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Management of Community College System Forego 2010 Salary Increases

On March 16, 2009, Louise S. Berry, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut Community College System announced that the management staff of the 12-college system had voluntarily agreed to forego scheduled salary increases for FY 2010. The managers took this action on March 11, 2009, in recognition of the troubled Connecticut economy and the budget outlook for the Community Colleges that forecasts potential reductions of over 10% in FY 2010 and 12% in FY 2011.

The impact of the budget reductions proposed in the State budget for 2010 and 2011 were described for the college community in a letter from Chancellor Marc S. Herzog dated March 9, 2009 which indicated that to sustain even the 5% reductions undertaken in the current year (2009) “would severely affect services to students and the communities in each college’s region resulting in:

- Capping credit enrollment at the Fall 2008 levels.
- Reducing the full-time to part-time faculty ratio to 47%.
- Service reductions in libraries, laboratories, continuing education, and student services.
- Reductions in departmental budgets, maintenance and public safety on every campus.
- Closure of off-campus operations and campus facilities during weekends and intercession.
- Reduction in hours for advising, admissions, tutoring, childcare, and other essential services for students.

According to the letter, “each of these painful reductions [would] have a detrimental effect on student success in terms of retention, completion, transfer, graduation, and preparation for jobs in Connecticut’s Knowledge Economy.”

In announcing the voluntary wage freeze, Mrs. Berry expressed her gratitude to the “managers throughout our system who stepped forward, through their Management Committee, to forego wage increases in light of Connecticut’s current budget crisis and in order to express support for the Chancellor and the crucial mission of the Connecticut Community Colleges.” In informing the Chancellor of its decision, the Management Committee also expressed its interest in “leading by example in making this public statement” and its commitment “to keeping students learning.”

Mrs. Berry described this voluntary action as “a personal sacrifice,” saying it clearly “reflects how highly our system’s leaders value service to students and to the State of Connecticut.”