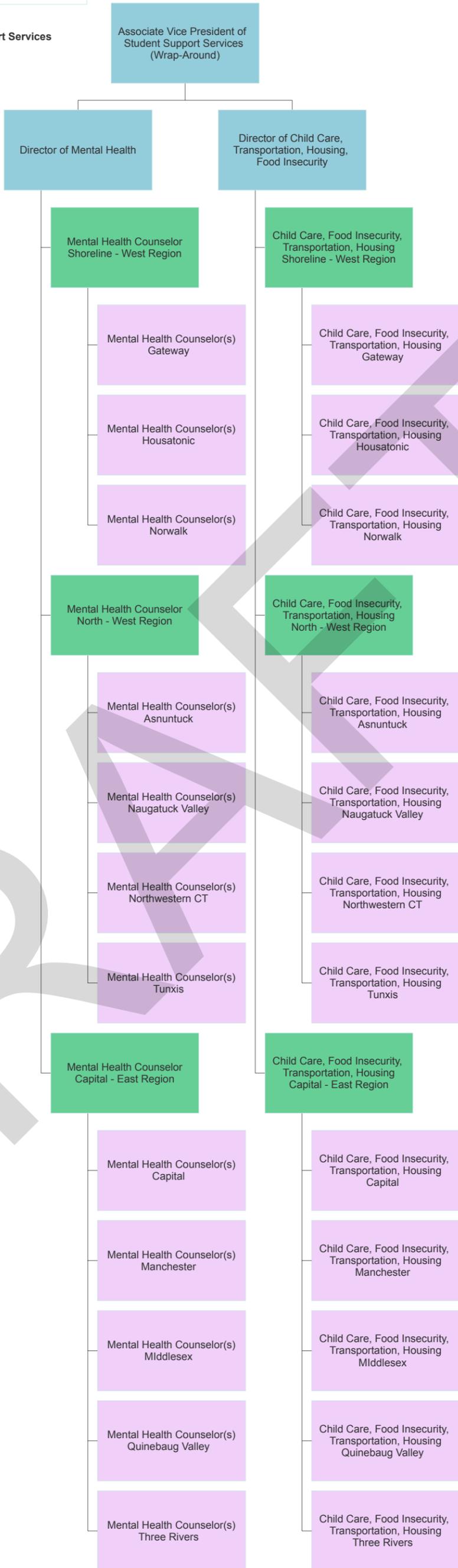
Connecticut State Community College

DRAFT - Student Success Management (Advising)- DRAFT



\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

DRAFT - Student Support Services  
(Wrap-Around) - DRAFT

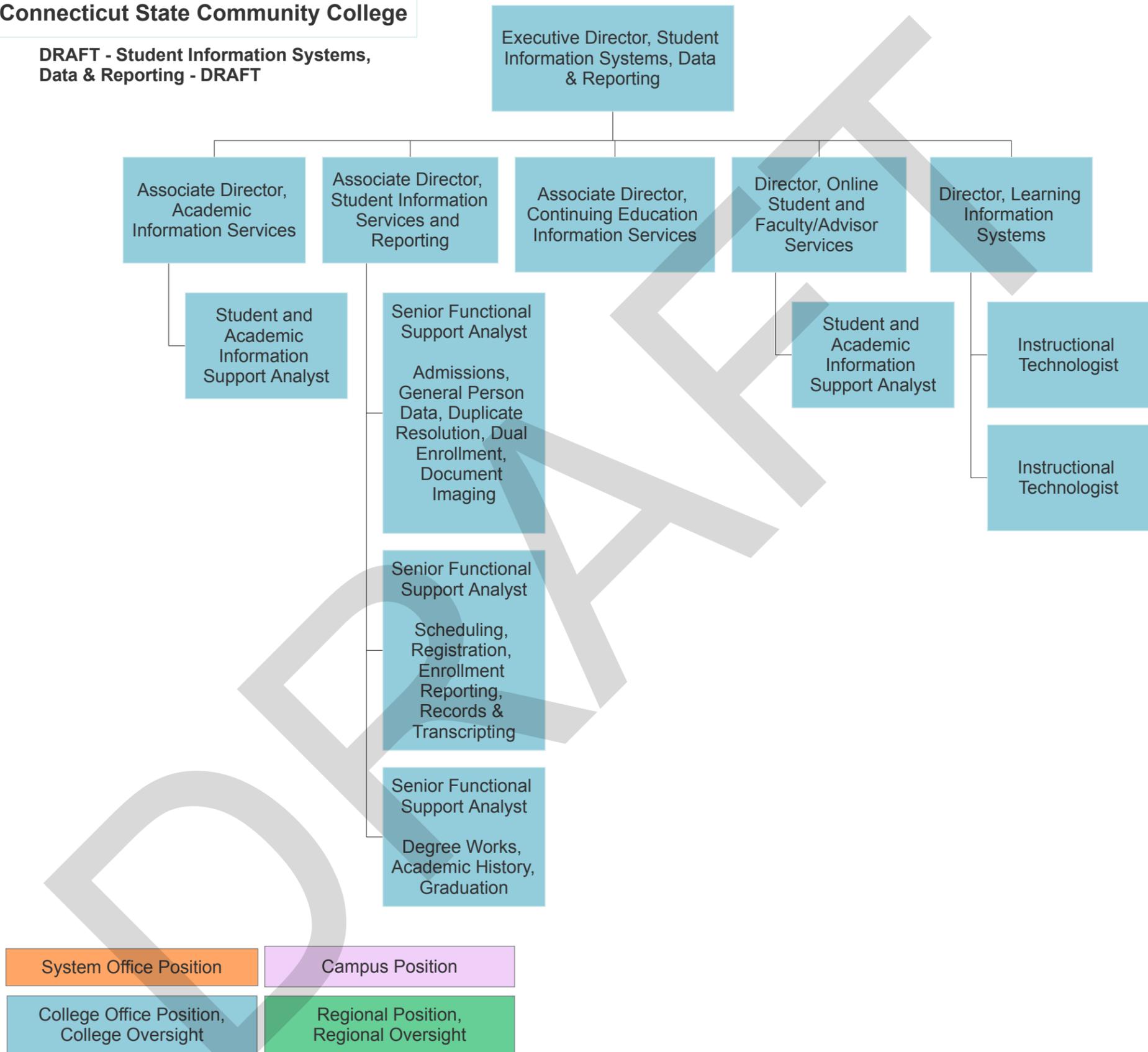


System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

**Connecticut State Community College**

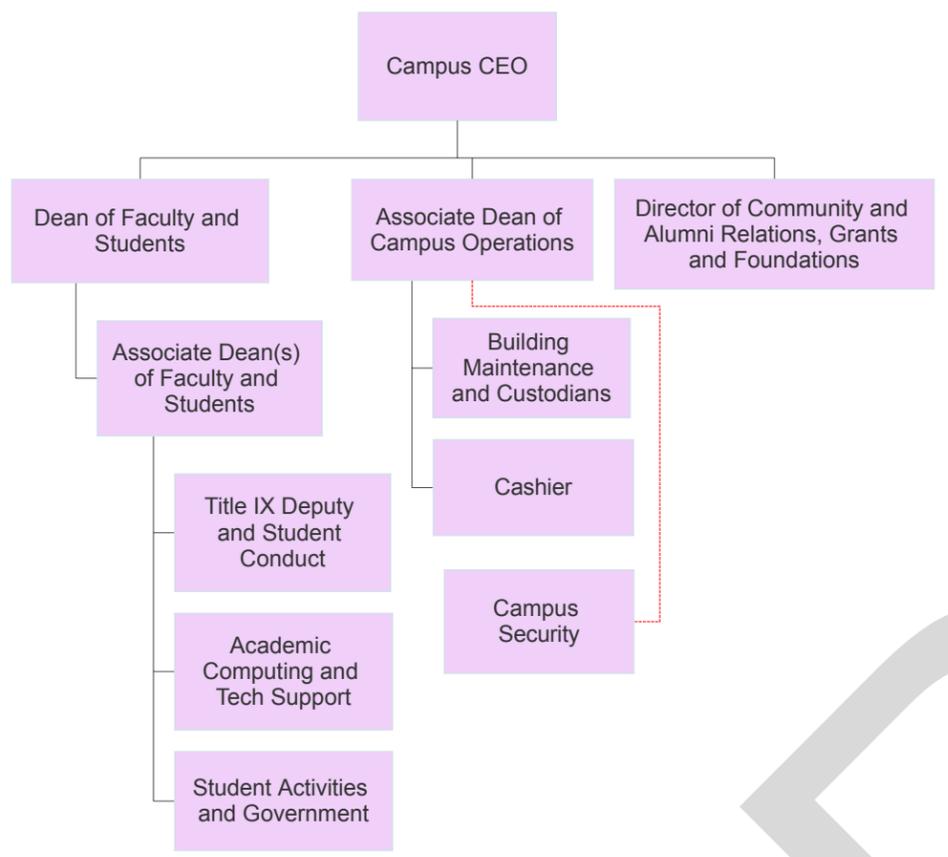
