

# DRAFT Strategic Plan through Academic Years 2023-2025

## Introduction

The leadership of Connecticut State Community College (CT State) is pleased to share this first complete draft of its inaugural Strategic Plan with the Board of Regents, the institutions of the Connecticut State Community Colleges and University community, our students and communities, and our partners and other stakeholders.

The process of developing the Strategic Plan began in earnest in Spring 2021 with the formation of the CT State Executive Strategic Planning Council. The Council used the strategic plans of the twelve Connecticut Community colleges and CSU as the basis of developing the Strategic Plan, but geared its deliberations, discussions—and even debates—to answering the question of what were the critical goals, activities, and outcomes necessary to begin the operations of new institution.

The Strategic Plan for CT State is not designed to be the operational plan for the college. Every unit, every department, every office, and every individual will still need to organize themselves and their work in CT State to fulfill our mission. We are also aware that there were numerous plans already developed and work that is underway. Ultimately, we will need to develop a comprehensive set of planning, operational, and assessment processes that will be aligned with the Strategic Plan.

The inclusiveness of this process cannot be overstated or underestimated. More than 50 people have served on the Council, and membership consisted of faculty, staff, and administrators, with representatives from all the campuses and CT State. Importantly, students have also served as council members. We are thankful to all the Council members, as well as to all the individuals who provided feedback to council members. We want to also express our deep appreciation to the Faculty Advisory Council to the Board of Regents, who provided honest and earnest feedback during the development of the plan. Each time we engaged the FAC, we got useful feedback from them, and the Council subsequently incorporated their comments into our planning work.

Although there is consensus on numerous critical components, we acknowledge that CT State is still in development. Consequently, the Strategic Plan will need ongoing review and continued development. We decided to make the timeframe for this plan relatively short, through 2025, in recognition of the fact that our context, challenges, and opportunities are changing rapidly. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, we wanted to hold ourselves to revisiting our Strategic Plan sooner rather than later, and to use it as an opportunity to deepen engagement between the constituents and stakeholders of our college, and to harness all our perspectives and experiences to chart the way forward.

We look forward to your perspective and feedback.

## Background and Process

The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) administration submitted the first substantive change proposal to our accreditor in April 2018. Through leadership and organizational changes and in the face of a once in-a-lifetime pandemic, the nascent Connecticut State Community College (CT State) worked diligently to stand up a single institution that meets the needs of students, is efficient through leveraging economies of scale, and is on a pathway to fiscal sustainability.

In Spring 2021, the CT State Executive Strategic Planning Council (ESPC) was formed to develop a strategic plan for the single college. Composed of 50 individuals representing constituents (faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders) from 11 of the 12 colleges, the ESPC developed a plan to implement and assess the plan's goals and objectives and gather feedback from all constituencies. Initially, the 11 priority areas that were identified in Spring 2021 focused on the following: excellence, mobility, accessibility, orientation, support, user-friendliness, common core, transferability, workforce development, efficiency, and savings.

In January 2022, an ESPC sub-committee consolidated the 11 priorities into three meta-priorities: effectiveness, equity, and community. A parallel subcommittee elucidated the values that CT State should embody. In Spring 2022, the sub-committees worked to incorporate the plans, goals, and benchmarks of major college-wide initiatives.

The work below is the product of the labor of the ESPC and its subcommittees. The plan identifies major goals and reflects the meta-priorities identified by the ESPC. Priorities are derived from the ongoing work of CT State's many initiatives. Benchmarks are designed to measure the single college's progress towards reaching our major goals, executing our priorities, and realizing our values.

The whole of this document represents the hard work of the members of the Executive Strategic Planning Council:

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## Mission and Vision

### CSCU Vision

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities will continually increase the number of students completing personally and professionally rewarding academic programs.

### CSCU Mission

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) contribute to the creation of knowledge and the economic growth of the state of Connecticut by providing affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs. Our learning environments transform students and facilitate an ever-increasing number of individuals to achieve their personal and career goals.

### CT State Mission

The 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, and advances positive change for the students, communities, and industries it serves

### CT State Vision

The 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.

