

Focused Evaluation Report to the New England Commission of Higher Education

SUBMITTED BY
CONNECTICUT STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

February 23, 2025

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Submitted by Connecticut State Community College

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Institutional Name: Connecticut State Community College
Location: 185 Main St, New Britain, Connecticut

February 23, 2025

This Focused Evaluation report is provided in response to the Commission's April 17, 2024 letter requesting a focused evaluation of the College in Spring 2025.

Introduction

This report provides specific updates on four primary areas that were requested by the commission for the first formal visit by the Commission since granting CT State initial accreditation in June 2023. The Commission has requested that CT State highlight four primary areas for the focus visit, namely:

1. progress with Alignment & Completion of Math and English (ACME),
2. implementing a college wide approach to the assessment of teaching and learning,
3. developing and implementing an approach to dual enrollment plans and strategy,
4. implementation of our deficit mitigation plans and achievement of our enrollment goals and sufficiency of resources,

The Commission also requested three additional areas of focus that have been included in this report:

5. implementation of our transitional strategic plan,
6. implementation of Shared Governance processes and procedures,
7. updates on matters previously requested in the January 2024 progress report,

This report is intended to provide an update on the development of CT State in all of these specific areas as the college establishes and stabilizes itself as a single institution.

All of the previous reports that formed the basis of our merger and substantive change proposal to the Commission have been shared publicly at the following website: <https://ctstate.edu/neche>.

This report provided CT State with an important opportunity to review the progress that has been made as well as an opportunity to identify and prioritize the work ahead that will see CT State Community College become an even more effective and successful institution. CT State is grateful to both the Commission and the members of the visiting team for their assistance and feedback on the College's progress.

Institutional Overview

CT State Community College is a public institution of higher education formed in 2023 from the merger of the previous twelve CT community colleges into a single accredited institution. The New England Commission of Higher Education granted CT State initial accreditation as a single institution in June 2023 and is scheduled to undergo its first comprehensive self-study in 2027. This focused visit serves as the first formal visit by the Commission since its inception.

CT State serves more than 36,000 credit students as of the Fall 2024 census across eighteen locations that cover the entire State of Connecticut and is the largest institution of higher education in the North-East United States.

The mission of CT State is to provide all students access to an academically rigorous and innovative education and training focused on student success.

Areas of Focus

1. Progress with Alignment & Completion of Math & English (ACME)

In fall 2024, CT State's ACME Committee prepared a detailed report, that is included as [Appendix A](#) on the progress made relating to this policy's implementation across CT State. Language from that report forms the basis for this section of the report, however, the appendix goes into more depth.

As an open access institution, educating the diverse continuum of students who need additional support to succeed in college level courses is foundational to CT State's mission and equity agenda. The twelve legacy Connecticut community colleges, now campuses of CT State, began developmental education reform as many post-secondary providers in the nation did, following several landmark studies conducted by the Community College Research Center and Complete College America that questioned the effectiveness of course placement into college level courses via Accuplacer and Compass Exams between 2011- 2012, as well as the outcomes of traditional developmental education.

These studies sparked a national response across the community college sector to think differently on how to support developmental students recognizing the disproportionate number of students who were Black and Latine, low income, and ESOL students who were placed into developmental courses with limited positive outcomes related to achieving the first milestone markers linked to degree completion; completion of college-level math and English courses within the first year of enrollment. These findings ultimately influenced the passing of Public Act (PA) 1240.

During this same time frame, corequisite models that coupled introductory credit-based courses in English and math with just-in-time added support courses, were being piloted and scaled in various areas of the country, all of which began showing promising student outcomes. Based on these trends and the promising outcomes being seen with corequisite models, the Board of Regent's ACME policy was developed and sought to expand corequisite programming as the default way to academically support

students by immersing them into college level courses. As the merger of the community college system continued to gain momentum and additional national data showed the improved outcomes of corequisites, the Board of Regents passed the ACME policy in 2021, with a directive to have the full policy implemented for the fall of 2025.

The core tenants of the policy were for faculty to lead the design of a curriculum that places students directly into gateway, college-level, transferable mathematics and English courses with corequisite supports as needed, rather than into prerequisite developmental sequences; for faculty to lead the design of placement processes to more accurately identify student corequisite support needs in gateway, college-level, transferable mathematics and English courses; and to expand practices to eliminate the completion gap in gateway, college-level, transferable coursework in English and mathematics, specifically the gap that exists for Black and Latine students when compared to White students.

The ACME policy also sought to require students to register for college-level English and math within the first 24 credits of their program. It noted the structural requirements of co-requisites including the concurrent nature of the support, no grades to be assigned, and the voluntary nature of the support. The policy looked to create and foster ongoing faculty professional learning opportunities related to developmental learners and pedagogy, prescribed math pathways and curriculum based on areas of study, establishment of optimal class sizes, multiple measures to determine course placement including a guided self-placement option, and data-informed key performance indicators to gauge success and identify areas for continuous improvement. Ongoing annual reports to the Board of Regents were to be developed and presented to track progress and identify any adjustments needed to the policy.

Full implementation of ACME policy was slated to begin in Fall 2023. This was the first semester during which all programs and certificates would be aligned and unified under the newly formed CT State. This time frame ideally presented the opportunity to integrate all changes to the

math curriculum at the same time for the least disruption to students, staff, and faculty. However, in Fall of 2022 the new CT State administration requested that the policy be phased in over the two-year implementation window provided for in the ACME policy based on feedback from the college community. This phase-in approach provided additional time to gain buy-in on the policy, adjust implementation based on research, as well as address any confusion related to program alignment as each program had to wrestle with the implications of a changing set of curriculum requirements over a two-year period.

Though much progress with developing the corequisite model in English, English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Math has been made at CT State, additional research, resources, and support are needed to continue to gain sustainability and continuously improve student success. This is due in part because unbeknownst to the framers of the policy, March of 2020 coincided with the onset of the Corona virus Disease (COVID) forever altering education in the United States. Coupling the emergence of COVID during the same time of the consolidation of the community college system, along with significant administrative leadership changes at CT State between 2021-2025, elements of the intended ACME Policy have not yet been actualized.

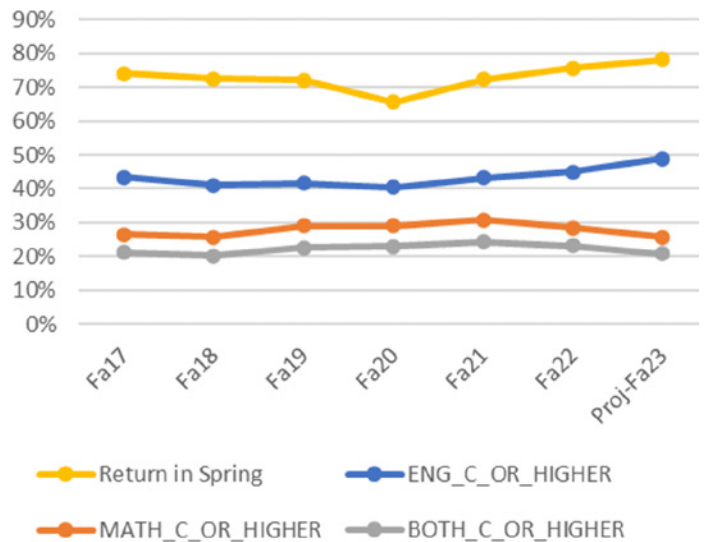
Between 2022-2024, additional studies have been conducted on the scale of developmental reform, including the Tennessee Community Colleges full scale implementation of co-requisites. This study denotes better outcomes with college-level English and Math completion within the first 24 credits but saw no significant gains on student graduation outcomes.

On January 23, 2025, CT State sponsored an ACME Summit to share data, learnings, and provide a forum for its faculty and staff to engage in how to reinvigorate instructional practices related to developmental education reform and identify innovations, resources, and supports needed to continuously improve our student outcomes related to alignment and completion of college English and Math. Lessons learned and recommendations from the Summit, included as [Appendix B](#), will be shared with the Board of Regents in a spring 2025 meeting and provide a venue to request suggested updates or adjustments to the ACME policy.

