

Norwalk Community College
188 Richards Ave.
Norwalk, CT 06854

March 26, 2018

Dr. Barbara W. Brittingham, President
Commission on Institution of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Dr., Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

RE: Proposed Annual Cost Savings by Eliminating Department Chairs/Division Directors as Defined in Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) NEASC Substantive Change Request

Dear Dr. Brittingham:

Before we present our concerns on the above topic we would like to clarify that we fully understand that NEASC can choose not to review the contents of this document since we are sending it after the March 16, 2018 deadline. But, we believe that the specific area this document focuses on is important enough for us to present our findings to you and the NEASC Commission. We did not see this report until Monday, March 19 and, therefore, were unaware of how this topic would be addressed in its final form.

- ✓ Page 51 (attached) of CSCU's substantive change request claims that replacing Department Chairs and Division Directors will save 27.4 FTE faculty.
- ✓ This "...equates to 822.0 credit hours per academic year, equivalent to 274 three-credit course sections per year. At approximately \$5000 per adjunct per course, that amounts to \$1.4 million in potential savings."

The claim that eliminating Department Chairs and Division Directors will save money is more rhetorical misdirection, than accounting reality. Based on the figures presented in the report, eliminating Department Chairs and Division Directors will cost approximately \$3.907 million annually.

- ✓ The table on page 50 (attached) reflects the following:
 - The current total number of FTE Staffing for Department Chairs, Division Directors, and Program Coordinators is 79.6 (which is 27.4 + 15.9 + 36.3).
 - The "Future State," shows a projected staffing total of 46.5 FTE for Program Coordinators. Momentarily excluding the Associate Deans from the calculation, this is a FTE staffing reduction of 33.1.
 - The 33.1 FTE staffing reduction equates to 993 contact hours or (993/3) 331 courses. Using the above figure of \$5000 per adjunct per course, this amounts to a savings of \$1.655 million.
- ✓ This is offset by the cost of hiring an additional 34 (38 - 4) Associate Deans.
 - Appendix GG (attached) provides estimates of the cost of salaries and fringe benefits of Associate Deans, which are forecasted to be somewhat higher at the larger community college campuses than the smaller ones. The numbers below reflect what is noted in Appendix GG.
 - Based on the number of new positions listed in the table on page 50:
 - 6 Associate Deans will cost \$148,750 each for salaries and fringe benefits at the smaller schools or, \$892,500 total
 - 12 at the medium-sized schools at \$159,906 each or, \$1,918,872 total
 - 16 (20-4 already there) at the larger schools at \$171,899 each or \$2,750,384 total

- This produces a total cost of \$5.562 million.

Eliminating Department Chairs and Division Directors will cost an extra \$3,907,000 annually.

Appendix JJ (attached) presents a table of projected savings that was presented to the CT Board of Regents Finance Committee in December 2017. This table, too, appears to estimate a savings with the elimination of Department Chairs and Division Directors of \$1,500,000, but notes that the "Associate Deans have already been budgeted as a cost of the new structure..." This statement would appear to contradict any commentary on realized savings since the Associate Deans, as noted above, were already budgeted as a cost.

Appendix GG breaks down the additional costs of "New Positions" and "Transferred Positions." It is unclear what parameters were used to determine what would define a "New Position" versus a "Transferred Position." One could certainly argue that Associate Deans are not "Transferred Positions" since there are only 4 of them in the Connecticut Community College system at present, and, when factored into the proposed structure, there is still a \$3.907M deficit. But, whether these positions are considered "New" or "Transferred" is irrelevant. They will be paid real money that could either be used in other areas or could be part of the savings that this restructuring is touted to save. But, it becomes more and more apparent that the advertised savings is more obfuscation than factual accounting.

Beyond the misdirection over supposed cost-savings, however, lies an even more problematic concern with the removal of Department Chairs and Division Directors, which centers on the academic integrity that our students depend upon. Full-time faculty will no longer be evaluated by Chairs and Directors, but instead, by Associate Deans who are highly likely to be unfamiliar with the content of the classes they are evaluating. With supervisors who have little to no knowledge of the content, how can they provide informative guidance to faculty being evaluated? How can academic programs maintain consistent integrity when those directly charged with oversight cannot ascertain whether a teacher is factually correct and teaching the most current best practices?

We presently employ Department Chairs and Division Directors in an evaluative capacity to mentor all faculty on how to apply best teaching practices to their classes as well as maintain the integrity of what our students are learning through ensuring all content is current within that discipline. This proposal will not only be more financially costly, it will also be more academically costly.

Sincerely, (in alphabetical order)

Lois Aime, Professor; Director, Educational Technology; Norwalk CC Senate President

John Alvord, Professor of Graphic Design; Dept. Chair, Art, Architecture & Design

Michele Barber, Professor of Biology; Dept. Chair, Science

Angela Chlebowski, Professor of Nursing; Dept. Chair, Nursing

Thomas Duffy, Professor of Computer Science; Dept. Chair Computer Science

Elizabeth Glatt, Professor of Mathematics; Dept. Chair, Mathematics

Steven Glazer, Professor of Economics; Dept. Chair, Social & Behavioral Science

Edward Grippe, Professor of Philosophy; Dept. Chair, Humanities

Forrest Helvie, Professor of English; Dept. Chair, Academic Enrichment & First Year Experience

Thomas Jackson, Professor of Law; Dept. Chair, Business

Linda Lerman, Director, Library

Judith Mocchiola, Interim Director, Nursing & Allied Health

Hannah Moeckel-Rieke, Professor of ESL; Dept. Chair, ESL

William O'Connell, Professor of English; Dept. Chair, English

