



**Faculty Senate
Central Connecticut State University**

On the Matter of “Students First”: A Pending Proposal before the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Central Connecticut State University reaffirms its serious commitment to the principle of shared governance of Connecticut public universities and community colleges; and

WHEREAS the Board of Regents (BOR) for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System and its President Mark Ojakian have launched the “Students First” Initiative, which attempts to consolidate the administrative infrastructure and academic programs of the 12 community colleges that are part of the system; and

WHEREAS it is public knowledge that the CSCU administration of has submitted a preliminary plan outlining the goals, objectives, methods and structure of “Students First” to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC); and

WHEREAS this plan did not include input from any committee or faculty body representing either the community colleges or the four universities that comprise the system despite President Ojakian and the BOR’s commitment to do so when the initiative was first announced; and

WHEREAS CCSU’s Faculty Senate has been privy to NEASC’s initial response to the plan and shares many of the concerns raised in that response; and

WHEREAS our current understanding of “Students First” leads us to believe that it is a flawed initiative that lacks a coherent rationale, accurate financial data, and sound academic assessment evidence that would justify such a radical proposition that will result in the dismantling of the twelve community colleges; and

WHEREAS the proposed savings said to result from the consolidation of the community colleges have not been factually demonstrated by Mr. Ojakian and the BOR and the plan, to the extent that it has been made available to CSCU’s academic constituents including the Connecticut State Universities, seems to be ill conceived and structured; and

WHEREAS this consolidation plan will further increase the administrative infrastructure of the CSCU System Office at the expense of the academic units that comprise the system and the sound education of the students we are committed to educate; and

WHEREAS in order to protect and defend the autonomy and integrity of the missions of the universities, we reject any effort to consolidate so-called “back office” support staff and operations at the universities, and/or require them to double-report to the individual university and the System Office; and

WHEREAS the “Students First” plan will have a negative impact on many of the academic programs offered in the four state universities that receive hundreds of transfer students every year from the community colleges and that impact has not been adequately assessed and analyzed;

BE IT RESOLVED that the CCSU Faculty Senate requests that NEASC not grant provisional accreditation to the Connecticut Community College under the current proposal submitted by Mr. Ojakian and the Board of Regents as this has the potential to undermine the entire CSCU system to the detriment of its student body and the effectiveness of its institutions.