**DRAFT - Student Information Systems,  
Data & Reporting - DRAFT**



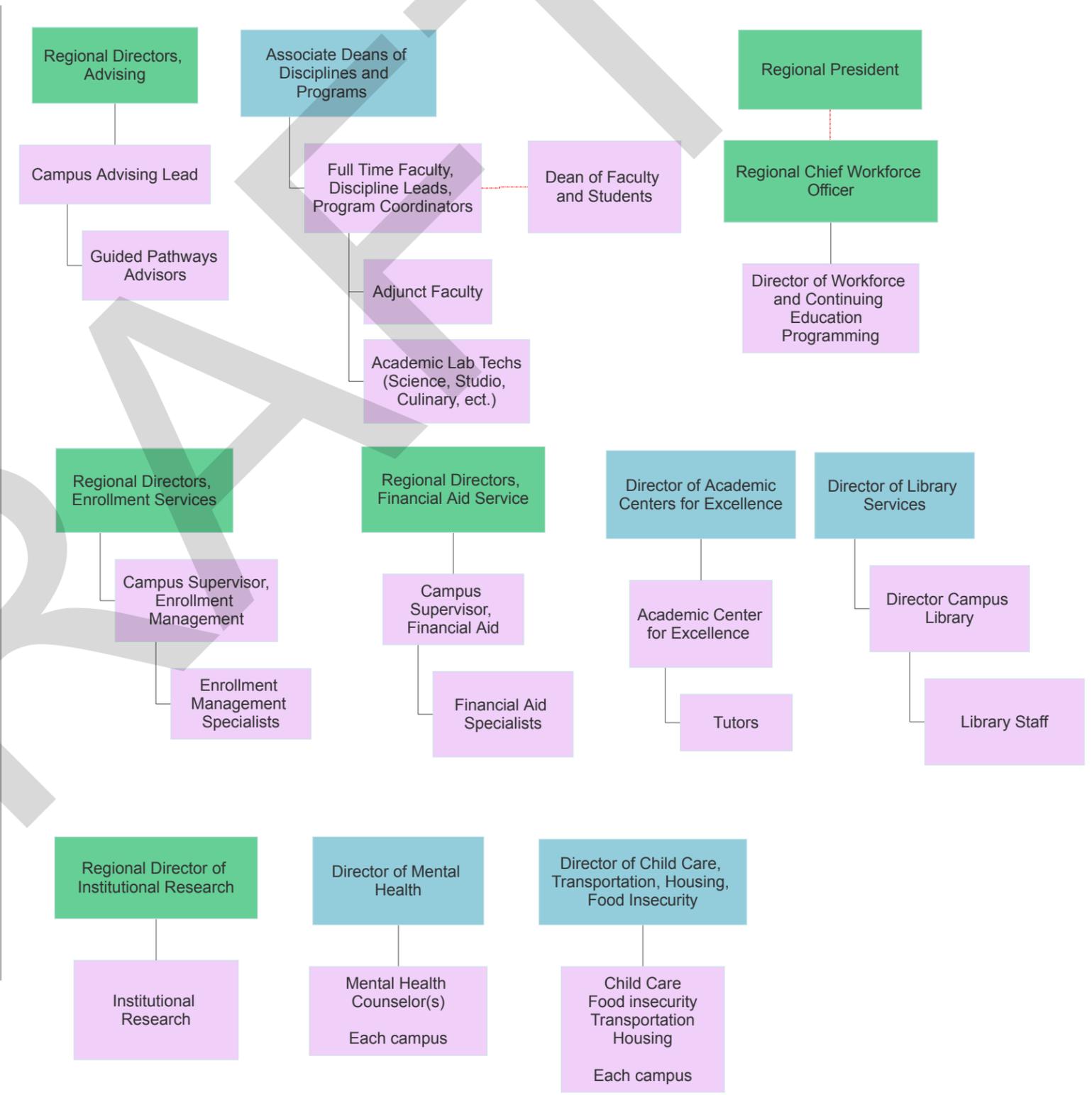
System Office Position	Campus Position
College Office Position, College Oversight	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

\*Note that administrative support and other classified staff are not represented in this draft but will be included across the final college structure.

