



**CharterOak**  
STATE COLLEGE

**CT STATE**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# **CSCU Responses: Appropriations Work Group Meeting**

**March 4, 2026**

**1. What is CSCU’s total budgetary ask for FY 27? What is the breakdown of that ask by policy/purpose (ie, you are requesting \$x for wage increases)?**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total (millions)</b>
Unfunded Portion of Projected FY27 Wage Increases	\$25.02
Restore and Expand Funding to Finish Line Scholars Program	\$10-15
Mary Ann Handley Award (MAH) (Formerly PACT)	\$2.30
Current Tuition Waiver Reimbursement	\$12.7
U-Pass Increase (or rejection)	\$1.10

**Unfunded Portion of Projected FY27 Wage Increases (\$25.02M):**

Employee wage increases are a part of sustaining our public higher education system here in Connecticut. Within CSCU’s operating model, there are only a few practical ways to absorb those increased costs which include (1) increased state appropriations (2) tuition increases and (3) enrollment growth.

While enrollment growth can help offset pressure, growth is not a dependable lever, and increases in enrollment are accompanied by the need for additional educators, support and other direct costs.

When considering tuition increases, rate hikes against our students help shrink the deficit, but undermine CSCU’s ability to remain affordable for the residents in our State.

Year-over-year increases in state appropriations are also appreciated and provide meaningful support; however, the 3% inflationary rate provided in appropriations does not keep pace with wage increases and other inflationary costs. The shortfall between the 3% provided and current wage increases widens CSCU’s operating deficits each year. The compounding of this cycle has led to structural operating deficits.

The chart below represents the impact of wage increases for FY27 on CSCU (using historical wage increases as a reference point) and calculates the remaining unfunded balance after deducting the annual increase received in the FY27 state appropriation.

	<b>Connecticut State Universities</b>	<b>CT State Community College</b>	<b>Charter Oak State College</b>	<b>Total CSCU</b>
Impact of wage increases in FY27	18,930,758	18,754,914	699,609	38,385,281
Less: inflationary increase received in FY27	5,980,287	7,281,169	106,542	13,367,998
Unfunded portion of FY27 wage increases	12,950,471	11,473,745	593,067	<b>25,017,283</b>

For FY27, CSCU is requesting **\$25.02 million in additional state support** allocated across the CSCU block grants to fully fund the unfunded portion of projected wage increases. Providing this support would help slow the compounding impact that recurring wage obligations have had on CSCU’s structural operating deficits and strengthen the system’s long-term financial stability. This begins to slow down the compounding effect wage increases have had on CSCU’s structural deficits.

**Restore and Expand Funding to Finish Line Scholars Program (\$10-15 million)**

\$10-\$15 million. Please see analysis responsive to question #9.

**Mary Ann Handley Award (MAH) (Formerly PACT) (\$2.3 million)**

CT State Community College provided **\$2.3 million** in institutional aid to cover awards that would have otherwise been funded through the MAH program, for which we are seeking state reimbursement.

**Tuition Waiver Reimbursement (\$12.7 million and future waiver expansion):**

CSCU has experienced steady growth in tuition and fee waivers. From FY22 to FY26, the total cost of statutory and contractual tuition and fee waivers increased by \$3.8 million, rising from \$8.8 million to **\$12.7 million**. This growth reflects increased participation in legally required statutory waivers and tuition benefits negotiated through collective bargaining agreements.

Over the same period, statutory tuition waivers for veterans, seniors over age 62, members of the National Guard, and eligible dependents of firefighters and police officers increased from \$5.0 million in FY22 to \$6.3 million in FY26, an increase of \$1.3 million, or 27%. Additionally, contractual tuition and fee waivers provided under labor agreements increased from \$3.86 million to \$6.29 million, a \$2.5 million increase, or 63%.

Importantly, this **\$12.7 million** figure does not include tuition and fee waivers associated with high school dual and concurrent enrollment programs, which represent an additional and significant cost to CSCU institutions. The single largest driver of waiver growth systemwide is participation in these early college programs. Waivers for students enrolled in dual and concurrent enrollment increased from \$3.18 million in FY22 to \$21.3 million in FY26, an \$18.2 million increase, or 573%, over five years.

Separately, there are two proposed pieces of legislation introduced this legislative session, HB5046 and HB5003, which would extend tuition waivers to members of law enforcement and firefighters who have served more than five years, both paid and volunteer, including those training at the Connecticut Fire Academy. While we would welcome the opportunity to serve additional students under this proposal, adding a new statutory tuition waiver without a corresponding line-item appropriation would place additional strain on institutional operating budgets.

**U-Pass Increase (\$1.1 million)**

The Governor's budget adjustments for FY27 includes baseline adjustments for bus and rail operations at DOT. According to OPM, a fee increase for U-Pass from \$40 to \$50 is assumed in those proposed adjustment amounts. That increase would have a **\$1.1 million impact**; a cost directly absorbed by students. We would ask the committee for reimbursement of that cost increase or for the committee to reject the Governor's proposed increase to U-Pass.

