



**CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS**

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Board of Regents' College Consolidation Plan Raises Red Flags

Connecticut State University Faculty Union questions plan, estimated savings in college merger

HARTFORD – Faculty from the four Connecticut State Universities continue to question a plan raised by Board of Regents President Mark Ojakian last spring and that is being voted on by the BOR Thursday. The plan, called Students First, would consolidate Connecticut's 12 community colleges into a single system.

While being touted as a savings strategy to help lift the state-wide higher education system out of deficit, the plan's financial details are foggy to say the least, especially when considering a plan of this magnitude, according to Elena Tapia, president of Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors. CSU-AAUP represents faculty, counselors, coaches, trainers, and librarians at the four Connecticut State Universities.

“The plan offers no real evidence or overall balance sheet to support claims of saving millions of dollars for a system that has been bled dry by continued state funding cuts,” said President Tapia. “Combined with the centralization of control for each college and threats to their accreditation, it is stunning to see the Board of Regents throwing caution to the wind and moving forward on implementing such a nebulous restructuring plan.”

An August 2017 letter from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which is the accrediting body for the 12 community colleges and the four state universities, conveyed significant concerns about Students First negatively affecting CSCU campuses' abilities to meet accreditation standards.

“Consolidations like the one being planned rarely result in long-term cost savings,” President Tapia said. “What's worse is it stands to jeopardize the very public higher education institutions tasked with educating Connecticut's future leaders.”

“Instead of cuts and consolidation, the powers that be should turn their efforts to raising revenue for our state's public higher education system. Enough of tax policies at state and national levels that put the greatest burden on working and middle class students and their families. Our elected and appointed leaders must stop bowing down to corporate and special interests and do the right thing for the future of our state.”

“Investments – not cuts – in public higher education are investments in our state's future. When public higher education thrives, communities thrive and that means Connecticut thrives.”

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