**Campus Team with Direct Report to the CEO**



**Campus Team with Direct Report to the College Leadership**



	Reporting Lines
	Relationship Lines
	System Office Position
	Campus Position
	College Office Position, College Oversight
	Regional Position, Regional Oversight

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APPENDIX B:

# **NECHE Concerns**

**Appendix B: Commission's responses to recent Interim (5<sup>th</sup> year) reports submitted by our community colleges reveals the following concerns:**

- Housatonic (comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2022)
  - Improving retention and graduation rates
  - Sufficient financial resources to support the college's programs and services to fund priorities identified in the institution's strategic plan
  - Impact of BOR
- Three Rivers (comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2022)
  - Effectiveness of internal governance structure
  - Sufficiency of disability services and programs
  - Sufficient financial resources
  - Improving retention and graduation
  - Accuracy of website
- Northwestern Connecticut (comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Spring 2023)
  - Improving retention and graduation rates
  - Assessment data to inform decision making and improving teaching and learning
  - Assuring sufficient resources
- Naugatuck Valley (comprehensive in Fall 2022)
  - Financial stability
  - Retention and completion
- Middlesex (comprehensive in Fall 2022)
  - Effectiveness of internal and external governance
  - Assessing general education outcomes

APPENDIX C:

# **Mission & Vision**

## Appendix C

### The Connecticut State Community College Mission

*Connecticut State Community College provides access to academically rigorous and innovative education and training focused on student success. The College supports excellence in teaching and learning, makes data-informed decisions, promotes equity, advances positive change for the students, communities, and industries it serves, and awards associates degrees and certificates.*

### The Connecticut State Community College Vision

*Connecticut State Community College will be recognized for exceptional student success, educational leadership, and transformative collaboration with business and industry, government, educational, and key stakeholders while advancing diverse opportunities for Connecticut's citizens and communities.*

Revised to reflect that on May 14, 2020, the Board of Regents named the college Connecticut State Community College

APPENDIX D:

# **Areas of Study**

## **Areas of Study for the Consolidated Community College**

Social & Behavioral Sciences, Education, & Public Service

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math)

Manufacturing, Industry, & Technical Careers

Health Careers

Humanities & Creative Arts

Business & Hospitality

APPENDIX E:

# **Holistic Case Management Advising Policy**

**ITEM**

Proposal to adopt a policy concerning Holistic Case Management Advising at the CSCU Community Colleges that 1) ensures all degree and certificate seeking students have an assigned professional Guided Pathways Advisor and support network of faculty and staff who collaborate with students to plan for their educational goals and deliver the necessary holistic services to stay on track to completion; 2) reduces the student (headcount) to Guided Pathways Advisor (full time equivalent) ratio to 250:1, with the goal of reaching full scale by Fall 2022; and 3) adopts a student success technology platform that facilitates holistic case management advising.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION FOR FULL BOARD**

**Resolved:** That the Board of Regents for Higher Education formally adopts the Holistic Case Management Advising Policy for the CSCU Community Colleges.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This staff report:

- Describes how the structure of advising at the CSCU Community Colleges prevents current advising staff from providing students with the supports necessary to improve retention, completion, and equity;
- Explains how a holistic case management advising model will benefit students at the CSCU Community Colleges and promote Guided Pathways principles;
- Illustrates how a holistic case management advising model ensures all degree and certificate seeking students are assigned a Guided Pathways Advisor for their entire time at the institution, who guides students in the creation of a personalized plan, monitors their progress, and coordinates the holistic supports they need to achieve their academic and career goals;
- Explains how a holistic case management advising model is effective only when Guided Pathways Advisors have reduced caseloads and access to a student success technology platform that facilitates personalized planning, progress monitoring, service coordination, and communication;
- Provides evidence that other community colleges have improved their students' retention and completion rates and reduced equity gaps in achievement after implementing a holistic case management advising model; and
- Documents the process by which the CSCU Holistic Case Management Advising Policy was created.

**THE MODEL**

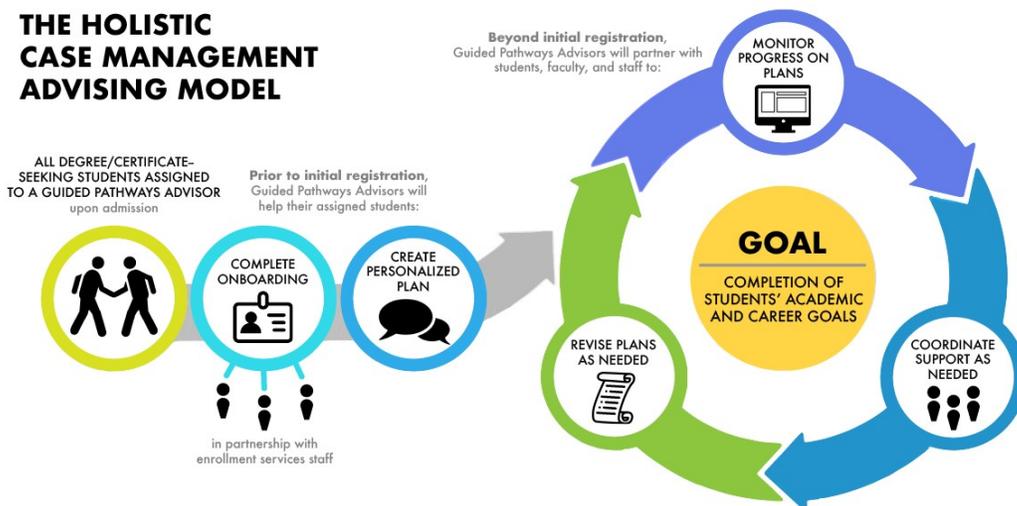
The Guided Pathways framework seeks to help community college students efficiently complete credentials, transfer, and attain jobs with value in the labor market. It consists of four pillars: 1) provide students with clearly structured program pathways with clearly defined expectations and

outcomes for education and employment, 2) get all students on an individualized plan that lays out the steps to achieve their academic and career goals, 3) help students stay on track to completion of a degree or credential, and 4) ensure that students are learning the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to succeed in life.