ACME Outcomes 2023-2024

CT State Community College Measures of 1st Year Student Success

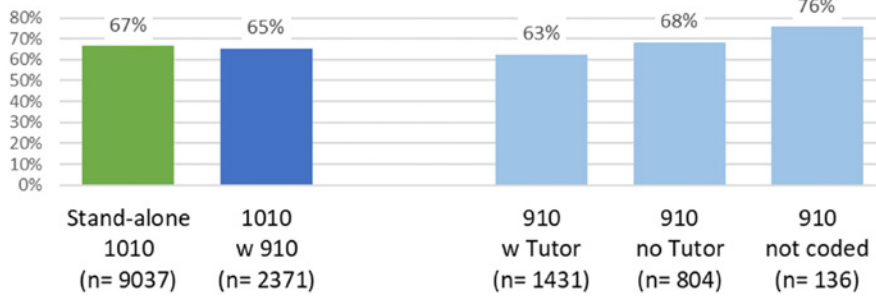
New First Time Degree Seeking Students in Fall Semesters



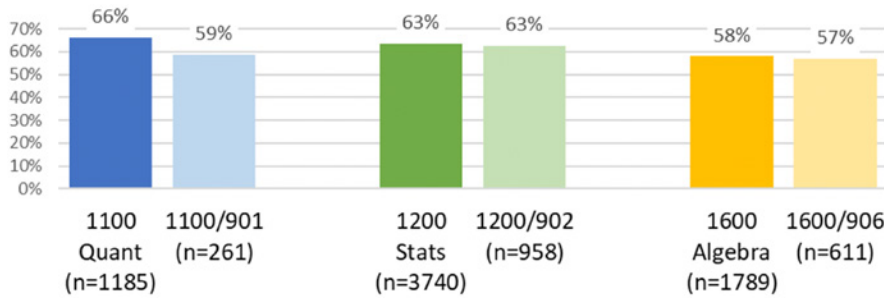
The above chart shows that there has been an increase in fall-spring retention since fall 2020, however there are many potential factors that might be contributing to that. In English, there is a modest upward trend over the past four years of students successfully completing the course with a C or better within their first year. With mathematics, there is a concerning decreasing trend over the same period, although it is difficult to know what is causing this. Much more research will need to be carried out on this. It is noted that the data shows that those first-year students who co-enrolled in College & Career Success 1001 (CCS 1001), our first-year experience class, as well as both math and English had an overall retention rate of 83%, 16% higher fall-spring retention than students who did not take the CCS class. Of those students, 61% successfully completed English within their first year and 33% successfully completed math within their first year.

The chart below shows that in 2023-2024 students who enroll in the corequisite support for ENG 1010 with ENG 910 performed similarly to those who enrolled in the stand-alone ENG 1010 with a 65% pass rate with a C or higher compared to a 67% rate. The bars on the right show a surprising trend; with students taking English

CT State Community College C or Better Rates English 1010 Stand-Alone vs. 1010 with Support Sections Fa23-Sp24



CT State Community College C or Better Rates Selected Math Courses Stand-Alone vs Support Sections Fa23-Sp24



910 without an embedded tutor outperformed their peers in the same English class with a tutor. This data may not be particularly reliable however, as many of the class sections were not coded correctly, thus the college is not able to say whether these students had tutors or not. It is noted that similar results exist in math as for English, as shown below, with those receiving embedded support succeeding at approximately the same rate as those in the standalone class, aside from Quantitative Reasoning (MATH 1100 below) that had a 7% difference.

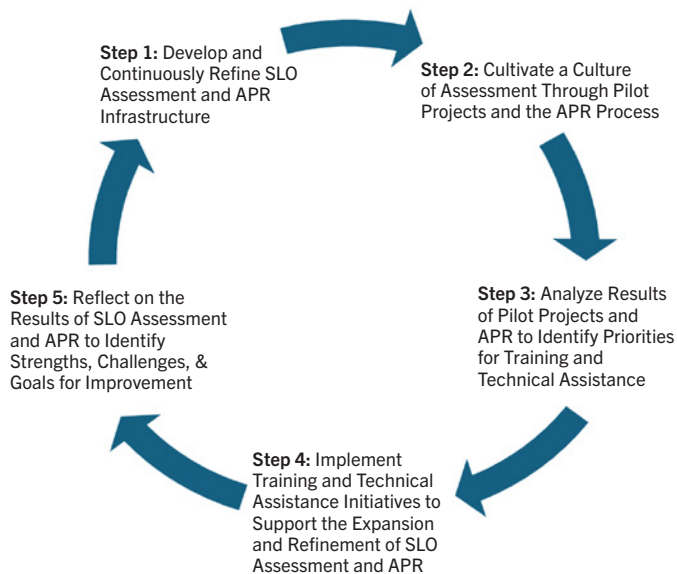
In reviewing the disaggregated data, demographic differences exist in student outcomes. Thirty-eight percent of Black ACME students passed a college level English with a C or higher in the first year versus forty-nine percent of all ACME students. Equity gaps have persisted for many years between white students and non-white students. Connecticut has one of the largest, if not the largest racial achievement gaps in the country, suggesting that this will be a long-term problem to be addressed. Full time ACME students passed college level English with a C or higher at a rate of 58%, outperforming the average by 11%, whereas part time ACME students passed college English at a rate of 32% in the first year. College-wide training of embedded tutors will also be conducted to determine if investment in embedded tutors is warranted in the future scale of the ACME policy.

With the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, the results are more encouraging. For the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 cohorts, the student success rate of passing a corequisite combination of ESOL support alongside ENG 1010 had an 83% and 82% respectively success rate (C or better). This suggests that the embedded support model has a positive impact on student success for ESOL students.

Based on the data and feedback from the ACME Summit, the next steps for continuous improvement related to the implementation of ACME will include a request to amend the ACME policy, including updates to multiple measures for course placement, updates to the math courses to be assessed as part of the key performance metrics, expanded requirements related to professional development and training for faculty and staff related to the policy requirements, building of summer bridge programs, expanded paired courses and learning communities.

2. Implementing a College Wide Approach to the Assessment of Teaching & Learning

This section provides an update on CT State's efforts to meet NECHE accreditation standards pertaining to academic quality, including its efforts to institute Academic Program Review, Student Learning Outcome Assessment, Curriculum Mapping, and a culture of assessment that wisely uses data to inform teaching, learning, academic planning, and resource allocation. To guide its approach to the development of these initiatives, CT State has developed the following cyclical, data-driven, five-step model:



CT State's last update, [dated October 2023](#), described the completion of two key milestones under Standards 4.2 and 4.3: The development of a provisional Academic Program Review (APR) Handbook and related documents, and the scheduling of APR for six of the College's degree and/or certificate programs. Since then, there have been several developments that have delayed further implementation of a college-wide APR regimen. The most significant of these developments was a June 28, 2023 decision by the Connecticut State College and University (CSCU) Board of Regents (BOR) mandating that all CSCU institutions engage in a process called *Academic Program Planning (APP)*. This process, which was separate from traditional Academic Program Review, required CT State to assess the degree to which its existing academic and student support programs were effective, relevant, and aligned with the mission and values of the CSCU system.

Because APP and APR are intended to be complementary processes that utilize similar metrics – cost/revenue,

demand/enrollment, program efficiency, labor market trends, student success, student achievement, and end-of-term (EOT) course evaluations, the decision was made to delay APR until fall 2024 and to focus on the APP process during the 2023-24 academic year. By doing so, CT State was able to use insights gleaned from APP to identify programs that should be prioritized for APR, due either to low vitality or overlap with other programs (see APP report in [Appendix C](#)). These insights resulted in a decision to move degree and/or certificate programs that exhibit low enrollment, low completion rates, and/or similarities in content with other programs to the first two years of the cycle.

Prior to implementation, additional information surfaced that the current collective bargaining agreements only reflect contractual requirements of program review of single campus programs. Since contract negotiations open for review in Spring 2025, contract negotiations open for review, it was decided to adjust the timeline and cycle to await these negotiations prior to moving forward with a multicampus review. To allow sufficient time to resolve this issue, the decision was made to list only single campus programs in year 1 (2024-25) of the APR schedule and to adjust the review cycle from 7 years to 5 years. These programs have program coordinators that are ready and able to complete self-study reports as described in the CT State Academic Program Review Handbook, thus allowing the APR process to move forward, while the administration negotiates agreements with the College's faculty unions to address who is responsible for overseeing the APR process for multi-campus programs, and how they will be compensated in their workloads.

Change in the Chief Academic Officer position further delayed finalization of the handbook due to the need for additional review by the new administration recognizing this contractual development. This review was completed on October 15, 2024, and the official/approved version of the CT State APR Handbook was sent to all key stakeholders on October 21, 2024. To give Program Coordinators (PCs) sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the APR process and complete their self-study reports, the timeline for 2024-25 was extended by one semester, making the due date for self-study reports 12/31/25 and postponing presentations to the President's cabinet until the spring 2026 semester. Meanwhile our 32 programs that have external accreditation continued their cycle of review.