### CT State Equity Statement

Equity is the removal and reduction of barriers that negatively impact student success within structures, policies and practices and ensuring that students receive targeted resources and supports to achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals. Equity is achieved by identifying and intentionally addressing structural racism, systemic poverty, and other forms of marginalization, upholding the expectation that administrators, faculty and staff act as anti-racist institutional change agents.

CT State Community College commits to bold and disruptive change by actively identifying, naming, and dismantling structural racism, systemic poverty, and other barriers, establishing equitable and anti-racist policies and practices, and empowering students, faculty, staff, and administrators to advance racial, social, and economic justice.

Our core collective responsibility is to continuously assess practices and policies and transform the world we live in by eliminating inequities.

## CT State Institutional Values

The CT State Strategic Plan is informed by the CSCU and CT State missions and visions, CT State's equity pillars and these seven institutional values:

### Teaching, Learning, Education and Training

We believe in the power of education and teaching to empower our students, our communities, and our organizations to create, fulfill and transform. We are committed to the enterprise of teaching and the process of learning, and to organizing ourselves and allocating our institutional and professional resources to deploying the most effective and relevant academic program, the most engaging teaching pedagogy, and the most impactful professional and organizational development of which we are capable.

### Service and the Holistic Development of our Students and Communities

Our teaching, education, training and supports of our students are acts of service to them, for their personal, family, social and professional/career benefit. Their educational and human needs and the impact of our decisions on them are our first and primary considerations. We remain mindful that our students are whole human beings, and that authentic education requires service and support beyond the classroom. We are committed to organizing ourselves and allocating our institutional and professional resources to serve our students individually and to serve our surrounding communities toward the greater and collective good.

### Equity

Equity is achieved by identifying and intentionally addressing structural racism, systemic poverty, and other forms of marginalization, upholding the expectation that administrators, faculty and staff act as anti-racist institutional change agents. Connecticut State Community College commits to bold and disruptive change by actively: identifying, naming, and dismantling structural racism, systemic poverty, and other barriers; establishing equitable and antiracist policies and practices; and empowering students, faculty, staff, and administrators to advance racial, social, and economic justice.

### Integrity

Integrity is central to us fulfilling our mission of education, service, and equity, and we are committed to honesty and authenticity in all our work, to open and transparent communication, to resisting corruption, to the faithful discharge of our respective responsibilities and to adherence to our principles across our campuses and communities.

### Mutual Respect

Every member of the Connecticut State Community College community has their own unique history, goals, experiences, and perspectives. We commit to taking the time to consider the things we share and the ways in which we differ from each other, to listening carefully and deeply to our students and colleagues, and to treating each other in ways that affirm and validate the humanity of every member of the college community and cultivates a safe and welcoming environment conducive to transformative teaching, learning and service.

### Shared Governance

Shared governance reflects our reality that the collective effort of the college community is required to serve our students, communities, and stakeholders effectively, affirms the mutual respect expected of every member of our college community, and validates the importance, necessity, and inherent value of inclusive decision-making. As an institution, we commit to the spirit, structures, and processes of shared

governance to effectively harness the collective talents and transformative power of our college community.

### Stewardship, Effectiveness and Accountability

Connecticut State Community College represents an incalculable investment by our fellow-citizens and communities, businesses and employers, the governments of the State of Connecticut and the United States of America, and by our students themselves. Out of respect for our constituents and stakeholders, we commit to making the wisest and most impactful use of all the resources entrusted to us, whatever form they take. We commit to holding ourselves accountable for the decisions we make and actions we take in service of our mission and goals, and to relentlessly seeking out better and more effective ways to accomplish our work.

## Major Goals: Effectiveness, Equity and Community

To actualize the above values, CT State resolves to achieve three major goals, defined by their attendant institutional priorities and measured by objective benchmarks.

### Goal I: Providing an effective, exceptional, affordable educational experience

CT State commits to improving user-friendliness and universal access for enrollment, financial aid, and registration processes.

CT State will strive to implement all Guided Pathways initiatives, included but not limited to Alignment and Completion of Math and English (ACME) and Guided Pathways Advising to maximize the probability that each Connecticut State Community College student will enter and complete gateway, college-level, transferable coursework in English and mathematics, and that every student has an advisor who is an advocate and champion to provide support from start to finish.

