

Central Connecticut State University Faculty Senate

No Confidence Vote

As institutions, the most important asset of each of the twelve community colleges in Connecticut is its individual and independent accreditation. It allows the faculty and staff to make local decisions that respond to the specific needs of its students and its community. The Students First Proposal from President Mark Ojakian, as endorsed by the CSCU Board of Regents, would take away the individual accreditations. This loss would remove the ability of each community college to act on behalf of its local constituents. The fact that decisions would be made at a distance by bureaucrats who neither understand nor have direct knowledge of the needs of the community and of the students is counter to the mission of a community college.

Whereas in April 2017 the Board of Regents (BOR) for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System and its President, Mark Ojakian, launched the "Students First" Initiative, which attempts to consolidate the administrative infrastructure and academic programs of the 12 community colleges and consolidate "back office" functions for the 17 CSCU institutions with no understanding of how this might affect the colleges and universities ability to function and retain accreditation;

Whereas the planning process for "Students First" violates established principles of shared governance, despite repeated calls to create a more representative and deliberative process for managing the transition;

Whereas the committees created as part of this plan do not provide adequate faculty representation and participation in academic decision-making;

Whereas the processes adopted for curriculum reform are rushed and unlikely to build academic excellence into programs, but will instead result in programs that meet the "lowest common denominator";

Whereas we share all of the concerns raised in the initial NEASC (now NECHE) response dated April 25, 2018 when they did not endorse the initial Substantive Change application, and there is no guarantee that an updated application for accreditation will be approved;

Whereas over the last two years "Students First" has already failed to meet both budgetary expectations and planned timelines, and will continue to drain resources from the colleges to build a statewide bureaucratic structure that does not educate anyone;

Whereas the plan to build a single community college for Connecticut with 12 campuses removes the community from the community colleges;

Whereas "Students First" risks plunging the community college system into years of uncertainty and chaos that will have negative impacts on students;

Whereas "Students First" endangers the ability of the twelve Community Colleges in Connecticut to fulfill their respective missions, while only putting the system office first; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the CCSU Faculty Senate, as the representative body for faculty and staff of CCSU, votes No Confidence in the "Students First" plan, Mark Ojakian, president of the CSCU system, and the Board of Regents for the CSCU system.