

**Date:** February 24, 2003

**Topic:** Mission and Core Values

**Recommended by:** Chairman of the Board

**RESOLVED:** THAT the Board of Trustees of Community-Technical Colleges reaffirms its commitment to the twelve Connecticut Community Colleges and their mission that ensures access and academic success for students seeking the opportunities offered by higher education and required by the high demand workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Current Environment and the Community College Mission

This commitment is evident in the Trustees' continued support for the statutory mission of the state's 12 regional community colleges in offering:

- Occupational, vocational, technical and career programs to provide training for immediate employment, job retraining or upgrading of skills
- Programs of general study and continuing education to meet individual goals and acquisition of basic skills
- Programs of study for transfer to the baccalaureate level
- Remedial and developmental programs for personal or professional development
- Educational programs centered on addressing community and lifelong learning needs
- Student services that support personal development and academic success

#### Responding to Student and State Needs

The success enjoyed by the system of regional community colleges demonstrates the continued relevance of the statutory mission to the needs of the state and its students and proves the responsiveness and effectiveness of the 12-college structure and governance system in meeting the priorities of the state and its diverse populations by:

- Serving 50% of the state's undergraduates in public higher education  
66% of the state's African American and Hispanic undergraduates
- Serving non-traditional older students:  
53% are over the age of 25  
60% are women
- Providing basic skills preparation to advance academic success:  
Over 70% of the students entering degree programs require developmental course work in English, mathematics or both.
- Addressing worker shortages through curricula continuously reviewed for relevance. Currently these shortages are in nursing and allied health, information technology, bioscience, and teaching.
- Advancing the quality and availability of child care education
- Bridging the digital divide through educational and instructional technology
- Developing cost-effective training programs for business and industry
- Expanding access to further education and better jobs
- Improving worker and business productivity
- Improving workforce preparation and the prosperity of Connecticut
- Preparing a skilled workforce to support economic development
- Reducing unemployment, welfare dependence, and societal costs.

### Strategic Structure

The colleges are organized strategically to provide educational programs and services according to the policies established by the Trustees that guide and govern the colleges in fulfilling their mission and in meeting student and state needs.

### Core Values and the Community College Culture

The Board's policies reveal the core values that form the community college identity and differentiate it from other institutions of higher education. The educational mission is reinforced through:

- Accessible locations statewide that serve student and community needs
- Open door admissions
- Comprehensive services including instruction and student support to promote academic success
- Low tuition and fees supported by financial aid opportunities
- Relevant curricula and responsive program development including education and training services for business and industry.

### Board Commitment Preserves Mission and Values

Knowing that the most detrimental effect of any restriction of access or limitation of services is the chilling effect each will have on the ability of Connecticut's Community Colleges to meet the on-going needs of the state and its citizens, the Board of Trustees renews its commitment to maintaining the core values and supporting the unique mission, strategic structure, and governance of Connecticut's Community Colleges.

The Board recognizes its responsibility to guide the college system in the fulfillment of its mission within the limits of its resources in order to ensure continued access to high quality education and services. Therefore, the Board rededicates its efforts to advocating for public support and state investment that will sustain the mission of community colleges.

### Board Stewardship and Responsibilities

The Board acknowledges the primacy of its role as stewards of Connecticut's investment in the Connecticut Community Colleges and commits itself to ensure productivity and efficient use of resources throughout the college system. By examining college and system operations, building on demonstrated competence in integrating technology in operations, and by monitoring and managing its resources wisely, the Board of Trustees will strive to maximize the return on the State's investment.

### Guiding Principles

Informed by the community college core values and dedicated to their preservation, the Board establishes the following guiding principles by which it will evaluate effectiveness and efficiency in order to appropriately and responsibly guide the college system.

All components of the mission are considered valuable and will be sustained within resource limitations.

Learning will be supported at every level system wide through the best teaching methodology and through the highest quality administrative and instructional technology as an enhancement of teaching and learning.

