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February 5, 2020

Mr. Mark E. Ojakian  
President  
Connecticut State System Office  
61 Woodland Street Rm 302  
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Mr. Ojakian:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on November 22, 2019, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the public comment regarding Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) submitted by Lois Aime and Stephen Adair, and CSCU's response to that comment and voted the following:

that action on the public comment submitted by Lois Aime and Stephen Adair regarding CSCU's plans to consolidate the 12 community colleges in the state be deferred;

that the progress report scheduled for Spring 2020 be confirmed and the scope of the report be expanded to include a detailed response to the issues addressed in the public comment submitted by Lois Aime and Stephen Adair.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

After reviewing the public comment and considering the materials submitted by CSCU in response, the Commission deferred action on this matter because it did not have enough information to make a decision. We therefore request that the scope of CSCU's Spring 2020 progress report be expanded include a detailed response to the issues addressed in the public comment submitted by Lois Aime and Stephen Adair. We anticipate being apprised through the report of the ways in which the plans to implement the Students First initiative meet the Commission's standards with emphasis on: the implementation of regional presidents for clusters of community college in lieu of presidents for each community college; assuring academic quality and the integrity of academic programs upon the consolidation of the curriculum under "one college;" and assuring financial stability under this new model. This portion of the report will be informed by our standards on *Planning and Evaluation, Organization and Governance, the Academic Program, and Institutional Resources*:

Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes and include external perspectives. Results of planning and evaluation are regularly communicated to appropriate institutional constituencies. The institution allocates sufficient resources for its planning and evaluation efforts (2.1).

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

In multi-campus systems organized under a single governing board, the division of responsibility and authority between the system office and the institution is clear. Where system and campus boards share governance responsibilities or dimensions of authority, system policies and procedures are clearly defined and equitably administered (3.6).

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

The chief executive officer, through an appropriate administrative structure, effectively manages the institution so as to fulfill its purposes and objectives and establishes the means to assess the effectiveness of the institution. The chief executive officer manages and allocates resources in keeping with institutional purposes and objectives and assesses the effectiveness of the institution. The chief executive officer assures that the institution employs faculty and staff sufficient in role, number, and qualifications appropriate to the institution's mission, size, and scope (3.12).

The effectiveness of the institution's organizational structure and system of governance is improved through periodic and systematic review (3.19).

Through its system of academic administration and faculty participation, the institution demonstrates an effective system of academic oversight, assuring the quality of the academic program wherever and however it is offered (4.5).

The institution develops, approves, administers, and on a regular cycle reviews its academic programs under institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. Review of academic programs includes evidence of student success and program effectiveness and incorporates an external perspective. Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters (4.6).

The institution undertakes academic planning and evaluation as part of its overall planning and evaluation to enhance the achievement of institutional mission and program objectives. These activities are realistic and take into account stated goals and available resources. Additions and deletions of programs are consistent with institutional mission and capacity, faculty expertise, student needs, and the availability of sufficient resources required for the development and improvement of academic programs. The institution allocates resources on the basis of its academic planning, needs, and objectives (4.7).

The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances (7.4).

The institution is financially stable. Ostensible financial stability is not achieved at the expense of educational quality. Its stability and viability are not unduly dependent upon vulnerable financial resources or an historically narrow base of support (7.5).

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

The institution establishes and implements its budget after appropriate consultation with relevant constituencies in accord with realistic overall planning that provides for the appropriate integration of academic, student service, fiscal, development, information, technology, and physical resource priorities to advance its educational objectives (7.13).

The institution's financial planning, including contingency planning, is integrated with overall planning and evaluation processes. The institution demonstrates its ability to analyze its financial condition and understand the opportunities and constraints that will influence its financial condition and acts accordingly. It reallocates resources as necessary to achieve its purposes and objectives. The institution implements a realistic plan for addressing issues raised by the existence of any operating deficit (7.14).

Opportunities identified for new sources of revenue are reviewed by the administration and board to ensure the integrity of the institution and the quality of the academic program are maintained and enhanced. The institution planning a substantive change demonstrates the financial and administrative capacity to ensure that the new initiative meets the standards of quality of the institution and the Commission's Standards (7.15).

Lois Aime and Stephen Adair will be informed of Commission's disposition of this matter.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,



David Quigley

DQ/sjp