A holistic case management advising model serves as the foundation of Guided Pathways efforts. Holistic case management advising is integral to helping students identify and plan for their academic and career goals, monitor students’ progress toward their goals and assist those who stray off plan, and ensure that students are learning essential critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills (Bailey et al., 2015).

The central premise of a holistic case management advising model is that every student is assigned to a professional advisor (such as a Guided Pathways Advisor) who guides students through college from intake to graduation, monitors their academic progress, and coordinates the seamless provision of support services with a team of faculty and staff that stretches across traditional departmental lines. Professional advisors are able to provide deeper, more personalized services to students as a result of reduced caseloads and regular contact with their advisees. The ultimate benefit of a holistic case management advising model is that students are more likely to build a meaningful relationship with their assigned advisor and to receive a continuum of care that helps ensure their efficient completion of a credential (Richardson, 2008).

Figure 1: Overview of the Holistic Case Management Advising model



Under this model, every degree and certificate-seeking student at the CSCU Community Colleges is matched with a professional advisor, named their Guided Pathways Advisor, upon admission, who remains with the student for their entire time at the institution. Once assigned, Guided Pathways Advisors guide their respective students through an intake process that involves an initial conversation about their academic and career goals. Based on this conversation, Guided Pathways Advisors work with students to develop action steps toward these goals in the form of a plan that not only maps out the courses toward their declared area/program of study, but also identifies financial needs, opportunities for employment and

transfer, and resources and services relevant to their academic and holistic needs. Guided Pathways Advisors and students continually assess and revise plans based on academic performance and clarification of a students' interests, goals, and life circumstances.

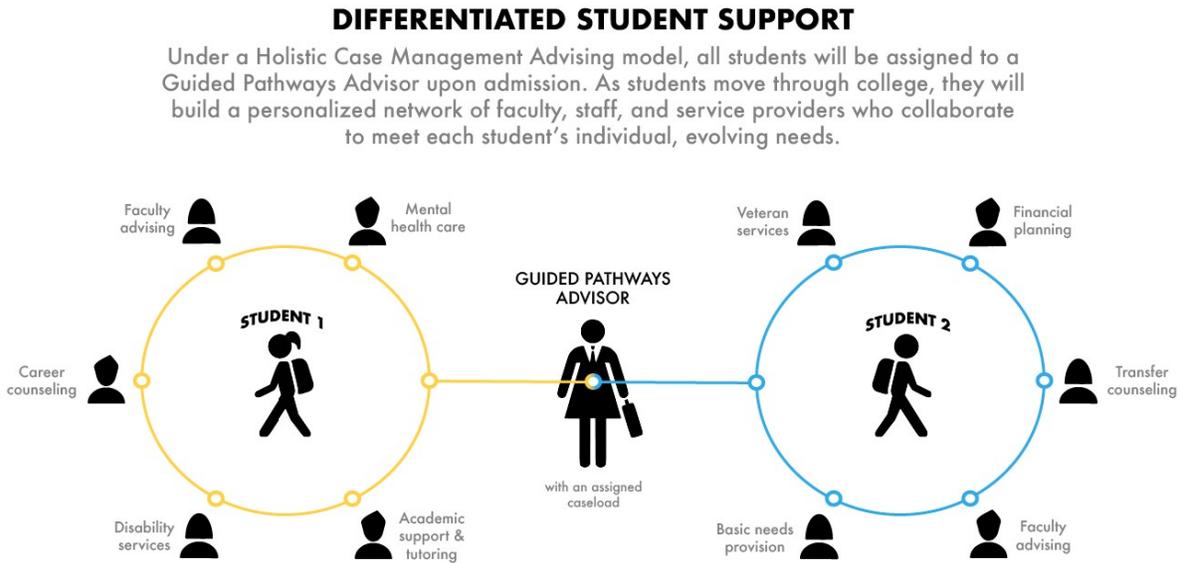
Students' plans are maintained on a student success technology platform, which students can access at any time to check their academic progress and adjust their plan. This technology platform also enables Guided Pathways Advisors, faculty, and other academic and student affairs staff to continually track students' progress on their personalized plans through academic performance indicators, risk factors, and metrics. It also facilitates communication between these stakeholders, enabling them to share feedback, through reports and early alerts regarding student performance and progress.

The continuous monitoring of student progress allows Guided Pathways Advisors, faculty, and other academic and student affairs staff to identify emerging barriers to student success and proactively intervene before problems worsen. Real-time student information collected on the technology platform also helps advisors triage cases, target resources to students who need them most, and tailor interventions to the specific, holistic needs of each student. If Guided Pathways Advisors can't provide the support themselves, then they are able to make referrals to other service providers on campus or in the community and track students' use of services through a system of case notes; access and user rights will be determined based on role and will comply with all federal guidelines as outlined in FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) or any other relevant policies and regulations.

The student success technology platform, while essential to creating these planning, monitoring, and intervention capacities, is only a tool that colleges must couple with ongoing, intentional professional development focused on developmental advising practices. For holistic case management advising to work effectively, the technology must also be accompanied by an institutional culture in which all stakeholders view themselves as sharing responsibility for student success and equity. Yet another critical ingredient of the model is multi-level leadership that builds support for holistic case management advising practices within and between departments (Kalamkarian et al., 2017).

A combination of these factors—assigned Guided Pathways Advisors, reduced caseloads, a college-wide student success technology platform, professional development resources for staff and faculty, a culture of shared responsibility, and committed leadership—can create the conditions for students to develop more meaningful relationships with an advisor and to receive the holistic supports necessary for completion. Furthermore, a holistic case management advising model better meets the varying needs of community colleges' diverse student bodies, and thus moves colleges closer to providing equitable educational opportunity for historically underserved groups (Achieving the Dream, 2018; Bettinger and Baker, 2011; Karp and Stacey, 2013; Miller and Murray, 2005; Pierce, 2016).

