



# Connecticut State University System

39 Woodland Street ■ Hartford, CT 06105-2337 ■ (860) 493-0013 ■ [www.ctstateu.edu](http://www.ctstateu.edu)

*Office of the Chancellor*

February 3, 2011

Mr. Richard J. Balducci  
Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Connecticut State University System  
39 Woodland Street  
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Vice Chairman Balducci:

I announced just over four months ago that it was my intention to retire no later than September 1, 2011. I selected that date to provide sufficient time to assure a smooth transition of leadership in the best interests of the students of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS). Unfortunately, I could not then have anticipated that my health, and my increasing desire to spend more time enjoying my grandchildren, would hasten that timetable. Accordingly, I have revised my plans, and I intend to retire from state service effective on March 1, 2011. Please know that taking leave of this work is even more difficult than I had anticipated, and were circumstances otherwise I surely would have continued.

To say that serving the students and our State of Connecticut has been the joy of my life is to understate the depth of affection that I have for the transformative impact of higher education; for my years at the University of Connecticut, at Eastern Connecticut State University and at CSUS; and for the remarkable and inspiring individuals with whom I have worked and learned for nearly a half-century.

Education has been my life's work, in ways I could not possibly have imagined in my youth. Members of the Board of Trustees are aware of the challenges of my early years and the travails that afflicted my family. You have heard me describe my strong conviction, rooted in my experiences in those early years, that there is nothing more meaningful, more profound nor rewarding than to touch a life and affect its course. Because individuals unexpectedly came forward to lend a much-needed helping hand and to set me on an unlikely path of possibilities, I have always believed that one's situation need not define one's destination. Our work at the universities of the CSUS, and the impact we have on our students, has always resonated to my core.

I am profoundly grateful to have worked in this system since 1988, first as Eastern's president for nearly 18 years, and then as chancellor since 2006. I never envisioned being either a university president, or a system chancellor. It was difficult enough while growing up to envision completing high school, but, as do many of our students, I persevered. And I am so fortunate that perseverance enabled me to encourage our students as I was encouraged, to challenge them to succeed as I was challenged, and to watch them thrive as their God-given talents blossom through their own hard work, seriousness of purpose and unrelenting drive.

There is much that I will miss in retirement. First and most of all, I will miss the students. There is nothing more incredible, inspirational, insightful or just plain fun than spending time with students and

being witness to their growth and achievement. I also will miss the interactions with faculty and staff, from tenured professors renowned in their fields to the maintainers and skilled craftsmen who help keep our campuses running smoothly. The vibrancy of a university campus is deepened and enriched because every individual, regardless of their station, has something of value to offer. Each of us is better for their unique and special contributions. I will also miss my work with public policy makers and elected officials, from Governors to legislators to community leaders, whose vision and diligence have been instrumental to the successes that we have realized throughout the CSU system. Their support of the system and their constructive criticism, which we always have taken seriously and tried to address, has made each institution stronger.

A great many individuals and institutions profoundly influenced my life's journey, and I am deeply grateful to each of them. I am particularly indebted to the Board of Trustees of CSUS, for its many hours spent providing direction for our universities, to the late chairman Lawrence Davidson, who led the Board when I was hired as Eastern's President, and to Searle Pinney, who succeeded him. I am extremely honored and privileged beyond words to have served under former Chairman Lawrence McHugh and his successor Chairman Karl Krapek. I spent the majority of my years in higher education working under their stewardship. Their sage advice, wise counsel and unwavering commitment to students have not only earned my enduring respect and admiration, but also ensured that the Connecticut State University System provides accessible, affordable, high quality education to thousands upon thousands of Connecticut students. Many of these students would not have had the opportunity for a college education if not for these institutions.

I am also grateful to Bill Cibes, with whom I worked closely throughout his time as Chancellor, and whose leadership laid the groundwork for considerable progress in both academic programs and what eventually became the CSUS2020 capital investment program enacted in 2007. The university presidents and administrators with whom I worked in Connecticut, first at UConn, and then at CSUS, have demonstrated that great leadership with solid teamwork brings remarkable results. It has been an honor to have worked with them on behalf of our students.

We have weathered cutbacks without sacrificing the caliber of education we provide time and again, as economic winds shifted through the years. We have kept tuition in check despite diminishing resources, and maintained student success as our first priority. We reached out to our communities in unprecedented ways, and we brought Connecticut's communities to our universities as never before.

In my view, university communities, through our teaching, learning, scholarship and services, can make significant contributions to a better society. That has always been a guiding principle, and it has been taken to heart by students, faculty and staff all across our university communities.

At this moment, it is appropriate to reflect not only on the totality of what has been accomplished, but also on those individual moments – both significant and relatively mundane - along the way: working closely with architects and even laying some bricks at Eastern, to build state-of-the-art academic facilities that would enhance learning and keep Connecticut students in our state; engaging in a spirited game of pool among an engaging group of students; collaborating with colleagues to add rigor to academic offerings; challenging ourselves to do more to enhance student success; and to turn today's dreams into tomorrow's reality, all the while acutely aware of the importance of a genuine willingness to listen. I will remember each of these moments, and so many more.

Certainly, there are measures of some of the successes that have been achieved. In recent years, during my service as Chancellor, we have seen our graduation rates and retention rates climb at each

university. More than 90 percent of students surveyed respond that they are satisfied with the education they received, and would recommend their CSUS university to others. We have observed unprecedented numbers of full-time students, significant growth in the number of transfer students – both from our Connecticut Community Colleges and out-of-state institutions – and solid improvement in attracting students of color to attend, to stay, and to succeed. We have achieved a system-to-system articulation agreement, and we have developed academic programs to meet the state’s workforce needs and to provide graduates with the critical thinking skills and technical know-how so much in demand. Together, we have developed programs and partnerships with high schools and middle schools, reaching out to develop effective strategies to enhance college readiness. New academic admission standards have been established, to begin in 2015, to better prepare our young people for their futures. Throughout, we have cut costs and reduced staff, sought efficiencies and achieved them all without sacrificing the progress and results of our efforts.

Admittedly, more needs to be done to continue this progress. To quote Robert Frost, CSUS still “has miles to go,” and I am firmly convinced that those miles will be traveled because of the level of dedication of individuals throughout our system. A sound foundation is in place that offers Connecticut the opportunity to build future success.

While I may not be at the helm to witness the future of the CSUS universities first-hand, I am nonetheless fully confident that Connecticut’s best times remain ahead, and that CSUS can and will continue to be an effective and energizing catalyst for Connecticut. Our universities ensure intellectual development, enhance economic competitiveness, provide cultural enrichment, and encourage civic engagement. In doing so, we make a better Connecticut.

For me, the time has come to leave and enter upon my personal transition on March 1. In doing so, I am humbled by having had the chance to make a difference in the lives of four decades of students in Connecticut and beyond, and I am eternally grateful to those whose support, camaraderie and friendship have made every moment of the journey thoroughly enjoyable. Though I will not physically be present, my thoughts, enduring commitment and innermost being will very much remain with the Connecticut State University System and all of those working for the benefit of students. I wish the trustees, presidents and entire CSUS community the very best.

Sincerely,



David G. Carter  
Chancellor

cc: Members, CSUS Board of Trustees