

Connecticut State Community College Transitional Strategic Plan

2023-2025

Background

During 2020-22, a cross section of campus and system level administrators and staff developed a comprehensive Connecticut State Community College (CT State) Strategic plan. The committee presented the plan to CT State Inaugural President, Dr. John Maduko, and his Cabinet in early fall 2022. The committee recommended that the plan be distributed to the larger community and allow for a period of comment and feedback throughout the academic year. However, to provide President Maduko the opportunity to develop his vision and strategic priorities for CT State, a request was made to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) to extend the completion of the final plan.

President Maduko visited each of the 12 legacy community colleges in September and October of the fall 2022 term. Based on his visits, he developed a “100 Days” report in which he highlighted seven themes as the context for his strategic vision for CT State:

1. Re-envision student success and support.
2. Bolster campus support and infrastructure.
3. Enhance communications and transparency.
4. Champion academic freedom, shared governance, and innovation.
5. Embrace values of equity and access.
6. Foster a culture of compassion and accountability.
7. Acknowledge campus identity, history, and legacy.

The CT State Transitional Strategic Plan integrates President Maduko’s vision, his themes, and the Executive Strategic Planning Committee’s recommendations. Overall, the transitional strategic plan aligns with the Board of Regents (BOR) and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) mission and vision, and the CT State mission, vision, and values.

CSCU Mission (current)

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) contribute to the creation of knowledge and the economic growth of the state of Connecticut by providing affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs. Our learning environments transform students and facilitate an ever-increasing number of individuals to achieve their personal and career goals.

CSCU Vision (updated by BOR December 2022)

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities will build on its long and successful history by working collectively - within and across institutions - and by engaging external partners to increase the number of students pursuing and completing personally and professionally rewarding certificate and degree programs, improving their social mobility, and helping the state to meet its current and future workforce demands.

CT State Mission (reconfirmed in BOR’s December 2022 Strategic Vision Plan)

The Connecticut State Community College provides access to academically rigorous and innovative education and training focused on student success. The College supports excellence in teaching and learning, makes data-informed decisions, promotes equity, and advances positive change for the students, communities, and industries it serves.

CT State Vision

The Connecticut State Community College will be recognized for exceptional student success, educational leadership, and transformative collaboration with business and industry, government, educational, and key stakeholders while advancing diverse opportunities for Connecticut’s citizens and communities.

CT State President Strategic Vision

CT State Community College will augment the strength of its parts to drive the Pathway to Thrive 2030. The ultimate goal is to ensure each of our students is provided with the opportunity to pursue an affordable and quality education that aligns with their identities, lives, and required skills to be prepared for their careers.

CT State Equity Statement

Equity is the removal and reduction of barriers that negatively impact student success within structures, policies, and practices and ensures that students receive targeted resources and supports to achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals. Equity is achieved by identifying and intentionally addressing structural racism, systemic poverty, and other forms of marginalization, and by upholding the expectation that administrators, faculty, and staff act as anti- racist institutional change agents.

CT State Community College commits to bold and disruptive change by actively identifying, naming, and dismantling structural racism, systemic poverty, and other barriers; establishing equitable and anti-racist policies and practices; and empowering students, faculty, staff, and administrators to advance racial, social, and economic justice. Our core collective responsibility is to continuously assess practices and policies and transform the world we live in by eliminating inequities.

Value Statements:

Student Success

We promote student success by creating a learner-centered environment that supports holistic student development. Our teaching, education, training, and support services we provide are designed for students’ personal, family, social, and professional/career benefit. Their educational and personal needs, and the impact of our decisions on them, are our first and primary considerations. We remain mindful that our students are whole human beings and that authentic education requires service and support beyond the classroom.

Teaching, Learning, Education, and Training

We believe in the power of education to empower our students, our communities, and our organizations to create, fulfill, and transform. We are committed to the enterprise of teaching and the

process of learning so students can earn high-quality degrees, certificates, and credentials. We strive to organize ourselves and allocate our institutional and professional resources to deploy effective, affordable, and relevant credit and non-credit academic programming, engaging instructional pedagogies, and high-impact learning experiences that enable students to thrive and achieve their academic and career goals.

Equity

We value equity and are committed to bold and disruptive change by actively identifying, naming, and dismantling structural racism, systemic poverty, and other barriers; establishing equitable and antiracist policies and practices; and empowering students, faculty, staff, and administrators to advance racial, social, and economic justice.

Integrity

Integrity is central to fulfilling our mission of education, service, and equity. We are committed to honesty and authenticity in all our work, to open and transparent communication, to resisting corruption, to the faithful discharge of our respective responsibilities, and to adherence to our principles across our campuses and communities.

