



February 7, 2022

To the New England Commission of Higher Education,

We, the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, write in support of the merger of Connecticut's 12 state community colleges into one unified higher education system, the Connecticut State Community College. Working as one state college system will enable the Connecticut State Community College to innovate in ways that centralize and promote equity, increase student success, and, ultimately, will improve the lives of over 60,000 students annually.

The Dana Center firmly believes that working systemically and at scale is powerful and very effective. Over the past few years, faculty, advisors, administrators, and leaders from across Connecticut have collaborated in crafting and enacting essential policies that will enable Connecticut State Community College to implement guided pathways, mathematics pathways, and corequisite support courses at scale. The structures necessary to support these frameworks can be achieved through the planned merger of the colleges to ensure equitable design and implementation.

The Dana Center has been honored to support the faculty and administrators charged with leading and doing the hard work of designing modern math pathways, creating aligned corequisite support courses, and developing infrastructure to support these frameworks. In collaboration with the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Student Success Center, the Dana Center has worked alongside the proposed Connecticut State Community College leaders and faculty in:

- Making the case for guided pathways, math pathways, and corequisite support courses;
- Conducting policy scans and supporting policy development;
- Providing critical thought partnership;
- Prioritizing equity at every stage of work;
- Connecting leaders and faculty to relevant research;
- Connecting leaders and faculty to the field; and
- Providing professional learning and technical assistance to design and implement modern math pathways and aligned corequisite courses.

This work has not been easy, but it would have been virtually impossible without the structures in place to work with every campus united as one. Working as a single, aligned, and coherent system has allowed the proposed Connecticut State Community College to move this work forward in a faster, more streamlined, and more impactful way.

Connecticut State Community College is positioning itself as a national leader in guided pathways by advancing modern math pathways that align to students' career and life needs. For too long, traditional entry-level college mathematics programs have failed to serve students well because they comprise disconnected courses whose content is misaligned to students' career and life needs. Minoritized students are disproportionately impacted by multi-semester development sequences, which underestimate the capability of students to learn mathematics and delay students' engagement with college-level coursework required for their degree programs.

As the work to design and implement math pathways at scale continues at Connecticut State Community College, it will allow all students, and especially minoritized students, to be more successful. We at the Dana Center believe this is possible because of Connecticut State Community College's ability to work cohesively and coherently across their entire system. Had this work only been attempted on one campus, the potential impact would have been far diminished.

Please accept this letter of strong support for the excellent work of Connecticut educators and mathematics leaders in coming together as one to support all of their students. We applaud the aligned innovations that Connecticut State Community College has already undertaken and look forward to working together as they officially become one system of higher education, devoted to the success of the students of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Dana Center
The University of Texas at Austin

The Charles A. Dana Center has worked for over 30 years to design, support, and implement modern mathematics education across classrooms, institutions, systems, and states to improve equitable access and increase success for all students. The Center is led by Dr. Uri Treisman, a University Distinguished Teaching Professor and professor of mathematics and public affairs at The University of Texas at Austin.