## **2. Can CSCU provide its system-wide and institution-specific plans to address long-term deficits?**

The Board of Regents has charged CSCU's institutional leaders, in coordination with the System Office, with developing system-wide and institution-specific financial sustainability plans to address long-term structural deficits; those plans are currently under development and not yet finalized for release.

Several institutions experienced significant leadership transition over the past year, including presidential turnover at roughly half of our institutions. It would be counterproductive, and potentially misleading, to provide "plans" that were developed under prior leadership but may not be operationally feasible or aligned with the new Presidents' strategic direction. Our goal is to ensure these are actionable implementation roadmaps, not static documents.

Campuses are actively working on these updated strategies now, and the intent is for each campus to present institution specific plans to the Board of Regents as part of the FY27 spending plan approval process in June 2026.

This planning work is occurring in a challenging environment. State appropriations have not fully kept pace with annual wage growth and inflationary cost pressures, which continue to widen structural gaps year over year. At the same time, CSCU remains committed to affordability and access for Connecticut residents, and tuition has not been increased over the last two years to preserve that accessibility.

Against that backdrop, campuses are working urgently to identify a mix of solutions including budget reductions, operational efficiencies and sustainable revenue strategies that can close long-term deficits without undermining the core mission of access and student success. While campuses are doing the hard work internally, meaningful progress will also require additional state investment to keep pace with wage and inflationary pressures.

### **Where We Are Now**

- Each institution is actively developing (or refining) a multi-year structural balance plan under the direction of its current President and leadership team.
- The System Office is coordinating a common framework so plans are comparable and can be monitored consistently (assumptions, timelines, labor/contract considerations, enrollment strategies, program mix, facilities footprint, and reserve usage).

We will provide the completed system-wide framework and institution-specific plans once they are finalized and reviewed to ensure they are realistic, measurable, and capable of being implemented.

### 3. What role will budget reserves play in addressing long-term deficits? What other plans are there for the system’s budget reserves?

In the years leading into the pandemic, structural deficits began to emerge as recurring costs grew, particularly employee wages. The costs outpaced recurring revenue growth from state appropriations and student tuition. Over the last several years, federal pandemic relief funding helped offset these pressures and temporarily masked the compounding nature of the underlying imbalance. While the sunset of emergency funding was anticipated and incorporated into planning, deficits remain as the cost of delivering educational services continues to increase here in the State.

Consistent with feedback raised in legislative and gubernatorial discussions; part of CSCU’s FY26 deficit solution relied on utilizing reserves to cover deficits with reserves banked from the one-time ARPA funding received. Based on current estimates, CSCU will collectively utilize approximately \$131.5 million of reserves by the end of FY26.

A significant component of this strategy is the distribution of \$51.2 million from system office reserves to the university campuses to provide additional relief to the campuses. Because these funds were originally generated through the operations of the universities, the relief is directed to those campuses accordingly.

**FY26 Estimated Deficit Coverage Plan (in millions):**

<i>(in millions)</i>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Western</b>	<b>CT State</b>	<b>Charter Oak</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>FY26 Estimated Deficit</b>	(10.0)	(29.3)	(21.1)	(18.3)	(52.7)	(0.1)	(131.5)
<b>Campus Reserve Drawdown</b>	-	12.2	10.9	4.4	52.7	.1	80.3
<b>System Office Reserve Drawdown</b>	10.0	17.1	10.2	13.9	-	-	51.2

Reserves are inherently a short-term resource. System Office reserves are not positioned to provide the same level of deficit support in FY27, and with structural deficits continuing, campus reserves will be drawn down further until recurring revenues and recurring expenses are brought back into alignment. The table below provides a preliminary view of how FY27 could look based on current projections:

**FY27 Preliminary View of Reserves vs. Projected Deficits:**

<i>(in millions)</i>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Western</b>	<b>CT State</b>	<b>Charter Oak</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Estimated FY27 Campus Reserves Available</b>	41.4	31.5	40.5	14.3	201.7	12.1	341.5
<b>FY27 Projected Deficit</b>	(14.7)	(15.8)	(24.8)	(13.4)	(78.1)	(0.1)	(146.9)

The role of reserves in this context is to serve as a bridge, providing temporary stability while the system implements longer term actions to reduce structural deficits, hopefully in concert with additional state support.

With projected deficits extending into FY27 and system office reserves largely exhausted as a support source after FY26, campuses will be forced to rely more heavily on their own reserves to maintain operations. As a result, reserve balances for certain campuses will be thin by the end of FY27, limiting the ability to respond to unexpected pressures.

## 4. What is your current budget reserve balance?

Reserve balances are calculated each year at fiscal year-end in connection with CSCU’s annual external financial audit. The most recent reserve data for CSCU is dated June 30, 2025, and is summarized below:

<i>\$ in millions</i>	Designated Funds	Undesignated Funds	Total Reserves
<b>Central</b>	71.0	41.4	<b>112.4</b>
<b>Eastern</b>	37.9	10.0	<b>47.9</b>
<b>Southern</b>	28.5	40.5	<b>69.0</b>
<b>Western</b>	12.0	7.3	<b>19.3</b>
<b>CT State CC</b>	187.3	98.0	<b>285.3</b>
<b>Charter Oak</b>	2.4	12.1	<b>14.5</b>
<b>System Office</b>	151.7	6.9	<b>158.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>490.8</b>	<b>216.2</b>	<b>707.0</b>

Reserve balances include both designated and undesignated funds. Designated funds result from internal designations placed on resources by the Board of Regents or campus leadership for specific purposes (detailed designation breakdowns are included within the original presentation).