Mutual Respect

Every member of CT State has their own unique history, goals, experiences, and perspectives. We recognize that when people can bring their authentic selves to school or work, they are happier, healthier, more engaged, and more able to contribute to each other and our community. We are committed to promoting a sense of belonging amongst our students, faculty, and staff to support relationship building that incorporates the things we share and the ways in which we differ from each other; to listening carefully and deeply to our students and colleagues; to treating each other in ways that affirm and validate the humanity of every member of the college community; and to cultivating a safe and welcoming environment conducive to transformative teaching, learning, and service. It is in that vein that the approach for our work shall be grounded in universal design and an appreciation of human dignity and diversity.

Shared Governance

We value shared governance where communication, collaboration, and mutual accountability between administration, faculty, staff, and students advances excellence in the operation of CT State. Shared governance reflects our reality that a collective effort of our local and statewide governance bodies is required to serve our students, communities, and stakeholders effectively. It affirms the mutual respect expected of every member of our college community and validates the importance, necessity, and inherent value of inclusive decision-making. As an institution, we commit to the spirit, structures, and processes of shared governance to effectively harness the collective talents and transformative power of CT State.

Stewardship, Effectiveness, and Accountability

To effectively support our institution as a place of higher education excellence, CT State will be a model of stewardship with its physical, fiscal, and human resources while actively engaging in the pursuit of new opportunities. The college will prioritize resources toward diverse student needs, equity, inclusivity, and the advancement of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. We value the investment that taxpayers make in us and the dollars our students invest in themselves through tuition, and we are committed to transparent, ethical, efficient, and responsible financial decision-making and use of organizational resources. We commit to holding ourselves accountable for the decisions we make and

actions we take in service of our mission and goals, and to relentlessly seeking out better and more effective ways to accomplish our work.

Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

We commit ourselves to establishing a culture of continuous quality improvement through data-informed decisions, evidence-based solutions, and other widely recognized best practices in higher education administration. We commit to building collaborative strategic networks and partnerships that will grow community and workforce development, expand external funding opportunities, and create seamless educational pathways to earning a credential, particularly for those who are underserved and underrepresented from the communities we serve.

Goals, Strategies, and Benchmarks

Goal I: Provide students an accessible, high quality, and affordable educational experience

Advance Student Access and Success Practices: CT State is committed to student access and success regardless of background, credit type, or program of study. CT State will define and coordinate practices and procedures that will allow students to attend all campuses statewide based on their needs and availability if they so choose while also staying connected to their home campus. All students will benefit from seamless recruitment, enrollment, registration processes and student support services.

1. BENCHMARK: Achieve at least one percentage point increase in student enrollment growth and success rates (without declines in disaggregated student access, retention, transfer-out or graduation rates) annually through 2025.
2. BENCHMARK: Establish baseline student passing grade improvement rates in first-year Math and English (Guided Pathways KPIs 4, 5, and 6) relative to Fall 2020 by fall 2024.
3. BENCHMARK: Assess the impact of the Guided Pathway Advising (GPA) program on student retention, including the sustainability and return on investment from the 250:1 student to advisor ratio from fall 2022-spring 2025.

A. Recognize Students as Citizens and Faculty as Leaders: CT State will broaden and deepen commitment to civic education, diversity, pluralism, anti-racism, and democratic citizenship education in all facets of the College and with specific respect to curriculum. CT State will empower faculty to empower students to effect positive change in our communities and in their personal lives.

1. BENCHMARK: Academic Affairs will review and produce general education curriculum that will provide the civic and multicultural education necessary to prepare students to survive, thrive, and be active participants in and leaders of a multicultural democratic republic, and will recommend improvements by the end of the transitional strategic plan period in spring 2025.

B. Promote Multiple Paths to Student Success: CT State will align all vital licensures and transfer articulation agreements as part of the transition to a single college or submit a plan for achieving this goal by the end of the strategic planning period. CT State will also explore and improve credit transferability to institutions outside the CSCU system. Reverse transfer programs will be a focus to allow students who face barriers in obtaining a baccalaureate degree to earn an associate degree through CT State.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs will set goals for the alignment of all transfer articulation agreements and relevant external agreements during the 2023-24 academic year.
2. **BENCHMARK:** Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs will collaborate to set reverse transfer goals by fall 2024.

