

Connecticut State University System

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January 4, 2011

Brenda L. Sisco, Acting Secretary
Office of Policy and Management
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1379

Dear Secretary Sisco:

Your cover letter to Governor Rell, dated December 13, 2010, accompanying transmittal of the report by the "Connecticut State University Working Group" stated that "the state's largest public university system is a worthy subject for which a thoughtful and scholarly inquiry" was appropriate. It is unfortunate that the product provided was neither thoughtful nor scholarly.

Your letter goes on to indicate that six meetings were held, during which "various issues" were "sorted through." To our knowledge, after Governor Rell announced in a news release issued on July 23, 2010 that she would be "forming a panel to develop a plan" to be "submitted to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1," work was done in secret, shielded from public and news media scrutiny.

The Connecticut State University System (CSUS) has been and remains committed to working closely with the executive and legislative branches to achieve more efficient and effective operations, is certainly open to constructive suggestions that can advance the caliber of the education and student services that we provide, and recognizes that even with the substantial progress that has been achieved there remains more to be done. It is essential, therefore, that any future adjustments be considered based upon a foundation of accurate information, which this report unfortunately does not provide.

No Public Disclosure

CSUS, let alone the citizenry of Connecticut, was never informed that a working group had been appointed. No members were announced, no meetings were posted, no attendance was revealed, no minutes were made public, if kept at all. Inquiries by CSUS, and apparently by some in the news media as well, were met with no confirmation that a review was underway.

This procedure appears to be in stark contrast, for example, to the manner in which a 2007 Governor's Commission on the Reform of the Department of Transportation was handled. Meeting schedules, agendas and minutes were posted on the internet, and therefore DOT – as well as the public – had an opportunity to be aware of, and contribute to, the process.

In addition to noting the numerous inaccuracies, inconsistencies, out-of-date references, out-of-context statements and blatant omissions in the report's narrative, we must express our concern over what certainly appears to be a serious breach of public policy in the process employed in development of the report. As we are not aware of any exemptions from Connecticut's Freedom of Information laws under which such deliberations would fall, we cannot help but conclude that the procedures were not in conformance with applicable statutes and regulations.

It is even more unfortunate that the working group chose to ignore or obfuscate the high degree to which the Connecticut State University System is currently an “accessible, affordable, successful system,” working as an effective catalyst for our students and our state.

Complete Compliance with Information Requests

Over the past few months, information and data was sought by the Office of Policy Management (OPM) under the guise of preparation for the budget being developed by the outgoing Governor for the incoming Governor. Since this report has now been issued, it would appear as if the requests were made as part of its preparation.

As is routinely the case, material sought by OPM was provided by CSUS. Requested information has also been provided to the General Assembly’s Program Review and Investigations Committee. To state, as the report does, that “repeated efforts” to obtain data “went unanswered” is untrue. Every request for information since July 2010 has either been provided, had been provided previously, or is publicly available.

Even after the draft of the working group report was developed, CSUS was provided no opportunity to review it to ensure that the material included was accurate. In fact, when a copy was provided to the *Hartford Courant* mid-afternoon on December 14, CSUS did not receive a copy from OPM and was not informed that the report even existed. It was not until the next day, after media reports had begun to appear, that your office first contacted CSUS in regard to the report.

Responsive to Student and Workforce Needs

As reflected in the increasing enrollment, strong student satisfaction, and highly regarded education provided by Central, Eastern, Southern and Western, as well as considerable data and statistics outlined below but omitted from the working group report, CSUS is providing sound education responsive to the state’s workforce needs, even as it works to strengthen programs, practices and academic offerings. To suggest that CSUS is not doing so, as the working group report repeatedly suggests, is simply erroneous.

CSUS is Catalyst for Connecticut

The report correctly noted that “Connecticut depends on CSU, even more than it depends on UConn, to educate its high school graduates,” noting that only about two-thirds of UConn students are from Connecticut, versus more than 90 percent of CSUS students.

The report further points out that 59 percent of UConn students stay in the state after graduation, compared with 78% of CSU graduates who stay in Connecticut to work. (To be more precise, the source cited* in the report actually reported that 78% of CSUS recent graduates were employed in state six months following graduation, and that count does not include those graduates that are self-employed or federal employees.) The CSUS annual survey of recent graduates finds that approximately 86% are living and working in state in the year following graduation.

However, the report failed to recognize that:

1. **All-time Enrollment:** The number of undergraduate students has reached an all-time high of 30,122, and the number of full-time undergraduate and graduate students has also reached record levels. Overall enrollment (36,629) is at the highest level since 1991, and the number of full-time students has grown from 63% in 1991 to 82% in 2010, an increase of 7,000 students. (See appendix, charts 1 & 2)