The CT State APR process differs markedly from the APR processes followed on the College's 12 campuses prior to

consolidation. Specifically, to align the self-study report more closely to Standards 4.2 and 4.3, PCs are now required to provide:

- **A thorough description** of their program, including its mission, goals, essential student learning outcomes, curriculum map, instructional modalities, program resources, and alignment with the mission of the College.
- **An in-depth report** on enrollment trends and student characteristics.
- **An analysis** of current and projected employment trends and/or transfer rates for graduates.
- **An analysis of data on student success** and the results from Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessments.
- **Feedback from external reviewers** and/or advisory committees.

While most PCs had experience writing self-study reports prior to consolidation, it is anticipated that some may need additional training with the data analysis and interpretation requirements of the new CT State model. Technical assistance will be provided by the Department of Program Review and Assessment and newly appointed faculty assessment fellows by school to assist them with these requirements. CT State will also be partnering with the National Institute for Learning Outcomes (NILOA) to conduct additional professional development and trainings on assessment and to conduct focus group meetings with PCs and department chairs to form the framework for multicampus program review in late April 2025.

To initiate the APR pilot, the Department of Program Review and Assessment conducted two well-attended webinars on 4/25/24 and 5/10/24. These events focused on providing attendees with an overview of the process and answering their questions. In addition, following the release of the official/approved version of the CT State APR Handbook on October 21, 2024, an orientation meeting was held on November 7, 2024, for PCs who will be completing self-study reports this academic year.

Since its last report in October 2023, CT State has overall made considerable progress toward establishing a rigorous APR process that will provide a sound basis for decision-making. It will proceed, starting in spring 2025, as the four-semester process described in the timeline on page pages 9-10 of the [CT State APR handbook](#). The timeline also includes presentations and recommendations for continuous improvement to coincide with the annual budget-building time frame.

College Wide Assessment

The College's last progress report, in Jan 2024, referred to the importance of having a college-wide policy requiring all programs to develop and implement plans for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the results of Student Learning Outcome (SLO) assessments. Given that said policy necessitated significant input from faculty, its development, approval, and implementation required that shared governance bodies be established and fully functioning. Over the past 18 months, CT State's shared governance bodies — including the Statewide Discipline Councils (SDCs), School Area Curriculum Committees (SACCs), Curriculum Congress (CC), the General Education Sub-Committee of Curriculum Congress (GESCC), and the College Senate — have formed and determined their by-laws and operating procedures. In addition, they have cleared their backlogs of pending business and are expected to address the subject of assessment in the coming months.

To assist CT State's shared governance bodies with these tasks, the Office of the Provost has created four *Assessment Fellowships* to be awarded to faculty members with expertise in assessment in each of the College's four newly consolidated schools — Business and Professional Studies; Liberal Arts and Education; Nursing, Allied Health, and Human Services; and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The Assessment Fellows, along with the Director of Program Review and Assessment, will reconstitute the Assessment Council with the assistance of consultants from the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA). The committee will be charged with guiding the efforts of Program Coordinators, Department Chairs, and Directors through a nine-step SLO assessment model.

Examples of our assessment model to date include four of CT State's programs: Developmental English, First-year Studies, Early Childhood Education, and Surgical Technology. Each have initiated SLO assessment projects to either fulfill program mandates or satisfy external accreditation requirements.

The Department of Program Review and Assessment (DOPRA) has provided ongoing technical assistance to faculty involved in these efforts, including:

To assess corequisite English, Institutional Research and faculty collaborated to develop and pilot, First and Last-Day Surveys, as indirect SLO assessments. English 1010/0910 pairs an English Composition class (ENG 1010) with a workshop course called Composition Workshop

(ENG 0910) that provides additional instruction in support of English 1010 learning outcomes. “First Day Student Surveys” were designed to capture students’ pre-intervention self-appraisals of their critical reading and writing skills and “Last Day Student Surveys” were designed to capture students’ self-appraisals of their growth in critical reading and writing skills over the course of the semester (see examples in [Appendix D](#)). The surveys were administered in fall 2023, spring 2024, and fall 2024 and, as of this writing, have received a total of 2627 responses.

These findings, which are based on the responses of a sample of 209 students who completed both the first and last-day surveys in fall 2023, indicate that students’ levels of confidence in their critical reading and writing skills showed sizable rates of improvement ranging from 57-254% over the course of the semester. These findings provided insight into the effectiveness of the co-requisite model AND demonstrated the usefulness of indirect assessments, like student surveys, to assess student learning outcomes.

Table 1: Fall 2023 English 0910/1010 First & Last Day Survey

Pre-Intervention – Post-Intervention Comparisons in Critical Reading Skills (Sample=209 Students)

	% RESPONDING “SOMEWHAT LIKE ME” OR “VERY MUCH LIKE ME”		
	PRE-	POST-	% IMPROVEMENT
I make a plan for when I read.	78	100	28%
I use strategies when I read.	71	100	41%
I take notes as I read.	71	100	41%
I record and explore my confusion about a reading assignment that I don’t understand.	84	100	19%
I write down what interests me.	86	100	16%
I ask: What’s the main idea in this section?	86	100	16%
I can summarize each paragraph that I’ve read in a sentence or two.	89	100	12%

Table.2: Fall 2023 English 0910/1010 First & Last Day Surveys

Pre-Intervention – Post-Intervention Comparisons – Writing Skills (Sample=209 Students)

WITHOUT INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT I CAN:	% RESPONDING “I CAN DO THIS”		
	PRE-	POST-	% IMPROVEMENT
Use pre-writing strategies before I write (such as brainstorming, outlining, and mapping).	36	88	144%
Write a 300-word summary of a reading assignment.	49	90	84%
Identify an author’s main point.	56	88	57%
Understand the differences between major and minor points in a reading assignment and/or text.	40	80	100%
Respond to various and diverse perspectives in class discussion about an assignment and/or text.	45	86	91%
Write a thesis statement in response to a text’s or reading assignment’s topic.	29	82	183%
Revise my essay and improve its organization and focus before I turn them in for a grade.	38	83	118%
Draft a four-page academic essay that includes sources.	24	85	254%
Document and cite sources according to MLA standards (or an equivalent standard such as APA).	36	84	133%

Meanwhile, augmenting direct assessments designed for CCS 1001: College & Career Success, the College’s BOR mandated first-year seminar, with indirect assessments in the form of surveys designed to assess the course’s five

key learning outcomes. In the spring 2024 semester, 631 students provided these assessments.

The results of the indirect SLO assessments implemented in CCS 1001 are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Results of Spring 2024 CCS 1001 End-of-Course Student Survey (N=631 responses)

IN CCS 1001 LEARNED:	RATINGS				
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. How to identify and access campus resources.	60.4%	32.0%	4.8%	0.3%	0.5%
2. About opportunities to become involved.	56.3%	32.0%	7.4%	0.6%	0.5%
3. About cultural identity and diversity.	54.0%	33.9%	7.9%	1.1%	0.5%
4. How to apply college success and resilience strategies.	55.0%	33.9%	7.6%	0.5%	0.5%
5. How to access, evaluate, and ethically use information.	53.9%	35.8%	7.1%	0.5%	0.5%
6. How to create an academic and career plan that included financial and success strategies for reaching my goals.	60.2%	29.8%	7.0%	0.8%	0.6%

These findings show that 88-92% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that, after completing the course, they were able to effectively: 1) Identify and access campus resources, 2) Identify opportunities to become involved in the campus community, 3) Recognize their cultural identity and appreciate diversity, 4) Apply college success and resilience strategies, 5) Access, evaluate, and ethically use information, and 6) Create academic and career success plans. The results of faculty surveys mirrored students’ responses with 91-100% agreeing or strongly agreeing that students achieved learning outcomes 1-5.

Meanwhile, CT State’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs collected data via a set of online rubrics and a common data repository. The results of these assessments are being used to inform efforts to improve the ECE curriculum and satisfy the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation requirements.

Regarding direct forms of assessment, the project implemented in CT State’s ECE program in spring 2023, fall 2023, spring 2024, and fall 2024, permitted the college-wide aggregation of results on the program’s six key assessments, which were aligned to the standards of the NAEYC. Results from these assessments, a sample of which is presented in Table 4, provide valuable lessons in

how project-based, rubric scored assessments should be developed, analyzed, and interpreted.

Specifically, the data below indicates that 80% or more of the students (the NAEYC program benchmark) performed at or above the minimum level of proficiency on 21 of 22 NAEYC standards. They also reveal that 77% of the students performed at or above the minimum level of proficiency on Standard 2a, which pertained to knowing, understanding, and valuing diversity. This level of performance is slightly below the 80% NAEYC benchmark.

