

**Report to the Chancellor on the Standing Advisory Committee to the Board of Governors for Higher Education (SAC)**

**To: Community College Colleagues**

**From: Barbara E. Richards, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at Housatonic Community College and representative of the non-technical faculty to the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) of the Board of Governors for Higher Education**

As you know, I was elected as the representative to the Standing Advisory Committee of the Board of Governors for Higher Education in November 2005 by all of the community college faculty members and ACLs except those in the areas that were part of the former technical colleges. Since my election I have attended every meeting of the SAC. Although it is not expected and only one other SAC member does so, I have also chosen to attend almost all meetings of the Board of Governors for Higher Education (BOG). Since the primary responsibility of the SAC is to give advice to the BOG, I felt that it was important to observe the activities of the BOG. I have now been able to adjust my teaching schedule so that beginning at the end of the spring semester I will attend meetings of the Board of Trustees of the Community Colleges (BOT) as well. (For those who may be reading this report and are not familiar with the various boards and committees governing higher education in Connecticut, an explanation is included at the end of this report.)

I am happy to have the opportunity to work through the Standing Advisory Committee and in cooperation with the Chancellor's office to advocate for the mission of Connecticut's Community Colleges. My periodic reports on the SAC, including this first report, will be circulated via the system website <http://www.commnet.edu/> within the information for Faculty and Staff with email notices sent to alert campus community members of the report's availability and location on the web.

I also welcome the opportunity to speak to faculty or at college meetings about the activities of the SAC in order to be able to discuss issues with the people who elected me.

I would encourage anyone in the system to ask questions or send in comments to [brichards@hcc.commnet.edu](mailto:brichards@hcc.commnet.edu).

This report is divided into three parts:

1. Some important issues that have been discussed by the Board of Governors
2. Questions I have raised with the Standing Advisory Committee regarding its role and procedures
3. A brief explanation of some entities relevant to community colleges

## 1. SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

A. Professor Stephen Coelen presented some very interesting research, sponsored by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. One study, called First Steps, tracked Connecticut students for the six years following their high school graduation. It found that the CAPT test taken in tenth grade is a good predictor of college success. "The study also provided insight into the college enrollment of Connecticut high school graduates who completed CAPT tests...Public institutions do just as they are expected to do: The community college system provides an open door for students, allowing a wide range of access while still enrolling a high proportion of very bright students capable of being admitted to any college. This possibly gives low-income students the best buy for their money." One surprising finding of the study is that almost 10 percent of the highest scorers on the tenth grade CAPT test in Connecticut do not attend college. This raises the question of whether income level of the students was a problem in terms of the ability to attend college, and whether the state should be doing something to make college more affordable for the brightest low-income students. It was called a "brain drain". A summary of this report can be found at: <http://www.ctdhe.org/info/pdfs/2006/FirstSteps.pdf>.

Professor Coelen also did an important demographic study. It predicts that Connecticut's 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will include a significantly higher percentage of Black and Hispanic enrollment by the year 2020. It states that if the "historically lower educational attainment rates" of minority students in Connecticut continue there "will be a clear labor force problem in Connecticut" due to a shortage of labor force entrants with at least a BA degree. There have been discussions at the BOG about the need to make improvements in the quality of the high school preparation offered these students if we are to maintain Connecticut's highly-qualified college population and workforce. The complete study has not yet been released.

This study's findings are reinforced by research reported in the following excerpts from a report titled *"As America Becomes More Diverse: The Impact of State Higher Education Inequality"*, by Patrick J. Kelly at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), with support from the Lumina Foundation. For the full report, see:

[http://www.higheredinfo.org/raceethnicity/Connecticut\\_State\\_Profile.pdf](http://www.higheredinfo.org/raceethnicity/Connecticut_State_Profile.pdf).

"Connecticut's workforce continues to become more racially diverse. The share of Connecticut's workforce consisting of whites (particularly those under age 45) is declining rapidly, while the share made up of other racial/ethnic groups is projected to reach 29% by 2020...The growth is almost completely within the Hispanic/Latino population, whose share of the workforce is expected to jump from 3% in 1980 to 14% in 2020...

The gaps between the educational levels of whites and Hispanics/Latinos, and whites and African-Americans, are substantial. For example, there is a wide disparity between the least-educated and the highest-educated segments of the state workforce... Among working-age adults, about 40% of Hispanics/Latinos and 20% of African-Americans do not have a high school credential, compared to 8% of whites. At the other end of the

spectrum, only 16% of working-age Hispanics/Latinos and 21% of working-age African-Americans have a college degree, compared with 47% of working-age whites...

