

The following questions relate to the planned organizational and operational structure of **Connecticut State Community College**. Questions and answers are broken down into five categories, below.

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## General FAQ

### 1. Why are the community colleges being consolidated?

Our goal as a public higher education institution is to provide a high quality, affordable and accessible post-secondary education that enables students to achieve their life and career goals. The main drivers for the consolidation are closing the opportunity gap, improving student success rates and reorganizing our community colleges into a financially sustainable position, such that it is well positioned to continue to serve students for many years to come.

We recognize that without real structural change our system is unsustainable in both the short and long term. Our institutions are facing a true structural deficit because of decreased tuition revenue and increased costs. The Board of Regents voted in April 2017 to pursue two strategies to remedy and strengthen the community college system going forward: 1) consolidation of the 12 community colleges into one singly accredited institution, 2) consolidation of CSCU's administrative back-office functions into shared services used by the community colleges, state universities and Charter Oak State College.

Introduction of Shared Services has been underway since then, while CSCU and later CT State leaders shared draft plans and progress reports with NECHE through June 2021. With significant feedback from NECHE over the past few years and continued work by a range of stakeholders on work from curriculum alignment to information system development, a revised substantive change and final draft organizational charts have been submitted on Feb. 11, 2022. CT State leadership will make a formal presentation to the NECHE board on March 3, 2022. CT State plans to officially open on July 1, 2023 and will start accepting applications in Fall 2022.

More details can be found here: <https://www.ct.edu/sf>

## 2. How will one community college benefit students?

Benefits of a single community for students are numerous. The new structure eliminates many barriers to success and degree completion. In particular, the new structure calls for an increased focus on enrollment management, advising and retention to maximize the impact of our guided pathways initiative.

Colleges currently are not able to share student information from one to another. When students take classes at multiple colleges, as they often do to get the classes they need, they must transfer credits between schools. However, those transfer credits do NOT count towards the students' GPA. At the same time, they have to provide duplicate documents needed to enroll, such as high school transcripts, immunization records, and previous college transcripts. Financial aid for books and college supplies does not transfer from one college to another.

Under the new structure, students would apply once, and be able to take classes at any of the 12 campuses, and all courses taken would apply to their GPA and be recorded on their Connecticut State Community College transcript for a degree program that is available across all 12 campuses.

## 3. How will the consolidation affect the accreditation of the 12 Colleges?

The 12 community colleges all are currently accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). They are accredited separately, which requires that each institution meet the 9 NECHE standards required for continued accreditation. By consolidating the 12 colleges into one, this constitutes a change in the accreditation, and NECHE policies require a substantive change proposal to consolidate the 12 colleges into CSCC.

Once NECHE approves the consolidation, the current 12 colleges will share one accreditation.

View NECHE standards for accreditation at: <https://www.neche.org/resources/standards-for-accreditation/>.

## 4. What does the leadership structure of one single community college look like?

In order to meet NECHE standards for accreditation, new institutional leadership positions of President of the Connecticut State Community College, Chief Academic Officer and a Chief Financial Officer must be included in the organizational structure. Campuses have been organized into three regions with three Regional Presidents, managing the coordination between campuses. Each campus has a Campus CEO (2 campuses have Presidents hired prior to

2017 who retain that title) to manage the campus and play the critical role of serving the surrounding community.

#### 5. What is the purpose of the three regions and why does each have a Regional President?

Consolidating 12 separate colleges, each with a long history of working independently, into a single college will take considerable effort to align processes and practices. The Regional Presidents play a key role in bringing consistency across the campuses and in promoting innovation at scale. To effectively manage an entity of this size, and to coordinate processes across the 12 campuses, regional positions are necessary. These positions will be in many areas, such as enrollment management, workforce development and continuing education, sponsored programs and grants, planning and research, information technology and marketing. Many staff currently working at an individual college will gradually shift into regional roles, working with their colleagues across the campuses in their regions as well as across the other two regions. Similar to the Campus CEOs, many of the regional positions will report to or have a working relationship with the Regional Presidents.

#### 6. How will being one college help with student retention?

Research and our own experience show that when students are given extra, personalized support, they make better informed enrollment decisions and have higher rates of attendance, persistence, retention and graduating on time.

Guided Pathways Advising is a holistic advising program that works in collaboration with faculty to support students during their academic career to increase retention and completion rates at Connecticut's community colleges. It is part of a larger suite of Guided Pathways initiatives, and is a nationally recognized, research-based approach that is seeing success in sixteen other states from Ohio to California to Tennessee.