2. **Declining State Financial Support:** State fiscal support – as a percentage of CSUS operating revenues – has dropped from 48% a decade ago to about 39% today. The two primary sources of operating funds are the state and students, thus reductions in state funds add additional burden to students. The report describes CSUS as “an unaffordable option” for Connecticut students. While we do not believe that is true, to the extent that it is, the shifting balance between state funding and student funding must be considered. The level of support provided by the state to CSUS as a percentage of Education & General expenses per Full Time Equivalent student is the lowest of the three constituents units of higher education.
3. **Low Tuition Cost:** The cost of attendance is among the lowest compared with public universities in the Northeast, and the lowest when compared with 11 competitor universities in the region that CSUS students had considered attending. CSUS has held down its tuition and fees compared to national trends. Over the past thirteen years, CSUS has only exceeded the national average tuition and fee increase at public 4-year colleges three times; and this occurred in the face of steadily declining state support. CSUS remains a relatively low-cost option compared with its competitors, not “inordinately high” as the report states. For CSUS students, 49 percent of whom are the first generation in their families to attend college, the accessibility provided by this affordability is critical. (See appendix, chart 3)
4. **Recommended Tuition Freeze:** The Board of Trustees is on record to freeze tuition and fees for the 2011-12 academic year, depending on the action taken by the Governor and the General Assembly on the FY2011-2013 Biennial Budget. CSUS is the only unit of higher education in Connecticut that has announced such an intention. Subsequent to the issuance of this report, the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Community Colleges voted to increase tuition in each of the next two years.
5. **Degree Leader:** CSUS awards the most bachelor's degrees in Connecticut in mathematics and statistics, computer/information science & systems, business administration and related degrees. CSUS also awards the most bachelor's degrees and post-baccalaureate certificates in education and is a leader in awarding Bachelor of Science degrees in nursing.
6. **Key Workforce Needs:** Academic programs keyed to workforce needs, such as nursing and sustainable energy, have been added and are thriving. The number of students in the civil and mechanical engineering programs, for example, has exceeded expectations.
7. **Leader in Cost Reduction:** The Board of Trustees has voted to freeze management salaries in FY2012, the second freeze in the past 3 years, and the first state agency to announce a salary freeze for FY2012. The initial year-long salary freeze occurred in FY2008. In 2008, two rounds of internal budget reductions by CSUS occurred prior to the imposition of rescissions by Gov. Rell, as well as immediate responsiveness to the Governor’s hiring freeze and out-of-state travel ban for Executive Branch Agencies. In fact, CSUS’ leadership, in making the reductions, was praised by Gov. Rell at a meeting of agency leaders held at the Governor’s residence in November 2008.
8. **Management, System Office Staff Reductions:** System Office positions have been cut and management positions at each university and the system office have been cut. CSUS has reduced the number of System Office positions by 32% since 2006, reduced overall management staff levels across the system by 10%, and achieved cost savings and cost avoidance in excess of \$48.9 million to date.
9. **Growth Only in Full-time Faculty, Student Support:** In the past five years, CSUS staff levels increased only in full-time instructional personnel (up 7 percent) and full-time direct student support professionals (up 7.8 percent). Staff levels in other personnel categories have been

reduced, as follows: maintenance (reduced 3 percent), clerical (reduced 9.4 percent), administrative and residual (reduced 14.7 percent), and management/confidential (reduced 5 percent). It would appear that the report groups all non-faculty positions together as “administration” without regard for the purpose of the position.

10. **Less than 2.5 Percent for System Office, Management:** The System Office budget – including direct services to universities – is 2.45% of the total CSUS budget. The number of management personnel system-wide is 2.4% of the total number of full-time employees, which includes faculty and student support staff.
11. **Oversight and Accountability:** There are both internal and external auditors who provide oversight of CSUS operations, and data is routinely and regularly provided to a range of state agencies, including OPM, the Department of Administrative Services, Department of Higher Education and others.
12. **Collaboration to Earn Federal Dollars:** Working collaboratively among the universities and System Office, CSUS obtained an almost unprecedented \$1.9 million in federal funds a year ago for university programs, including nanotechnology, autism, nursing, college readiness and dual enrollment – programs of benefit to our students and the state.
13. **Providing Financial Support to students:** Across the CSUS universities, nearly 90% of all non-loan institutional aid awarded is need-based, and slightly more than 75% of full time students receive some form of financial aid. CSUS awarded over \$27 million of institutional grant aid in FY10, and has consistently exceeded the required amount of tuition set-aside earmarked for need-based aid (from 16.28% of tuition revenue in FY2006 to 17.86% in FY2011, versus a requirement of 15%).
14. **Focusing on STEM fields:** An increasing number of academic programs, such as in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as nursing, energy and education, are keyed to the knowledge economy and state workforce needs. In engineering, for example, new and expanded programs at Central in civil and mechanical engineering have attracted more students than initially anticipated. In Mathematics, CSUS produced 92 math majors in the 2009-10 academic year, nearly three times more than UConn, reflecting consistent leadership in the field. The significant growth in the number of science majors – now reaching 43 percent over the past six years – is outlined later in this correspondence.
15. **Seeking to Develop More Nursing Faculty:** CSUS is awaiting Department of Higher Education action and Board of Governors for Higher Education approval of a new Ed. D. in nursing education program that would result in more critically needed nursing faculty which would allow more nurses to be trained at the universities. Presently, we do not have sufficient number of faculty to admit all of the applicants that qualify for admission due to the shortage of nursing faculty.
16. **Improving Graduation Rates, Degrees at All-time High:** Graduation rates have steadily been increasing, from 38 percent in 2005 to 46 percent in 2010 system-wide, and each of the four universities is now above the national average for public comprehensive universities. The report does not explain that the graduation rate statistic does not, by definition, include any students who graduate if they transfer into a university (and the number of transfers is at an all-time high) or started as a part-time student. It should also be noted that CSUS conferred more than 7,000 degrees and certificates in 2010 for the first time in its history. The record-setting total of 7,005 also reflects intensified efforts to increase degree completion, including strengthened First-Year Experience programs and student support services.