Given the demographic shifts in the state workforce, *IF* Connecticut's current educational gaps among racial/ethnic groups remain, then...the percentage of the workforce with a college degree is projected to decline: By 2020, the share of the workforce with less than a high school diploma is projected to increase, while the share with an associate's or a bachelor's degree is projected to decrease...The income of residents is projected to drop: *IF* the average educational level of the state workforce declines, Connecticut's personal income per capita is projected to drop from \$28,869 in 2000 to \$27,813 in 2020—a decline of \$1,056 or 4% (in inflation-adjusted dollars). In contrast, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Connecticut's personal income per capita had grown 61% during the two decades prior to 2000. One consequence of such a decline in personal income would be a decrease in the state's tax base...

### **Policy Implications.**

State policymakers in Connecticut must be aware of the social and economic costs resulting from demographic shifts and disparities in the education of the state's residents. Connecticut's opportunities to develop a strong state workforce that can compete effectively in a global, knowledge-based economy rest on its ability to raise the level of education of all its residents, particularly its Hispanic/Latino and African-American populations.”

B. Another demographic study indicates that the 18-year old population in Connecticut, which has been rising since 1990, will peak in the year 2008 and decline thereafter. After 2014 it is expected to be 5-7% below the levels of 2008. We would therefore expect a decline in enrollments of recent high school graduates after 2008.

C. There will probably be major changes in the field of Early Childhood Education. Governor Rell has established a “Cabinet” to deal with the need for improvements in this area. There is particular emphasis on funding for urban areas where fewer children attend preschool, and on the need for childcare workers with a BA. For more information, see:

<http://www.ctdhe.org/info/pdfs/2006/PublicActReportForECE.pdf>.

D. A Taskforce on the Faculty was set up by the Board of Governors. It developed some minor revisions in what is known as the “Faculty Standard” for Connecticut institutions of higher learning. The standard, with the proposed changes (which were adopted) is below:

“Section 10a-34-13, Faculty

(...Proposed deletions are in brackets.)

(a) *General requirement.* Institutions shall employ a sufficient number of qualified faculty to support all areas of instruction required for completion of all programs. Each academic program shall employ at least one full-time faculty member with credentials suited to the field and level of the program who will have principal responsibility for all aspects of the program. There shall be a reasonable [ratio] balance of full-time, [and] part-time, and adjunct faculty for each program.

(b) *Qualifications.* Faculty members shall have appropriate degrees from regionally accredited institutions or in accordance with constituent unit or institutional policy they shall demonstrate an equivalent level of competence in the specific subject areas they are assigned to teach. The master's degree shall be the minimum qualification for teaching undergraduate courses. In the case of graduate programs, each faculty member shall have a terminal degree in an appropriate field of study and at least one full-time faculty member assigned to the program shall have a minimum of three years' experience as a faculty member in a similar program. [The application] Applications for new programs shall include the names of all faculty members assigned to teach in the program, together with their titles, degrees and degree fields, areas of specialization, and course assignments. [The application] Applications also shall include a statement of the minimum qualifications for all faculty who may be assigned to teach in the program.

(c) *Assignments.* Faculty members' responsibilities shall include[:] broadening professional knowledge, preparing and assessing course materials and programs, advising and mentoring students, and carrying out other academic responsibilities appropriate to their position, in addition to performing assigned teaching, research, and administrative duties. Each college and university shall make provision [should be made] for part-time and adjunct faculty to participate in departmental and general faculty meetings and other activities.

(d) *Academic advising.* Adequate provision shall be made for students to confer with faculty and qualified counseling staff outside of class.

E. A Taskforce on the cost of textbooks met and reported recommendations to the Board of Governors. In part due to this process, the Board of Trustees of the Community Colleges adopted the following resolution in January 2006:

- “1. Each Community College will create an ad hoc textbook committee which includes representatives from the student body, the book store, college administration, faculty and staff.
2. Each Community College will create a system within each bookstore where students can charge purchases of textbooks and class materials against their financial aid award.
3. Each Community College will create a system to allow students advance access to textbook information for the following semester, including the title, author, price, and the International Standard Book Number (ISBN.)
4. Each Community College will create a practice which supports faculty ordering textbooks and classroom materials for the following semester at an early date which allows each bookstore to provide a ‘buyback’ opportunity to student who wish to sell their books back to the book store for reuse.”