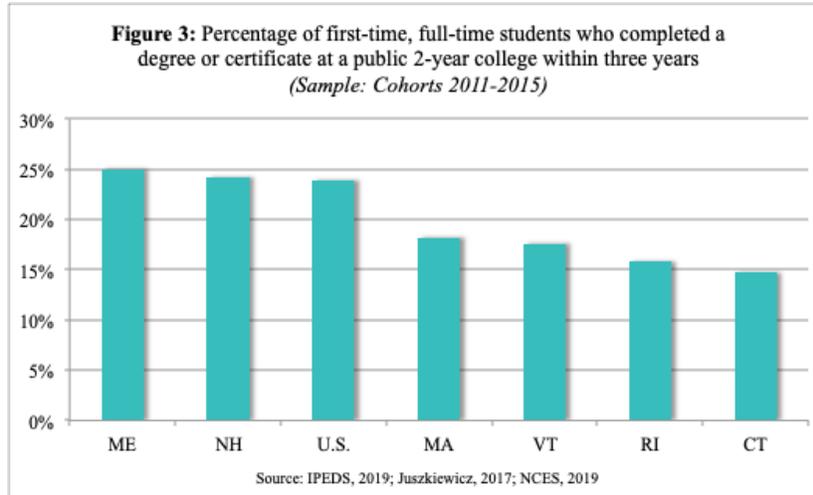
*Figure 2: Student support under the Holistic Case Management Advising model*



**BACKGROUND**

*Why redesign academic advising?*

The students of the CSCU Community Colleges face tremendous challenges to efficient completion of a postsecondary credential. These challenges have resulted in persistently low graduation rates across all twelve community colleges. Among first-time, full-time students who enrolled at the CSCU Community Colleges between 2011 and 2015, fifteen percent completed all the requirements for a degree or certificate within three years of starting. This was lower than the average IPEDS three-year graduation rate for all other state community college systems in New England during the same time period, which includes Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Furthermore, Connecticut’s graduation rate is consistently lower than the national average.



Historically underserved and minoritized student groups at the CSCU Community Colleges face additional barriers to success that make them even less likely to graduate. The average IPEDS three-year graduation rate for Black students has been 7 percent over the past five years and 11 percent for Latinx students, compared to 18 percent for Asian students and 19 percent for White students. The Board of Regents has stated its goals to increase retention and graduation rates and eliminate achievement disparities among different ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups at the CSCU Community Colleges (CSCU, 2019).

The trends in completion and equity at the 12 CSCU Community Colleges result from many factors. One contributing factor is that the system of academic advising is neither structured nor adequately resourced to meet students' complex and diverse needs. Many of these needs are related to navigating the various decisions and processes involved in completing a credential. Many CSCU community college students also have financial and other individual needs that extend beyond the classroom but inevitably impact their educational experience and outcomes. The purpose of academic advising is to help students meet these holistic needs to maintain progress toward completion of a credential. Furthermore, academic advising should equip students with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to navigate the college environment and manage their needs with increasing independence and confidence (NACADA, 2003, 2006).

There are certainly pockets of advising excellence within the community college system. Students in cohort-based programs such as nursing or advanced manufacturing receive consistent, often mandatory advising, progress monitoring, and support from assigned faculty and staff; they also boast high rates of completion. However, these best practices in academic advising do not extend to the majority of CSCU community college students. The CSCU Guided Pathways Holistic Student Support Redesign (HSSR) team—through discussions with professional staff and faculty from all 12 CSCU Community Colleges and focus groups with students on four campuses—determined that the inconsistency in the quality of advising is due to resource deficits and structural issues, rather than any individual person, department, or campus.

Most obviously, advising offices are severely understaffed and financially under-resourced. Currently, there are approximately 760 students for every FTE (full time equivalent) professional advisor in the system; this far exceeds the median U.S. two-year institution advising ratio of

441:1, and the Board of Regents's ideal ratio of 250:1 as stated in its FY20/FY21 biennium expansion budget (Board of Regents, 2018; Carlstrom and Miller, 2013). The CSCU Community Colleges' current ratio reduces advisors' capacity to provide all students with the attention and services they need. Overwhelmed by the sheer number of students, professional advisors frequently only have the time to complete perfunctory tasks like course selection and registration. Current advising staff have little to no bandwidth for advising activities such as goal-setting, planning, and having conversations that develop students' critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Even when students are able to schedule an appointment with an advisor, they often see a different advisor each semester because advisors are not typically assigned to a specific caseload of students. As a result, students often receive inconsistent and conflicting information, leaving them frustrated and their needs unmet.

Another structural issue with the advising system is that not all CSCU community college students are required to work with an advisor when they first enter college to create a detailed plan that maps out the courses, activities, and supports they need to complete their chosen program of study, gain employment, or transfer to a four-year university. Consequently, many students do not establish clear academic and career goals in their early semesters, nor do they identify the action steps and holistic supports needed to achieve their goals efficiently. The lack of a thoughtful and comprehensive plan makes it difficult not only for students to make effective decisions, but also for current advising staff to effectively monitor students' progress toward degree completion.

Current advisors' monitoring abilities are further limited by the available technology. Ellucian Degree Works, the planning and auditing tool currently used at the CSCU Community Colleges, lacks critical functionalities like digital early alerts that would allow advisors, faculty, and other academic and student affairs staff to identify when students run into problems and to intervene proactively. The provision of support often depends on a student initiating a request for support. However, many students either delay coming forward for support or don't come forward at all, limiting advisors' ability to provide students with the support they need, when they need it most.

Finally, the various academic and student affairs departments involved in the CSCU Community Colleges' advising system too often operate in uncoordinated silos, forcing students to visit several offices before getting the support they need. The current student information technology system reinforces this siloed structure by preventing advisors, faculty, and other academic and student affairs staff from collaborating to support students who require resources and services from various providers across campus. For example, they are unable to make referrals to each other or share notes about certain students, leaving it up to the student to coordinate the services themselves and retell their story to every provider. At the end of the day, no one is held accountable for ensuring that the students' needs are fully met.

Altogether, these structural and capacity issues deprive many CSCU community college students of an accountable, "go-to" advisor who actively guides them through college with a thoughtful academic and career plan tailored to their unique goals and circumstances, and an integrated support network of faculty and other academic and student affairs staff. Without one or all of these resources, students are more likely to feel disconnected from their college, make poorly informed and inefficient academic and career decisions, and run up against barriers when moving between different departments and campuses to find the supports and course offerings they need.

These experiences may increase the chances that students delay their education or drop out before completing a credential.

Weaknesses in the current structure and capacity of the CSCU Community Colleges' academic advising system further disadvantage students from historically underserved and minoritized groups. Even though these students face the highest barriers to graduation, they receive the same type and level of advising services due to scarce resources and inadequate student success policies. This standardized approach to advising does not compensate for the unequal opportunities in students' lives beyond the classroom, thus perpetuating the equity gaps in completion rates across the system.

Advising redesign can and should be leveraged to improve the CSCU Community Colleges' low and inequitable completion rates which, if left unabated, will profoundly and negatively impact the livelihood of Connecticut's students, families, communities, workforce, and economy. Advising redesign would also support and reinforce CSCU's Guided Pathways efforts by getting all students on a clearly defined path to completion and helping them stay on track.