17. **More CSUS Students Seeking Master's Degrees:** The number of CSUS graduates pursuing master's degrees grew from 22% a year ago to 29%. In fact, 60% of those pursuing further education are doing so at Central, Eastern, Southern or Western, up from 53% a year ago.
18. **Students Returning to Connecticut at CSUS:** The report notes the "brain drain" in Connecticut, with young people leaving the state to pursue higher education. It does not note the success of CSUS in recent years in bringing Connecticut residents who begin attending out-of-state schools back to the state to continue their education at a CSUS university. In 2010, for the second consecutive year, four out of five transfers from out-of-state colleges and universities were returning Connecticut residents. Last year, more than 1,000 students transferred to CSUS from out-of-state schools, and 83 percent were Connecticut residents. In 2008, it was 76 percent.
19. **Successfully Advancing Employment:** In last year's survey of CSUS Recent Graduates, 91% of graduates report being employed, either full-time or part-time, after graduation. This includes students who reported having obtained either a new, higher level or higher paying job.
20. **Students Achieving Success:** In the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement, 94% of seniors across CSUS reported that their university provides support for student success and 94% report "working harder than they thought they could" to meet an instructor's standards or expectations. In the CSUS Survey of Recent Graduates, 94% of seniors said they would recommend their university to prospective students. In addition, nearly nine in ten graduates responding to a survey said they are satisfied or very satisfied with their educational preparation for their current job.

Promoting Education and Connecticut's Economy

The report correctly pointed out that Connecticut has lagged when compared with other states and certainly other nations in terms of the level of education provided to its students, from kindergarten through college. In the past, CSUS has made similar points in legislative testimony and other forums, including coordinating a series of town meetings around the state and on CPTV two years ago that focused specifically on the connection between education and the state's future prosperity. That effort was supported by, and included the participation of, a broad array of individuals and organizations from throughout the state.

Addressing the Achievement Gap

We have also taken substantive steps to address the achievement gap, not only at the universities but across the state, and we are cognizant of the state's changing demographics and the challenges and opportunities that presents. Your report suggests this be a "front-and-center issue for the higher education system as a whole." For CSUS, it already is a priority focus. In fact, CSUS is a participant in the Access to Success Initiative (A2S), a project spearheaded by the National Association of System Heads and The Education Trust, which includes 24 public higher education systems across the nation that have pledged to cut the college-going and graduation gaps for low-income and minority students in half by Academic Year 2015-16. We have been a partner in this initiative since 2006.

Comprehensive Universities Awarding Degrees in Many Fields

To further suggest that the CSUS universities are, to a "large degree," "just...teachers' colleges" misrepresents reality. While preparation for the teaching profession remains an important part of our academic offerings, each university is a comprehensive public university. CSUS provides affordable, accessible, high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs in more than 160 subject areas, with

extensive opportunities for internships, community service and cultural engagement. The most popular major for the spring 2009 semester, for example, was Business Administration at both Eastern and Southern, Psychology at Central, and Justice Administration at Western. Among the other most popular majors at the universities are accounting, biology, nursing, criminology and management, as well as education. (See appendix, chart 4)

College Readiness

There was also no recognition in the report that the four CSUS universities have been working productively with high schools and middle schools across the state to increase college readiness and combat the achievement gap. Specific programs offer opportunities to students in urban centers, or from low income or underrepresented populations. CSUS is also an active participant in the state's KnowHow2Go initiative, and has developed material published as part of the Newspapers In Education program that have been utilized in Connecticut classrooms.

The "Bridges to Improve Student Success" program, in which Western Connecticut State University faculty collaborate with high school English and math teachers at Danbury and Bethel High Schools, is widely acclaimed as an exemplary model and has achieved solid results. Similar programs are underway at the other three CSUS universities and are now being extended to middle schools, and to science. Southern is currently working with the Meriden, Hamden and New Haven school districts (their initiative is referred to as "Galileo"); Central is working with the New Britain and Bristol school districts; and Eastern is working with the Windham and Norwich school districts.

Admission Standards

The report also failed to mention that the CSUS Board of Trustees voted to strengthen academic admission standards beginning with the 2015-16 academic year, leading the way in helping Connecticut students prepare for the workforce of tomorrow. While the state's high school reform proposal has yet to be adopted by the state legislature, communities are beginning to take note of the CSUS plan, and CSUS will continue efforts to inform local Boards of Education and communities.

Dual Admission

A Dual Admission Program with the Connecticut Community Colleges (CCC) makes it easier to transfer credits from a community college to a CSUS university, saving students time and money. In addition, a dual enrollment program for urban students who had not planned to attend college is currently being piloted, and the universities offer programs to assist at-risk students in their academic preparation prior to freshman year.

Community College Transfers

This year, nine of the 12 Connecticut Community Colleges have a record number of students transferring to CSUS institutions. Overall, a record-setting 3,150 students transferred into the four institutions in fall 2010, topping the previous record of 3,086 in 2008. The number of students transferring from the CCC to CSUS institutions continues to grow dramatically, increasing by 43 percent since 2005. Because of our various ongoing efforts, we believe these numbers will continue to increase. (See appendix, chart 5)

Science

The report questions the CSUS commitment to science education, yet fails to include that the number of students majoring in the sciences grew by 34 percent between 2005 and 2009 CSUS. The number of students majoring in scientific academic disciplines including biochemistry, biomolecular sciences, meteorology, chemistry, earth and planetary sciences, environmental science, physics and related fields increased from 1,373 in 2005 to 1,818 in 2009 across the four universities. That data was announced by CSUS in September, reported on the front page of the Hartford Courant and in other media, and currently appears on the CSUS website. (See appendix, chart 6)

At Eastern, for example, the number of science majors climbed from 222 in 2005 to 343 in 2009, a 54 percent increase. At Western, the number of science majors grew from 239 to 362, an increase of 51 percent. An additional year of data, available since the September announcement, indicates that the numbers continue to climb: an overall increase of 43% in the past six years in the number of science majors. It could also be noted that Southern teaches introductory physics to more students than any university in the state, that Eastern has developed an energy science track within the undergraduate Environmental Earth Science major and that Southern has developed a minor in forensic science. The four universities, working collaboratively with the System Office, have developed and plan to launch a new collaborative graduate program in nanotechnology. There are numerous other examples.

