



SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – February 7, 2024, meeting

1) Fiscal Impacts / State Budget / University Budget –

Please closely attend to messages from AAUP and SCSU-AAUP regarding upcoming events. See email announcement from Louise Williams, President, CSU-AAUP, on 1/31/2024. The legislative session has kicked off this week with a series of events.

- CSU-AAUP and the 4Cs are hosting a press conference at the Capitol to demand adequate funding for our public higher education system. When: Monday, Feb. 5 at 10 a.m. Where: CT State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford
- Connecticut for All is holding its "State of the People" address to outline its legislative priorities. When: Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. Where: Legislative Office Building, Room 1A, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford
- The 2024 legislative session begins. CSU-AAUP and other unions will be meeting at the Capitol to talk with legislators about the budget. When: Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 11 a.m. Where: Legislative Office Building, Cafeteria, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford

There is also a Chapter Meeting with SCSU-AAUP President, Kari Swanson, on Friday 2/9 at 1:00pm via Zoom.

A reminder that the Finance Committee continues to gather senators'/faculty perspectives and suggestions regarding budgetary issues. Please reach out to [Cindy Simoneau](#), FS Treasurer/Finance Committee chair.

2) Meetings with Chancellor Cheng & Senate Presidents Meetings –

The FS Executive Committee strongly recommends ALL senators continue to follow the events transpiring related to Eastern and their Resolution. While the Executive Committee is not bringing forth a similar Resolution for 2/7, many variables outlined in Eastern's Resolution have impacted or may impact our community in the future and therefore the Executive Committee recommends faculty senators be informed and share with their constituencies.

The Executive Committee has extended an invitation to Chancellor Cheng to visit Faculty Senate at an upcoming meeting this semester and will share the date and details when more information is available. Chancellor Cheng visited Faculty Senate in Spring 2023 and this recent invitation outlined an identical format for the visit—"While not an open forum per se, any member of our university community can join our Faculty Senate meetings, however, senators are given priority speaking rights."

The following events and details helped the Executive Committee come to these decisions and the team will continue to monitor this matter very closely:

- On 1/29/2024, Kari Swanson, Luke Eilderts, and I met with Chancellor Cheng at his request. Our meeting was positive and included the following topics: Eastern's

Resolution (attached/below), past and future communication between the Chancellor and CSU faculty, and our (SCSU faculty's) expectations for our own presidential search (through discussion of Eastern's current search and descriptions of our previous presidential search). Regarding Eastern's No Confidence Resolution, my impression from meeting with the Chancellor, confirmed by the Resolution itself, is that the presidential search is a major factor. The Chancellor confirmed the Eastern presidential search was not open – the decision to not include on-campus interviews occurred because the agency running the search advised this would mean fewer highly qualified candidates would apply, knowing their names would be publicly identified, which might create challenges for their current employment.

- On 1/30/2024, Eastern's Senate passed the below Resolution re No Confidence in Chancellor Cheng (27 – yay, 7 – nay, 2 – abstentions). I am awaiting more information from Senate President Lugo about any responses Eastern has received after the Resolution passed.
- On 1/31/2024, Western's Senate leadership met with Chancellor Cheng at his request and reports a similar discussion to the meeting we attended on 1/29.

3) ***The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meetings with administration*** – The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meet monthly with administration –The group met on 2/5.

