

RESOLUTION OF THE NAUGATUCK VALLEY FACULTY SENATE

In its April 24, 2018 decision letter, the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (hereinafter Commission), noted that it was not persuaded that the planning for the new Community College of Connecticut, as advanced by the *Students First* plan, was realistic. We acknowledge President Ojakian for continually asserting the need to institute system-wide changes for the betterment of the student body. Yet, faculty has been intentionally excluded from meaningful participation and genuine involvement and engagement. Moreover, we agree with the Commission and believe the accelerated process for planning/implementation was insufficient and will cause disruption to our students.

Over the course of many years, the Connecticut Community Colleges have received fewer dollars and less support from the state of Connecticut; yet, it is community colleges who are uniquely positioned to address and respond to students' needs, employers' needs, and the states' need for an educated citizenry. Community colleges are particularly vulnerable to dramatic funding shifts and Naugatuck Valley Community College is no exception. This chronic underfunding has substantially shifted the burden to those least able to absorb it – our students. This is particularly problematic because the benefit of a college education has never been greater. Nationwide, this downward shifting has resulted in the elimination of academic programs, student support, faculty positions, and even consolidation. Hence, the offered *Students First* proposal, would compromise academic integrity, decrease academic offerings, limit student choices, and take away the uniqueness that resides in each community college.

Moreover, it is unclear from the general proposal how the proposed new structure would ensure academic integrity of academic programs. With this true purpose in mind – protecting our students and their access to a quality, affordable education, the Naugatuck Valley Community College's Faculty Senate submits the following resolution regarding the active, genuine, participatory, and invaluable input from key stakeholders, principally faculty of the community colleges in the creation of a sustainable, viable, and comprehensive plan to address both the significant financial challenges faced by the twelve community colleges and the importance of improving student success:

Whereas the Commission noted “many of the matters needed to assure a smooth transition, including alignment of academic programs, are in the early stages of development, and the commission does not yet have confidence that sufficient progress will be made on implementation on the proposed two-year timeframe to ensure the college will be able to provide a clear and orderly environment necessary to support students”,

Be it Resolved that the Naugatuck Valley Community College Faculty Senate joins with their colleagues at other state colleges and universities in proposing

alternative solutions to assist the Board of Regents in advancing this important and noble goal.

Be it further resolved that the Naugatuck Valley Faculty Senate strongly urges the System and the Board of Regents to:

1. Establish a realistic implementation timeline (3-5 years) for any plan to address the challenges facing the CSCU. This will ensure active involvement and engagement of community college faculty on committees addressing issues impacting students, academic and certificate programs. Faculty must be primary participants in finding resolutions to the challenges facing the CSCU and our students. *Such critical faculty involvement requires the system to purposefully and intentionally include faculty;*
2. Urge an immediate halt to the “Low Completer” policy. The proposed policy fails to comprehend the dimensions and services to individual communities served by our community colleges. In fact, the policy negates the mission of community colleges to serve our unique communities and the needs of those communities. Additionally, the policy fails to take into account enrollment numbers, negates our responsibility to be responsive to employers and their workforce needs, and assumes that we are inflexible in addressing and adapting our program offerings;
3. Advocate and lobby the State Legislature to commit adequate funding to the college-system to support our students;
4. Articulate clear processes and guidelines to ensure academic integrity of all degree and certificate programs;
5. Publish and distribute an itemization of all implementation costs along with assumptions underlying each estimated figure; and
6. Establish regional working-groups between state universities and local community colleges, which can serve to share resources, align course offerings, and develop transitional two-to-four year academic programs.

Approved and adopted by the Naugatuck Valley Community College Faculty Senate on _____ day of May, 2018.