Accounting

The report also suggests that more attention be paid to accounting. Yet, CSUS has strong and growing accounting programs, with many students serving internships at major accounting firms in the state, and many of them hired by, and rising through the ranks of, major accounting firms and businesses and nonprofits in accounting, auditing and forensic accounting positions.

Accounting specifically and the business management field in general, are among the most popular majors offered at the universities. The number of accounting majors graduating from CSUS increased by 17.7 percent in the past decade (between 1999-00 and 2009-10), from 164 students to 193 students. In fact, CSUS conferred more accounting degrees than UConn at the baccalaureate level in the 2009-10 academic year according to data on the Department of Higher Education website; in addition, there were CSUS students who either had a minor or concentration in accounting. At Southern, which offers a Bachelor of Science with a concentration in accounting, the number of students in the program has grown from 159 in fall 2006 to 271 in fall 2010. Also of note, Western offers an Accounting 4+1 program, in which students earn an undergraduate degree in Accounting and an MBA in five years.

Nursing

As previously stated, another area of workforce demand is the field of nursing. CSUS is awaiting Department of Higher Education action and Board of Governors for Higher Education approval of a new Ed. D. in a doctoral nursing education program that would result in more desperately needed nursing faculty to prepare more nurses to be trained at the universities. The Ed. D. in Nursing doctoral program was developed collaboratively by Southern and Western and has received federal grant support. It is important to note that continued delays in approval could jeopardize nearly \$300,000 in federal funds to support the launch of the program.

In recent years, CSUS universities have added a number of very successful nursing programs, including the Accelerated Career Entry (ACE) program at Southern, which continues to grow, and the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at Central, among other programs.

Changes in 20 Years

The report discusses increases in positions over a 20 year period. Not only have universities – and what is expected of universities – changed in two decades, so has the world. In 1989, the Internet had yet to arrive on campus. 9/11 and the Virginia Tech shootings had yet to occur. The universities had considerably fewer full-time students and far fewer residence halls and residential students. Information technology, public safety, and resident hall staff are just a few of the areas that demand skilled personnel in greater numbers than two decades ago. Over the past 20 years, non-faculty growth has been mainly in areas of academic and student support, including information technology, libraries, advising and programs to increase retention, and institutional advancement, which enables the universities to provide more scholarship aid to qualifying students, and advance programs that serve the state and students. As noted earlier, there has been a decrease in non-faculty positions in recent years. To suggest that enrollment is the only determinant in the number of staff necessary to operate the small cities that are the four comprehensive universities fails to recognize the realities of today's ever-changing world.

Comparative Salary Data

The report references select administrative titles and salaries. These salaries are compared to median salaries for an unspecified classification of the CUPA Administrative Salary Survey. We have examined the report and the available CUPA data and have found many discrepancies. For example, in the report, you equate the Chancellor position with the CEO of a single institution. CUPA provides data regarding CEO of a System/District for public institutions. If you utilize the correct classification you will see that the median salary was in excess of \$335,000 not the \$237,000 you cite in your report. In fact, the management compensation system for CSUS is based on salary survey data and the placement of our salaries between the 60th and 80th percentile of salaries to account for the increased cost of living in the Northeast as opposed to other areas of the United States. In that case, the range for the Chancellor's salary should be in the range of \$350,373 to \$432,065, which it was in FY08 at \$362,733.

Moreover, our entire unrepresented compensation system is reviewed and based on a classification system developed by the same compensation consultant utilized by the State of Connecticut. This consultant reviews positions descriptions and confirms the salary placement of these positions on our salary schedule. In addition, this consultant performed a comprehensive salary study with recommendations for executive compensation that have not been fully implemented but were partially implemented prior to the economic downturn. We do not operate in a vacuum when it comes to compensation of our unrepresented staff.

Position Oversight

As has been stated in previous analysis by various state commissions through the years, it is in the state's best interest for higher education to manage their own personnel decisions in order to quickly respond to meet academic, residential, health and life safety needs of the students, faculty and staff.

As regards to CSUS, with enrollment at its highest in almost 20 years, this control allows us the flexibility to respond to our increasing enrollment growth by filling faculty and student support positions when

they are needed. For example, in 2007, the General Assembly authorized 23 new faculty positions in STEM areas – effective July 1, 2007. We were able to have all faculty lines filled by the fall of 2007. If such authority is given to OPM, the ability to respond quickly to the priorities of the General Assembly would be greatly curtailed.

Contrary to what is alleged in the report, CSUS has procedures and significant controls in place related to personnel expenditures and hiring practices. There is direct accountability to the Board of Trustees through detailed spending plans and reporting. In addition, we are subject to additional review by internal auditors, external auditors and state auditors.

Provisions related to personnel practices across the universities are subject to collective bargaining and the Board of Trustees is the bargaining agent in these matters. By removing the Board's ability to maintain control over hiring of faculty and professional staff from the constituent units, there are implications for collective bargaining and the ability to comply with the contracts. CSUS's flexibility with regard to its classified positions, which include clerical, maintenance, and protective service employees, is already limited because they are governed by statewide collective bargaining agreements, which are under the control of OPM. This has from time-to-time impeded our ability to function as responsively as we would prefer.