1. **Department mergers/splits.** Faculty leaders shared concerns about proposals, with specificity given to those proposals reported in the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - i. The Provost shared that proposals are not formal written proposals, and are considered “informal” conversations at this time. The President and Provost also shared the goal that the CBA is followed and that there are other related goals being explored regarding potential donors/funding for School names.Faculty leaders shared that Central [passed](#) “Faculty Senate Guidelines for Department Mergers and Splits” (draft attached; awaiting final version) in December 2023 and that the SCSU Faculty Senate Executive Committee has made note and is interested in this topic. Central's “*proposal creates an internal set of guidelines for the Senate, similar to the P&T guidelines, that are not binding on the administration but should be helpful in addressing foreseeable issues before changes are made.*” Faculty expressed interest in working together with administration to develop guidelines. Though no decisions were made at the 2/5 meeting, this item will remain on the FLC agenda for future discussions with administration. Of note, it is contractual and appropriate for the Faculty Senate to be involved in this topic, as Article 5.14 of the CBA states that “Departments shall be established by the University administration with the advice of the Senate...”
2. **Graduate Commencement Ceremony Change.** As recent announcements have outlined many details, faculty leaders shared a couple concerns about the change itself (e.g., traffic/travel at time-of-day) with more focus given to faculty concerns about the shared governance process related to this decision, specifically the lack of faculty representation and inclusion in communication, along with student/alumni inclusion. I have asked Julia Irwin, Interim Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, and Lisa Galvin, Associate Dean for Graduate Enrollment Management, to join us at the 2/7 Faculty Senate meeting to share information and answer faculty questions.

3. **Writing Center / Coordinator changes.** Faculty leaders shared concerns about recent changes to the Writing Coordinator position, duties, expectations, and related communication. These concerns are urgent/time sensitive. Faculty leaders shared efforts to address this issue (e.g., have repeatedly sought a position description and information as to why this changed). There are also concerns about the waiver process no longer being the purview of the coordinator, and that the coordinator would now be focusing on graduate writing. Not only do these changes affect other entities (i.e., UCF/WACC, Advising), but the focus on graduate writing is also a significant shift in the role that was not included in the previous job posting. Undergraduate students pay fees specifically for writing support that (to our understanding) are supporting the budget for the Writing Center/Coordinator. It was emphasized that support is needed with W-courses, W-waivers, writing assessment, and communication with stakeholders from the position along with authority granted by the administration to a Writing Coordinator. Faculty shared the concern that there is no mechanism for these services at present. Regarding Faculty Senate's role and support for this matter, as an initial step the Finance Committee is requesting an accounting of fees collected and expenditures for the Writing Center.
 - i. The Provost shared that this matter will be investigated, and that more information would be forthcoming.
 4. **Course cancellations for low-enrolled courses.** Faculty leaders shared concerns about Spring 2024 course cancellations, specifically that some faculty had received information about their courses during the winter break when faculty (those not on 12-month contracts) are off-contract, lack of consistency/clarity/transparency regarding how decisions are made, and the use of Independent Studies to address student needs following course cancellations.
 - i. The Provost helped clarify the data used for cancellation decisions in the College of Arts and Sciences, those thresholds are:
 - 100/200-level: 12
 - 300-level: 11
 - 400-level: 10
 - Graduate: 9
 5. **Curricular processes at BOR-level.** Faculty leaders shared concerns about BOR consideration of new programs that have left four proposals in "limbo" (these proposals are not appearing on the BOR agenda) despite faculty reports that the established procedures being followed. These proposals are MS in Data Science, Coastal Resiliency, BS in Neuroscience, and Doctorate in Business Administration. Faculty shared that no feedback has been received following submission to the first stage of the process for BOR approval.
 - i. The President and Provost shared that this matter will be investigated, and that more information would be forthcoming.
 6. **APP Report.** Faculty leaders requested a copy of the final APP report.
 - i. The Provost shared a copy of the report with the FLC via email after the 2/5 meeting.
 7. **Proposed Professional Advising Plans.** While not discussed at the 2/5 meeting, this previous agenda item has progressed to a stakeholder meeting called for by the Provost to be held on Friday 2/9 as agreed to at the December FLC/Admin meeting. Attendees will be meeting to discuss the topics and questions outlined in the [President's Report](#) dated 12/6/2023.
- 4) ***Senate visits to departments*** – A reminder that, continuing with these outreach efforts from last academic year, Luke Eilderts, Faculty Senate Secretary, and I are again offering our availability to meet with faculty via department visits. This is an optional and open

opportunity and will remain open for the academic year. I found these visits to be some of the most helpful opportunities to learn from and listen to faculty in preparation for much of the work encountered last year. Please email me and Luke with any questions and to schedule a visit.