A closer examination of student performance on the six key assessments found that they experienced significant difficulty with key assessments that required extensive written products. These findings were used to support the conclusion that the CT State ECE curriculum needed additional emphasis in diversity and more effective scaffolding for written products. They also demonstrated the benefits and pitfalls of using project-based assessments and how the data can be used to understand gaps and trends in student performance. In addition, they will also be used as models for non-externally accredited programs seeking to develop similar forms of SLO assessment.

In addition to these projects, previously established SLO assessments in CT State’s externally accredited health-care programs have continued to provide data to inform

Table 4: 2023 ECE Key Assessment Results

N=The Number of Students who Attempted the Assessment | % = Proportion of Students who Completed the Assessment at the Minimum Level of Proficiency (3 or 4 on a 4-point scale)

DOMAINS	STANDARDS	KEY ASSESSMENTS						
		1 Case Study N=25 %	2 Research Project N=55 %	3 Lang/Lit. Project N=34 %	4 Advocacy Project N=19 %	5 LEP Project N=41 %	6 Imp/Ref. Project N=25 %	Overall N=199 %
(1) Child Devel. & Learning	1a: Understand the developmental period.	88	NA	97	NA	NA	NA	91
	1b: Understand and value each child as an individual.	84	92	81	NA	NA	80	87
	1c: Understand the ways that child development and the learning process occur.	82	90	88	NA	NA	NA	88.
	1d: Use multidimensional knowledge about the developmental period.	91	84	97	NA	100	NA	93
(2) Family-Teacher Relationships	2a: Know about, understand, and value diversity.	81	NA	NA	83	70	NA	77
	2b: Collaborate as partners with families.	94	NA	93	NA	71	NA	87
	2c: Use community resources.	94	89	NA	28	77	NA	85
(3) Child observation, documentation, & Assessment	3a: Understand that assessments are conducted to make informed choices.	84	NA	78	NA	94	NA	88
	3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments.	87	NA	81	NA	89	100	89
	3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded.	87	NA	79	NA	NA	NA	85
	3d: Build assessment partnerships with families.	90	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	90
(4) Dev/ Cult/Ling Appropriate Teaching	4a: Understand and demonstrate positive interactions.	NA	NA	87	NA	80	92	84
	4b: Understand and use teaching skills.	86	89	100	NA	70	70	85
	4c: Use a broad repertoire of relevant skills & methods.	NA	80	67	NA	99	NA	82
(5) Knowledge Application & Integration	5a: Understand content knowledge.	NA	NA	88	NA	99	NA	94
	5b: Understand pedagogical content knowledge.	NA	NA	100	NA	97	100	99
	5c: Modify teaching practices.	NA	NA	100	NA	97	92	97
(6) Prof. as an Early Child. Educator	6a: Identify and involve themselves in the field.	NA	87	NA	45	NA	92	82
	6b: Know and use ethical guidelines.	NA	92	100	50	NA	NA	92
	6c: Use professional communication skills	89	98	87	22	NA	96	92
	6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning.	NA	96	NA	NA	NA	94	95
	6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective & intentional practice.	91	89	NA	27	88	89	85

decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and resource allocation. The Surgical Technology program at CT State’s Gateway campus targets licensure exam pass rates as its key SLO measure.

Regarding CT State’s Surgical Technology program, the results of the NBSTSA/CST licensing examination are profiled in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Program Outcomes 2020-2023

YEAR	PROPORTION OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR NBSTA/CST EXAM	PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO SAT FOR THE NBSTA/CST EXAM	PASS RATE NBSTSA CST EXAM
2023	100%	100%	47%
2022	100%	100%	93%
2021	100%	100%	46%

Further analysis of student performance on the licensing examination revealed that most students who failed did so due to low performance in the following four areas: using appropriate medical terminology and abbreviations, demonstrating knowledge of anatomical systems as they relate to surgical procedures, demonstrating knowledge of human physiology as it relates to surgical procedures, and identifying the following key surgical pathologies.

Given that students acquired knowledge essential to these skills in life science courses, the program recognized that students needed a stronger foundation in Human Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology. As a result, in 2024, the program changed its prerequisites to require that students pass BIO 2111: Human Anatomy and Physiology I, BIO 2112: Human Anatomy and Physiology II, and BIO 2350: Microbiology with a grade of C+ or higher prior to admission to the program. The effects of this change are currently being evaluated.

Although CT State is in the early stages of developing systems for collecting and analyzing college-wide assessment data, the results of the projects described in Step 2 above have shaped the College’s approach to assessment and the use of data to inform decision-making. In particular, they have demonstrated the importance of having a firm foundation for assessing SLOs, including measurable SLO statements, well-designed curriculum maps, evidence-based and equity-informed assessment tools, and, if appropriate, common rubrics and assignments, as well as continuing to develop and refine indirect measures of student learning as a starting point for programs seeking to develop consistent, college-wide SLO assessment systems.

The assessment projects discussed in this report have also demonstrated the value of SLO assessment for continuous quality improvement and, as such, serve as models for assessment in CT State’s General Education curriculum and

across the disciplines. CT State is committed to expanding these efforts and working toward a college-wide culture of assessment.

The body that has been guiding these efforts for the past three years has been the *CT State Assessment Advisory Committee* (AAC). Recognizing the need for greater faculty involvement and leadership from a committee that has more than an advisory role, the Provost will be replacing the AAC with the afore-mentioned *Assessment Steering Committee*, which will consist of the four Assessment Fellows and the Director of Program Review and Assessment. The role of this committee will be to support shared governance bodies by drafting a comprehensive plan and timeline to serve as a starting point for discussion regarding the implementation of a college-wide SLO assessment model, and providing technical assistance to programs as they develop SLO assessment plans.

Additional support for practitioners seeking to improve their understanding of SLO assessment was provided through the *CT State Assessment Professional Learning Community*, which met on a regular monthly basis throughout the 2023-24 academic year and will be re-introduced during the fall 2025 semester.

CT State’s last update, dated 10/13/23, included a discussion of the status of Curriculum Mapping as a foundational task that programs needed to complete prior to developing SLO assessments. It was noted that the process of stating meaningful, measurable SLOs and mapping them to their curriculum, including where they are introduced, developed, and mastered, had been completed in some programs, such as ECE, and these efforts would be used as models for programs that are just beginning the process. However, progress on curriculum mapping during AY 2023-24 and in fall 2024 was slow as PCs waited until the APR process was finalized before engaging in this endeavor. It is anticipated that the completion and dissemi-

nation of the official/approved CT State APR Handbook and related documents will generate renewed interest in developing curriculum maps for all the College's degree and certificate programs. All the resources described under topics 1 and 2 will also be utilized to advance curriculum mapping as a first step in developing SLO assessment plans.

CT State acknowledges it has substantial needs moving forward to implement program review and assessment of student learner outcomes to meet the standards around educational effectiveness. However, CT State has made substantial progress in this area, has a solid framework for moving forward, has concrete examples of effective assessment, and looks forward to implementing our plans for continuous improvement related to demonstrating educational effectiveness.

3. Developing & Implementing our Approach to Dual Enrollment Plans & Strategy

In the spring of 2024, Dr. Hynick and Provost Brown were tasked by President Maduko to convene a college-wide Dual Enrollment Taskforce, a cross-representative group to also design procedures aligned to the new draft Dual Enrollment Policy, in preparation for approval for shared governance, through Senate and on to the Board of Regents. The group met every three weeks and updated the draft dual enrollment policy ([Appendix E](#)) and draft dual enrollment procedure (see [Appendix F](#)). The draft policy and procedure documents were again reviewed and approved by Senate in May 2024 and shared with the Associate Vice Provost of Academic Affairs for Connecticut State Colleges and Universities to help bring forth in the fall to the Board of Regents for approval.

The CSCU Associate Vice-Provost of Academic Affairs simultaneously began working with our sister universities to help update their policies and procedure language in hopes of bringing final approval of a unified CSCU updated dual enrollment policy and procedure through the Board in Spring 2025 with planned implementation beginning in the fall of 2025.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hynick and President Maduko also vetted both documents through the CT State Executive K-12 Advisory Council Group in December and March of 2024, with unanimous support from the Council. The [Early College and Dual Enrollment – CT State](#) website that overviews CT State's dual enrollment programming was updated to create an overview of the benefits of dual enrollment, types of programs offered and new concurrent enrollment

teacher application. It also includes the staff directory information for campus contacts who support dual and concurrent enrollment programs.