For example, it generally takes six to eight weeks to hire administrative personnel; less than one week to hire temporary faculty and approximately three to six months to do a search and hire a permanent tenure-track faculty member. Prior to 1991, when the authority rested with OPM and DAS, it historically took 6 months to one year – if not longer – before approval was received.

Adverse Impact of Arbitrary Cutbacks

Let me also cite two comments which, on their face, are clearly contradictory. The report states “we can say with confidence that if Governor Rell’s recommendation to eliminate the CSU System Office is implemented: State budget savings of \$6 million can be realized.” A paragraph later, it states “It is not known how much if any of the \$6 million would be affected by moving many of the CSU System Office functions elsewhere.” How can you be certain of any level of savings if you have no idea which functions would simply be moved, resulting in no fiscal savings? The fact that much of the university services based at the System Office are tied to specific work at the universities calls into question the report’s assertion. Arbitrarily cutting the System Office budget in half and suggesting a \$3 million savings is not grounded in fact or analysis.

Among the facts not mentioned, and which would clearly inform efforts to determine the real financial impact, include:

- CSUS has the financial capacity to float bonds through CHEFA to finance university auxiliary services facilities, such as residence halls, dining halls, student centers, student parking garages. Without a system, only one of the four universities would potentially have the financial capacity to support a bond sale on its own. (In addition, there are serious questions as to the impact on previously issued bonds should the current system structure be eliminated.)
- Being a System permits purchasing that leverages volume discounts and efficiencies and economies of scale by utilizing System-wide contracts (including Accounting Services, Student Sickness and Accident Insurance, Emergency Notification System, Collection Agency and Pre-employment Background Check Services, and selected software license and hardware/software maintenance contracts). Also, by virtue of being a system, we participated as one unit in the

statewide electricity and natural gas reverse auctions further leverage economies of scale (and have achieved \$2.3 million in annual cost avoidance).

- Services provided to the universities by the system office include technical and functional operation and core support for information technology infrastructure and systems, administration and oversight of master planning, internal audit operations, and advocacy at the state and federal levels. Without such system-wide support, these services would need to be duplicated at each university, at considerable additional cost.
- System-wide collective bargaining negotiation and administration, as well as contract compliance administration and support for all four universities, ensures that there are not four separate and distinct processes or duplicative capacities at each university that would increase overall costs to the state.

Without System Office coordination, each university would be in direct competition with each other, potentially harming the state's workforce development efforts and the growing CSUS relationship with the state's community college system, which has achieved much success, as outlined above. Further, the System Office ensures that data is consistent and uniformly presented, which is important to state agencies and state and federal funding requests, such as the \$1.9 million in federal funds allocated a year ago. A system-wide data analysis capability provides consolidated policy development which is most efficient and in the best interest of the state. Importantly, the CSUS System Office spurs academic productivity with ongoing efforts to reduce student time to degree and the need for remedial coursework, helps to increase retention and graduation rates responds to the challenges of access and the achievement gap, in working with the universities, as well as coordinating responses to state mandates.

Establishing Common Courses, Eliminating Academic Programs

Faculty and administrators have collaborated to make it easier and more predictable for students to transfer course credits between the four CSUS institutions by establishing a new system of course equivalents. Under the initiative, specific courses taken at one institution will now have designated equivalent courses at the other CSUS institutions. The universities have designated nearly 100 common course equivalents in a wide range of academic disciplines at the lower division level. They include courses in more than 20 subject areas ranging from chemistry, biology and physics to economics, history, world language and mathematics. The courses are freshman and sophomore level ("lower division") courses meeting General Education requirements and serving as prerequisites for higher level courses in many majors.

The report states that UConn recently announced it "would be spending "\$3 million for an outside consultant to help the university find areas (including academics) to cut \$50 million. It should be noted that CSUS has achieved savings or reduced costs totaling \$48.9 million over the past few years. Each university has a process for regular review of every program offered by the university on generally a five-year rotating schedule. During those reviews, enrollment and graduation data as well as curricular data are examined. During the past three years, for example, 11 major programs were discontinued because of diminishing demand, and faculty were reassigned to other academic areas rather than hiring new faculty in those areas. In addition, four programs were modified extensively to ensure that the curriculum remained up-to-date and relevant to current workforce needs.

Additional Points

A few additional points that reflect on the manner in which the report was done:

- Reference in the report to CSUS as the “11th most expensive state university in the country” fails to similarly note that UConn is the 9th most expensive, as reported by the legislature’s Program Review and Investigations Committee and other sources.
- The report even includes a quote from a student commenting critically about administrator salaries. What the report fails to point out is that the student quoted attends the University of Connecticut, not one of the CSUS universities, and his comments were made in the context of tuition increases at UConn, not CSUS.
- Much of the material sought by OPM in recent months, supposedly as part of the budget preparation process but apparently related to the working group, was also provided, in the same time frame, to staff members of the General Assembly’s Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee, which was conducted a well-known and well-publicized review of higher education governance. PRI staff has indicated that CSUS has been “responsive” to their requests, “emphasizing how much information” has been provided.

In conclusion, it is our view that the information outlined here would have served policy makers and the public well by providing a more complete picture of the Connecticut State University System. While it is regrettable that the working group chose not to provide an opportunity for such material to be included, we are hopeful that, as you suggest, a new legislature and administration will “consider them with an open mind and with the needs of Connecticut’s families foremost in their minds.” We remain committed to working together to advance the needs of our students and our state, and look forward to working constructively and collaboratively to achieve those goals.