- 5) ***Travel Funds Report for FY2024 AAUP Full Time & Part-Time Travel Funds, Creative RG & Travel (as of 1-22-24)*** – Budget Information below includes prior year carryover. “Encumbered” reflects those TA's processed and funds committed but does not include TA's that are in transit or pending in the Provost Office.

Index	Description	Budget	Expenses (spent as of 1/22)	Encumbered	Balance Remaining
AUP768	AAUP Conf Workshop & Travel FT - 2024	\$ 853,068.10	\$ 186,377.05	\$ 175,127.27	\$ 491,563.78
AUP771	AAUP Conf Workshop & Travel PT - 2024	76,835.70	13,551.99	15,141.95	48,141.76
VPA017	Faculty Creative Activity-RG	85,000.00	69,833.78	1,204.28	13,961.94
VPA018	Faculty Creative Activity-Travel	85,000.00	1,068.81	-	83,931.19
	Totals	\$ 1,099,903.80	\$ 270,831.63	\$ 91,473.50	\$ 637,598.67

- 6) 2023-2024 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.

No Confidence Resolution in CSCU Chancellor Terrence Cheng

Authoritarian Management and the disregard for shared governance and transparency

Whereas Chancellor Cheng has ignored traditional shared governance protocols.

- The CSCU system office created an academic planning review process with zero faculty input for all CSCU campuses, which had unrealistic goals and timelines, produced a largely unusable product, and ultimately wasted thousands of hours of faculty and staff time across the system;
- Interim campus presidents are now appointed without a search or input from faculty & staff.
- An ECSU presidential search committee was formed with no representation from ECSU (a change occurred only after [significant pressure from the ECSU senate](#))
- New CSCU presidential search policies remove all decision-making authority from campuses.

Whereas the CSCU system office continues to create and hire new positions at high salaries, without the necessary searches and procedures to carry them out, in violation of shared governance and BOR past practices (while also simultaneously demanding significant budget cuts from CSCU institutions);

Whereas Chancellor Cheng refuses to work with CSCU institutions in good faith.

- on September 5, 2023 the ECSU University Senate [passed a resolution](#) expressing concerns about the Academic Planning Process and offered reasonable solutions to address their concerns but received no response.
- On September 19, 2023 the ECSU University Senate [passed a resolution](#) expressing concern about no representation on the ECSU presidential search committee, as well as who was chairing the search committee. Ultimately, we were given token representation that would be easily outvoted to whatever interests were expressed by the system office, and our concerns about the chair were ignored.
- On October 23, 2023 the ECSU University Senate president [sent an email](#) to the BOR expressing concern about the NDA he was asked to sign. There were ten overly broad restrictions on the NDA, and the Senate President asked for two of the restrictions to be removed so he could report back to the senate as to the status of the search. The Senate President was told the changes “cannot be accepted.”
- On October 31, 2023 the ECSU University Senate [passed a resolution](#) expressing concern about presidential candidate finalists not visiting campuses, as has always been past practice and in the interest of shared governance. Unfortunately, this past practice will not be continued.

Whereas CSCU is a public higher education entity required to be transparent both as a state agency AND as a [standard for NECHE accreditation](#), yet transparency is not a priority within the CSCU system office:

-Many CSCU administrators and members of presidential search committees are now required to sign [NDAs \(non-disclosure agreements\)](#) which limit both transparency and accountability- despite the fact that there are already confidentiality agreements in place for CSU faculty and staff that allow transparency and accountability to take place.

-Preventing faculty, staff and students from having public forums [to meet potential presidential candidates](#), despite all four CSU Senates passing resolutions and/or motions to endorse such forums ([CCSU](#), [ECSU](#), [SCSU](#), WCSU).

Lack of financial accountability and due diligence

Whereas the consolidation of the community colleges and the mismanagement of the merger has created financial and structural instability for the entire CSCU system, [fueling massive enrollment declines](#) at CT State, but [not other CSCU institutions](#) or [nearby community college systems](#);

Whereas Chancellor Cheng has consistently eroded the autonomy of CSCU institutions, including the ability of campus leaders to independently engage the services of outside contractors at their discretion;

Whereas Chancellor Cheng failed to secure adequate funding through the disastrous CSCU 2030 plan, which has led to [significant staff reductions, cuts in student services, and tuition increases throughout the CSCU system](#), while simultaneously ballooning the CSCU system office budget, yet unable to fully explain where all the money has gone.

