

To the NECHE Commissioners:

2/6/22

I am a retired faculty member who served 34 years at Manchester Community College. About half of that time, I served as Department Chairperson for Hospitality and Culinary Arts. Some of my responsibilities as chairperson involved maintaining an accredited curriculum for our students, increasing the number of students served, and assisting students with transfers between colleges. If my duties had been supported by a merged college model, I feel students would have benefited significantly.

In the 1990's we participated in common course numbering, theoretically across the system. Subsequently, I organized meetings of my Hospitality colleagues over the years in an attempt to create program consistency; we had some success. During my time as chair MCC had the largest and only American Culinary Federation accredited program in the system, and we attracted many transfer students from the other community colleges. It was very disheartening to watch students become upset and anxious while I and my colleagues in the system tried to fit our courses into differing programs. Considerable efforts were spent on manipulating courses to transfer and meeting graduation requirements through credit by exam. We even made a procedure for culinary credit by portfolio for certain situations.

I believe if there were a merged college system backing our programs, we would have had more impact to reach potential students. I cannot even guess how many times a student came to my office saying, "I didn't even know this program was here!" 85 percent of my students enrolled due to word of mouth, what a disservice to those who didn't know someone who knew about community college programs. It is my hope that the "one college", with one catalog, can assist in reaching underserved students and promote our quality programs.

Change is hard, I have seen a lot since 1984, and it wasn't always welcome by faculty. As we addressed the challenges, and grew with the times, it benefited our students. Becoming an alignment manager, I saw an opportunity to support our faculty in this process; I see my work today as a continuation of the long-ago common course numbering. It is amazing to see the faculty using a collaborative process within their discipline work groups, developing outstanding courses and aligned programs. I am pleased that alignment of our system is finally going to materialize.

I am honored to be part of the process.

Jayne Pearson
Professor Emeritus
CT State Community College Alignment Team