C. Remove Barriers between Credit and Non-credit Programs: CT State will continue to align all credit programs across the 12 campuses, pursuing rigorous program assessment, review, and improvement. CT State also commits to building a bridge between credit and non-credit programming, including a non-credit to credit pipeline and improving data collection practices and standards for continuing education. CT State will continue to coordinate and align its relationships with the Governor's Workforce Council, Workforce Development Board, and other key business entities. CT State will continue to engage with relevant advisory boards.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Workforce Development and Academic Affairs will align courses and programs to facilitate setting and achieving enrollment goals for non-credit to credit programs by December 2023.
2. **BENCHMARK:** Academic Affairs will implement accelerated credential completion schedules for selected programs by December 2024.
3. **BENCHMARK:** Align Continuing Education workforce development, personal enrichment, and lifelong learning programs into a coordinated shared schedule across all campuses by September 2024.
4. **BENCHMARK:** Increase by at least one percentage point the number of non-traditional adult learners in credit and noncredit programs annually through 2025.

D. Establish Student User Experience Metrics: CT State will continue to develop the CT State website, catalog, and student handbook. CT State will transition to a single-college educational resource and planning system (Banner), and standardize and integrate software titles for student learning, assessment management, student information systems, and related tools.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs will implement initiatives with metrics to improve user-friendliness and universal access for enrollment, financial aid, and registration processes for both credit and non-credit students during fall 2023.

Goal II: Achieving Equity in Student Outcomes and Workforce Cultural Representation

A. Show Evidence of Equity as a CT State Baseline: CT State will use equity to examine policies, budget priorities, academic programming, faculty career pathways, and the overall student experience. CT State will continue to build a data-informed student success and equity framework. The central aim of CT State is to address gender, racial, and economic systemic inequities among students, faculty, and staff.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Finance will submit DEI plans by summer 2024.
2. **BENCHMARK:** DEI Unit will conduct an equity review of all CT State policies and procedures during the 2023-24 academic year.
3. **BENCHMARK:** CT State will move towards closing the equity gap by ensuring that all policies, practices, and procedures related to placement and student success in gateway English and

mathematics courses are designed to address social and racial justice; eliminate structural inequities; recognize and address implicit bias; promote equitable course completion; and lead to completion for all students from all backgrounds during 2023-24.

4. BENCHMARK: Use disaggregated metrics to track reductions in student success gaps for successful completion of first-year English and Math between students of color and white students relative to fall 2020 by June 2024. (Guided Pathways KPIs 4, 5 and 6)
5. BENCHMARK: Use disaggregated metrics to track reductions in student transfer rate gaps between students of color and white students without declines in either transfer-out or graduation rates relative to fall 2020 by June 2024. Transfer rate will be defined as graduation rate plus four-year transfer-out rates.

B. Provide Holistic Approaches to Support Students: CT State will offer wraparound student services and provide other resources to address household, transportation, and food insecurity on each campus.

1. BENCHMARK: Student affairs will develop a plan of action based on identified and assessed levels of basic needs and wrap-around services that exist on each campus and will include strategic objectives with measurable goals by December 2023.
2. BENCHMARK: Academic Affairs will create plans with trackable metrics to show improved learning opportunities for the incarcerated and post-incarcerated by December 2023.
3. BENCHMARK: Academic Affairs will work with DEI to develop a mechanism to ensure that curriculum integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts, and they will provide professional development for faculty and governance committees each of the transitional plan period fall 2023-spring 2025
4. BENCHMARK: CT State will approve culturally relevant access and inclusion goals by Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Finance for special populations such as ESOL, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Veterans by June 2024.

C. Reduce Enrollment and Financial Barriers for Students: CT State will facilitate the elimination of barriers throughout the student experience by addressing financial aid policies, procedures, and practices that act as barriers to basic participation in the college experience from application through completion.

1. BENCHMARK: Enrollment Management will detail a plan that identifies and minimizes financial barriers to completion over the course of the entire student career from admission to graduation by June 2024.
2. BENCHMARK: CT State will expand outreach, recruitment, and services to non-traditional and/or underserved student populations, including but not limited to high school students, students of color, women, LGBTQ+, and incarcerated and post-incarcerated, regarding opportunities in both non-credit and credit bearing certificate and degree programs by December 2024.

D. Help Grow a Diverse College Workforce: CT State commits to investing in the expertise of our faculty and staff through ongoing professional development including, but not limited to, universal design, equity, implicit bias, and culturally relevant pedagogy.

1. BENCHMARK: Academic Affairs, Human Resources and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will develop a consolidated plan to implement training and professional development in areas including, but not limited to, universal design, equity, implicit bias, and culturally relevant pedagogy by December 2023.