In collaboration with faculty advisors, GP advisors help students explore their options, persist toward a career as well as a degree, and meet the personal challenges that often derail or delay academic progress. While GP advisors are for all students, we believe our first generations students will particularly benefit from and rely upon their GP advisors.

#### 7. What other system-wide changes can be expected?

Additional initiatives that use the Guided Pathways are outlined in the attached report ([Guided Pathways Taskforce Final Report PDF](#)). Holistic student support is embodied in advising, the addition of mental health counseling, free telehealth for students through TimelyMD (<https://www.timelycare.com/ctstate>) and better support services overall beyond academics.

Areas of study have also been streamlined and standardized. Plus, the next year will bring the

implementation of the Alignment & Completion of Math and English (ACME) policy, which will essentially eliminate remedial math and English courses by embedding extra help within required classes that count toward degree requirements. This change will save students time and money.

CT State will have a statewide catalog which will be the same across all campuses, with standardized course pre-requisites, learning outcomes and titles, making it much easier for students to take classes at any campus and no longer have to transfer credits from community college to community college.

A new Banner Student Information System is being built which will allow a major upgrade in the services that we provide for recruiting, on-boarding, advising, scheduling classes and tracking student degree completion.

#### 8. Will campuses still have foundations and advisory boards?

Yes, each of the 12 colleges will continue to have their own foundation and regional advisory boards. The foundations are legally separate 501c(3) entities, and will be completely unaffected by this proposed consolidation. As part of the commitment to retain the local connections between campuses and the local community, it is important that these organizations continue to operate as they do now.

#### 9. What is the current budget situation for the colleges and how will the consolidation help?

As of FY 2022, two of the colleges have negative net reserves. Unless we adapt, the number of colleges in difficult financial situation will grow to include the majority of colleges in the next few years.

Over the last 3 years, there has been a 25% decrease in overall enrollment. The demographics of higher education, particularly in New England, are not in our favor when taking into account overall population declines, the number of high school graduates and the number of higher education options in Connecticut that compete for students.

Merging into one institution allows us to review all administrative processes and promote efficiencies, leverage resources across campuses, and improve teaching, learning and student support services through implementation of best practices at scale.

#### 10. What specific achievements or improvements is the merger designed to do?

The merger's most important improvements are in the area of reducing administrative barriers to student recruitment, admission, transfer of credit, financial aid processes and alignment of curriculum. The Board of Regents has also adopted national best practices in moving to a co-

requisite English and math curriculum over time, implemented at-scale a guided pathways advising model, made first-year experience a required course and adopted diversity requirements as part of the general education of all future students. The new college will also support student equity as a central pillar and focus on reducing barriers to entry for students of color, first generation students, and those from low-income backgrounds.

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## Shared Services FAQ

### 1. What will the centralization of back office processing look like?

The new Connecticut State Community College will have a shared services structure for certain back-office functions that are not student-facing. The benefit of this type of organizational structure is that it does not require staff at all 12 campuses all performing duplicate functions. The shared services will be in Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, Information Technology, Purchasing. Some of the shared services have already been established and others may eventually be added in the future. Staff will either be hired into new positions or moved laterally and may serve multiple campuses. These services will also be centrally managed, either as part of CSCU system office or as part of the new College office.

### 2. How will I know who to contact if I need help from a shared service, such as HR?

Human Resources Shared Services (HRSS) has created a website which details the five Centers of Excellence, who to contact and other relevant information: <https://www.ct.edu/hr>. As the other areas of shared services come online, campus employees will be notified of the new services and when they begin and how to contact those services that they need. The person you are contacting could work at your own campus, another campus, the new College office or the CSCU System Office depending on the service.

### 3. How/when may we review the job descriptions associated with the new structure?

As the transition begins, job descriptions become available and approved in accordance with the respective collective bargaining provisions, we will share them through the shared service human resources website and other appropriate channels at all campuses.

### 4. Are the positions unionized? Which union?

Most positions will be unionized but there may be several that are deemed management/confidential. Each position will be reviewed by the System Office Human Resources Shared Services organization. Decisions as to which union a job will be placed in will be made in accordance with the respective collective bargaining agreements.