In March 2024, the college applied for a grant through the Connecticut State Department of Education for Connecticut's Institutions of Higher Education to expand dual enrollment opportunities to more underrepresented students, free of charge. The grant was funded in July 2024 and provided the financial resources to hire a college-wide Director of Dual Enrollment and a Director of Concurrent Enrollment, both hired as of February 2025. These positions will lead the technical assistance to expand our partnerships with our school districts and our accreditation process in the years ahead to secure National Association of Concurrent Enrollment Programs (NACEP) accreditation, planned for fall 2028 in alignment with Connecticut Department of Education requirements.

The funding also created the capacity for the college to host five regional Early College and Dual Enrollment Summits between September 25, 2024 and October 9, 2024, with 283 people participating from CT State's school district partners and the college community. During this meeting the draft dual enrollment policy and procedures were shared, and input was sought by a broader audience. A survey was conducted during the conference in real time, and the results showed 97% of the participants agreed with the definitions and terms parts of the draft dual enrollment policy, 96% of the participants agreed that credentialing requirements of concurrent enrollment teachers were clear and transparent, 94% agreed with opening access to 9th grade eligible students who meet the prerequisite of the course, and 97% were supportive of a required student orientation to be a dual enrolled student.

In February 2025, two new dual enrollment leads were hired to foster expansion in dual enrollment for fall of 2025. Concurrent enrollment teachers across the state will also have access to a summer Concurrent Enrollment Professional Development Institute, sharing best practices in dual and concurrent enrollment and review of all CT State Academic Procedures. The college is planning to launch a new faculty liaison program in the fall of 2025 to support and mentor the concurrent enrollment instructors, however this must be permissible via our collective bargaining agreement and is planned to be a priority item for our contract negotiations with our unions.

By May 2025, Provost Hynick is scheduled to have presented the college's vision and outcomes related to expanding dual and concurrent enrollment at the Board of Regent's Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting.

Once the new policy and procedure passes the Board of Regents, all legacy memorandums of agreement related to dual enrollment will be updated by way of a unified CT State template.

4. Implementation of Deficit Mitigation Plans, Achievement of Enrollment Goals & Ensuring Sufficiency of Resources

CT State Community College is managing through structural imbalance towards greater fiscal stability while fulfilling its mission to provide a high-quality, affordable, and accessible post-secondary education that enables students to achieve their life and career goals. This structural imbalance occurs as expenses outpace revenues due to enrollment challenges and the expiration of temporary funding from the state and federal government. In November 2024, CT State forecast a three year (FY 24-26) cumulative shortfall of \$243 million and implemented a deficit mitigation plan to resolve 57% of the shortfall, leaving a remaining deficit of \$104.4 million. However, CT State has outperformed these forecasts and expects to fully extinguish the forecast deficit for this period though it still faces shortfalls into the outyears.

- Student Support Services;
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Principles;
- Campus and Public Safety; and
- Physical Plant and Technological Infrastructure.

The deficit mitigation plan provides a path towards fiscal sustainability that enables the college to stabilize, build and thrive without laying off bargained employees; closing campuses or locations; or closing academic programs.

CT State continues to refine its budget development and execution processes, as it aligns its finances into a single institution and addresses chronic fiscal imbalance. It is critical that CT State has a flexible, responsive process that allows budget revisions to ensure that adequate resources are available for critical services.

Accordingly, since the November 2023 deficit mitigation process began, CT State used four strategies to ensure sufficient resources are allocated in the priority areas of continued investment. These include:

- 1. Budget Development Process** – Although, the FY 25 budget annualizes many of the FY 24 deficit mitigation initiatives by using a current services approach for the baseline budget, funding for new initiatives was provided. Campuses were asked to identify new strategic investments or items reduced through deficit mitigation that should be restored. Campuses recommended 81 items with a net cost of \$6.3 million. Although it was not possible to fund all requests, approximately \$1.2 million, or 19% is funded in FY 25. The same approach will be used for the development of the FY 26 budget.
- 2. Board Resolution to Restore Student Facing Services** – The board directed CT State to develop a plan to restore or adjust certain student facing services impacted by the FY 24 and FY 25 deficit mitigation efforts. (See [Appendix G](#)) The plan prioritized key student service areas such as: library hours, tutoring services, disability services, academic advising and counseling, mental health support and wrap around services (food pantry, transportation, and childcare), and emergency student support services. A total of 76 recommendations were made, of which 39 were included in the plan. The FY 25 cost is \$1.76 million with fully annualized costs of \$2.19 million in the outyears. This process was inclusive and transparent with a special website dedicated to communicating about the process. [Resolution to Restore Student Facing Services - CT State.](#)

Comparison of FY24-26 Forecast to Results

	FY24-26 PROJECTIONS		
	Proj FY24	Proj FY25	Proj FY26
Forecast Surplus/ (Deficit)	\$ (33.6)	\$ (91.3)	\$ (118.1)
Technical Re-estimate	\$ 2.5	\$ 8.0	\$ 8.0
Deficit Mitigation	\$ 24.0	\$ 27.0	\$ 27.0
Use of Reserves	\$ 7.1	\$ 15.0	\$ 20.0
Remaining Deficit	\$ (0.0)	\$ (41.3)	\$ (63.1)

	FY24-26 RESULTS/RE-ESTIMATES		
	Act FY24	Est FY25	Proj FY26
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 72.3	\$ 30.5	\$ (60.0)
Deficit Mitigation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16.8
Use of Reserves	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43.1
Remaining Deficit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Through deficit mitigation CT State articulated its strategic priorities and areas of continued investment. These priorities echo the values embedded in the transitional strategic plan. They include:

- Teaching and Learning;

3. Assess and Align Resources for Academic Supplies – After feedback from some campus town hall visits, CT State management was concerned that the appropriate academic supplies were not in place in the classroom. Accordingly, the CFO and Provost launched a joint initiative to assess academic supply needs, develop stronger funding models, and explore future cost savings through bulk purchasing. The process leverages the academic leadership at each campus engaging the program coordinators, department chairs and lab assistants with a singular finance professional to review the level of goods and services needed on a campus basis. The process began with the science and allied health programs and is ongoing as it is expanded to other areas like manufacturing, studio arts, and culinary arts. This process is being expedited to ensure that the resources are available for the spring semester.

4. Midyear Budget Reallocation Process – As part of the midyear budget reporting to the board, CT State implemented a process to reallocate resources during the current fiscal year, FY 25, to campuses for strategic priorities. (See [Appendix H](#)) Whereas the board-initiated process was limited to “student services” positions, this process is broader, and requests are permitted in all functional areas. A total of 159 requests were made, of which 89 were included in the plan with FY 25 costs of \$1.8 million and fully annualized costs of \$4.6 million. Another nine requests were resolved via technical adjustments due to cost overruns and are reflected in the midyear spending plan forecasts reported to the board. Accordingly, lapsing funds will be realigned for these nine requests. Four requests made by individual campuses are resolved elsewhere in the plan through a statewide initiative. Additionally, three requests were for

items already funded in the FY 25 budget, thus no additional funds are needed. This process was very inclusive and transparent with a dedicated website. <https://ctstate.edu/spending-reallocation>

Please see [Appendix I](#) for an overview of how these resource allocation efforts support the five strategic priorities.

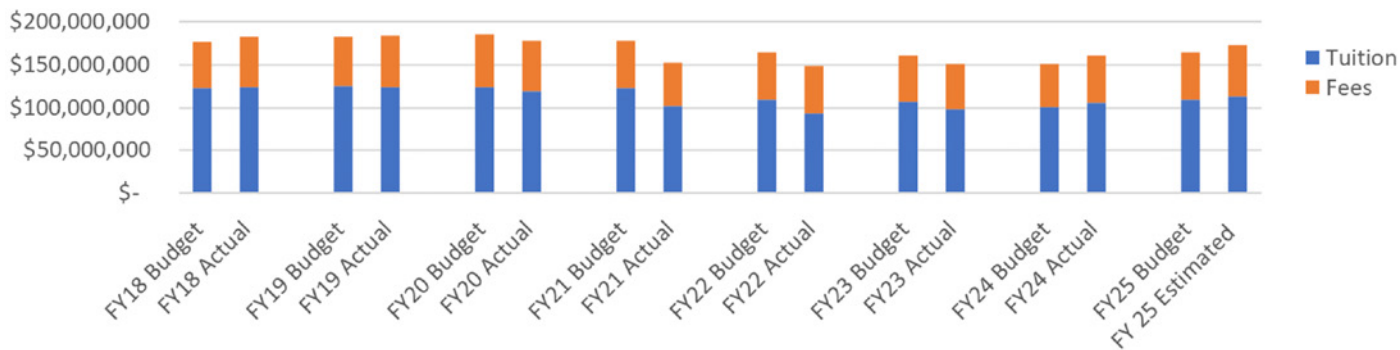
Financial Planning

CT State’s budget development process is inclusive and relies on input from the campuses and other stakeholders. It is aligned with our transitional strategic plan and priority areas articulated in the November 2023 deficit mitigation plan. As the college matures, the budget development process continues to evolve. CT State is evaluating technology solutions to reduce the work of manually aggregating the budget and instead focus on leading more strategic deliberations. Despite fiscal challenges, CT State has implemented strategies to ensure that resources are aligned into priority areas as discussed above.