### ***Why a holistic case management advising model?***

The CSCU Guided Pathways Holistic Student Support Redesign team's findings suggest that tweaking advising practices at the CSCU Community Colleges without addressing structural and resource deficits will not yield meaningful improvements in student success. Their findings also reveal that students would be better served if the focus of advising moved beyond providing information and course registration to promoting *holistic* student development, which requires meeting students where they are and addressing their individual needs (Achieving the Dream, 2018).

The Community College Research Center and Achieving the Dream identified five guiding principles for colleges looking to design more holistic advising systems—termed SSIPP (Achieving the Dream, 2018; Karp and Stacey, 2013):

- **Sustained:** students receive support throughout their entire time at the institution, particularly at key momentum points.
- **Strategic:** students receive the support they need, when they need them, in a way that is convenient and efficient for them.
- **Integrated:** students receive the support they need in a seamless, coordinated fashion, without being tossed around between departments.
- **Proactive:** students receive the support they need at the earliest stage possible, not when their situation has become a crisis.
- **Personalized:** students receive the type and intensity of support appropriate to their unique needs.

Other community colleges implementing Guided Pathways—such as Lorain County Community College, Sinclair Community College, the Alamo Colleges District, and the Austin Community College District—have shown that changes to institutional policies and practices are a powerful strategy to deliver advising services and supports to students in a more holistic, sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive, and personalized way. Specifically, these colleges made a

structural shift from a walk-in, self-service advising system to a *holistic case management advising model*. Their students are now assigned a single point of contact (such as a Guided Pathways Advisor) for their entire time at the institution, and advisors have specific and reduced caseloads. This new structure affords each student-advisor pair the time to build deep relationships with each other and co-create a personalized academic and career plan that considers the student’s evolving, unique goals and needs. Advisors are also trained to utilize student success technology platforms with special functionalities that enable them to regularly and proactively monitor students’ progress on their plans; intervene at the first sign that students are having trouble; refer students to the resources and services they need, when they need them; and collaborate with faculty, staff, and service providers across the institution to provide students with these supports in a seamless fashion.

**Table 1:** How students receive support under different scenarios

<b>WITHOUT holistic case management advising &amp; Guided Pathways, student support is frequently</b>	<b>WITH holistic case management advising &amp; Guided Pathways, student support is always</b>
Intermittent	Sustained
Delayed	Strategic
Siloed	Integrated
Reactive	Proactive
Standardized	Personalized

The combination of holistic case management advising and Guided Pathways practices at these colleges has resulted in significantly higher retention and graduation rates (Ashford, 2019; Dryden, 2018; Excelencia in Education, 2019; Ohio Higher Ed, 2018b). For example, at Lorain County Community College, the IPEDS graduation rate jumped from 8 percent to 25 percent within seven years (Dryden, 2018). At Lorain, the equity gap in developmental completion rates and first-term credit accrual has also narrowed; these short-term measures have been shown to correlate with longer-term measures like completion (Ohio Higher Ed, 2018a). It should be noted that these colleges were largely able to make these gains because of significant investments in human and technological resources, including hiring additional advisors, funding ongoing professional development for staff and faculty, and integrating a student success technology platform into their technical infrastructure. However, Lorain has demonstrated that colleges can make a strong return on these investments through increased student retention (Dryden, 2018).

***Holistic case management advising as part of Guided Pathways efforts***

Consistent with the revised CSCU Students First initiative approved by the Board of Regents on June 18, 2018, implementing a Holistic Case Management Advising Policy is one in a series of Guided Pathways initiatives designed to improve student success and increase student retention, completion, and equity. The new advising model will play a critical role in supporting key pillars of Guided Pathways: getting all students on a personalized plan, keeping them on plan, and ensuring their learning.

Holistic case management advising also complements other Guided Pathways efforts. For instance, faculty workgroups have been charged with developing program maps that include suggested course sequences, career opportunities, and labor market information. These maps will provide students and Guided Pathways Advisors with the foundation for academic and career planning. They will also give Guided Pathways Advisors a benchmark to assess their assigned students' academic progress. The CSCU Community College Areas of Study Policy serves as yet another tool to assist students and Guided Pathways advisors in making informed choices about their career and academic goals. Last but not least, the College and Career Success course (CCS 101) was intentionally designed by our community college faculty to offer students the opportunity for deep exploration of their academic and career goals. Taking CCS 101 would give students a valuable forum to continue the conversations that they begin with their Guided Pathways Advisors and develop a more thoughtful personalized plan to completion.

### *How was this model determined?*

The Holistic Student Support Redesign (HSSR) team was established in February 2018 as part of the CSCU Guided Pathways (GP) work, and charged to explore and make recommendations for best practices in implementing advising models, monitoring student progress, designing a common first-year experience for students, and developing wraparound services to address external factors that impede a student's ability to meet their educational goals.

The team includes a diverse cross section of faculty, staff, and administrators from all 12 CSCU community colleges, CSCU State Universities and CSCU System Office. Members of the team consist of professional staff from core areas such as advising, counseling, enrollment services and financial aid, as well as faculty members and academic and student affairs administration (see Appendix). The team is led by two managers (Gayle Barrett, Middlesex and Michael Buccilli, Gateway), both with practitioner and director-level experience in advising, enrollment management and student affairs, on loan from their current roles at their respective colleges.

In an effort to move the redesign process forward, a HSSR steering team was established with the two primary managers, two collaborating managers (Tamika Davis, Tunxis; Heidi Zenie, Three Rivers) and four members from the HSSR team (Jill Rushbrook, Asnuntuck; Jason Scappaticci, Capital; Nora Uricchio, Manchester; Debra Zavatkey, Northwestern). In September 2019, the HSSR team unanimously adopted a set of design principles to guide the steering team's work. The steering team participated in a facilitated design institute through Achieving the Dream (ATD) in October 2019 and continues to receive individual support from ATD staff with expertise in state-wide advising redesign efforts.

The steering team developed the initial policy draft. Benjamin Wong, a Research Fellow for CSCU Guided Pathways, provided the steering team with research, writing, and editing support. After several rounds of internal feedback, the revised draft was brought to the full HSSR team for endorsement. HSSR managers coordinated regional forums, online feedback process, and specific sessions with key state-wide councils such as advising leads, deans of student affairs and presidents/CEOs. The HSSR steering team will collect and review feedback before moving the revised policy forward for approval by the following bodies: HSSR, Guided Pathways Task Force, and the Community College Implementation Committee (CCIC). If the CCIC approves, it

will then recommend to move the policy forward to the Board of Regents Academic and Student Affairs committee for consideration.

