

2013–16 Strategic Initiatives

Connecticut State Universities

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CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

The 17 institutions that constitute the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) play a critical role in higher education in Connecticut. Through a statewide system of 12 community colleges, four state universities, and Charter Oak College—the state’s only public online university—ConnSCU serves 95,000 students annually, awards 15,000 degrees each year, and has the lowest net price of any sector of higher education in the state. Ninety-six percent of ConnSCU students are state residents. The vast majority of ConnSCU graduates stay in Connecticut to launch careers, begin families, and serve as active citizens in the state’s 169 communities.

Governance, guidance and support of the 17 ConnSCU institutions is provided by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR). With leadership from newly appointed Board of Regents President Gregory Gray and the anticipated appointment of a new Board chair, the Board of Regents is committed to continue the record of faculty excellence, and student achievement and success that has been evidenced in the past by individual ConnSCU institutions.

To provide direction to its member institutions, the Board of Regents passed a new Strategic Plan in September 2012 that included a Vision, Mission Statement, and Goals for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. Central to the vision of the Board was that ConnSCU provide an increasing number of Connecticut residents with a high-quality college education that will help them achieve their personal and career goals while ensuring Connecticut’s global economic competitiveness. A key metric in achieving this vision will be to increase the rate of students completing their academic programs. To do so, the Board is committed to providing ConnSCU students with affordable, innovative, and rigorous educational opportunities.

Strategic Planning Goals of the Board of Regents

The five goals that serve as the foundation of the Board of Regents' Strategic Plan for the future success of ConnSCU's 17 member institutions also provide guidance for the Strategic Objectives of the four State Universities over the next three-year period.

- 1) **A successful first year.** Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college.
- 2) **Student Success.** Graduate more students with the skills to achieve life/career goals.
- 3) **Affordability and Sustainability.** Maximize access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable.
- 4) **Innovation and Economic Growth.** Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast-changing world.
- 5) **Equity.** Eliminate achievement disparities among ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups.

Forces that Drive State University Planning and Operations

- Changing demographics of Connecticut (37 percent of ConnSCU students are minorities)
- Declining high school graduating classes in Connecticut (projected to continue for 10 years)
- Increasing enrollment competition from private institutions, for-profit operations and UConn
- Workforce realities (65 percent of jobs in Connecticut by 2018 will require some form of postsecondary degree yet only 41 percent of 2004 Connecticut high school graduates completed a postsecondary credential by 2010.)
- Organizational growing pains of ConnSCU system and accompanying public narrative
- Constraint to change and agility implicit in Collective Bargaining Agreements (especially AAUP and SUOAF)
- Limits to revenue generation from continued tuition increases
- Restrictive impact of declining direct state support since 2009 on curricular development and decreased organizational effectiveness
- Challenges and opportunities that technological disruption affords
- Comparative advantages of ConnSCU's size (enrollment, budget, staff)
- Stability in leadership at ConnSCU's four-year institutions
- Relative affordability of ConnSCU education

Connecticut State University Strategic Objectives: 2013–16

Over the next three years, the following objectives will be pursued by all four Connecticut State Universities, individually, collectively, and/or in concert with the Board of Regents for Higher Education and its staff, in support of the five Strategic Goals of the Board of Regents, and in response to the forces that drive our planning and operations.

- **Work with the Board of Regents to articulate and promote distinct institutional and curricular identities for each of the four Connecticut State Universities.** Balance these unique, statewide identities with each institution's regional markets and commitments.
 - Central Connecticut State University: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
 - Eastern Connecticut State University: Liberal Arts
 - Southern Connecticut State University: Health and Human Services (supported by STEM, Business, and Education)
 - Western Connecticut State University: Visual and Performing Arts
- **Reaffirm each university's local and regional relationships and responsibilities as a public institution and regional resource.**
 - Respond to local and regional workforce development needs
 - Stress each university's local economic impact and support local economic development
 - Build citizenship skills and support local needs through civic engagement
 - Support environmental stewardship and sustainability on and off campus
 - Identify opportunities for community-based research to solve critical problems in local and regional communities
- **Support faculty and student research and scholarship.**
 - Develop strategies for campus-specific and cross-campus faculty collaboration in the strategic research areas (i.e. STEM)
 - Support faculty scholarship through grants, award programs, and other support systems
 - Support undergraduate research programs through fellowships, conferences, publication opportunities, and other means
- **Develop closer relationships with Connecticut's Community Colleges.**
 - Continue implementation of the Transfer Articulation Policy, including major-by-major articulation, program review, and assessment of transfer patterns
 - Further enhance student transfer opportunities by improving transfer student services (e.g. website) and creating financial incentives for associate degree completers
 - Respond to specific workforce needs in Connecticut (health sciences, manufacturing)
 - Expand opportunities for state university/community college faculty collaboration