CT State’s governing body, the Board of Regents, adopted a resolution on October 24, 2024, requiring all CSCU institutions to develop a five-year sustainability plan to be presented in late February 2025. This process will help guide a multi-year fiscal planning process for the college.

Through pandemic related enrollment declines, CT State employs realistic enrollment assumptions when developing its budget. A comparison of the budgeted tuition and fee revenues with the actual revenue achieved demonstrates that since FY 23, CT has made conservative enrollment forecasts and exceeded them. For Fall 2024, the budget assumed a flat enrollment rate yet achieved a 3% full time equivalent increase over the prior year. (See [Appendix J](#))

Comparison of Budgeted vs. Actual Tuition & Fee Revenue



Fiscal Management

As CT State anticipates declining state support with the expiration of pandemic relief, the college and CSCU continue to advocate to state leaders for more resources. These efforts have been met with some early success as CT State received an additional \$4 million disbursement of state administered ARPA funds mid-year in FY 25. However, CT State’s primary revenue source remains state funding. In the face of these challenges, CT State management demonstrates strong fiscal stewardship evidenced by year-over-year increases in the CT State reserves. After the close of FY 24, CT State anticipates reserves of \$226.2 million, which equates to 106 days of cash on hand for operations. Based on the FY 25 midyear forecast, CT State projects a lapse of \$30.5 million, yielding potential reserves of \$256.7 million.

UNRESTRICTED NET POSITION, EXCLUDING PENSION & OPEB LIABILITIES (in millions)	
Current Designated Reserves*	\$ 30.3
Current Undesignated Reserves	\$ 123.6
Anticipated FY24 Deposit: CT State	\$ 59.4
Anticipated FY24 Deposit: Shared Services/ System Office	\$ 12.9
TOTAL	\$ 226.2

*Per board policy the college may reserve 3% of the operating expense as contingency

Staffing

Despite fiscal challenges, CT State has not laid off bargained staff nor implemented a hiring freeze, although it has made significant changes to its centralized executive structure, by eliminating and consolidating roles. The college prioritizes having sufficient and qualified staff for critical functions through its “request to fill” RTF review process for all full-time positions. This process integrates Human Resources, Finance, and Equity & Civil Rights with cabinet leadership to review all full-time hiring requests to ensure that hiring decisions are aligned with the mission and direction of the college, its budget, and is consistent with its principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. During FY 24 while implementing deficit mitigation, CT state hired 102 full-time employees, and year-to-date for FY 25 has hired 90 full time employees. (See [Appendix K](#))

One of the most important ways the college achieves its DEI goals is by ensuring equity in the hiring process. Staff in the Equity and Civil Rights (ECR) unit monitor the screening of all applicants for employment at CT State. (See [Appendix L](#)) Throughout the 2023-2024 academic

year ECR conducted 95 search charges, which involved 466 employees who were members of search committees. A total of 405 employees completed bias training required to serve on a search committee. In 2023-2024 ECR also implemented “pause points” at specific stages throughout the search process to address deviations, bias and/or favoritism in the process. Pause points provide an equity-based lens that allows for decision makers to determine how they wish to proceed. It is notable that using this approach, CT State has made major gains in closing the racial/ethnic representation gap. For example, between the 2020-2021 academic year and 2023-2024 academic year there has been a 79% increase in the hiring of faculty and staff of color.

5. Implementation of our Strategic Plan

The [CT State Transitional Strategic Plan \(2023-2025\)](#) was designed to guide the newly established college through its formative years, allowing time to develop infrastructure, policies, and procedures necessary for long-term success. This plan structured around three key pillars—Excellence, Equity, and Community—outlined 38 strategic goals essential to the consolidation and future growth of CT State. These goals focused on foundational initiatives such as Guided Pathways advising, transfer articulation, and shared governance, while also addressing student success and equity measures.

To assess progress, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning developed a strategic planning assessment process. This process involves interviewing cabinet-level office heads to determine whether each goal has been completed, remains in progress, or has been affected by policy shifts.

Among the most critical objectives of the transitional strategic plan were efforts to improve student success and equity outcomes. Progress on these initiatives includes:

Increasing Student Success Rates: The student success rate (combining graduation and four-year transfer-out rates) rose from 32% in the Fall 2020 cohort to 37% in the Fall 2021 cohort, with graduation rates improving from 19% to 24%.

Guided Pathways Advising (GPA) Impact: The implementation of the GPA program has led to significant increases in student retention, with 7-9 percentage point gains after one advising visit and 11-15 points after two visits. The program has been especially impactful for underrepresented students, boosting one-term retention by 19% for Black students and 14% for Hispanic/Latine students respectively.

Equity in First-Year Math and English Completion: Progress remains mixed in closing racial-ethnic gaps in first-year Math and English passage rates. While some disparities have narrowed, others persist, requiring continued efforts to ensure equitable outcomes.

Adult Learner Enrollment: A key challenge remains the decline in non-traditional adult learners in both credit and noncredit programs, dropping from 32% to 29% (credit learners) and from 76% to 72% (noncredit learners) over the past academic year.

Tracking Student Transfer Rate Gaps: While overall success metrics have improved, equity gaps in student transfer rates between students of color and their white peers have held steady at 8 percentage points, highlighting the need for further strategic focus.

As the transitional plan concludes in 2025, CT State is preparing for its next phase of strategic development. In Spring 2025, President Maduko will establish a college wide strategic planning taskforce to begin developing a new five-year strategic plan that will carry the college into and past 2030. This plan will build on the progress of the transitional strategic plan, ensuring that CT State continues to provide accessible, high-quality, and affordable education, promotes equity in student outcomes, and strengthens workforce development initiatives and community relationships.

The new strategic plan will be reviewed annually, allowing for continuous improvement and alignment with institutional priorities, workforce demands, and evolving student needs. With a strong foundation in place, CT State is well-positioned to advance its mission and expand opportunities for all students in the years ahead.

6. Implementation of our Governance Processes & Procedures

The CT State Shared Governance structure was created by a faculty/staff committee working over a four-year period from 2018-2022. A [timeline](#) is provided showing the development of the governance structure. The first statewide elections were held in December 2022 after a period of statewide faculty/staff input with subsequent changes being made to the structure. A copy of the [Spring 2024 election results](#) for AY2024-2025 are provided.

A [Shared Governance website](#) has been created that documents all of the changes, history, procedures and flow processes of our shared governance structure.

The Shared Governance structure consists of the following core elements:

- Local Campus Faculty/Staff and Student Governance bodies at all 12 campuses
- CT State Senate that reports up to the CT State President and ultimately to the Board of Regents
- CT State has 27 Statewide Disciplinary Councils (SDC) that review proposals for curricula changes from campus faculty
- Six Statewide School Area Curriculum Committees (SACC) that flow up to the CT State Curriculum Congress. Those six Schools are:
 - Arts & Humanities
 - Business & Hospitality
 - Engineering & Technology
 - Nursing & Allied Health
 - Sciences & Mathematics
 - Social & Behavioral Sciences
- CT State Curriculum Congress
- A CSCU student advisory committee to the Board of Regents

Curriculum proposals first originate at the campus faculty level and are then elevated to the Statewide Disciplinary Council for review and an open feedback period. Subsequently, those proposals then go to the School Area Curriculum Committee, then to the Curriculum Congress and ultimately to the Provost and to the Academic & Student Affairs Committee of the Board, as appropriate, for approval.

All of the above bodies have elected representation across faculty, staff, and students.

To demonstrate the processes and procedures of the various CT State governance bodies, the following evidence is provided:

- [Shared Governance Policy flow process](#)
- [Shared Governance Curriculum flow process](#)
- [Fall 2024 Curriculum process timeline](#)
- Spring 2024 CT State Senate meeting [minutes](#) and [recordings](#)
- [Curriculum Proposals considered in Spring 2024](#)
- [CT State Senate Governance Landing Page](#)

All proposals for curricula changes are circulated to all faculty across all campuses for review and comment and stored in Microsoft OneDrive folders that all employees have access to.