Sincerely,



David G. Carter
Chancellor

cc: Governor M. Jodi Rell
Governor-elect Dannel Malloy
Ben Barnes, Secretary-designate, Office of Policy and Management
Timothy J. Bannon, Chief-of-Staff designate
M. Lisa Moody, Chief-of-Staff
Members of the Connecticut State University Working Group
Members of the Board of Trustees, Connecticut State University System
Frank W. Ridley, Chairman, Board of Governors for Higher Education
Michael P. Meotti, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education

Attachments Chart 1: Undergraduate Full-Time Enrollment Trends
Chart 2: Increase in Undergraduate Enrollment
Chart 3: Tuition Comparison
Chart 4: Undergraduate Degrees
Chart 5: Transfers from Connecticut Community Colleges
Chart 6: Increase in Science Majors

*Connecticut Department of Higher Education, *Higher Education Counts: Achieving Results, 2009*. All figures shown reflect employment in Connecticut only, excluding self-employment and federal employment. Some graduates not working in Connecticut may be employed out-of-state CT or continuing their education.

Attachments

Charts 1&2: Undergraduate Enrollment Trends

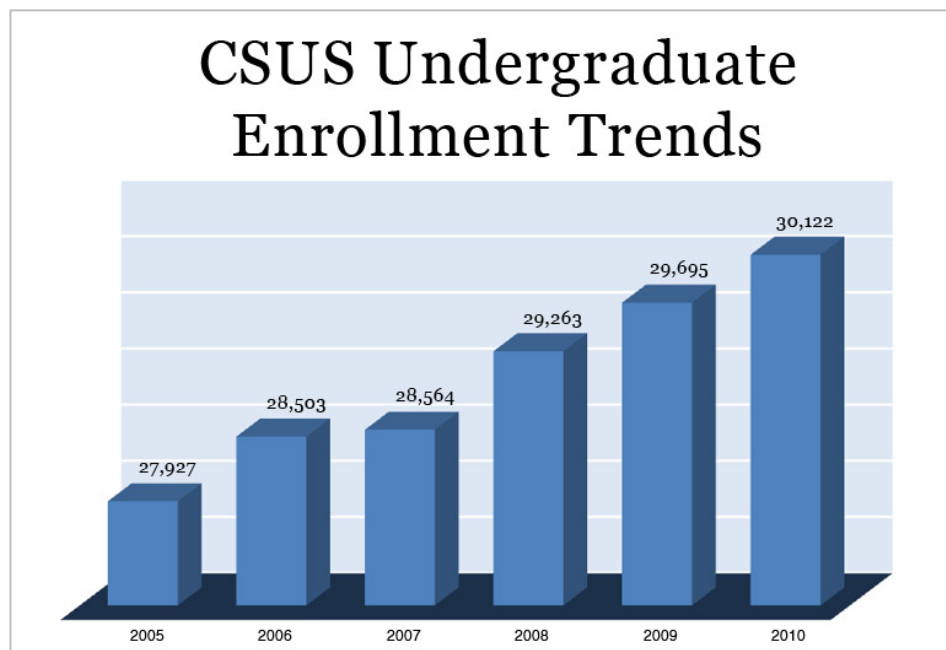
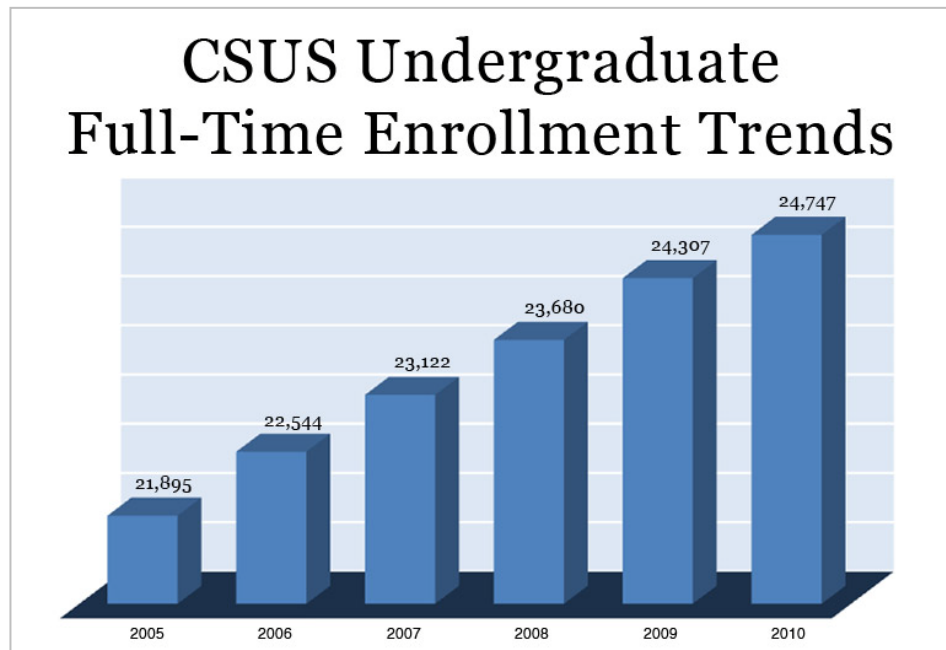