In summer 2025, CSCU implemented a new fund balance / reserve policy to:

- Ensures a detailed reserve summary is regularly provided to the Board of Regents to strengthen oversight and transparency of reserve strategies,
- Established a reserve “window” that sets actionable thresholds; a floor of 30 days and a ceiling of 90 days of operating expenses,
- Require action plans to restore or strategically utilize reserves should a campus fall outside of the established range.

Calculations to assess the need for reserves related action plans are presented annually to the Board of Regents at the first finance committee meeting of the calendar year (last held February 18, 2026). Based on the most recent calculation, Eastern and Western are required to develop action plans to restore reserves, and Charter Oak is required to develop an action plan to utilize a portion of reserves.

Below is a breakdown of reserves by system office and individual institutions.

**System Office:**

	\$ millions
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$158.6</b>
<b>Designated Funds</b>	
One year debt service coverage	29.1
FY26 Debt service relief to Universities	28.3
Q-1 Series construction match funds	25.0
FY26 Support for ECSU & WCSU	14.0
Banner SaaS Support	11.0
Initiatives & financial aid	8.3
Plant funds for future projects	29.0
FY27 Support for WCSU	7.0
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$6.9</b>

**Central Connecticut State University:**

	\$ millions
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$112.40</b>
<b>Current Designated Funds</b>	
1. Debt Reserves and Plant Funds	22.3
2. Legislative Supported Programs	0.3
3. Indirect Costs for Grants	1.8
4. Self-Supporting Programs/Facilities	4.7
5. Auxiliary Renewal/Replacement	9.1
6. Other Projects	32.8
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$41.40</b>

**Southern Connecticut State University:**

	<b>\$ millions</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$69.0</b>
<b>Designated Funds</b>	
1. Debt Reserves and Plant Funds	6.2
2. Program Funds	2.9
3. Indirect Costs for Grants	0.9
4. Self-Supporting Programs/Facilities	6.3
5. Other Projects (Loan Funds)	1.3
6. Projected FY26 Deficit Mitigation	10.9
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$40.5</b>

**Western Connecticut State University:**

	<b>\$ millions</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$19.3</b>
<b>Designated Funds</b>	
1. Debt Reserves and Plant Funds	0.6
2. Indirect Costs for Grants	0.4
3. Self-Supporting Programs, Revenue Generating Facilities	2.4
4. Other Projects*	3.9
5. Projected FY26 Deficit Mitigation	4.4
6. FY26 Strategic Investments	0.3
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$7.3</b>

\* Includes program funds, loan funds, student support funds, and other misc. funds.

**Eastern Connecticut State University:**

	<b>\$ millions</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$47.9</b>
<b>Current Designated Funds</b>	
FY26 Deficit Mitigation	\$5.1
FY26 Capital Repair/Replacement Projects	9.0
FY27 Deficit Mitigation	12.5
Debt Obligations	5.4
Systemwide IT/Telecom	5.9
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$10.0</b>

**CT State Community College:**

<b>\$ millions</b>	<b>Collegewide TOTAL</b>	<b>Contextualized on a Per Campus Basis</b>
<b>Unrestricted Net Position (UNP)</b>	<b>\$285.3</b>	<b>\$23.8</b>
<b>Designated Funds</b>		
FY 26 Operating Support	52.6	4.4
Outyear Operating Support	103.7	8.6
Healthcare Partnerships	5.0	0.4
Manufacturing & Defense Industry Partnerships	5.0	0.4
Technology Innovation & Process Improvement Investments	21.0	1.8
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$98.0</b>	<b>\$8.2</b>

**Charter Oak State College:**

	<b>\$ millions</b>
<b>Reserves (Unrestricted Net Position)</b>	<b>\$14.5</b>
<b>Funds Designated by President:</b>	
1. Research/Develop AI Student Support Tools	2.0
2. Expand Online Course Offerings	0.4
<b>Current Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$12.1</b>

## 5. Can CSCU describe what each of the line items in its GF agency sheets is for, who receives the funding, and what metrics does CSCU use to measure the success of the programs funded via each line item?

The General Assembly appropriates funds from the General Fund to CSCU in the form of three block grants for operating support and eight specific legislatively supported activities.

### **Block Grants**

Appropriated block grant funds are allotted to the CSCU System Office quarterly, which allots funds to the colleges and universities. Since no block grant exists to support System Office costs, each institution's contributions are assessed before allotting the appropriated funds.

1. **Charter Oak State College:** This block grant is for general operating support for its only public dedicated online college. It represents 16.5% of the college's projected revenue in FY26.
2. **Community Tech College System:** This block grant is for personnel services support for its public consolidated community college, which includes 12 campuses and other satellite locations. It represents 56% of the college's projected revenue in FY26.
3. **Connecticut State University:** This block grant is for personnel services support for its four public universities. It represents 28% of the universities' projected revenue in FY26. It is allocated to the universities based on a common fixed amount and the remainder based on weighted enrollments.
4. **Board of Regents:** This funding supports direct administrative costs of the system's board.