The Commission's Standards for Accreditation were instrumental in the development of all of the Shared Govern-

nance structures and procedures throughout the process, particularly in accordance with Standards 3.13-3.16 and 4.5-4.6 all carefully documented through CT State's [progress reports to the Commission](#) from 2022-2024 that are all posted on the CT State Accreditation website:

- [January 2024](#)
- [June 2023](#)
- [February 2023](#)
- [September 2022](#)

The governance structure implemented includes student voices from all campuses, each having a local student governing body and a CSCU system wide student advisory committee. In a transparent approach, every curriculum proposal and policy proposal is made available to all employees through a [web portal](#), providing multiple opportunities for critique and input. Issues that arise at the campus governance level, if adopted by the governance body, can then flow to the CT State Senate via the campus-elected College Senators, for further consideration and ultimately as recommendations to the CT State president.

Creating a completely new Shared Governance structure from scratch for a statewide institution that meets NECHE standards was a complex undertaking, and it has taken considerable time to design, build, and implement. However, the structure and processes that have been created provide for a significantly increased ability of faculty and staff from across CT State to work more collaboratively now than was true when each campus was a separate institution. Faculty from across CT State have commented on how they value the ability to work together in disciplinary groups with colleagues from their respective disciplines and develop innovative academic programs.

These Shared Governance bodies are aware that because the bodies consist of many stakeholders, scheduling meetings and running meetings can be, at times, cumbersome and challenging. The leadership of both primary governance bodies, the CT State Senate and the Curriculum Congress, held a joint shared governance summit in October 2024, which generated a report (included in [Appendix M](#)) that details potential improvements to the governance bodies and their respective processes. Both governance bodies are currently reviewing the broad stakeholder input that was collected in fall 2024 and those bodies will make recommendations to CT State leadership on how best to further revise the governance structure. In November of 2025, the Provost's Office announced a planned restructure of its staffing based on the feedback heard at the town halls and end of the year Governance

Report from May of 2024. This restructuring includes a streamlining of the number of schools from 6 to 4 and an elevated role of the college dean position, to oversee both credit and non-credit programs under their portfolio. These shifts coupled with the feedback from the Governance Summit will have an impact on the shared governance model moving forward. Changes to the college governance structure will be announced in April with planned implementation in fall of 2025.

7. Update on Student Success Metrics, Graduation & Retention

The Commission requested an update on CT State's progress with improving graduation rates and student success metrics, specifically relating to how well the defined goals in retention, graduation, and overall progress and success are being met, and how CT State's initiatives contribute to those goals.

CT State's retention and graduation metrics are significantly improved across the board, primarily due to two of the success initiatives previously reported: Guided Pathways (GP) and Advising and PACT, CT State's last-dollar aid program now renamed the Mary Ann Handley Award. Both programs have measurably increased student success rates.

CT State has also completed its first year as a member of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, producing metrics that will establish a baseline for future comparisons and measurements of the effectiveness of programs such as GP Advising and PACT/Handley.

Student Retention

Retention has increased at CT State, with community college students persisting at higher rates than other region's two-year, open-enrollment public colleges or systems.

Full-time student retention has reached 65%, 46% for part-timer students, and 57% overall, for one-year retention; a five-year high at CT State that tops other New England community college systems, and is equal or exceeds rates in comparable schools in the Mid-Atlantic region. See chart below with Fall-to-Fall retention data.

Early data show that retention gains still have momentum, with Fall 23-24 persistence topping the previous year's highs.

Much of the credit for this increase goes to CT State's Guided Pathways Advising program, which provides holistic wraparound advising services to students, includ-

IPEDS Cohort Fall-to Fall Retention Rates

By Region, State and Cohort for New England and the Mid-Atlantic Community Colleges

ENROLLMENT LEVEL	COHORT	CONNECTICUT	NEW ENGLAND					MID-ATLANTIC				AVERAGE
			MA	ME	NH	RI	VT	MD	NJ	NY	PA	
FULL TIME	Fall 18-19	58%	60%	58%	64%	59%	54%	64%	65%	60%	60%	61%
	Fall 19-20	53%	56%	54%	59%	56%	52%	62%	63%	59%	58%	59%
	Fall 20-21	56%	59%	53%	59%	54%	45%	62%	66%	56%	59%	59%
	Fall 21-22	61%	57%	58%	58%	60%	55%	65%	66%	58%	62%	61%
	Fall 22-23	65%	62%	56%	65%	60%	43%	66%	66%	59%	63%	62%
	Fall 23-24	68%										
PART TIME	Fall 18-19	46%	46%	42%	49%	39%	39%	47%	49%	43%	44%	46%
	Fall 19-20	39%	42%	44%	50%	37%	34%	43%	43%	38%	41%	41%
	Fall 20-21	36%	45%	42%	46%	33%	31%	44%	49%	38%	42%	42%
	Fall 21-22	42%	42%	44%	42%	40%	36%	44%	48%	40%	44%	43%
	Fall 22-23	46%	45%	40%	43%	38%	34%	48%	48%	43%	45%	45%
	Fall 23-24	50%										
ALL LEVELS	Fall 18-19	53%	54%	54%	58%	55%	43%	57%	61%	58%	53%	57%
	Fall 19-20	47%	50%	52%	56%	51%	39%	55%	58%	56%	50%	54%
	Fall 20-21	50%	53%	49%	53%	49%	34%	55%	62%	54%	51%	54%
	Fall 21-22	55%	50%	53%	51%	54%	41%	56%	61%	56%	53%	56%
	Fall 22-23	57%	54%	52%	55%	54%	37%	58%	61%	57%	54%	57%
	Fall 23-24	60%										

ing mental health resources, and help with food and other insecurities that can adversely impact the educational experience. Such wrap-around supports have shown to keep students coming to classes and completing their courses and degree/certificate programs.

Guided Pathways Advising has also had a measurable impact on retention, with students who make one appointment 7-9% more likely to re-enroll the following semester, and students who make two or more appointments 14-15% more likely to re-enroll, however, it does vary from semester to semester. These results are consistent even while controlling for previous GPA and enrollment levels.

The Guided Pathways program remains effective and adequately staffed, maintaining a current student-to-advisor ratio of 223:1, more favorable than the 250:1 target set at the program's conception.

Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) Graduation Rate Update

CT State's IPEDS 150% graduation rates have increased significantly in the past two academic data cycles. In Fall 2019, eight of CT State's legacy colleges were identified by the Commission for reporting graduation rates below 15%. In Fall 2020 only four campuses fell below that threshold and in Fall 2021 only one campus graduated less than 15% of its IPEDS cohort in three years.

IPEDS Cohort 150% Time Graduation Rates

COHORT:	FALL 2020	FALL 2021
All CT State	19%	25%
Asnuntuck	39%	42%
Capital	7%	10%
Gateway	14%	18%
Housatonic	13%	20%
Manchester	23%	29%
Middlesex	26%	30%
Naugatuck Valley	15%	25%
Northwestern CT	22%	32%
Norwalk	11%	21%
Quinebaug Valley	28%	33%
Three Rivers	17%	22%
Tunxis	19%	25%

Some of these gains can be attributed to CT State’s last-dollar tuition program, formerly known as PACT, now known as the Mary Ann Handley Award that began in Fall 2020. Recipients of this award – which in the periods observed below included only full-time, first-time cohorts – has boosted recipients’ graduation rates by three percentage points.

Impact of PACT/Mary Ann Handley Award on Graduation Rates

YEAR	POPULATION	GRADS	COHORT	RATE
FALL 2020	PACT/Handley	751	3350	22%
	IPEDS Cohort	968	5095	19%
FALL 2021	PACT/Handley	984	3,584	28%
	IPEDS Cohort	1,200	4,881	25%

Success and Progress Update

CT State developed an in-house Progress and Success measure to assess student success in a more appropriate to two-year, open-enrollment institutions. CT State has now adopted the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) to serve that purpose.

In the VFA’s six-year outcomes measure, 57% of CT State credential-seekers graduated, transferred-out, or continue to pursue their credential, equaling a 57% success rate. Notably, when employing a metric that better assesses community college success, gaps between high and low outcome campuses are less pronounced.

This was CT State’s first year of reporting to the VFA. The rates posted this year will serve as benchmarks for future success goals and in the upcoming round of strategic planning.