2. **BENCHMARK:** Ensure alignment with Affirmative Action plans to improve representation of non-White populations overall in our faculty and staff populations relative to FY2021 by at least one percentage point by fall 2023.

E. Campus Climate: CT State will develop a better understanding of the extent to which the climate across all campuses supports diversity and equity and will improve support, policies, and practices at the campuses related to diversity and equity, including those to prevent or respond to discrimination and harassment. CT State will measure its campus climate (students, faculty, and staff). The implementation of the surveys will signal the development of campus level diversity, equity, and inclusion plan based on available data including but not limited to the campus climate survey.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Conduct a college-wide campus climate assessment during the fall semesters of subsequent odd years starting in fall 2023.
2. **BENCHMARK:** Campuses will develop a campus diversity, equity, and inclusion plan based on available data including, but not limited to, the campus climate survey by the summer of each even year,.
3. **BENCHMARK:** Identify the levels and types of investments to develop culturally relevant and in-depth knowledge of our diverse communities; include an equity scorecard that assesses student success and access, employee satisfaction, and institutional outcomes through an equity lens during 2023-24 academic year.

Goal III: Stronger Internal Community and External Community Relationships

A. Acknowledge campus identity, history, and culture: CT State commits to building and growing a community of mutual respect between students, faculty, staff, and administration. CT State will deepen bonds between the single college, students, faculty, foundations, and local/external constituencies. We commit to improving infrastructure and bolstering campus-based support. CT State commits to working with all campus foundations to ensure local communities continue to support students on campus. CT State will ensure all administrative and student support services under the single college are sensitive to the needs of the local campus community. CT State will provide clarity on standard forms of technology for instructional staff and will support employees with the training they seek to support their responsibilities.

1. **BENCHMARK:** Develop and implement a plan that will facilitate greater campus autonomy through a balance of centralized and decentralized oversight by spring 2023.
2. **BENCHMARK:** Assess and develop a framework for providing administrative and support services needed to operate each campus and develop a baseline level of service for each campus by fall 2024.
3. **BENCHMARK:** Establish framework that supports campus foundations within the requirements of the applicable BOR policy by December 2023.
4. **BENCHMARK:** Assess and provide a framework for providing administrative, career, and student support services needed to operate each campus by December 2023.
5. **BENCHMARK:** Annually review effectiveness of efforts ensure the continuance of shared governance structures across campuses, including implementation of a shared governance plan with annual reviews issued and progress with meet and confer communications protocol between governance leaders and administration.

B. Emphasize Administrative Engagement and Transparency: CT State will diversify its communication strategies and show visible engagement to build effective working relationships with faculty, staff,

and students. CT State will identify protocols for receiving feedback and recommendations on how administrators can better inform all constituents. Senior administrators will have greater visibility and engagement across all campuses.

1. BENCHMARK: The President's Office will communicate a plan for keeping the college community informed and for receiving feedback from all campus constituent groups by fall 2023.
2. BENCHMARK: The President's Office will establish a President's Student Advisory Council, President's K12 Council, President's Community Council, and President's Strategic Partnership Council by September 2023.
3. BENCHMARK: Each functional area will provide monthly reports (i.e., office of the president, academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management, workforce development, fiscal affairs and IT, campus relations, facilities, and marketing) to the shared governance leadership, union leaders, and the statewide college community to highlight decisions, the progress of projects, hiring, partnerships, etc. in spring 2023.
4. BENCHMARK: An audit will be conducted of current campus masterplans, security provisions, and technology infrastructure to align student services teaching and learning priorities with limited funding resources by fall 2024.

C. Expand Collaborative and Innovative Partnerships: CT State will expand personal enrichment and lifelong learning programs for students; deepen K12 relationships, College Career Pathways, dual enrollment, and early college programs; and identify new funding opportunities related to these programs. CT State will be more strategic and sensitive in reassuring all partners that our relationships statewide will help build the college while preserving what local partners expect from us to support mutually beneficial priorities.

1. BENCHMARK: Establish baseline for increasing cooperative/work-based learning programs and opportunities and expand and deepen relationships between industry, job market, and areas of study to provide opportunities to as many types of students as possible by December 2023.
2. BENCHMARK: Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Workforce Development will plan and prioritize initiatives for deepening relationships between industry, job market, and areas of study in all regions by December 2023.
3. BENCHMARK: Establish a president's innovation fund and form a committee of faculty, staff, and administrators to determine criteria to approve the funding of innovative proposals aligned with strategic priorities by December 2023.
4. BENCHMARK: Establish metrics for increased external grant funding coordinated and supported by CT State Office of Sponsored Programs during 2023-24.

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