

Central Connecticut State University
UNIVERSITY SENATE ACTION

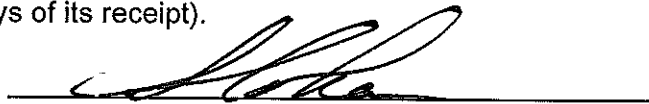
Senate Motion Number FS 13.14.034B

TO: President Jack Miller
FROM: President of the University Senate

1. The attached motion of the University Senate, dealing with: **Fall Commencement for Undergraduates** is presented to you for your consideration.
2. This motion was adopted by the University Senate on **05/05/2014**.
3. After considering this motion, please indicate your action on this form, and return it together with the original copy to the President of the University Senate.
4. Under the By-Laws of the University Senate, Section 3.7, the following schedule of action is to be observed.
 - a) By **05/12/2014**, Senate action reported to the President of the University. (Within five school days of the session in which they are adopted).
 - b) By **05/27/2014**, the President of the University to return the motion to the President of the Senate. (Within ten school days of its receipt).

05/12/2014

Date


Stephen Cohen, President, University Senate

ENDORSEMENT:

TO: President of the University Senate
FROM: President Jack Miller

1. Motion Approved : _____
2. Motion Disapproved: (Explanatory statement must be appended).
3. Action "is deferred": _____
4. Resolution Noted: _____
5. Other: _____

Date

5/15/14

President Jack Miller



A Resolution of Support for Fall Commencement Exercises

Whereas, numerous students graduate from Central Connecticut State University each academic year;
and

Whereas, a significant fraction of these students graduate in December; and

Whereas, those students must return to CCSU five months later if they wish to participate in
commencement exercises; therefore, be it

Resolved, that we do hereby voice our support for fall commencement exercises for undergraduate
students, and urge the administration of Central Connecticut State University to consider the
reinstitution of the same.

McDavid, Courtney (PresOffice)

From: Miller, John (President CCSU)
Sent: Friday, May 16, 2014 4:53 PM
To: Cohen, Stephen (English); Sonet, Simms A. (Student)
Subject: Senate Motion

I am writing you concerning the Motion FS13.14.034B, adopted by the Faculty Senate on 5/5/14. It was not transmitted to me until 5/12/14. I note that I am forwarding this to Simms Sonet, the new President of the Student Government Association, as I told him I would.

Let me outline the chronology of this issue, which has been in a state of flux since 2005.

In December of 2005, a winter (December) commencement was scheduled. It was either the first one ever conducted at Central or, at least, the first one in a very long time. This decision was made after I was appointed, but before I started work in June, 2005. It was made for several reasons. The original idea was to have a special ceremony to recognize the first cohort of doctoral students to receive their degrees. It was decided that original plan needed some modification because it would not make sense to have a commencement ceremony for a dozen people. Therefore, it was decided an overall Graduate commencement would be held to make it seem more like a real "graduation." Although I was involved in this decision, because I was informed of it, it all occurred prior to my arrival at CCSU.

During the course of the conversations, it was also expressed to me that we needed to set up times for an inauguration celebration, and this might span several days with a number of events. I said I really didn't feel that that was needed, nor necessarily appropriate. I suggested that the inauguration be combined with this one-time Graduate commencement to be held in December 2005, and that my inaugural speech would also be the commencement address.

After this ceremony was conducted, the institution began to receive a number of complaints and concerns from undergraduate students requesting that they be added to the December commencement, and that it be continued. We agreed, and did so, for December of 2006. We also decided, at the same time, that if we could do a combined ceremony for graduate and undergraduate students in December, we could do a combined ceremony for graduate and undergraduate students in May, and we did so.

We then had a number of concerns expressed the by the Graduate Student Association regarding combined ceremonies. There were comments that combined ceremonies were somehow “demeaning” to graduate students. On the other hand, separating them was discussed, but four ceremonies was too costly, too difficult to get different speakers, and too hard to get full participation of faculty and staff at those events, etc. After many discussions, and with much deliberation, we then decided to move ahead with two combined commencements, one in December and one in May, beginning in 2008.

After trying this for a while, and again considering the complaints of graduate students, we reached the decision to move to the present model; two ceremonies both in the spring, one for graduates, and one for undergraduates.

If I had to pick the single-most compelling reason for discontinuing the other models and moving back to the “original,” with an undergraduate and a graduate commencement in May, is that none of the iterations increased participation. If there had been large differences when we had both December and May commencements, regardless of the number of them, it might have been different. However, the fact of the matter was that we had the data from multiple approaches, and the overall percentage of eligible participants who attended commencement did not vary appreciably. Therefore, there was no clear benefit of holding multiple ceremonies, and there were numerous problems associated with doing so. Since that time, in 2009, we have proceeded with two commencement ceremonies, both in the spring, one for graduates and one for undergraduate students. It seems fairest to all, and does not harm participation.

Given the above, I see no reason to re-enter into a series of different ways of doing this. Therefore, I have disapproved this Motion. Of course, I am always willing to entertain conversation in the future.

Regards,

Jack Miller
President