- **Work with the state K-12 educational system to implement clear strategies for closing the academic achievement gap so that more economically disenfranchised, minority, and first-generation students pursue and complete two- and four-year college degrees.**
 - Improve retention and graduation rates of at-risk populations
 - Complete development of the College Readiness Program mandated by PA 12-40, which must be in place by fall 2014
 - Increase completion rates for all students
- **Explore online and distance learning strategies with Charter Oak College.**
 - Develop degree completion programming
 - Investigate opportunities for State University/Charter Oak collaborations in the area of online, non-credit instruction
 - Expand ConnSCU online instruction by strengthening the role of Charter Oak College and strengthening local support as appropriate
- **Provide leadership to make improvements to the state's teacher preparation programs.**
 - Work with the P-20 Council, the State Department of Education, the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC), individual school districts, and other members of Connecticut's public higher education system to achieve this objective
 - Focus on EPAC's seven recommendations for improving teaching in our PK-12 schools
 - Conduct outreach to local school districts to develop pipeline systems and support the professional development of teachers
- **Prepare Connecticut students to be successful global citizens.**
 - Enhance teaching for such international professions as STEM, healthcare, etc.
 - Support study abroad opportunities and expand international faculty/student exchanges
 - Teach skills in critical thinking, communication, languages, cultural competency and social responsibility
- **Work with the Board of Regents to seek system-wide operational efficiencies.**
 - Explore the feasibility of centralizing select "back office" functions in the areas of admissions, financial aid, information technology, and other support systems
 - Support the Library Directors Council's plans to consolidate all 17 ConnSCU libraries and the Connecticut State Library into one cohesive library catalog system

University-Specific Initiatives

Central Connecticut State University

- 1. Expand academic programs for students pursuing STEM careers.** In addition to Central's School of Engineering and Technology, the University is also the largest producer of secondary mathematics teachers in the state; has an extensive Construction Management Program and a successful Geographic Information Systems Program; and excels in numerous other academic areas under the broad "STEM" definition.

It is estimated that 75 percent of new jobs in Connecticut will require a STEM background over the next decade. These jobs are likely to be concentrated in the following industries: healthcare; aerospace; computing technology; bioscience; finance; maritime; manufacturing; and green technologies. To help meet this need, CCSU proposes to increase enrollment in the STEM disciplines, expand the number of program offerings to respond to workforce needs, increase the percentage of underrepresented minorities and women in STEM disciplines, improve graduation rates in STEM disciplines, and establish pathways to STEM careers.

To achieve these goals, CCSU proposes to create the first STEM School at a public university, which will require expanding facilities and laboratories, recruiting additional faculty to expand program offerings, implementing innovative curricular changes, cultivating cooperative education and internship programs, and establishing an innovation, design and applied research facility. The new school will also offer online engineering bridge courses for community colleges, sponsor summer camps and a summer STEM Academy in STEM for high-school students, and administer a dual enrollment program. The new school will feature expanded academic offerings in such areas as environmental engineering; computer engineering; aerospace engineering; energy engineering technology; cyber security technology; bioinformatics technology; bioengineering; and engineering physics.

Establishing the new STEM School will enable CCSU to increase enrollment in existing undergraduate programs by 300 students, as well attract 600 students to new undergraduate programs, in five years. An important five-year target for the new school will be to increase the number of minority students and women by 30 percent, and to increase the diversity of the faculty by 25 percent.

- 2. Bring greater emphasis to Graduate Education and Applied Research.** In addition to expanding Graduate offerings, the University is investigating the possibility of making other current offerings more accessible to populations via differentiated times, mediated learning, and technology-assisted delivery. It can expand programs into areas that require new training for certification, such as the proposed Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice Program, which will graduate an average of 35-40 students per year.

Over the next five years, CCSU will be allocating resources to develop graduate programs that respond to workforce needs in Connecticut. We are also considering the feasibility of converting four-year programs into five-year programs that will graduate students with master's degrees. Among the degrees presently under consideration are Master of Science degrees in engineering; social work; gerontology; sports communication management; and criminology with cyber and homeland security tracks.