CT State will aim to align all vital licensures, accreditations, and transfer articulation agreements as part of the transition to a single college or submit a plan for achieving this goal by the end of the strategic planning period. CT State will also explore and improve credit transferability to institutions outside the CSCU system. CT State will continue to engage with relevant advisory boards (in compliance with specialized accreditation). CT State will establish reverse transfer programs to allow students who face barriers in obtaining a baccalaureate degree to earn an associate degree through CT State.

CT State continue the development of the CT State website, catalog, and student handbook. CT State will transition to a single-college educational resource and planning system (Banner), and standardize and integrate software titles for student learning, assessment management, student information systems and related tools.

CT State will continue to align all credit programs across the 12 campuses, pursuing rigorous program assessment, review, and improvement. CT State also commits to build a bridge between credit and non-credit programming, including a non-credit to credit pipeline and improve data collection practices and standards for continuing education. CT State will also continue coordination of representation and relationships with the Governor's Workforce Council, Workforce Development Board, and other key business entities.

The following benchmarks will measure CT State's progress towards providing an exceptional, affordable educational experience by AY2425:

- Achieving a student-to-advisor ratio of 250:1
- Improvement in rates of passage in first-year Math and English (Guided Pathways KPIs 4, 5 and 6) by 25% relative to Fall 2020
- At least one percentage point improvement in student success rate (graduation rates plus four-year transfer-out rates) without a decline in either transfer-out or graduation rate
- Increase the headcount of credit-level adult learners in the CT State student population by three percentage points relative to Fall 2020
- All extant transfer articulation agreements are preserved, consolidated, or expanded
- Successful adoption of accelerated learning schedules for some programs at all 12 campuses
- All twelve campuses remain open and operating with no plans to close locations
- All departments and campuses at CT State have aligned their own strategic plans with the single college's strategic plan in the realm of educational experience, including, but not limited to:
  - Enrollment Management & Student Affairs and Academic Affairs setting goals to improve user-friendliness and universal access for enrollment, financial aid, and registration processes
  - Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management & Student Affairs will set goals for alignment of all transfer articulation agreements and relevant external agreements
  - Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management & Student Affairs will set goals to effectuate a reverse transfer program
  - Workforce Development will set goals for building a bridge from non-credit to credit programs and aligning external agreements in all regions.

## Goal II: Achieving Equity in Student Outcomes and Workforce Cultural Representation

The central aim of CT State is to address systemic inequities, both between students, faculty, and staff of different socioeconomic backgrounds and between institutions.

CT State will broaden and deepen commitment to civic education, diversity, pluralism, anti-racism, and democratic citizenship education in all facets of CT State and with specific respect to curriculum, empowering students to engage in, operate within, and effect positive change in our multicultural democratic republic.

CT State is committed to using equity as a lens when examining policies, budget priorities, and academic programming. CT State will continue building a data-informed student success and equity framework.

CT State commits to investing in the expertise of our faculty and staff through ongoing professional development including universal design training, BIPOC training, equity training and implicit bias training, expanding, and deepening professional mentorship and faculty and staff development programs.

The ACME placement policy commits CT State to ensuring that all policies, practices, and procedures related to placement and student success in gateway English and mathematics courses are designed to

be anti-racist, eliminate structural inequities, recognize, and address implicit bias, and promote equitable course completion.

CT state will offer wraparound services and provide other resources to address household, transportation, and food insecurity at all main campuses.

CT State will expand outreach, recruitment, and services to non-traditional and/or underserved populations, including but not limited to the incarcerated and post-incarcerated, regarding opportunities in both non-credit and credit bearing certificate and degree programs.

CT State will reduce financial friction throughout the student experience by reducing or eliminating small payments that act as barriers to basic participation in the college experience from application through completion.