Ensuring student participation continues to be a primary goal of this work. HSSR managers participated in a student panel coordinated by the Student Advisory Council (SAC) to the BOR in spring 2018 and followed up with a SAC briefing and Q&A session in spring 2019. The HSSR team hosted four student focus groups in spring 2019 to dig deeper into the issues students face in our current advising support and structures. Focus groups were held at Gateway, Manchester, Naugatuck Valley and Northwestern and yielded valuable data that has shaped the proposed policy. HSSR managers with the SAC to review the draft policy in February.

***What are the next steps if the policy is approved?***

The HSSR managers, steering team, and full team will continue to develop and refine the holistic case management advising model and create an initial implementation plan to be presented to the Board of Regents Academic and Student Affairs Committee by December 2020. The plan will include detailed timelines, benchmarks, and a full assessment plan to track progress during the various stages during and post-implementation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is the recommendation of the System's Provost, Senior Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and Vice President of Enrollment Management that the Board of Regents give favorable consideration to the adoption of the proposed Holistic Case Management Advising Policy for the CSCU Community Colleges.

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## APPENDIX

HSSR Membership List\*

Rebecca Adams	<i>Professor of English, Chair of Humanities Department</i>	Housatonic Community College
Kathleen Ahern	<i>Interim Director of Advising &amp; Retention</i>	Gateway Community College
Gayle Barrett (Non-Voting Member)	<i>Director of Enrollment Management/ Guided Pathways Manager/Student Success Center College Coach</i>	Middlesex Community College/System Office
Kerry Beckford	<i>Assistant Professor of English</i>	Tunxis Community College
Caitlin Boger-Hawkins	<i>Director of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness</i>	Northwestern Community College
Victoria Bozzuto (Ex-Officio)	<i>Guided Pathways Manager</i>	System Office
Paul Broadie	<i>President</i>	Gateway & Housatonic Community College
Michael Buccilli (Non-Voting Member)	<i>Director of Student Success, Guided Pathways Manager</i>	Gateway Community College/System Office
Alison Buckley	<i>Vice President for Enrollment Management</i>	System Office
Kellie Byrd-Danso	<i>Dean of Students</i>	Norwalk Community College
Patrick Carr	<i>Program Manager for Library Consortium Operations</i>	System Office
Diane Clokey	<i>Registrar</i>	Asnuntuck Community College
Jonah Cohen	<i>Professor of Human Services</i>	Gateway Community College
Les Cropley	<i>Director of Project Management and Academic Initiatives, Student Success Center</i>	System Office
Tamika Davis (Non-Voting Member)	<i>Director of Admissions/ Guided Pathways Manager/Student Success Center College Coach</i>	Tunxis Community College/System Office
Greg DeSantis (Ex-Officio)	<i>Executive Director Student Success Center and Academic Initiatives</i>	System Office
David Ferreira	<i>Dean of Academic &amp; Student Affairs</i>	Northwestern Community College
Sarah Gager	<i>Dean of Student Services</i>	Naugatuck Valley Community College

Keith Gauvin	<i>Registrar</i>	Western Connecticut State University
Jeannine Gibson	<i>Acting Director of Academic Advising &amp; Student Retention</i>	Housatonic Community College
Bonnie Goulet	<i>Director of Student Services</i>	Naugatuck Valley Community College
Sarah Hendrick	<i>Associate Director of Admissions</i>	Quinebaug Valley Community College
Bob Kozlowski	<i>Director of Advising and Retention</i>	Quinebaug Valley Community College
Amanda MacTaggart (Ex-Officio)	<i>Associate Director of the CSCU Student Success Center</i>	System Office
Margaret Malaspina	<i>Director of Financial Aid</i>	Capital Community College
Lesley Mara	<i>Director of Workforce Development, Strategic Partnerships &amp; Sponsored Programs</i>	System Office
Helen Marx	<i>Associate Professor of Curriculum and Learning/ Faculty Director of Advising</i>	Southern Connecticut State University
J.D. Mathewson (Ex-Officio)	<i>Senior Research Associate</i>	System Office
Judy Mazgulski	<i>Retention Specialist</i>	Middlesex Community College
Steve McDowell (Ex-Officio)	<i>Director of Financial Aid Services</i>	System Office
Steve Mendes	<i>Registrar</i>	Norwalk Community College
Alese Mulvihill	<i>Interim Dean of Student Affairs</i>	Gateway Community College
Joseph Navarra	<i>Coordinator of Disability Services</i>	Manchester Community College
Latisha Nielsen	<i>First Year and New Student Advisor</i>	Manchester Community College
Kelly Pittman	<i>Transfer Coordinator/Academic Advisor</i>	Tunxis Community College
Francine Rosselli-Navarra (Ex-Officio)	<i>Professor &amp; Chair, Department of Psychology &amp; Anthropology, Guided Pathways Manager</i>	Manchester Community College/System Office

Jill Rushbrook	<i>Director of Advising</i>	Asnuntuck Community College
Jason Scappaticci	<i>Associate Dean of Student Affairs</i>	Capital Community College
Daniela Squizzato	<i>Acting Director of Student Success Initiatives</i>	Housatonic Community College
Tim St. James	<i>Interim Dean of Students</i>	Asnuntuck Community College
Kathy Taylor	<i>Associate Professor Legal/Business</i>	Naugatuck Valley Community College
Kristina Testa-Buzzee	<i>Associate Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce</i>	Norwalk Community College
Nora Uricchio	<i>Associate Professor, Radiologic Science; Program Coordinator, Radiation Therapy</i>	Manchester Community College
Pam Williams	<i>Research Librarian</i>	Three Rivers Community College
Jama Yusuf (Ex-Officio)	<i>Sr. Information Systems Development Manager, Information Technology</i>	System Office
Brenda Zanta (Ex-Officio)	<i>Student/Academic Information Systems Support Specialist</i>	System Office
Debra Zavatkay	<i>Registrar</i>	Northwestern Community College
Heidi Zenie (Non-Voting Member)	<i>Program Coordinator, Exercise Science and Sports &amp; Leisure Management/ Guided Pathways Manager/Student Success Center College Coach</i>	Three Rivers Community College/System Office

\*HSSR Membership as of December 18, 2019.