We will also be investigating potential programs in allied health, as well as the possibility of reactivating an MBA degree with a niche focus targeted to needs in the region. The expansion of our graduate offerings and efforts to offer existing degrees in new formats will increase our graduate enrollments by 250 students in each of the next five years.

- 3. Leverage the strengths of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department.** Central has a strong Criminology and Criminal Justice Department with extensive faculty and a large number of students. It also has a number of externally funded projects, such as the Sentencing Commission, that can potentially complement the department's strengths. According to U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, positions in criminal justice are identified as growth areas. Since the inception of our programs, we have consistently had more student interest than we have been able to accommodate. We have the potential to serve a larger and broader population of students.

Since the inception of our graduate program in 1996 and undergraduate program in 1997, CCSU has graduated approximately 1,000 students in criminology and criminal justice. Currently, we offer a B.A. in Criminology with more than 600 majors. Our program has a broad behavioral emphasis facilitated by multi-disciplinary faculty that provides students with a strong foundation to pursue a range of career paths in criminal justice and related fields. The department's plans include offering bachelor's degree cohorts at off-site locations to reach new populations of students. Also under discussion are interdisciplinary concentrations in such interdisciplinary areas as forensic computing; computer crimes; forensic science; crime mapping; and forensic accounting.

We can further develop and expand our expertise to address the following areas that represent future critical needs:

- Violent crime (risk and threat assessment, workplace violence, mass shootings, mental health issues)
- White-collar crime (computer crime, forensic computing, corporate security)
- International and global challenges (human trafficking, drug trafficking, immigration)
- Emergency management (Homeland Security, first responders)
- Criminal justice reform (pretrial detention, aging prison population, bail reform, gun policies)

We are considering developing a five-year combined B.A. & M.S. degree program. The first might be a combined Criminology B.A. and M.S. These types of five-year programs could also be interdisciplinary (e.g., Social Work B.A. and Criminal Justice M.S., etc.). Currently, we offer an M.S. in Criminal Justice with more than 40 graduate students. In addition to our traditional program, we have a law enforcement/leadership cohort being offered at the West Hartford Police Department. We are planning for a second cohort for state and local police officers to start in January 2015. We are organizing a cohort in community corrections to start in January 2014. This cohort will serve probation officers, parole officers, and non-profit offender program counselors. We have been approached by other criminal justice and community-based agencies about developing cohorts in additional areas such as correctional administration and juvenile justice programming. Criminal justice professionals have also expressed an interest in certificate programs. The proposed expansions in our Criminology and Criminal Justice programs will graduate 75-100 more students per year.

The Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice (ISCJ) was established in 2002 to serve as the research and community outreach arm of the department with the purpose of creating and disseminating scientific and practical knowledge of Criminal Justice that will inform local, state, and federal criminal and juvenile justice policy. With the addition of full-time staff, the ISCJ could better support faculty research and community outreach activities. The ISCJ could be designated as the Connecticut Statistical Analysis Center (SAC); direct and conduct research for the Sentencing Commission, and other legislative and state agencies; and provide technical assistance, training, consulting, and research to state, local, and community-based criminal justice agencies.

4. **Use the University's International Education program as a ConnSCU System-wide resource.** Central's Muirhead Center for International Education (CIE), which is already recognized as a Center of Excellence, can provide many resources to the Community Colleges and to the other three State Universities. The center could help expand both the number of international students who come to our institutions and the number of students and faculty who travel internationally to other institutions. Expanding the mission of the CIE would enable including students from all community colleges in the short- and long-term programs of the four state universities, as well as invite study-abroad program proposals from all ConnSCU faculty. The IERConn website, through which the CIE currently shares information with the Connecticut higher education community, would be the key means of achieving this goal. Investment in a dedicated scholarship fund could significantly reduce the financial burden that deters many ConnSCU students from studying abroad. Given sufficient resources, the CIE also has the capacity to coordinate international recruitment and marketing for ConnSCU, which aims to increase international student enrollments at institutions in our system.

The CIE also plans to expand its ESL and Intensive English Programs (IEP) as a tool to recruit international students to Connecticut. Approximately 900 CSU students study abroad each year; currently there are no community college students studying abroad. With additional investment in the CIE, the goal will be to increase that total to 1,200 per year across the system within five years. Similarly, supporting expanded marketing and recruitment efforts abroad will seek to increase the number of international students enrolled in ConnSCU institutions from approximately 300 to 400 students within five years.