### 5. When will advertising for new positions take place?

As positions are approved as part of the finalized organizational structure, a plan for posting and hiring will be disseminated to employees. Many of these positions offer advancement opportunities for current employees who are encouraged to apply.

## 6. What is the phase in/out plan for the new organization? (i.e., how long will current campus positions remain in place)

Most bargaining unit faculty and non-teaching staff positions will remain on campuses, or directly serve campuses, through the transition to the new college in 2023, particularly those supporting the NECHE standards.. Any changes impacting employees represented by a union will be discussed with the respective bargaining units to develop a transition plan.

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### **Campus FAQ**

#### 1. What is the role of the Campus CEO?

The Campus CEO has responsibility for day-to-day management of a campus, but will no longer have to individually maintain every requirement of NECHE accreditation. That will be the responsibility of CT State College office. The CEO reports to their Regional President and is responsible for implementing College policy and ensuring that students have a high-quality educational experience. The Campus CEOs work with the Regional Presidents to engage with the local community and interface with the campus foundation in order to support students.

#### 2. What will be the role of the Dean of Students & Faculty?

The role of the campus Dean of Students & Faculty will be to support teaching and learning on campus and supporting the staff and faculty who provides this learning environment on campus. They will ensure that all classes are running appropriately and that students are able to access their classes without any issues. Working closely with the Campus CEO, the Dean will be responsible for ensuring that all academic and student issues are handled appropriately and will work with CT State College-level academic and student affairs staff as needed.

#### 3. Who will full-time and part-time faculty report to?

All full-time and part-time faculty will work within College-wide academic departments that span all 12 campuses and are led by a dean and an associate dean of that discipline/degree program. Campuses will also have program coordinators and discipline coordinators who will coordinate class sections and hire and supervise part-time faculty.

#### 4. Who provides support for student lab workers?

Student lab workers will be managed locally on the campus, hired and trained by faculty and staff at the campus level.

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### **Academic Affairs FAQ**

#### 1. Why isn't my academic program listed on the organizational chart?

When developing an organizational chart of this complexity and to make sure that the chart was readable, not all programs could be shown. All programs and discipline areas will become part of approximately 18 new, statewide academic departments. The new academic departments will begin operating alongside current departments through AY 2022-2023 to familiarize faculty with the new structure and allow for an orderly transition.

#### 2. The organizational chart shows Academic Discipline Coordinators and Program Coordinators. What is the difference?

The academic organizational structure is modeled after similarly sized institutions in other parts of the country. Instead of having 12 separate and different academic structures, Connecticut State Community College will have one academic organizational structure, with sufficient capacity to satisfy NECHE Standard 4.

Currently, the 12 colleges have varying academic structures; some have department chairs, some have division directors, some have both and some have associate deans instead. The tasks previously assigned to department chairs and division directors will eventually move to the Academic Discipline Coordinators and program coordinators, as described below.

Academic Discipline Coordinators are full-time faculty at the campus level who are given release time to manage the implementation of discipline curriculum and courses that are not directly associated with specified programs. The campus discipline coordinators will report to the associate dean and be charged with organizing and coordinating local faculty from that discipline and hiring all adjunct instructors within that discipline just as program coordinators do within academic programs. Discipline/program coordinators will also work alongside campus deans of faculty/students to resolve any student issues at the campus level.

Program Coordinators will function very similar to how they do now, at the program rather than discipline level. Program coordinators will remain at the campus level and will work collaboratively with each other and their associate dean at the college level to manage their particular program as well as hire all adjunct faculty in that program.



Academic Discipline Coordinators and Program Coordinators will also play an important role in developing a schedule of courses within their respective discipline/program.

### 3. Where will the CT State (College-Office) Director positions, Associate Vice President and Provost reside?

NECHE Standard 3 Organization and Governance requires that CT State remain sufficiently independent from any other entity to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's standards. As such, CT State offices will be established at a new office location in New Britain, and not in the same location as the CSCU System Office. The direct reports will likely reside at the College office. Some may be based at a campus depending on the nature of the position.

### 4. Who hires and evaluates adjuncts faculty?

All adjunct faculty will be hired and evaluated by Program Coordinators if they teach in a program or by a discipline coordinator if they teach in a discipline. The evaluations will be reviewed by the associate dean of the specific academic study area at the College level with input by the campus dean.

### 5. It does not appear Program Coordinator positions have been centralized. Will a Program Coordinator on one campus supervise faculty and adjuncts on other campuses?