Chart 3: Tuition Comparison

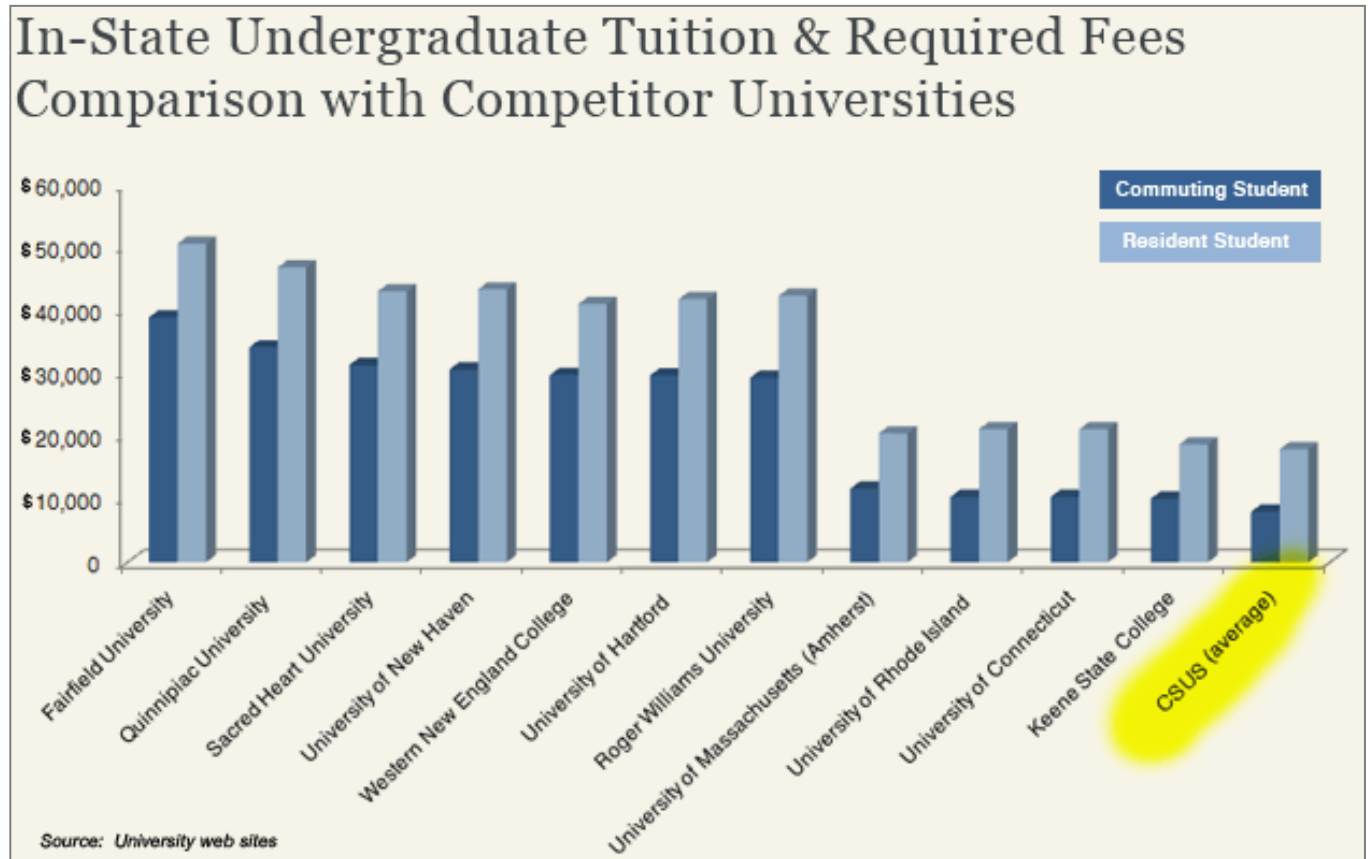


Chart 4: CSUS Undergraduate Degrees

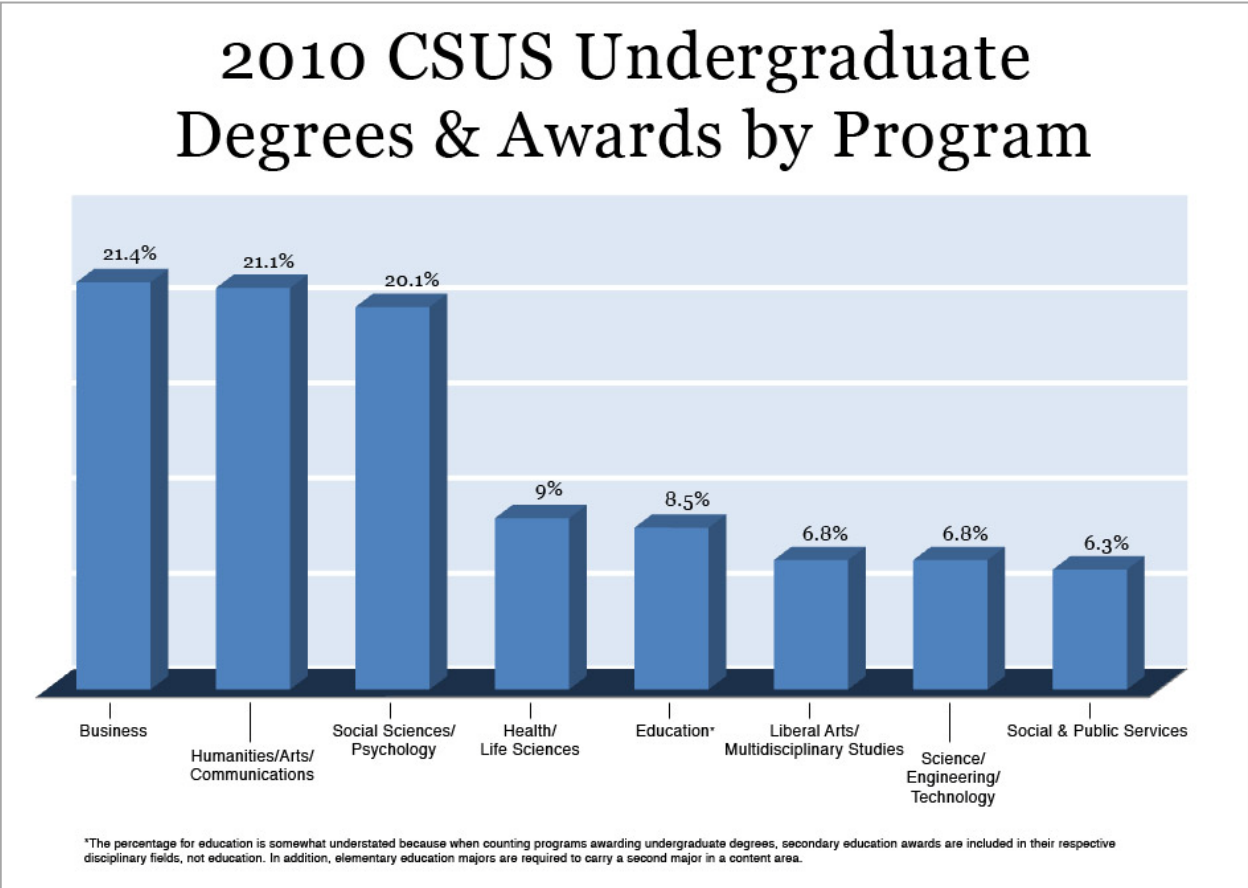