Eastern Connecticut State University

1. **Strengthen the University's academic programs.** Eastern will revise existing programs and develop new programs to prepare students for growing industries (health care, finance, culture and tourism) with an emphasis on programs that have clear pathways from community colleges to Eastern and then to jobs or graduate programs in the state (nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy). Several of these new programs are already in the approval process (finance, health science, global enterprise and culture, costume design). In six years, we plan to have 70 finance majors; 100 health science majors; 50 global enterprise majors; and 30 costume design minors. We also intend to build on the university's strengths in Early Childhood Education, Biology, Environmental Earth Science, Sustainable Energy Studies and Psychology to expand faculty and student research and community engagement via undergraduate research and service-learning.

Strengthening our academic programs will require the University to provide faculty with more support and incentives to conduct their own scholarship and research activities, improve the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic programs; and develop Graduate Division programs and student support services.

2. **Expand integrative learning opportunities and "high impact practices"** on and off campus. Tie residence hall programming to off-campus experiential learning; expand the on-campus Work Hub (paid co-ops); provide additional support for undergraduate research; further develop the "Liberal Arts Work!" transcript attribute project to include credit- and noncredit-bearing applied learning experiences; and expand community-based Service Learning (programs in early childhood literacy; middle school tutoring; and health/wellness.)
3. **Enhance the residential, liberal arts experience of Eastern students.** Eastern will hire more full-time faculty; increase financial aid and scholarship options for students to enable students to graduate in four years; increase students' career connections with alumni through internships and other career exploration options; develop theme-based residential halls; and refine the Exemplary Program Review Process.
4. **Reinforce Eastern's identity as a premier residential public liberal arts college offering an affordable option to the experience and education that has prepared many of America's leaders.** With a four-year graduation rate of 43 percent, 60 percent of students living on campus, and more than 75 percent of students engaged in experiential learning, Eastern students have the same experiences and will have the same successes as students

attending private liberal arts institutions that have been the hallmark of higher education in New England. Reinforcing this will involve both controlling costs and reinforcing a campus culture that promotes leadership, involvement, broad exposure to global and cultural diversity, and development of a strong network of students and alumni. Emphasize that the 21st century liberal arts college experience incorporates a critical new element of experiential education that blends liberal arts education with integrated experiences that build essential skills.

5. **Support the personal and professional growth of students, faculty, and staff.** Eastern plans to enhance student success through improved counseling, tutoring, and advising services, including faculty and professional advising services; improved use of data to predict and respond to the needs of at-risk students; and expanded financial aid and scholarship support. Develop a Parent Advisory Council and related programs. Create an Office of Professional Development that integrates and supports faculty and staff professional development.
6. **Increase public awareness of Eastern's unique public liberal arts mission.** The University will attract a diverse and talented pool of students using predictive modeling, leveraged financial aid, and enhanced admissions marketing/communications strategies. Expand public relations and marketing efforts through the use of digital media and alumni/employer networking.
7. **Play an increasingly significant role in the economic development, cultural vibrancy, and educational quality in Windham County and the Eastern Connecticut region.** We plan to leverage the public service potential of our Fine Arts Instructional Center, scheduled to open in fall 2015; continue the work of the Center for Community Engagement in our local and regional communities; and use our on-campus Work Hub to support local startup companies.

Southern Connecticut State University

1. **Strengthen student success by ensuring accessibility and providing specialized support for targeted student groups,** including the provision of academic advisors for transfer students and students who need personalized financial planning. Provide support for lifelong learners/adult students seeking to retrain or enter new careers, and lower the cost of education for Southern students and their families through the use of accelerated academic programs (3- and 3½- year) and other means. Utilize technology to ensure students have the skills they need when entering the workforce. This includes investments in new technology and equipment to complement new facilities constructed under CSU 2020, upgrades of current technology, the development of online resources tied to workforce needs, and fostering innovation.
2. **Strengthen graduate programs, establish clinical doctoral programs, and strengthen full-time faculty in such workforce areas as health sciences and education.** Focus on cutting-edge areas in STEM, health sciences, and the intersection of business with both of

these fields, as well as emerging fields such as creative writing, and traditional fields such as teacher preparation and leadership. Develop clinical advanced degrees in specialty areas such as audiology and nursing in response to additional requirements in these fields.

