

New England Commission of Higher Education, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Provide Update on June 23 Meeting

At its meeting on June 23, 2020, the New England Commission of Higher Education (the Commission) considered the progress report from the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system in a session that included CSCU President Mark Ojakian, Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education Chair Matt Fleury, and Connecticut State Community College Interim President David Levinson.

The Commission accepted the progress report, noting that CSCU had made significant progress on previous feedback from the Commission and provided an update on work to establish the single community college, which would be one of the largest in the United States. The Commission noted that the Board has approved the name of the single community college, appointed an Interim President and leadership team, and moved resources from the CSCU budget to support Connecticut State Community College.

In accepting the report, the Commission asked for a progress report due April 1, 2021 to include: 1) more specific information about the system of internal governance for the college; 2) an update on current and projected enrollment; and 3) the recent, current, and projected budgets, and position changes at the 12 separately accredited colleges and for the proposed Connecticut State Community College. The Commission will continue to monitor the current 12 separately accredited community colleges until such time as it approves a substantive change request for a single Connecticut State Community College.

The Commission was also in receipt of public comment documentation both affirming and identifying concerns with this effort. Consistent with Commission policy, President Ojakian responded to the public comments. The Commission voted to take no further action on the comments and will thank the commenters.

Speaking on behalf of the Commission, President Barbara Brittingham said, “The Commission appreciates the commitment of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities to ensure greater support for and success of Connecticut students working toward their certificates or associate degrees and those with plans to transfer to a four-year institution. The challenges of the current moment underscore the importance of that commitment.”

Speaking on behalf of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, President Mark Ojakian said, “I thank the Commission for their positive feedback and for noting the progress we have made. We will continue to closely follow NECHE standards as we work toward the launch of Connecticut State Community College. I am confident that the Commission’s thorough oversight of this process will lead to a stronger institution that better meets the needs of our students. The new college leadership is currently proactively reaching out to all stakeholders to discuss the transition to the new structure.”

Further information can be found at:

Connecticut State Colleges & Universities: <https://www.ct.edu>

New England Commission of Higher Education: <https://www.neche.org>

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