All programs, supporting services and technology will be designed around relevance to student needs, workforce requirements, and fit with accreditation, licensure, and quality educational standards.

Limitation of resources requires that all programs and services be evaluated in terms of:

Regional and statewide need

Resources and facilities that meet quality educational standards

Cost and Benefit

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of program outcomes

Impact or value added in terms of external demand or potential for resource development.

#### Operational effectiveness and efficiency

In addition to evaluating effectiveness of programs and services, the Board will also consider the efficiency and effectiveness of operational and organizational structures in order to sustain delivery of high quality instruction and services and preservation of the fundamental values that define the community college: access, opportunity, and ongoing responsiveness and relevance to the needs of the state and its students.

#### Redefinition and Recommendations

The results of this operational examination may recommend a redefinition of concepts such as “comprehensive” and “open door” that will include consideration of resource limitations; a different approach to organization may require realignment, regionalization, or collaborative delivery of services, administration, and instruction - all in the interest of preserving access, opportunity, and the colleges’ ability to respond to statewide and regional student needs.

- The open door will extend to all components of our mission within the limits of our resources.
- Tuition and fees will be maintained at the lowest level possible within the limits of our resources and through a continuation of extensive financial aid.
- Entrepreneurial initiatives, including continuing education and development, will have a goal to develop new resources for the colleges.
- Planning and delivery of educational offerings and services will be based on an integrative model.
- Comprehensive programming will be planned on a statewide basis.
- Comprehensive services will be planned on the basis of student and regional need.
- Basic skills instruction will be planned within the context of its contribution to academic success as well as to meet student and regional needs.
- Collateral services, such as childcare, athletics, and student activities will be delivered within resource limitations and through partnerships.
- By building on our experience in providing administrative support and services through management information systems, a technological infrastructure, and statewide planning, we will encourage the development of an integrated network to improve the delivery of administrative services statewide.
- We will expand the learning community through collaboration to include other providers and partners who share our interest in expanding educational opportunities and services for students including adult basic education, social service and community based organizations, child care agencies, workforce development boards, and employers. These collaborative partnerships can support and expand our capabilities in:
  - Literacy
  - Developmental and remedial education

- Entry-level job training
- Counseling and social services
- Childcare
- Referral and recruitment
- Internships and job placement
- Educational services for disadvantaged and immigrant populations

Much of what is suggested here is contained in recommendations from a 2002 report from The Workforce Strategy Center on Career Pathways that is being implemented in states from North Carolina to Washington and California. Our responsibility for both leadership and stewardship tells us that we must be willing to hear, consider, and accept quality ideas from sources outside our organization.

#### Sustaining Opportunities to Meet Demand

The primary organizational challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be sustainability as determined by three factors: environmental fit, social justice, and financial viability. If any one of the three is missing or weak, the organization's practice is not sustainable.\* The fit of the Community College practice with the economic environment is reflected in student demand that has resulted in the largest FTE enrollment in the system's history in Fall 2002. Demographic studies predict that demand will continue throughout much of the coming decade, while higher education trends indicate a continuing need among Connecticut's traditional and non-traditional student populations for equal access to educational opportunities through the available and affordable programs offered by the Community Colleges as preparation for transfer, careers, intellectual development, personal growth, and economic self-sufficiency.

However, reliable and predictable funding is required if the practice of the Connecticut Community Colleges is to be financially viable and sustained. Beyond the very real risk to regional and state accreditation, the greatest risk of extreme resource limitations is the diminished ability of the Community Colleges to respond to the priorities of the State and the needs of its citizens for educational opportunity and workforce preparation. The Board of Trustees takes its fiduciary responsibilities seriously and dedicates every effort to support and sustain the Community Colleges as essential contributors to Connecticut's economy and quality of life.

\* Robert Fullan, Leading in a Culture of Change, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. 2001.