Whereas there is a total lack of transparency with internal and external stakeholders by CSCU and CSCC as evidenced by the many [claims and lawsuits](#) citing abuses of power, mismanagement of taxpayer money, and acts of retaliation and discrimination.

Resolved, that the ECSU University Senate, as the representative body for faculty and staff of Eastern Connecticut State University, votes No Confidence in CSCU Chancellor Terrence Cheng.

William Lugo

William Lugo, Senate President January 30, 2024

(CCSU) Faculty Senate Guidelines for Department Mergers and Splits

Per article 5.14 of the 2021-2025 collective bargaining agreement between CSU-AAUP and the Board of Regents of the Connecticut State Colleges and University System, “departments of a university shall be established by the University administration with the advice of the Senate according to criteria of commonality of interest and academic purpose.”

For the purposes of these guidelines, a departmental merger is the combination of existing departments, programs, or “divisions or other major groupings of departments with some common interest” (§5.14) into a single new department. A departmental split is the removal of members of an existing department and their assignment to new or existing departments.

In the wake of a series of department mergers and splits in recent years, the CCSU Faculty Senate recommends that the following items be resolved prior to any department merger or split, whether voluntary or involuntary.

1. Drafts of departmental bylaws will be created by the affected departments. In the case of mergers of existing departments, majorities of both preexisting departments will negotiate how the merged department will operate. For split departments, each will agree on their own bylaws. Determination will be made by the faculty of the new department(s) as to who will be chair. Bylaws should also address course scheduling provisions.
2. Draft promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines will be created. Each AAUP member assigned to a new departmental unit may choose to be evaluated for P&T either per the guidelines of their original department or per the guidelines of the new department. Members will choose one set of guidelines and will maintain this selection. This is particularly important in newly merged departments whose constituent parts may use different student opinion surveys. New department guidelines will be flexible enough to permit the evaluation of each of its members. An analogous plan will be established for faculty not yet hired. They should know, in advance, by what guidelines they will be evaluated, and that should be made clear in their appointment letter.
3. An agreement with the applicable academic dean(s) will be established as to how operating expenses will be distributed. This includes secretarial support (§9.4.1) as well as all other departmental staff. In the case of a merger, the senate recommends a minimum of one-year commitment to maintaining the level of combined existing operating expenses.
4. Environment is to the learning process. Therefore, decisions on the following points should be made among the departments and administration involved in any merger or split.
 - a. The physical location(s) of the department. Where are the department chair and secretary located? Will labs, offices, and other facilities have to be moved? Office assignments will be clearly designated. If one department is folding into another, how will office space or lab space be assigned?
 - b. The supervision of existing or future student workers and graduate assistants.
 - c. The management of laboratory fees.
 - d. The method by which curricular changes are determined in the new department. Will they be determined by program, or by the department as a whole?
 - e. The method of assigning advising in the new department. Will advisees be assigned by program or by some other method?
5. Newly merged and split departments will elect senators and representatives to university-wide committees whose membership is by department election.

6. CCSU Foundation Funds – Donor intent needs to be followed at all times. Funds donated to a department that merges with another must still support only the former department. The current practice of (a) re-titling the former department funds as “Program” funds and (b) creating a new fund for the new, merged department should be observed.
7. The mechanism for representation of programs, especially smaller programs, in departmental decision- making will be determined in advance.
8. The departmental website should be representative of the new department as a whole. Departments folded into existing departments should be permitted to maintain their old web pages as program pages (rather than department pages).

The dean or other administrator initiating the departmental merger or split will submit the proposal in writing to the president of the faculty senate explaining the goals and benefits of the change with quantitative analysis.

In the event of disputes between departments the faculty senate shall create an *ad hoc* committee to mediate those using the guidelines above. The *ad hoc* committee will also work with the appropriate dean(s) to ensure that these principles are met, and that the spirit of collegiality and shared governance are honored.