For more details on the BOG report go to:

<http://www.ctdhe.org/BOG/pdfs/2006/February/AgendaBook200602.pdf>.

F. The Standing Advisory Committee has raised a concern about articulation agreements among the institutions of higher education. The student members stated

that they had difficulty in finding out about existing articulation agreements in order to plan their curriculum in preparation for transfer. We have discussed with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) the possibility of establishing a statewide website that would list current articulation agreements at all of the colleges and universities, and for each agreement give any relevant website links and contact information for a person who could provide details. DHE has begun to collect this information from the colleges.

G. iConn – The Board of Governors is undertaking a campaign to make the public more aware of iConn, a great library resource for the public with additional and very useful information for academic centers. You can explore iConn through your campus website or directly at [www.iconn.org](http://www.iconn.org).

H. The Governor has recommended a budget with adjustments favorable to the community colleges, and the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly has proposed a larger budget with additional funding for higher education including the community colleges. To view the Appropriations Committee proposed budget, go to: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/Documents/OFABudget/2006/Committee/index.htm>. The Republican Governor and the Democratically-controlled Legislature will attempt to reach a compromise settlement on a final budget before the end of the Legislative Session in May.

There is money in the budget proposed by the Appropriations Committee of the General Assembly to fund additional hiring of new full time faculty members at the community colleges. The community college budget requests for the last two years have included additional funding to increase the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty in recognition of the important role played by full-time faculty in ensuring academic program quality and oversight, in meeting accreditation standards, and in providing curriculum development, student academic advising and support. These initiatives, intended to allow for ongoing increases in enrollment as well as program expansion, have been received favorably by the General Assembly both last year, when funding for 18 new faculty members was included in the Community College budget for both years of the biennium. This year's recommendation from the Appropriations Committee for the 2007 budget adds 15 faculty positions to that number. The final decision rests on the negotiations between the Governor and the General Assembly and the approval of a final State budget.

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## **2. QUESTIONS I HAVE RAISED WITH THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGARDING ITS ROLE AND PROCEDURES**

The first meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee that I attended was in May of 2005. In December I read the statute setting up the SAC and the bylaws governing it and realized that in some ways the SAC has failed to comply with parts of the statute and the bylaws. I wrote a memo to the group about this and as a result the SAC has set up a Subcommittee on the Bylaws to make recommendations for changes. I have been a member of that subcommittee.

The memo identifies several issues. The most important is that the statute states that the SAC should elect a seven-person Executive Committee. Those seven people are supposed to attend all meetings of the Board of Governors and participate in all of their deliberations on a non-voting basis. The statutory language is as follows:

**“Sec. 10a-4. Executive committee of the advisory committee.** There shall be an executive committee of the standing committee established pursuant to section 10a-3, which shall serve as an advisory body to the Board of Governors of Higher Education to assist the board in carrying out its statutory functions. The executive committee shall be comprised of seven members to be elected by the standing committee, at least one of whom shall be a member of a board of trustees, one of whom shall be a member of an administrative staff, one of whom shall be a faculty member, one of whom shall be a Connecticut student from a public institution of higher education in the state and one of whom shall be a Connecticut student from an independent college or university in the state. Not more than two members so elected shall be from the same constituent unit. Except for executive sessions, the executive committee shall meet with the Board of Governors of Higher Education at all board meetings and shall have the right to participate in all discussions and deliberations, but shall not have the right to vote at such meetings.”

I have read all available back minutes of the SAC since its establishment in 1982. The last mention of any Executive Committee was in 1997. The Executive Committee has apparently not functioned since that time. The current practice is to send only one person to the BOG meetings *to give a brief report at the meeting, normally only a few sentences.*

The memo I wrote proposes that the SAC change its practice to comply with the statute and elect the Executive Committee to participate in all meetings of the BOG. This would give the SAC a more significant advisory role as intended by the legislature.

Another issue is about membership. The SAC is supposed to have 22 members and 22 alternates, but many of the members have not been named and many of those listed do not attend. Attendance has often been lower than the quorum of 10 members. The memo proposes that we set up a membership committee to work toward a full complement of members and alternates and replacement of members who are habitually absent (as provided in the bylaws).

