



Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges

Service Employee International Union (SEIU) Local 1973 – “Stronger Together!”

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“Students First” is anything but.

The recommended restructuring plan to consolidate the 12 community colleges into regional campuses has the potential to destroy our very essence: the ability to offer high quality, low cost, and flexible educational opportunities to Connecticut’s students.

The Delegate Assembly of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4Cs) voted to oppose the current proposal for consolidation because:

- The number of non-unionized management positions appears to increase, while attrition and a hiring freeze continue to decrease the number of faculty and staff who directly interact with students in their communities.
- The proposed model mimics a for-profit model that will pour more resources into convincing students to enroll with less emphasis on retention or developing curriculums students and businesses need.
- It rehashes K-12 concepts that have not borne fruit, such as No Child Left Behind and the Common Core, rather than using student-centered models like Guided Pathways.
- It eliminates on-campus staff positions, decreasing the one-on-one relationships with students that foster success and retention.
- This proposal creates more management positions, adding layers of administration that will impede the crafting and development of curriculum - leaving academic decisions in the hands of bureaucrats, not the faculty experts who teach.
- Replacing Department Chairs with Associate Deans or other administrators removes an integral aspect of faculty engagement in the administration of academic institutions at the community college level. Department Chairs have been instrumental in moving curriculum matters through the governance system and engage in meaningful decision making.
- The proposal silos student services at the BOR central office, away from the staff and faculty who assist them on a daily basis.
- Colleges will lose their unique identities and their ability to respond to individual communities’ needs.
- The approval process will take longer and critical issues will fall through the cracks. It is not a proposal geared toward efficiency and effectiveness.
- Aside from a single accreditation process, there is nothing in the proposal that cannot be done under our current structure. In fact, our colleges regularly look to achieve efficiencies that benefit our students.

The BOR was created less than a decade ago in an effort to save money and direct the savings back into the classroom and student services. However, the BOR continues to spend more of our declining state funds on management

positions rather than resources that directly benefit students. Their latest proposal continues this trend, putting management first, not students. Further, we contend that the consolidation may cost our state more as it dismantles a robust system that enhances our state, our businesses, and our communities.

Connecticut's dramatic shift away from adequate investment in affordable, accessible higher education for students has been accompanied by a move toward a big-business model where corporate style boards and their administrators— most of whom never set foot in a classroom— determine how to spend precious public dollars and tuition revenue. The BOR college consolidation proposal demonstrates an embrace of this corporate thinking.

The 4Cs is committed to reversing this trend. 4Cs' faculty, staff and students will unite in a movement that truly puts "Students First!" Together we will fight to restore funding for a community college system that prioritizes student learning and invests in educators and student services. Together, we can make Connecticut a great place to learn, work, retire and see our children prosper; make our state affordable for young people, families and retirees; preserve and create high wage jobs in ways that reduce inequality, are ecologically sustainable, and strengthen democracy.

The recommended restructuring of 12 successful colleges into one of the largest community college systems in the nation may actually take us further from our mission: offering high quality, low cost, and flexible educational opportunities to Connecticut's students.

We support the statement made by the Community College Governance Assembly, and the those made by a State University governance body that includes a demand made on the Board of Regents to:

- Halt the implementation until campus shared governance bodies can evaluate the proposals and provide feedback to the Board,
- Perform a thorough analysis of the financial aspects of the proposals, and
- Prohibit the implementation of the consolidation until NEASC can reasonably assure that the consolidation will not negatively affect the accreditation of any of our campuses.