Chart 5:

Transfers to CSUS from Connecticut Community Colleges

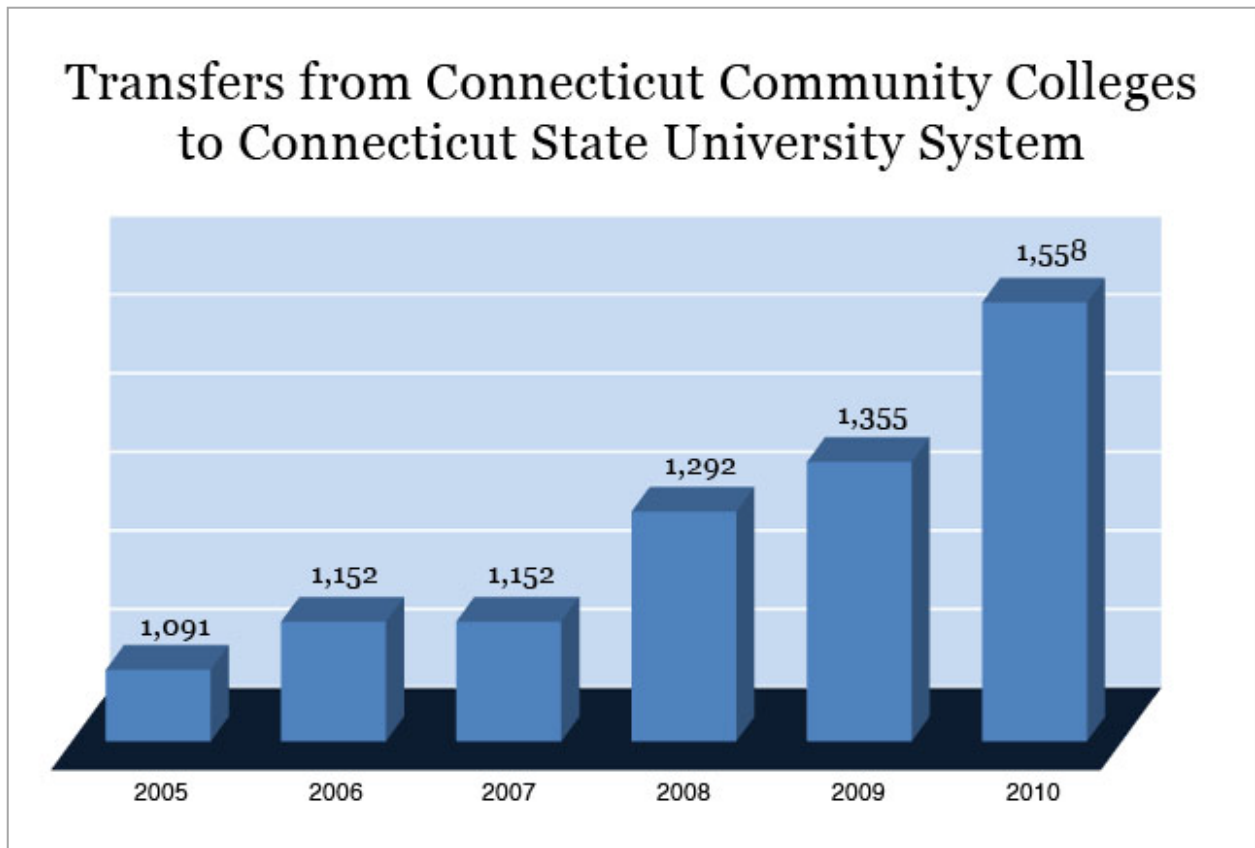


Chart 6: Increase in Science Majors