APPENDIX F:

# **Shared Services**

## **Appendix F** **Shared Administrative Services**

For the past two decades the Connecticut community colleges have utilized a shared services model for many administrative services—a model in which the key decisions are reserved to campus leaders while back office operations are centralized at the System office. As technological advances organically transform the enterprise into a shared services model, the staffing structure has become mismatched with shared services fulfillment. The misalignment of technical staff not needed to provide services has resulted in an organizational structure with underutilized capacity. The Students First plan provides the mechanism to correct this misalignment.

This year the focus has been on the development of shared services in the areas of:

- information technology
- human resources
- fiscal affairs
- facilities

These service arrangements will be formalized through service level agreements with the system office and campus Presidents/CEOs that specify expected levels of service and associated costs. Through this mechanism the campus presidents can retain their decision authority and control in ways that meet NECHE standards. This centralization of key, redundant functions, will allow for more efficient, consistent, and higher quality administrative services. When CSCC becomes operational, these agreements will be negotiated with the college President and their implementation overseen by the CSCC's Vice President of Finance and Administration (CFO), the Chief Information Officer, or the Director of Human Resources as appropriate.

Presently, these consolidations are underway with planning activities that engage staff from both the system office and colleges to help inform the implementation. Under the shared services model, all staff will work within the CSCU system office or be deployed to the campuses under service level agreements negotiated with campus leaders. This centralization will not require all staff to be in one location but rather combine both centralized and campus-based services. These agreements will be constructed to ensure they do not negatively impact the existing accreditation of the colleges or the accreditation of CSCC in the future. By using a shared services agreement, the expectations are clear and if the promised services are not adequately delivered and there are built in sanctions so that the Campus CEO/CSCC President has recourse.

By implementing a single, standard set of procedures for administrative and back office functions it will eliminate procedures unique to each campus; these are costly to support and produce uneven results across the system. As the system standardizes processes the overall operating cost will diminish.

### Information Technology

The community colleges have operated under a shared services model to consolidate enterprise level technology services since the early 2000s. Under the Students First plan, the technology governance process will build on this success by realigning technical staff with the operational service demands of academic programs and administrative processes.

In January 2020, the next phase began by reassigning all IT staff at the 12 community colleges to the CSCU Chief Information Officer (CIO) through an Interim Deputy CIO for CSCC. Working with the system's collective bargaining experts, a skills inventory collection process is underway to account for all skills among the IT employee population. The final organizational structure will align enterprise shared services, such as campus networks, Wi-Fi, Banner, etc. with qualified, skilled campus-based technical staff to ensure expedited service fulfillment of all technical needs of a campus. A key component of this model will be the provisioning of dedicated skilled technical staff at each campus to support the technology requirements of academic programs and administrative processes.

### Human Resources

Through the centralization of Human Resources, CSCU is creating Centers of Excellence (COEs) to improve the overall quality of services provided to the campus leadership and employees as well as improving compliance with federal and state policies and regulations. These COEs (Affirmative Action, Talent and Recruiting, Labor Relations, and Compensation and Benefits) will collect skill sets on one team, streamline functions and expertise, and provide assistance and recommendations to support the decision making of the current college leaders and the future CSCC President. We emphasize that CEOs will retain all the decision authority they currently have and that is required by NECHE standards.

The merger will improve focus, quality, speed, and compliance. For instance, the Labor Relations COE will ensure the consistent application of union bargaining agreements and policies and improve investigations with greater objectivity by investigators and clearer recommendations for campus decision makers. Additionally, there will be a Human Resources Director for the CT State Community College as well as Human Resources staff responsible for regional and campus level support. These direct service HR staff will facilitate use of the COEs by both the college, regional, and campus leaders, and by employees.

### Fiscal Affairs

Through centralization of day to day financial operations (e.g. accounting and financial reporting), CSCU will streamline redundant functions that now occur on the 12 campuses. Many of these functions are already being conducted by staff at the System Office including the annual audit function. Other enhancements, such as fixed asset tracking, are still in the development stage. Centralization improves these routine processes and brings together the staff expertise to serve all the colleges at levels not affordable at each of them. In all instances, fiscal decision authority resides with the college Presidents/CEOs; centralized services provide the support necessary to carry out those decisions.

### Payroll

We are also centralizing payroll as a shared service. By taking advantage of the state's self-service payroll functionality, and by assigning the support work associated with payroll to dedicated staff, we can reduce the number of individuals required, improve compliance with our policies and with state and federal law, and provide more consistent services to our employees.

### Purchasing

The purchasing function is moving from a fully decentralized model to a single shared service. By streamlining campus procurement of goods and services, it will achieve greater economies of scale and will produce greater savings and free up staff resources that can be reinvested into student facing activities.

### Facilities

The centralization of facilities management is already underway with all college capital projects being overseen by CSCU system office staff who work directly with the state agencies of cognizance to secure resources, manage projects, and oversee construction activities, etc. Day-to-day maintenance and custodial functions will be maintained on each campus under the leadership of the Associate Dean of Campus Operations.

### Budget Development and Management

The CT State Community College budgeting function will not be a shared service but rather will be overseen directly by the CSCC CFO. This allows for the autonomous control of the college resources by the institution per the NECHE standards. Regional Fiscal Officers have been hired this spring to assist in understanding the fiscal needs and opportunities of regions and working with the Campus CEOs/Presidents and the Regional Presidents to make budget proposals to the system office CFO. Until CSCC becomes fully operational, campus CEOs will have responsibility and authority over budget development and management.

APPENDIX G:

# **Additional Information**

## **Appendix G – additional information**

Academic & Student Affairs Consolidation Committee

<https://www.ct.edu/consolidation>

College Consolidation Implementation Committee <https://www.ct.edu/sf/ccic>

Guided Pathways Initiative <https://www.ct.edu/gp>

Board of Regents December 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

These minutes include Reaffirmation of Guiding Principles for Students First and Faculty Advisory Committee Report

<https://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR - Minutes - 12-19-2019>

Board of Regents April 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

These minutes include reports from the Student Advisory and Faculty Advisory Committees, and the approval of the Holistic Case Management Advising Policy

<https://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR - Minutes 04-16-2020.pdf>

Board of Regents May 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes

These minutes include reports and resolutions related to the General Education Core Proposal, Naming of Single College, Naming of Interim College President and Naming of Campus CEOs on 5 campuses

<https://www.ct.edu/images/uploads/BOR - Minutes - 05-14-2020.pdf>