



May 17, 2024

Dr. John Maduko
President
Connecticut State Community College
950 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear President Maduko:

I write to inform you that at its meeting on April 18, 2024, the New England Commission of Higher Education considered the report submitted by Connecticut State Community College regarding its graduation rates and took the following action:

that the report submitted by Connecticut State Community College be accepted;

that the focused evaluation scheduled for Spring 2025 be confirmed;

that, in addition to the information requested in our letters dated July 10, 2023, and April 17, 2024, the report prepared in advance of the Spring 2025 visit give particular emphasis to the institution's success in:

- 1) achieving its Success and Progress, graduation, and retention rate goals at each of the twelve branch campuses;
- 2) implementing its student success initiatives.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its actions.

The information submitted by Connecticut State Community College (CT State) regarding its graduation rates was accepted because it was responsive to the request made by the Commission in its letter of January 25, 2024. According to the information received, the IPEDS graduation rates for the most recent cohort were below 15% at eight of CT State's 12 branch campuses, with those rates ranging from 7% to 14%. The Commission understands that only 8% of CT State's students meet the IPEDS definition of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students. We appreciate that CT State continues to "maintain comparable marks to regional peers" in student retention. The Commission notes with favor the College's early momentum efforts, as the institution "serves as a springboard" for students looking to improve Math and English proficiency and appreciates that implementation of "embedded and co-requisite Math and English" increased completion and passage rates for students enrolled in those formats.

The Commission confirms the focused evaluation visit scheduled for Spring 2025. In addition to the information requested in our letters dated July 10, 2023, and April 17, 2024, we ask that the report prepared in advance of the visit give emphasis to CT State's success in two matters related to our standards on *Educational Effectiveness* and *Students*.

As noted above, the Commission appreciates that Connecticut State Community College evaluates both its full-time and part-time retention rates. We also note that CT State's outcomes metrics are "in line" with neighboring community college systems and are pleased to learn that six of the eight campuses with low graduation rates have seen their rates improve in AY2020, with four campuses having rates above 15%. The Commission understands that, in addition to retention and graduation, CT State uses an internal Success and Progress Rate to "measure student progress over a four-year period." For the 2019-2023 cohort, the eight campuses' Success and Progress rates ranged from 46% to 55%; the entire CT State cohort's Success and Progress Rate was 51%. As guided by our standard on *Educational Effectiveness*, we look forward to learning, through the report prepared in advance of the Spring 2025 focused evaluation visit, of Connecticut State Community College's success in achieving its Success and Progress, retention, and graduation rate goals for each of its branch campuses:

The institution defines measures of student success and levels of achievement appropriate to its mission, modalities and locations of instruction, and student body, including any specifically recruited populations. These measures include rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation; default and loan repayment rates; licensure passage rates; and employment. The institution ensures that information about student success is easily accessible on its website (8.6).

The Commission is gratified to learn that three initiatives designed to improve student success are underway at CT State: Pledge to Advance CT (PACT), Guided Pathways Advising, and the Voluntary Framework for Accountability (VFA). We understand that these initiatives are relatively new – PACT has been in place since 2020; Fall 2022 was the first term for Guided Pathways Advising at all twelve branch campuses; and CT State enrolled in the VFA in Fall 2023. The Spring 2025 report will provide an opportunity for Connecticut State Community College to update the Commission on its success in implementing these initiatives and assessing their impact on student success. We are informed here by our standard on *Students*:

The institution systematically identifies the characteristics and needs of its student population and then makes provision for responding to them. The institution's student services are guided by a philosophy that reflects the institution's mission and special character, is circulated widely and reviewed periodically, and provides the basis on which services to students can be evaluated (5.8).

The institution offers an array of student services, including physical and mental health services, appropriate to its mission and the needs and goals of its students. It recognizes the variations in services that are appropriate for residential students, at the main campus, at off-campus locations, and for distance education programs as well as the differences in circumstances and goals of students pursuing degrees (5.9).

The institution provides advising and academic support services appropriate to the student body. The institution's faculty and professional staff collectively have sufficient interaction with students outside of class to promote students' academic achievement and provide academic and career guidance (5.10).

The Commission expressed appreciation for the information submitted by Connecticut State Community College and hopes that its preparation has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education.

Dr. John Maduko
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You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution's constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution's governing board and the head of the system of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to JoAnn Ryan and Terrence Cheng. The institution is free to release information about the report and the Commission's action to others, in accordance with the enclosed policy on Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Lawrence M. Schall, President of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Carey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Russell Carey

RC/sjp

cc: JoAnn Ryan
Terrence Cheng

Enclosure: Public Disclosure of Information about Affiliated Institutions