The following benchmarks will measure CT State's progress towards equity by AY2425:

- Narrow student success gaps between White students and Black, Hispanic/Latino and non-White student populations for passage of first-year English and Math (Guided Pathways KPIs 4, 5 and 6) by 50% relative to Fall 2020.
- Narrow gaps between White students and Black, Hispanic/Latino and non-White student populations in student success rate (graduation rates plus four-year transfer-out rates) by at least one percentage point relative to Fall 2020 without declines in either transfer-out or graduation rates.
- Improve representation of Black, Hispanic/Latino and non-White populations overall in our faculty and staff populations relative to FY2021 by at least one percentage point.
- All departments and campuses at CT State have aligned their own strategic plans with the single college's strategic plan in the realm of equity, including, but not limited to:
  - Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management & Student Affairs and Finance will set specific equity goals in their respective plans
  - Academic Affairs, Human Resources and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will develop plans to implement universal design training, BIPOC training, equity training and implicit bias training via faculty and staff development programs and set attendant goals
  - Enrollment Management & Student Affairs will plan to offer wraparound services at all main campuses to address insecurities that hinder student success and set attendant goals
  - Academic Affairs will detail plans to improve learning opportunities for the incarcerated and post-incarcerated
  - Enrollment Management & Student Affairs will identify examples of financial barriers to completion over the course of the entire student career from admission to graduation or transfer-out and detail plans to eliminate said barriers, setting attendant goals
  - Academic Affairs will review the general education curriculum with respect to its capacity to provide civic and multicultural education to prepare students to survive, thrive and active participants in and leaders of a multicultural democratic republic, and make recommendations to improve this practice by the end of the strategic planning period.

### Goal III: Stronger Internal Community and External Community Relationships

CT State commits to building and growing a community of mutual respect that meets the needs of its local constituents. CT State will deepen bonds between the single college, students, faculty, foundations, and local external constituencies.

CT State commits to ensuring the continuance of shared governance structures in the transition to a single college.

CT State commits to working with all campus foundations to maintain connections to local constituencies and ensure local communities continue to support students on campus.

CT State will ensure all administrative and student support services under the single college are sensitive to the needs of the local campus community.

CT State will expand personal enrichment and lifelong learning programs, deepen K12 relationships, College Career Pathways, dual enrollment, and early college programs, and identify new funding opportunities related to these programs.

CT State will implement cooperative/work-based learning programs and opportunities as well as expand and deepen relationships between industry, job market, and areas of study.

The following benchmarks will measure CT State's progress towards stronger internal community and external community relationships by AY2425:

- Implementation of the CT State Shared Governance plan
- Full availability of all administrative, career, and student support services at main campus locations.
- Professional development services rolled out for entire CT State faculty and staff population.
- Review of all clinical in-service partnerships and continuation of all partnerships deemed academically necessary.
- All consortium agreements and contractual arrangements will be rewritten to name the new college as CT State prior to July 1, 2023. All agreements will be reviewed to ensure consistency with other similar arrangements in other parts of the state.
- Alignment across the CT State campuses of the personal enrichment and lifelong learning programs.
- All departments and campuses at CT State have aligned their own strategic plans with the single college's strategic plan in the realm of community connections, including, but not limited to:
  - All campuses and relevant departments develop strategic plans with goals and benchmarks for continuing relationships with local foundations
  - Enrollment Management & Student Affairs will set goals and benchmarks for providing the broadest possible range of wraparound services to address student insecurities and outline priorities to ensure services are sensitive to the needs of local communities
  - Workforce Development will plan for continuation and expansion of K12 relationships, College Career Pathways, dual enrollment, early college programs, lifelong learning, and personal enrichment programs and set relevant benchmarks in all regions

- Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Workforce Development will plan and set benchmarks for deepening relationships between industry, job market, and areas of study in all regions

## The Near and Long Term

The Strategic Plan, upon adoption, remains in effect through the end of the 2024-2025 Academic Year. At the conclusion of the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Academic Years, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning under Academic Affairs will collect data on progress towards benchmarks and issue a report to the CT State cabinet on said progress.

This is a transitional strategic plan, appropriate for standing up a new institution born from an unprecedented merger. Nearing the conclusion of this plan's interval on June 30, 2025, the Executive Strategic Planning council will reconvene to develop and approve a long-range plan that takes CT State through 2030.

DRAFT (for Review and Feedback)