### **Legislative Supported Activities**

Funds for legislative supported activities began by supporting specific programs, but over time, and particularly during the community college consolidation, the funds for Developmental Services, the Outcomes-Based Funding Incentive, and the Disabilities Study have been integrated into the community college's operating fund to support related activities.

5. **Developmental Services:** This funding has been distributed to institutions based on the required spending established in FY15 based on FY14 actual spent data following the implementation of developmental education reforms from PA 12-40 and PA 14-217. Since implementation, the yearly allotment to each institution has been prorated based on the required spending and distributed to each Institution. The funding appropriated for Developmental Services (Intensive, Embedded and Transitional) remains unchanged from FY18 to FY26.

The table below provides a breakdown of the distribution of the Developmental Services appropriations for FY26 by institution:

	Developmental Education	
	State Support	Institutional Costs
CT State Community College	\$ 8,418,639.00	\$ 19,754,924
Central	443,086	867,816
Eastern	443,086	924,392
Southern	443,086	1,002,460
Western	443,086	947,834
	<b>\$ 10,190,983</b>	<b>\$ 23,497,426</b>

**CT State Community College – Developmental Education Funding**

On May 20, 2021, the Board of Regents for Higher Education adopted the Alignment and Completion of Mathematics and English (ACME) policy in fulfillment of CGS 10a-157a, ensuring that supports are aligned to the college-level course and delivered as a “just-in-time teaching” practice. This support takes many forms from discrete co-requisite sections that meet separately from the college level course to activities embedded directly into the meeting time of the college-level course. This appropriation directly supports 42.6% of the ACME related costs.

Developmental Education	FY 26	FY 26
	State Support	Total Institutional Costs
CT State Community College		
Co-requisite and Developmental English		9,602,905
Co-requisite and Developmental Math		8,842,593
Tutoring Support		1,309,426
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,418,369</b>	<b>19,754,924</b>

**State Universities – Developmental Education Funding**

State Universities	Developmental Education
Central	The developmental education funds are used to cover instructional costs for our MATH 099, MATH102C, WRT 100 and WRT 105P courses. In addition funds are used to support supplemental instruction as well as tutoring to support students in these math and writing classes. In FY2026, a total of 102 course sections offered to 1,696 students.
Eastern	The developmental education courses and programs are assessed as part of the academic department and School assessment processes, annual reports are provided each year to the Provost's office, and closing-the-loop interventions are implemented as determined by the outcomes of the assessment.
Southern	SCSU relies on the developmental education funding of \$443,086 to fulfill the requirements of Public Act 12-40, which mandates that public institutions provide embedded, co-requisite English and Math coursework rather than traditional stand-alone remediation. In the current FY2026, this funding covers about 44% of the direct instructional costs for 105 embedded course sections serving 1,776 students, a 22% increase in enrollment compared to FY2025, despite SCSU received the same funding level. These embedded courses, such as ENG 110, ENG 119, MATH 095, MATH 100, and MATH 100P have produced clear improvements in student success in gateway English and mathematics, fulfilling PA 12-40's goal of accelerating student progress toward degree completion.
Western	The developmental education funds are used to cover instructional costs for our MATH 099, MATH102C, WRT 100 and WRT 105P courses. In addition funds are used to support supplemental instruction as well as tutoring to support students in these math and writing classes.

**6. Outcomes-Based Funding Incentive:** Guided Pathways is a set of comprehensive student success initiatives focused on providing students with clear program maps, improving the student experience, and closing equity gaps. In the current fiscal year, CT State has 165 Guided Pathways Advisers supporting students. This appropriation directly supports 7.6% of the cost for the Guided Pathway Advisers.

	FY 26 State Support	FY 26 Total Institutional Costs
<b>Outcomes Based Funding</b>		
<b>Guided Pathways Advising</b>	<b>1,374,425</b>	<b>17,990,727</b>

**7. O'Neill Chair:** This funding supports the William A. O'Neil Endowed Chair which is housed in the Center for Community Engagement and Social Research (CCESR) at Central. The Center has had successful programming and initiatives with an increased emphasis on engaging students in high impact practices, particularly focused on experiential learning. The Center for Community Engagement and Social Research continues to archive the papers of Governor O'Neill's administration and create related oral history programs; provide a wide range of information, training, research and consulting services to communities, municipal and state government, and non-profit agencies, serve as a resource to policymakers on critical issues facing Connecticut and to preserve the legacy of Governor O'Neill.