Program Coordinators have not been centralized and will generally be present on those campuses that have that program available. In a few specialized cases, where programs are very small, shared program coordinators may be necessary across two or more campuses. Many program coordinators oversee and coordinate internship opportunities for students which are often locally specific.

### 6. What does it mean to have a reporting line between full-time faculty and College-office Associate Deans of Disciplines and Programs, and a relationship line between FT faculty and campus-position Dean of Students & Faculty?

In a matrix organization, such as CT State, there are both reporting lines and relationship lines within the organization. A reporting line is a formal supervisory relationship. The relationship line is not supervisory, but denotes where extensive collaboration is expected.

### 7. What will happen to the curriculum and courses of all of the colleges?

Our accrediting body expects that as a single institution we would have a single catalog of courses, degrees and certificates for students to enroll in.

The Connecticut State Community College will eventually award all degree and certificate programs, beginning in July 2023. In accordance with NECHE standard 3.13 and 3.15, faculty

have an important role in determining curriculum for degree programs that are common. Where it makes sense based on local needs or area of focus, there will continue to be some programs that are unique and differentiated across campuses. Hundreds of faculty have worked to align all of our degrees, certificates and courses since this work began in 2018. Externally accredited programs will work with their specialized agencies and where required, maintain local campus-based accreditation. All courses have been built to align with the CT State general education and Board policy on learning outcomes and these courses will have consistent pre-requisites across all campuses.

#### 8. Where does schedule production land (on campus or at the system)?

The class schedule will be developed in the academic division of the new Connecticut State Community College and overseen by the AVP of Academic Operations with input from Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. Each semester's schedule will be built beginning with faculty disciplinary groups and associate deans of functional areas. Under a single college, the schedule will reflect the needs of students across the state, scheduled when and where students need the classes.

#### 9. Under the currently proposed new structure, what role do you envision for the various program area deans and associate deans?

The program area Deans and associate deans will oversee the curriculum within their disciplinary area and work with the faculty in those programs and disciplines, organized into academic departments that span all 12 campuses. Those departments will meet regularly, and function similar to the academic departments that exist now, revising curriculum, developing new courses, revising and assessing outcomes, etc. The associate deans are charged with directly supervising all of the full-time faculty within their disciplinary area with the assistance of campus Deans of Students and Faculty and Campus Associate Deans of Faculty. Program Coordinators and Academic Discipline Coordinators will continue to hire and evaluate part-time faculty at each campus. All work in collaboration with the Deans of Students & Faculty at the campus level.

#### 10. Does the reporting differ for someone who teaches in two disciplines?

It is not uncommon for full-time faculty to teach in multiple disciplines if they have multiple areas of expertise. In such cases, faculty will report to those associate deans who oversee those particular disciplines, much like faculty do now when they span multiple academic departments, however, they will be formally housed in a single department.

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## **Enrollment Management & Student Affairs FAQ**

1. The new structure shows “Title IX Deputy and Student Conduct” that reports directly to the CEO. Do you know if each campus will have a T9 Deputy?

Yes. Each campus will have a Title IX Deputy.

2. How will Career Services for students be delivered?

We now have Coordinators of Career Services on all 12 campuses to help coordinate the intersection of career services between academics, workforce development, and student affairs. We also added a Director of Carl Perkins and Career Services that reports to the AVP of Academic Programs and Curriculum to help oversee the academic ties to Career Services. As part of a holistic approach to student advising, career exploration is incorporated into the role of Guided Pathways Advisors.

3. Where will the (College-office) director positions listed under Vice President Enrollment Management and Student Affairs reside? Will they reside on a campus or a centralized Regional/College office?

Staff who directly report to the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will be housed in the central college office in New Britain. Most director-level positions in the division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will be housed on campuses as they are direct student-facing positions.

4. How are student complaints reviewed and resolved?

Processes will be developed for Connecticut State Community College and implemented across all 12 campuses. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it will be triaged at the campus or College office.

In the case of an academic complaint, the process would be handled by the appropriate staff depending on the seriousness of the complaint. Student complaints would first be referred to the Dean of Students & Faculty on the campus who will decide whether the issue can be addressed locally with the program coordinator or individual faculty member, or if the issue needs to be referred up to the program area Dean at the College office. Final decisions would ultimately be left to the program area Dean in cooperation with the campus Dean of Students & Faculty, but those decisions can be appealed and reviewed by the CSCU Legal Affairs Office, as they can now.

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