



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## **AUTHORITY FOR DISMISSING PUBLIC UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS**

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You asked for information about a Connecticut State University System (CSUS) policy that allows the system chancellor to non-continue a university president. You also wanted to know whether any other state university systems grant their chancellors this authority.

### **SUMMARY**

The CSUS Board of Trustees recently enacted a policy allowing its chancellor to dismiss a university president with or without cause. The chancellor needs only the board chairperson's agreement. The full board has a one-time opportunity to reverse the decision.

This type of formal authority is uncommon in university systems in other states, as most systems require action by a board of trustees or governors in order to dismiss a president. We located policies for approximately 35 university systems nationwide and identified four (University of Alabama, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, University of Nebraska, and Texas State University) that have policies similar to the one at CSUS. Additionally, the University of Nevada system allows the chancellor, in consultation with the board chair, to remove a president. However, the removal must be for cause, and the president has the right to appeal. The Virginia Community Colleges have a similar policy, but do not require approval from the board chair.

### **CSUS POLICY**

On October 1, 2009, the executive committee of the CSUS Board of Trustees unanimously approved a policy change that allows the chancellor to dismiss a president without cause or explanation and without providing the president a hearing. The chairman of the board must be notified of and concur with the chancellor's decision. Presidents hired before December 8, 2006 must be given a one year notice while presidents hired on or after December 8, 2006 must be given three months' notice.

At the next board meeting following the dismissal notification, the board may, by a majority vote, overturn the decision. If it does not, the

dismissal is final. By virtue of a prior board resolution (07-07), the policy change did not need approval by the full board. Before this change, only the board had authority to dismiss a president.

### **POLICIES IN OTHER STATES**

Most university systems do not grant their chancellor the level of authority granted to the CSUS chancellor. We located policies for approximately 35 university systems nationwide and identified four besides CSUS that give their chancellors the power to dismiss a president. Table 1 lists these systems and their policies, along with the CSUS policy.

Generally, action by a board of trustees or governors is necessary in order to remove a university president, but some systems explicitly authorize the chancellor to recommend to the board that a president be dismissed. In many systems, board policy simply states that the presidents serve at the pleasure of the board.

**Table 1: University Systems Where the Chancellor can Dismiss a President**

<b>System</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>University of Alabama System</b>	“The chancellor shall perform duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to...with the approval of the president pro tempore, and with prior notice to the board, terminate the employment of presidents. ”	The Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama Board Manual Article 5. 2
<b>Connecticut State University System</b>	“Each President of a university within the CSU System...may be non-continued by the Chancellor without cause or explanation and without recourse to the procedures of Article 10. Prior to notifying the President of his/her non-continuation, the Chancellor shall notify the Chairman of the Board of his/her intended action and shall receive the Chairman's concurrence of said action. ”	CSUS Human Resources Policies for Chancellor and Presidents Article 10. 2
<b>Minnesota State Colleges and Universities</b>	“The chancellor, upon advance notification to the Chair of the Board, may terminate a president. ”	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policies Chapter 4. 2
<b>University of Nebraska System</b>	“The President, or the supervising administrative officer designated by the President, shall have authority to remove from office an administrative officer of the rank of Dean or equivalent rank, Vice Chancellor, Vice President, Chancellor or Provost”	Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska Chapter 3. 2. 1
<b>Texas State University System</b>	“The Chancellor shall assume administrative responsibilities for the System	Rules and Regulations: The Texas State University

	Administration; recommend to the Board the hiring of Component Presidents; set terms and conditions of their employment, and, when appropriate, terminate their employment”	System Chapter 2. 3. 1
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<sup>1</sup> Unlike Connecticut, some states refer to the system chief executive as the president and the campus chief executive as the chancellor. In this report, “chancellor” refers to the system chief executive and “president” refers to the campus chief executive.