- 8. **Debt Free Community College:** This funding supports eligible students obtain an associate’s degree. It covers 19% of community college student tuition and fees.
- 9. **Expanded PACT:** This funding extends support for eligible “debt-free” students to obtain a bachelor’s degree.
- 10. **Accessibility Accommodations:** funding provided in FY26 and FY27 for four staff for a pilot program to support students with accessibility accommodations at Central and Southern, funding distributed as follows:

	FY2026	FY2027
<u>Provide Funding to Assist Students with Accessibility Accommodations at two CSUs:</u>		
Central Connecticut State University	467,804	467,804
Southern Connecticut State University	467,804	467,804
	\$ 935,608	\$ 935,608

- 11. **Social Work and Law Enforcement Project and Police Training Center:** The Governor’s biennium budget provided funding of \$850,000 in FY 26, \$2.05 million in FY 27 to establish a social work and law enforcement (SWLE) project at Southern Connecticut State University and establish a police training center at Central Connecticut State University. The SWLE Center, which had already been in existence, did not yet receive their FY26 funding due to an error in accurately conveying initial legislative intent. The proponent behind this language is introducing language this session to formally clarify that legislative intent, and allow for the allocation of FY26 funds, which will become non-lapsing upon passage of the updated language.
- 12. **Disabilities Study:** In the biennium budget passed last year, \$250,000 was allocated for FY 27 for a study of inclusive programming for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities at the CSUs. It requires a plan for inclusive educational programs for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities at CSUS. Funding is not yet available, as it will be allocated in FY27.
- 13. **Various Grants:** This funding supports vending machines that dispense emergency contraceptives and a food pantry at Central Connecticut State University. Funding also supports a social work and law enforcement project at Southern Connecticut State University and a police training center at Central Connecticut State University.

## **6. How are administrative costs addressed in CSCU’s long-term deficit management plans? This refers to administrative costs at both the system office, central office and the institutions.**

When we develop plans for deficit mitigation, our first task is to identify costs that, if eliminated, will have the least impact on our students. Thus, we start with administrative costs (often meaning non-instructional) as the target for reduction. However, administrative costs include student support costs such as advisors, financial aid officers, library staff, career counseling, and student health services, to name a few. Even costs associated with physical campus operations have student impacts that we try to protect.

Question 12 of this document makes this distinction between student-facing and non-student-facing costs. It shows that 69% of our total spending is for direct student services, 40% on instructional costs, and 29% for student-facing costs in academic and library support, student services, and auxiliary enterprises. For those administrative costs that are less student-facing (e.g., physical campus operations, public and community service, institutional support and administration, and research), 31% of our spending falls into these categories.

“Institutional support and administration” is the one category that comes closest to “administrative overhead.” The data for question 12 shows that we spend 15% of our collective budgets in this area, 10% for administrative salaries and wages, and 5% on vendor support. This rate of spending for administrative overhead is at the low end for business and non-profit organizations.

## 7. What is the status of the system-wide and institutional strategic plans?

### **Connecticut State Colleges & Universities**

**Strategic Direction:** *In Development*

Websites:

**[BOR: Mission, Vision, Goals](#)**

**[ACT: Accessibility, Completion, & Talent](#)**

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system is currently engaged in the active development of an updated strategic direction designed to reflect the evolving needs of Connecticut's students, workforce, and economy. The renewed focus builds upon CSCU's commitment to Accessibility, Completion, and Talent (ACT), ensuring broad access to high-quality public higher education, supporting timely degree completion, and cultivating the skilled workforce Connecticut requires to compete and grow.

As the state's largest public higher education system, CSCU institutions collectively serve recent high school graduates, adult learners, first-generation students, career changers, and working professionals. The System's strategic direction is aligned with:

- Expanding affordable access statewide
- Increasing completion and closing equity gaps
- Strengthening workforce and employer partnerships
- Supporting economic development across the state
- Promoting social mobility and long-term talent retention

This systemwide direction provides the framework within which each institution advances its own strategic priorities.

---

### **Connecticut State Community College**

**Inaugural Strategic Plan:** *In Development*

Website:

**[CT State: Strategic Planning](#)**

CT State Community College is currently undertaking a participatory, transparent, and collaborative strategic planning process to develop its first comprehensive long-term strategic plan as a singly accredited institution. This planning effort represents a historic milestone following the unification of Connecticut's 12 community colleges into one institution.

Grounded in CSCU’s ACT framework and guided by its “One College, Many Communities” model, CT State is aligning its future direction around:

- Expanding equitable access to affordable higher education statewide
- Increasing student completion and credential attainment
- Meeting regional and statewide workforce needs
- Advancing social and economic mobility
- Strengthening operational integration across 12+ campuses

This process brings together faculty, staff, students, campus leadership, employers, and community stakeholders to ensure the institution is positioned to respond to Connecticut’s workforce shortages, demographic changes, and economic priorities. Completion is targeted for November 2026, with public launch anticipated by January 2027 following extensive statewide engagement and governance review.

As Connecticut’s primary access institution, CT State plays a central role in preparing skilled workers in healthcare, manufacturing, technology, public service, and other high-demand sectors. The forthcoming strategic plan will provide a unified roadmap to sustain student success while strengthening the state’s talent pipeline.

---

## **Central Connecticut State University**

### **Strategic Plan 2030 – Changing Lives, Building Communities; Central to Connecticut** *(Currently Under Five-Year Review & Update)*

Website:

#### **[Strategic Plan Revision Committee](#)**

Central’s Strategic Plan 2030 serves as a long-term framework for institutional transformation, student success, and public impact. Central is five years into its 10-year strategic plan. As of summer 2024, Central had completed or made substantial progress on 70 percent of the 94 strategies contained in the plan and another 18 percent of the strategies had been initiated. Given that Central has made so much progress on the plan, a mid-point review with stakeholder engagement is currently underway. The revised plan is the result of feedback from the campus community, including two campus-wide open forums is now being considered by the Faculty Senate.

