



ASNUNTUCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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February 4, 2022

RE: State of Connecticut, Support for One College

Dear Dr. Schall,

My name is Jim Wilkinson, I've served as a faculty member here at Asuntuck for 19 years teaching Business and Economics including teaching in the Department of Corrections, and articulating courses taken in the College Careers Pathway programs with local High Schools. Prior to that, I served corporate America with a 20-year career at MassMutual Financial Group and serving my country in the United State Air Force. I also proudly serve as the Veteran's advisor here at Asnuntuck. I have experienced and evaluated the testimony from my colleagues opposing the One College Concept of the Community Colleges, and I've heard legislators say they only hear from opponents on this. With this in mind, I want to take the opportunity as a faculty member who is actually doing the work and serving on the Curriculum Alignment Committee to tell you why I support the concept.

Primarily, my reasons are student focused. The One College System will look at it from my existing students' perspective. Serving on committees for our transfer and articulation pathways programs for Connecticut and Massachusetts Colleges has given me insight to student courses that will fit in careers and college transfer possibilities for our students. Having seen firsthand all the barriers to students' career choices and transferring courses between community colleges and four year programs. I serve on advisory boards and Boards of Directors that has afforded me insight for career choices for students. For my students, I've seen the challenges they face transferring their business degrees to AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) schools in our area like UHart, CCSU or UCONN, Western New England University and UMASS, where each community college has a different sets classes and programs and graduation requirements for the same degree.

Second, I've seen too many students forced to wait a semester or two to complete their degree or certificate because the courses they needed were not offered when they needed them. Many colleges have classes only offered one semester a year at a particular college. At the same time, we may have that same course offered at another community college with open seats. We have to streamline the process for our students to get the courses they need for completion, and the One College will have one course catalogue where students can access the classes they need anywhere in the state.

I want to assure you that the overall development and coordination of aligned curriculum has relied on content area experts like myself putting their expertise into a student centric process. My colleagues who have joined me in working on the Curriculum Alignment Committee are doing so because we have all seen firsthand the barriers we put in student's paths, with a great opportunity to fix it.

Many of our community colleges (including Asnuntuck) lay in the MA-CT Knowledge Corridor stretching from Massachusetts into Connecticut. For my business students, parts of the merger like better access to courses and support services across the state, more robust advising, and statewide curriculum alignment that will open up career pathways and access to the business programs at the public and private four-year institutions in the Knowledge Corridor.

I am an educator with an unrelenting drive to succeed, and believe that One College and our team of educators will drive student competitiveness in the future, build loyal and highly productive students and workers, and introduce and implement effective performance methodologies, focusing on continuous improvement.

Being passionate about serving our students and our community. I serve on advisory boards for local schools and municipalities, and I have advocated for our incarcerated students in Washington DC at Sen. Blumenthal's request. When I am passionate about something, there are no barriers to my need to promote it. That is why, despite the criticism I get from its opponents, I don't hesitate to express my support for the One College and its obvious benefits that will be a support for our students.

Thank you for your time, and your service to our college community. I'm available anytime if you'd like to meet with me to get a dedicated faculty member's perspective on the college merger.

Sincerely,

James E. Wilkinson

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