Six Year Outcomes for CT State’s Credential-Seeking Population

	GRADUATED	TRANSFERRED-OUT	STILL ENROLLED	SUCCESS RATE
CT State	34%	17%	7%	57%
Asnuntuck	48%	13%	3%	63%
Capital	26%	14%	7%	47%
Gateway	28%	16%	7%	50%
Housatonic	27%	19%	9%	55%
Manchester	33%	19%	7%	59%
Middlesex	37%	18%	4%	59%
Naugatuck Valley	34%	18%	7%	59%
Northwestern CT	41%	21%	7%	69%
Norwalk	34%	18%	8%	60%
Quinebaug Valley	45%	14%	4%	64%
Three Rivers	35%	18%	8%	60%
Tunxis	35%	15%	6%	55%

*Using Voluntary Framework of Accountability methodology for credential-seeking students; see vfa.aacc.nche.edu

8. Updates on matters previously requested in the January 2024 Progress report

All of the items below have been fully completed and were reported on in our last progress report of [January 2024](#).

Completing the faculty handbook

As was noted in our January 2024 progress report, the [CT State faculty handbook](#) was completed in July 2023 and is updated every summer for the subsequent academic year.

Implementation of One College Banner

As was noted in the January 2024 progress report, One College Banner implementation was fully completed December 31, 2023 and has been in constant operation since that date, supporting all Enterprise functions of the College.

9. SUMMARY APPRAISAL & PLANS

A. Alignment of College English & Mathematics (ACME)

CT State acknowledges that considerable work lies ahead relating to this policy for developmental education reform. A summit of English and math faculty was held in January 2025 to share the College's data, highlight best practices related to co-requisite education and to seek input and recommendations from the college community on areas for continuous improvement.

The policy will be under significant review in the 2025-2026 academic year to determine what changes will be needed, particularly as it relates to funding embedded tutors, which have not proven to add to student success.

Other recommendations from English and math faculty suggest that adjusting the policy to allow for more flexibility for faculty to modify their curriculum over time will improve success rates. On-going faculty professional development will also be needed, including training related to active learning, universal design, trauma informed teaching and focused training on neurodivergence. Developing a comprehensive and uniform placement guide for students and advisors will be important to remove variations across different campuses in placing students.

The Summit provided valuable input and recommendations which as has been stated are being reviewed for further refinement of this policy. Policy changes that

become necessary will be vetted through the ACME council, shared governance and the CT State cabinet before going through the review process with CSCU System Office and ultimately to the Academic & Student Affairs committee of the Board of Regents and subsequently approved by the full board.

B. Implementing a College wide Approach to the Assessment of Teaching & Learning

CT State acknowledges that building a culture of assessment that is consistently applied across all CT State locations equally will be a long-term goal. Campuses are still unevenly assessing courses in some disciplines, but in programs significant progress has been made, especially those that benefit from external accreditation standards that bring unity of assessment standards.

Tying the APR process to budgeting will significantly improve buy-in for assessment data collection and analysis as it will require programs to be accountable to their data for program continuation, expansion, etc.

Faculty professional development will need to be an investment that CT State makes to build a broad awareness and skillset for writing and assessing measurable outcomes and for periodic review of data to make better decisions about courses and programs.

CT State is committed to developing institutional student learning outcomes that are distributed across all of the college programs and gather data to assess the competency of the graduate.

C. Developing & Implementing our Approach to Dual Enrollment Plans & Strategy

The past year has seen a major shift in the institution's approach to dual enrollment strategy with the development of a comprehensive policy document, regional meetings with K-12 districts to share the approach that CT State will be taking, fostering partnerships with these districts, and the establishment of a presidential advisory council of key statewide dual enrollment leaders that will guide this strategy going forward.

The Board of Regents will review the comprehensive dual enrollment strategy and policy this spring. Once adopted, CT State will update all memoranda of understanding with each school district to reflect the new policy and procedures and then begin expanding the dual enrollment offerings gradually over the next several years with the support of the legislature to fund this expansion.

D. Implementation of Deficit Mitigation Plans & Achievement of Enrollment Goals

CT State is successfully emerging from a period of structural imbalance, caused by years of expenses outpacing revenue, due primarily to enrollment challenges and the expiration of temporary funding from the federal government provided during the pandemic. CT State has successfully implemented a budget mitigation process, that has already eliminated a \$104.4 million budget deficit in FY25 and FY26.

CT State continues to revise its budget development process to that of a single institution and eliminate the chronic fiscal imbalance and it has succeeded in making all of these changes while avoiding laying off any bargained employees. This process will give the College a flexible, responsive budget development process in the future that better aligns budgetary priorities to the needs of the college as a whole and one that is transparent and inclusive of all stakeholders through a shared governance process.

CT State is fully committed to further developing this process toward a robust budget process that closely aligns resources to the strategic direction of the College.

E. Implementation of CT State's Transitional Strategic Plan

CT State is in the final stages of reviewing the results of its transitional strategic plan that guided the college over the past three years. This plan successfully captured the priorities of the new institution and the direction that it needs to go in the future, however, the College needs to establish more broad-based measures of assessing these key performance indicators that will allow for a much more robust way of measuring CT State's success in achieving these goals.

F. Implementation of Governance Processes & Procedures

The shared governance structure of CT State is now firmly established and functioning effectively, however, improvements will be made in response to feedback that was received during the shared governance summit that was held in the fall of 2024.

Further work is needed to strengthen the connection between the local campus governance bodies and the CT State Senate and ensure that issues can freely flow either up to the college level or down to the local campus level. Campus governance representatives hold a special responsibility for reporting back to their local campus governance meetings to keep all stakeholders informed

and for ensuring a strong connection between local and college wide governance.

The Curriculum Congress has received clear feedback that there are not enough SDCs and that they don't include some key voices – some of these groups cover too many different disciplines to ensure that all of the faculty in an area are properly consulted. CT State is currently undergoing a review process which may result in changes to the governance structure.

Some changes that have been proposed may include division of SDCs to a much larger number so they are more discipline-specific. There may also be more individual attention from curriculum experts earlier in the process, and the curriculum review process will be streamlined. More formally incorporating campus-based review and feedback is also a point of emphasis.

Student governance bodies are also fully established, however, as was the case above, further work will be needed to maintain strong connections between campus student governance and CT State governance, especially since the membership of student governance groups is so transitory and ever-changing. Student representatives are already serving on the CT State Senate, established in fall 2024, as an important way to strengthen and maintain those connections.

The Summit in October 2024 suggested that the following improvements needed are:

Governance Structure: Participants provided constructive feedback on the current structure, suggesting ways to streamline processes, clarify roles and responsibilities, and improve efficiency. This feedback will be instrumental in refining the governance model to better serve the needs of the institution.

Communication and Transparency: Recognizing the importance of clear and consistent communication, participants offered valuable insights into how communication channels can be enhanced and transparency in decision-making processes can be increased.

Workload and Compensation: The summit provided a platform for open dialogue about workload concerns related to shared governance participation. This feedback will inform the development of equitable workload distribution models and compensation practices.

Campus-Statewide Alignment: Participants identified opportunities to strengthen the alignment between campus-level and statewide governance structures. This feedback will guide efforts to foster greater collaboration and synergy across the institution.

G. Update on Student Success Metrics, Graduation & Retention

CT State has made significant strides in improving student success metrics, particularly in retention and graduation rates. The implementation of initiatives such as Guided Pathways Advising and the Mary Ann Handley Award has played a crucial role in these achievements. The data indicates that CT State's retention rates are now among the highest in the region, and graduation rates have shown marked improvement across multiple campuses. Additionally, the adoption of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability provides a robust mechanism for tracking and benchmarking future progress. These accomplishments underscore CT State's commitment to fostering an environment where students can thrive and succeed, setting a strong foundation for continued growth and excellence in the years to come.

APPENDIX

Focused Evaluation Report to the New England
Commission of Higher Education

February 23, 2025

- A [Alignment of College Math & English Progress report to CT State](#)
- B [ACME Summit Lessons and recommendations Report \(.DOCX\)](#)
- C [APR Academic Review Schedule 2024-2029](#)
- D [First and last day indirect SLO assessment surveys in ENG 1010/0910](#)
[By-laws and procedures for Curriculum Congress](#)
- E [Dual Enrollment Policy \(Draft\)](#)
- F [Dual Enrollment Procedures \(Draft\)](#)
- G [CT State's plan to Restore Student Facing Services](#)
- H [Executive Summary of Midyear Resource Reallocation Plan](#)
- I [Aligning CT State's Budget with Strategic Priority Areas](#)
- J [CT State Fall 2024 Enhanced Credit Enrollment Report](#)
- K [FY24 Full-time Hires across CT State](#)
- L [Equity & Civil Rights Report on Hiring](#)
- M [CT State's Shared Governance Report to the Visiting Team](#)