Student success is embedded throughout five interconnected goals:

1. Enhancing academic excellence and preparing graduates to thrive in a changing economy
2. Increasing access to higher education and ensuring student success

3. Fostering a welcoming and safe campus environment that values and encourages individuals to participate in a free and respectful exchange of ideas
4. Strengthening Stewardship – Advancing Scholarship, Service Learning, and Community Development for the Public Good
5. Assuring long-term sustainability for the future

Central positions itself as a comprehensive regional public university deeply connected to Connecticut’s workforce and civic infrastructure. The plan emphasizes career readiness, experiential learning, innovation, and stewardship of public resources and ensures graduates are prepared to contribute meaningfully to the state’s economy and communities.

---

## **Eastern Connecticut State University**

### **Strategic Compass: Navigating Our Journey Ahead – New Institutional Strategic Plan** *(In Development)*

Full Document:

#### **[Eastern’s Strategic Compass](#)**

Eastern has adopted a new strategic framework, the Strategic Compass, which will guide institutional priorities through 2030 and align with its next comprehensive NECHE accreditation review. Action steps, performance metrics, and implementation timelines are currently being finalized, with a comprehensive campus presentation scheduled for May 2026.

The Strategic Compass sharpens Eastern’s identity as Connecticut’s public liberal arts university while strengthening workforce alignment and institutional sustainability. The plan focuses on six goals:

- Clarifying and elevating the value of the liberal arts, including stronger connections to career pathways
- Enhancing student success and experiences through improved advising, wellness supports, and retention strategies
- Deepening regional partnerships and reinforcing Eastern’s role as an anchor institution in Willimantic and eastern Connecticut
- Modernizing operations and advancing innovation, including positioning Eastern at the intersection of liberal arts and responsible AI
- Expanding enrollment strategies to attract traditional and emerging student populations
- Strengthening university spirit, culture, and community engagement

Through the Strategic Compass, Eastern is positioning itself for long-term sustainability, enrollment stability, and continued contribution to Connecticut’s workforce and civic vitality.

---

## **Southern Connecticut State University**

### **Leading the Way: 2023–2028 Strategic Plan**

Website:

[\*\*Leading the Way: 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan\*\*](#)

Southern’s 2023–2028 Strategic Plan reflects a renewed commitment to elevating educational attainment across the region and state. The university is focused on aligning academic innovation with Connecticut’s most pressing workforce and societal needs.

Key priorities include:

- Addressing environmental and health challenges through innovative research
- Cultivating entrepreneurial and inventive leaders for Connecticut’s workforce
- Expanding access for underserved learner communities
- Recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff
- Ensuring equitable student outcomes

Southern plays a vital role in preparing educators, healthcare professionals, scientists, and public service leaders. Its strategic focus reinforces Connecticut’s talent pipeline while advancing social mobility for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

---

## **Western Connecticut State University**

### **Focused Strategy (Spring 2026 – Fall 2028)**

Website:

[\*\*Western Rising Focused Strategy — February 2026 Update\*\*](#)

WestConn is implementing a Focused Strategy to guide coordinated action from Spring 2026 through Fall 2028. This effort builds upon, and does not replace, [Western Rising 2030](#). It refines prior planning work to concentrate institutional effort during a critical period of financial stabilization and enrollment growth.

The Focused Strategy establishes five institutional commitments that clarify shared direction while preserving faculty governance, academic judgment, and unit-level flexibility:

- **Strengthening Foundations:** Stabilizing finances, modernizing facilities and digital infrastructure, and aligning resources with mission-critical priorities. A key objective is eliminating a \$12.4 million structural deficit by FY30 through measurable annual progress.

- **Distinctively WestConn:** Delivering relationship-rich, student-centered, workforce-aligned liberal arts and professional education.
- **Regional Anchor and Opportunity Engine:** Expanding partnerships, pathways, and workforce-aligned learning to drive regional economic vitality.
- **Culture of Shared Leadership and Renewal:** Advancing transparency, collaboration, and shared responsibility across governance structures.
- **Creating a Healthy Environment that Cultivates Growth and Thriving:** Embedding belonging and equity throughout the university community.

Developed through a collaborative, university-wide process, the Focused Strategy prioritizes enrollment stability, retention improvement, sustainable operations, and institutional culture. Commitment teams will translate these priorities into measurable goals, coordinated action plans, and continuous assessment.

Through this focused approach, WestConn is strengthening financial stewardship, reinforcing academic quality, and positioning itself as a resilient regional public university serving western Connecticut.

---

## **Charter Oak State College**

### **Strategic Plan 2023–2028**

Website:

#### **[Strategic Plan: Fall 2023 - Spring 2028](#)**

Charter Oak State College’s 2023–2028 Strategic Plan reflects its unique role as Connecticut’s public online college serving working adults and nontraditional learners.

