

## Public Higher Education 101

(Cross-listed with *Thriving Communities 101* and *Bright Futures 101*)

### Course Description

This course is based on the proven theory that thriving communities require strong economic and political commitments to public higher education. Throughout this legislative session and heading into the coming election cycle, we will address the many ways in which public higher education provides Connecticut residents with the knowledge, skills, and care they need to build a bright future for themselves and their families.

Your performance will be evaluated based on your support of the following priorities.

Legislative Priority	Excellent	Deficient
In the 21st Century, higher education is a human right that must be accessible and free.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses crippling student debt</li> <li>Works actively to support free college legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows little to no regard for middle-class and working-class families who are shouldering enormous debt burdens to attend college.</li> </ul>
Because higher ed is a public good generating social and economic progress, state funding for the public colleges and universities must be increased and sustained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriates additional funds to institutions of higher ed so they can effectively carry out their educational missions in accord with the CT Constitution.</li> <li>Ends the cycle of alleged "austerity" and higher ed budget cutting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to see higher education as an engine for economic, social, and intellectual growth.</li> <li>Cuts additional funds from higher education institutions.</li> </ul>
Academic freedom is the freedom to search for truth, to innovate, to explore, and to debate. It is central to the core mission of every institution of higher ed and must be defended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks to strengthen free speech and academic freedom on all college campuses while supporting faculty autonomy, shared governance, and tenure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes or supports legislation that restricts academic freedom, that puts undue curriculum requirements on college faculty, and eviscerates the contracts that protect college and university professors' academic freedom and free speech rights.</li> </ul>
Students deserve faculty who are highly qualified and available. The number of full-time tenure-track positions must be increased, and contingent faculty must be provided with decent working conditions, job security, pay parity and opportunities for advancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the changing labor landscape in higher ed and supports solutions to hold administrations accountable for hiring well qualified, tenure track faculty to serve our state's students.</li> <li>Supports quality higher ed and respects the collective bargaining rights of part- and full-time faculty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continues to ignore the fact that well-supported colleges and universities create the thriving communities that appeal to new businesses and corporations.</li> <li>Limits students' access to faculty mentors and teachers.</li> <li>Degrades the quality of the education in the state through chronic underfunding of public higher ed.</li> </ul>
Collective bargaining ensures a voice in the workplace and provides a better life for all working people. The right to bargain collectively must be defended across all employment sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes the sacrifices made by public employees through multiple SEBAC concessions.</li> <li>Respects collective bargaining agreements negotiated in good faith.</li> <li>Works to ensure that all people have a voice and dignity in their workplaces through their union.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports legislation that undermines collective bargaining and limits employee's freedom to negotiate together for fair wages and working conditions.</li> <li>Looks to take away the voice of working families and destabilizes the working relationship between administrators and employees.</li> </ul>

### Required Reading

- The Constitution of the State of Connecticut, Article VIII which mandates a system of public higher ed "dedicated to excellence."
- The Mission Statements of each of the public colleges and universities in Connecticut.