To President Ojakian and the members of the Board of Regents:

The Central Connecticut State University Faculty Senate would like to express to you our concerns about the recently released CSCU Workgroup reports. As individuals we will take advantage of the opportunity afforded to submit feedback on the individual reports via the online form; the concerns in this letter are more global in scope and collective in source, and so not appropriate for the feedback mechanism provided.

- We are concerned about the lack of clarity surrounding the Workgroup process. The timeline on the CSCU web site indicates that the reports released to the CSCU community on January 31 are "final recommendations" that, after a month's feedback, will be presented to the Board. President Ojakian's e-mail of February 6 indicates that the reports are instead "preliminary recommendations." The reports themselves are extremely uneven: some report on actions that have already taken place, some offer detailed, actionable proposals, and others offer only general suggestions. It is difficult to know how to respond to the reports without knowing their actual status or what action the Board might take in March: a provisional approval of further development of the proposals, or a final approval of implementation? We strongly suggest that a clear list of specific proposals to be considered for approval and implementation should be made available to the CSCU community, with an appropriate period for comment, before they are discussed or approved by the Board.

- We are dismayed by the lack of concern indicated by the presentation of the reports. One is largely composed of images that are illegible and cannot be made legible by magnification. Another is replete with acronyms and other terms neither immediately accessible nor properly explained to the lay reader. This does not indicate to us a genuine desire to receive substantive, informed feedback. We ask that the CSCU community be provided with legible, comprehensible revised drafts.

- We are concerned that many of the reports seem to have been written from a top-down perspective without consideration of the impact of their recommendations on the 17 individual CSCU campuses. Even the most detailed reports offer no indication of what their implementation might look like on the campuses, making substantive comments from the campuses—much less from individuals—difficult or impossible. We request that before any plans are approved for implementation, the CSCU community be provided with the specific information we need to understand and evaluate them: how many and which HR and Financial Aid personnel will be fired or relocated, and what impact may those changes be expected to have on the timely, nimble operations of campus-based offices? What will the new purchasing procedures and policies look like for campus-based purchasing managers, faculty, and staff? What level of funding will be needed to implement the system-wide marketing, recruitment, and retention proposals, where will it come from, and how will it affect the ability or willingness of the system office to provide funds for campus-based initiatives? To commit to implementation without knowing the answers to these questions would be irresponsible on the part of the Board; to have the answers and not share them with the community would be equally irresponsible.

- We are concerned that the reports take no account of the autonomy or the independent operations of the 17 individual campuses. How would a (lamentably undeveloped) system-wide marketing campaign impact individual campuses' marketing efforts, including CCSU's own new marketing plan? How would the consolidation of Financial Aid services impact the ability of campuses to award financial aid, including campus-based funds, in ways they deem most effective? How will system-wide marketing, changes to financial aid processes, and system-wide recruitment and retention efforts affect individual campus' recruitment and fundraising plans? We ask that before any plans are approved for implementation, the campuses be given an opportunity to understand and respond to these potential impacts, lest we end up wasting campus resources on work that will be undone or contradicted by system-wide actions.

- We are concerned about the lack of input from knowledgeable stakeholders in some of the workgroups, particularly the lack of inclusion of campus HR personnel on the HR Workgroup and the effective exclusion of faculty group members from the decision-making process. It seems important to us that a broader and more representative set of individuals who are most familiar with the day to day operation of the affected area be involved in the Workgroups' discussions before their recommendations are finalized and approved for implementation.

- We are concerned that many of the Workgroups' proposals will, if implemented, visit the problems of the community colleges on the CSUs. We recognize that the community colleges face significant financial and personnel challenges that limit their efficacy in many of the areas addressed by the Workgroups, but we do not feel that diverting the CSU's personnel and other resources to system-wide operations is an appropriate response. The CSUs have been and continue to be willing to work with our regional community colleges, but such arrangements—like that between SCSU and Gateway CC—are most effectively established and managed at the campus level, not the system level. We encourage you to solicit and consider local and regional rather than solely global solutions.

We wish in closing to emphasize that we recognize the significant financial difficulties faced by the CSCU system both at present and in the years to come, as well as the need to work together to address these difficulties. Thoughtful, carefully planned consolidation of efforts and resources may well be a valuable part of our response. We have, however, some recent unhappy experience with hasty, ill-considered top-down attempts at consolidation and systematization at CSCU, and we wish to avoid repeating such a debacle. We ask that before approving the implementation of any of the Workgroups' proposals, you take the time to clarify exactly which proposals are being considered for implementation, make them clear and accessible to the CSCU community, consider and communicate their impact on the individual campuses, and solicit and support local and regional solutions. We hope you will agree that it is worth the extra time and care that this will take in order to earn the genuine and enthusiastic support of your campus-based partners in what must, in order to succeed, be a common endeavor.