3. **Increase civic and professional engagement opportunities for students through a variety of applied experiences**, including global awareness (study abroad, recruitment of international students, living-learning communities, on-campus cultural programming); civic engagement and volunteerism; undergraduate research (e.g. Materials Science Center jointly operated by Southern and Yale University); and paid internships. Become known for experiential education, undergraduate research, and other high-impact practices.
4. **Expand and support local and regional partnerships to respond to workforce and community needs**, including greater connectivity with community colleges to provide graduates for professional areas such as healthcare and business; enhanced efforts to work with local school districts to close the achievement gap and make college an attainable goal for all students; and the development of workforce-related programs in growth industries in the Greater New Haven area/Southern Connecticut region including biotechnology, biomedical, and health care business.
5. **Enhance Southern's reputation as a global institution** by increasing study abroad opportunities for students and international exchange opportunities for faculty. Create additional partnerships with sister institutions abroad (with an emphasis on Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East). Strengthen current infrastructure to support international students, enhance the international education office, and build on Southern's location on the Boston-New York-Washington D.C. train line.

Western Connecticut State University

1. **As home of ConnSCU's only School of Visual and Performing Arts, Western will serve as the system's flagship institution in the Visual and Performing Arts.** We will accomplish this goal by coordinating the University's fine arts programs' emphasis on creativity across the curriculum and producing unique partnership opportunities with business disciplines, entrepreneurship education, and the sciences (STEAM). We will capitalize on proximity to cultural resources of the New York City metro area to provide powerful educational experiences for students in creative and applied arts fields. WestConn will focus its attention on a partnership between fine arts disciplines, computer science and communications to develop a new academic program in digital media.
2. **Pursue excellence in other signature academic programs**, including biology/chemistry; justice and law administration; management information systems/information security; and nursing; as well as academic programs that serve Connecticut's workforce needs and are also offered at other Connecticut State Universities. Western will invest in programs that meet internally determined criteria with regard to quality, workplace relevance and student demand.

3. **Offer high quality professional programs on a strong arts and sciences foundation.**
Examples of such programs include justice and law administration, education, nursing, social work, meteorology, health promotion and exercise science, and business disciplines including accounting, finance, management, management information systems and marketing.
4. **Be recognized as the University of the Region,** enhancing the intellectual, economic, social and cultural environment of Fairfield County and Western Connecticut, and capitalizing on the financial, human, organizational and physical resources of the region. Provide as well undergraduate and graduate programs to address regional workforce needs in areas such as business (MBA); education (M.S. in Counselor Education, Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership); and Nursing (Ed.D. in Nursing Education).
5. **Demonstrate relevance through achievement and maintenance of specialized accreditation in professional fields.** This includes maintenance of accreditation by NCATE, ACS, CCNE, CSWE, NASM and attaining AACSB accreditation for all business programs by 2016.
6. **Increase the university's effectiveness in enrollment management and student retention,** including branding/communication, process re-engineering, and advising impact. Western's efforts include restructuring all student enrollment functions into one Division of Enrollment Services and the implementation of enrollment management and retention tools. Among these are software packages (e.g. MapWorks), a new Mathematics Emporium for elementary courses, and a Learning Commons for at-risk students in the Ancell School of Business.

Outcomes for Connecticut's State Universities: 2013–16

- **Graduation Rates:**

The four Connecticut State Universities will increase degree completion rates by 10 percent over the next three years, graduating approximately 6,500 undergraduates and 1,650 graduate students by 2015–16.

- **Retention:**

The four Connecticut State Universities will increase their overall freshman-sophomore retention rate 6.4 percent over the next three years (from 73.6% to 80% by 2015–16).

- **Teacher Preparation:**

The four Connecticut State Universities will increase the number of teacher preparation graduates by 20 percent, graduating 1,800 teaching candidates by 2015–16, (bachelor's and graduate levels) with attention given to the following four need areas: Special Education; Mathematics; Sciences; and English Language Learner instruction.

- **High-Demand Occupations:**

The four Connecticut State Universities will increase the number of students graduating in select high-demand occupations, with the following totals by 2015–16:

○ Biology/Biological Sciences:	175
○ Computer and Information Technology	130
○ Physical Sciences	180
○ Engineering/Engineering Technology	185
○ Mathematics	140
○ Health Sciences	400

- **Operational Efficiencies:**

The four Connecticut State Universities will work with the Board of Regents to identify potential operational efficiencies and cost savings over the next three years; a 5% savings would yield \$7 million annually; a 10% savings would yield \$14 million annually.

- **Outreach:**

The four state universities will continue to engage and have a positive impact on their local and regional communities as measured by economic impact/ROI data, and levels of activity in such areas as community service, internships, and cultural engagement.

- **Reputation:**

The state universities will advance their individual and collective reputations as institutions of quality and choice as evidenced by US News and World Report, The Princeton Review, and other rankings.