The plan outlines a commitment to:

- High-quality, affordable, flexible online education
- Workforce-aligned degree and credential pathways
- Serving adult learners and working professionals
- Becoming Connecticut’s premier online workforce college

Developed collaboratively with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external partners, the plan positions Charter Oak as a catalyst for economic and social mobility. By expanding flexible credentialing options and meeting learners where they are, Charter Oak strengthens Connecticut’s upskilling and reskilling infrastructure.

**8. In FY 26, CSCU has had to use institutional aid to supplement the Debt Free Community College appropriation and ensure that students who were relying on a Debt Free Community College award in FY 26 would continue to receive one. Is that accurate? What is the amount of institutional aid that has been used to supplement the GF appropriation? Are there any students who are losing a DF CC award and not receiving any institutional aid to replace it?**

**Spring 2026 as of 2/17/26**

<b>Debt Free CC/Mary Ann Handley</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b>Cost of Covering Awards for Those Students</b>
<b>Estimated Total # of Students Eligible for MAH Award</b>	16,925	\$20,869,238
<b>Estimated Total Covered by State Appropriation</b>	15,464	\$18,397,303
<b>Estimated Total Covered by Institutional Aid</b>	1,230	\$2,300,662

## 9. In FY 27, CSCU has concerns that the amount of funding originally appropriated for the Finish Line Scholars program is not sufficient to fully fund the program, as written in the FY 26 and FY 27 budget bill. Can CSCU describe its concerns? How many students could be eligible for the Finish Line Scholars program, as written? What would it cost to “fully fund” the program?

### Executive Summary

The Finish Line Scholars Program extends the PACT/Mary Ann Handley (MAH) debt-free community college model into bachelor’s degree completion at the CSU’s and Charter Oak State College. CSCU strongly supports the policy objective of the program. However, there is a misalignment between statutory eligibility and current and recommended appropriations.

Under current statute, CSCU projects approximately **5,587 students** will meet eligibility criteria by the end of AY 2025–26.

- **If all projected eligible students enrolled and were funded:** Estimated annual cost would be approximately **\$49–\$54 million**.
- **Based on projected participation rates and historic transfer patterns:** An annual appropriation of approximately **\$30–\$35 million** would likely support the majority of students who enroll under the statute and provide program stability.

Current funding levels do not align with statutory eligibility:

- **Governor’s FY27 Recommendation (\$3.85 million):** Funds approximately 350–450 students (roughly 6–8% of projected eligible students).
- **Original FY27 Appropriation (\$7.7 million):** Funds approximately 800–900 students (roughly 15% of projected eligible students).

In response, CSCU limited implementation to associate-degree completers in the current academic year, narrowing the eligible population to approximately **1,300 students** to better align program scope with available appropriations.

If the statute were clarified to allow eligibility based on receipt of PACT /MAH at any point during enrollment and attainment of an associate degree in AY 2025–26 or later, the eligible associate-degree population would increase to approximately **2,600 students**.

Assuming a 60 percent participation rate among those 2,600 students (approximately 1,560 students annually):

- Estimated first-year cost would be approximately **\$14–\$15 million**.

- Once fully implemented as a multi-year benefit, estimated steady-state annual costs would be approximately **\$24–\$30 million**, depending on retention and enrollment patterns.

The detailed analysis that follows outlines statutory eligibility criteria, cost modeling assumptions, projected participation scenarios, current funding impacts, implementation decisions, and estimated first-year and steady-state costs under alternative eligibility frameworks.

CSCU strongly supports the policy objective of the Finish Line Scholars Program: extending the Debt-Free Community College (PACT/Mary Ann Handley) pathway into bachelor’s degree completion at the CSUs and Charter Oak State College. However, there is a misalignment between statutory eligibility and current and recommended appropriations.

*Importantly, estimating the cost of the Program is inherently complex because it is a demand-driven, last-dollar benefit that depends on student behavior and financial aid interactions. Unlike a fixed appropriation grant program, costs are not determined solely by the number of students who meet statutory eligibility. Actual cost will depend on how many eligible students choose to enroll in a given year, whether they enroll full-time or part-time, their Pell and other need-based aid eligibility, the institution they select, and their persistence from year to year. Because each of these variables can change semester to semester, any estimates must use blended assumptions. The estimates provided below represent reasonable planning models based on historic transfer patterns, current tuition levels, and observed financial aid participation, but actual costs will vary depending on enrollment intensity and student characteristics and behavior.*

### **How Many Students Are Eligible Under the Statute?**

Under current statute, a student is eligible if they:

- Participated in PACT/Mary Ann Handley (MAH)
- Completed at least 60 credits through the program
- Are in-state and in good academic standing
- Enroll at a CSU or Charter Oak
- Complete the FAFSA and accept available aid

Applying these criteria, CSCU projects approximately 5,587 eligible students by the end of AY 2025-26.

### **What Would It Cost to Fully Fund the Program?**

Using:

- Historic transfer distribution
- Current effective tuition and mandatory fee levels at each 4-year institution

The blended average annual tuition and fee rate is approximately: \$12,250 per year

However, the actual Finish Line award amount per student will vary based on several factors, including:

- Pell Grant eligibility and award level (50% assumed)
- Other need-based or institutional aid received
- Enrollment intensity (full-time versus part-time)
- Institution selected (tuition levels vary modestly across campuses)

Because Finish Line operates as a last-dollar model, awards fill the remaining tuition and fee gap after other eligible aid is applied. As a result, individual awards may range widely, from lower amounts for high-Pell or part-time students to higher amounts for students with limited need-based aid.