It is unclear whether the SAC will approve the election of the Executive Committee or set up a membership committee. We will vote on both of these issues at the May meeting. However, since these issues were raised the attendance at meetings and the liveliness of discussions have improved dramatically. Attendance had sunk as low as four people at times, *but* the April meeting was attended by sixteen people. Also, some new members have been appointed, and with or without a membership committee we will investigate the problems of non-appointment of members and non-attendance by certain individuals. Finally, we have established a committee on the question of transfer and articulation, the first major initiative of the SAC in some time. When I first came, the regular committee meetings consisted almost entirely of a report from a Department of Higher Education liaison and questions. That report is still an important part of the agenda and all of us learn a great deal from it, but now the agenda includes many other issues as well.

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### **3. A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF SOME ENTITIES RELEVANT TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

A. The Board of Governors for Higher Education (BOG) serves as a coordinating body for all of the colleges, universities and private post-secondary institutions of Connecticut. It does not have budgetary authority but it approves programs (except in the case of most of the programs at Yale and a few other elite private colleges). It also participates in accreditation of institutions by sending observers with NEASC teams. Those observers do not normally participate in the actual writing of NEASC reports. The final decisions on accreditation are made by NEASC and the BOG is required to accept them. The BOG is also in charge of the Department of Higher Education (DHE), a large staff organization headed by Commissioner Valerie Lewis. DHE has many functions. Some of the most interesting BOG meetings have involved presentation of research studies commissioned by DHE. The BOG also has direct jurisdiction over post-secondary proprietary schools. Finally, the Board has a certain persuasive function, and may make recommendations to the institutions of higher learning or to the legislature.

Information about the BOG and DHE, including links to some research findings, can be found on the DHE website at <http://www.ctdhe.org/>.

B. The Standing Advisory Committee to the BOG was established at the same time as the BOG, in 1982. Before that year there had been a different structure in which representatives of what are called the “constituent units” – that is the Connecticut Community Colleges, Connecticut State University, the University of Connecticut, Charter Oak, and the private institutions – were voting members of the decision-making board that had jurisdiction over higher education. The BOG was set up without such direct representation. All of its members are private citizens who are not associated with the constituent units. The Standing Advisory Committee was set up as a way for the constituent units to continue to have an influential voice inside the Board of Governors but without a vote. SAC membership consists of elected representatives of trustees, administrators, faculty and students from each of the constituent units, and one alternate member for each elected member.

In the case of the community colleges, the statute was later amended to allow for two elected representatives from each group – trustees, administrators, faculty and students. One member represents the technical and one the non-technical people in the community colleges. One way to look at this distinction is to say that I represent the teaching faculty and ACLs who are part of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges bargaining unit, although the position of representative to the Standing Advisory Committee is not a union position.

C. The Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Connecticut Community Colleges has jurisdiction over our community college system. It makes policy and budgetary decisions regarding that system. It directs the staff of the Office of the Chancellor. The website for our system is at:

<http://www.commnet.edu/>.

The BOT policy manual is at:

[http://www.commnet.edu/doc/BPM\\_COMPLETE\\_MASTER.pdf](http://www.commnet.edu/doc/BPM_COMPLETE_MASTER.pdf).

The State University system (the CSUs) and the University of Connecticut also have their own Boards of Trustees.

D. There is also an Advisory Committee on Accreditation appointed by the Board of Governors which “reviews proposals for new degree programs in Connecticut and makes recommendations to the Board of Governors concerning licensure and accreditation”. For a membership list and schedule of meetings for this group go to:

<http://www.ctdhe.org/BOG/dheAdvisory.htm>

E. Ultimate authority over the colleges and universities of Connecticut lies with the General Assembly, which passes laws and budgets with the approval of the Governor. The legislative committee with jurisdiction in these matters is the Joint Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement. The General Assembly’s website is at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/>. The Committee is at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/hed/>. Through these websites it is now easy to find out what bills have been introduced, track the progress of a bill, read transcripts of house sessions and find out how legislators voted. You can also email your legislator directly through the website. The co-chairs of the committee are Senator Joan Hartley and Representative Roberta Willis.

An excellent way to observe the legislative committee at work is through CT-N, the public organization that films much of the work of the General Assembly. Their website contains a schedule of which committees or sessions are being shown on your local television. In addition they have both live and taped events available to be played directly on your computer. It is marvelous! The website is at <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/>.

**ALL MEETINGS OF ALL OF THESE GROUPS ARE PUBLIC, EXCEPT FOR OCCASIONAL EXECUTIVE SESSIONS.**