

## **University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) Report to Senate**

**January 27, 2014**

### **Re: Dr. Gray visit with UPBC to discuss ExcelCT and system planning on 011014**

The UPBC met with President Gray on January 10, 2014 to foster a discussion with the faculty and staff of the University with regard to his ExcelCT proposal. The meeting overall went very well and the committee found Dr. Gray to be very frank, knowledgeable and open to ideas from the CCSU community.

Generally speaking, Dr. Gray felt that very little planning went into the creation of ConnSCU. In the spring of 2013, prior to his arrival, he was asked to prepare plans for obtaining funding for the system somewhat in response to the UCONN program funding received during that legislative session. Upon his arrival he met with the Governor who communicated to him that he would consider some type of funding for the system only after such a plan could be seen and supported by the Governor's office. That was the impetus for ExcelCT.

#### **Dr. Gray stated that ExcelCT works to address three main points:**

- Become a system
- Serve students
- Improve ourselves

#### **The rough timeline that was communicated to the UPBC is as follows:**

January 17 – Dr. Gray to present to the Board of Regents (BOR) and outline the plan, Dr. Gray will be seeking unanimous support from the board. No dollar amount will be shared with the BOR at this time.  
February 5 (or earlier) – Governor Malloy includes plans for ExcelCT in his budget address or during an earlier press conference as he rolls out his budget proposal to the legislature and people of Connecticut.  
February 6 through Fall 2014 - Task forces needed to work toward to making us more of a system and fill out the plan. At least a dozen or more system groups, not counting local input groups from campuses will be developed. Already have IT and early college task forces. Needed groups to include; one on revenue, expenses, efficiencies, long term approach to tuition. There will be a need to continue to communicate throughout this process the reinforced message that we are the higher education choice for CT residents. Expectation is that this will be fully done by late 2014.

#### **Highlights shared with the UPBC**

- Multi-phase 10 year program - 3 phases (roughly 3 years each)
- Dr. Gray is very concerned about IT end of life issues - large amount of dollars are needed to remedy this issue. There is a substantial amount of money in plan for IT.
- ExcelCT would take care of all deferred maintenance in one shot (Approximately \$836 million according to the Sightlines report to the BOR November 2013).

- System academic master planning would have funding.
- At this point, there is a finite dollar request into the Governor. That number was not disclosed.
- Enrollment:  
Some funding exists in ExcelCT to address the decline in high school graduates by having early colleges for high school juniors and seniors to take college courses at Community Colleges. This would assist in reducing remediation costs and to secure our enrollment. A Regents scholarship for the system will be used to keep students in the system and offer them a chance to go to a State University (CSU). This is an enrollment driven initiative. The third component is Charter Oak. There is a need to better serve the adult market returning to education after many years and shore up the offerings to non-traditional and returning students.

## **Q&A**

When asked specific questions relative to rumors and concerns involving his speaking tour this past fall and its communication of ExcelCT he responded to each point accordingly.

### **How does Charter Oak fit into this plan especially with relation to the AAUP faculty v. contracted workers currently in use?**

We need to somehow "systematize" it. Charter Oak can be the conduit to make sure that we are offering the right courses, less duplication, local campuses still to offer their own online courses. AAUP faculty will be at the back end teaching, Charter Oak acts as the front end marketing and acting as a traffic cop to avoid duplication of course offerings. There was some concern on the part of UPBC with this idea.

### **Is the specialization aspect still included in the plan and will each institution have a say in that decision? What if any impact will that decision have on existing programs?**

Specialization will be in phase 2. Whether or not other programs (at CCSU) are impacted will be decided by the University itself when they decide what their specialization will be.

### **Role of consultants?**

Consultant to be hired on February 6 or soon thereafter (assumption) to look at improvement in offering services for less money.

### **Combining services that have typically maintained local control on the campus or may impact staff and operations on the campuses?**

Considerations of a fully centralized IT for efficiency were mentioned - looking to an expert to decide this, he will not make this decision himself. It is about serving students better, then secondary, hopefully saving dollars along the way.

### **Campus involvement at the legislature?**

Organized support from campuses for lobbying possible after February 6.

### **The continued growth of the system office?**

He sees little additional hiring to be done at the system office after he completes some key leadership team hires (CIO, Provost, etc.). He will be depending on the efficiency expert for some input into what will be needed however he was quick to point out that ConnSCU 3.9% of the budget compared to other places around the country that average in the 8-10% range.

**Timeline and relationship to 2020?**

Some of 2020 will be up for reevaluation and reconsideration as part of the ExcelCT plan once it is rolled out. They will obviously overlap in time.

Overall, Dr. Gray communicated that while he differs from some BOR members in their views of numbers (dollars) versus education; he understands their concerns and will work with them to make this plan a success. He is first and foremost an educator, with a strong Community College background and he believes in the role that our institutions have historically filled.

Members of the UPBC discussed afterward that it seems that this is truly a “framework” at this point and time with a request for a large sum of money attached to it. Of particular note, the system-wide academic strategic plan was most interesting as no one had really heard anything about this item before this date. The UPBC still has some concern that the legislature may try to interject with changes to the plan throughout the session and that we will need to be vigilant in watching ExcelCT as it makes its way through the legislature.