Based on realistic modeling of these variables, the estimated average annual Finish Line award is projected to fall in the range of \$8,750–\$9,750 per student/per year.

If all projected eligible students enrolled and were funded, annual costs would be approximately \$49 million to \$54 million.

That said, CSCU does not expect all eligible students to enroll in a given year. Based on projected participation rates and historic transfer patterns, an annual appropriation in the range of \$30 million to \$35 million would likely support the majority of students who enroll under the statute and provide program stability while accommodating normal year-to-year variability in enrollment and financial aid profiles.

### **What Happens at Current Funding Levels?**

#### *i. FY27 Governor’s Recommended Appropriation: \$3.85 Million*

- Funds approximately 350–450 students
- Covers roughly 6% to 8% of projected eligible students

At this level, potentially thousands of students would be denied awards funding who otherwise meet statutory criteria.

#### *ii. Original FY27 Appropriation: \$7.7 Million*

- Funds approximately 800–900 students
- Covers roughly 15% of the projected eligible students

This would significantly increase program reach but would still not fully fund the program.

### **Restricted Implementation (Associate Degree in AY 2025-26 and beyond)**

Given that the original FY27 appropriation of \$7.7 million did not align with the scope of statutory eligibility, the CSCU Chancellor and institutional presidents agreed to limit implementation to students earning an associate degree in the current academic year, which narrowed the population to approximately 1,300 students.

CSCU does not intend to impose restrictions beyond associate degree completion. If an associate degree requirement reflects legislative intent, codifying it in statute would provide clarity and alignment.

However, even under this narrowed framework:

- At \$3.85 million, only 350–450 students could be funded.
- At \$7.7 million, approximately 800–900 students could be funded.

Even under this restricted population, the program would need to operate on a first-come, first-served basis, and many otherwise eligible students would be denied funding due solely to limited appropriations.

### **Statutory Alignment and Eligibility Clarification**

The statute currently requires completion of “not fewer than 60 credits through the program” at CT State Community College.

At CT State, PACT or Mary Ann Handley (MAH) awards are often oversubscribed. When state MAH appropriations are exhausted, CT State will backfill awards with institutional funds when funding is available, doing its best to ensure that otherwise eligible students are not unexpectedly billed. This reflects a good faith, “do no harm” approach intended to preserve continuity for students whenever fiscally possible. However, when institutional funds are not available, students who would otherwise qualify may be denied MAH solely due to insufficient appropriations.

Because funding availability can vary from semester to semester, a student may be awarded MAH in one term and receive institutional aid in a later term after state funds have been depleted, or in some cases be denied MAH altogether due to lack of funding. Under a strict interpretation of the requirement that 60 credits be earned “through the program,” that student could lose eligibility even though they remained continuously enrolled and met the academic intent of the debt free framework. In this way, eligibility may be influenced by the timing and availability of funding rather than by student behavior or academic progress.

Recognizing both the funding limitations and the need for fiscal alignment, CSCU limited implementation to associate degree completers, approximately 1,300 students. This narrower framework was adopted to better align eligibility with available appropriations and to focus on students most likely to transfer.

If the statute were clarified to allow eligibility based on:

- ✓ Receipt of PACT or MAH at any point during enrollment, as well as continued eligibility for the award, and
- ✓ Attainment of an associate degree in AY 2025-26 or later,

the eligible associate degree population would increase from approximately 1,300 to approximately 2,600 students.

While this would expand the eligible population within the associate degree framework, it would do so by correcting a technical limitation in the current statutory language rather than broadening the underlying policy intent. The associate degree requirement would continue to narrow eligibility, while the clarification regarding PACT or MAH participation would ensure that students are not excluded solely because of funding fluctuations beyond their control.

### **Cost Implications Under the Clarified Framework**

Assuming a 60 percent participation rate among the 2,600 eligible associate degree completers, approximately 1,560 students would enroll in a given year. At current tuition levels and award modeling assumptions, the first-year cost would be approximately \$14 million to \$15 million.

Because this is a multi-year benefit, costs increase over time. In the first year, the state funds the entering cohort. In the second year and beyond, the state funds both the new cohort and continuing students. Once the program is fully implemented, annual costs are estimated to be approximately \$24 million to \$30 million, depending on growth in eligibility, retention rates, enrollment intensity, and financial aid packaging.

**10. Total value of statutory fee/tuition waivers that CSCU would realize as a value loss and a narrative that accompanies whether students apply for whether students apply for other financial aid first or those fee waivers are applied first?**

Tuition & Fee Waivers	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Proj	Variance	
						FY26 Proj vs. FY22	
						\$ Amt Inc(Dec)	% Inc(Dec)
<b>Statutory Waivers</b>							
Veterans	1,382,508	1,697,616	1,839,270	1,682,307	1,718,203	335,695	24%
Seniors (Over 62)	2,546,274	2,841,853	2,989,909	3,447,282	3,320,712	774,438	30%
Dependent Fire/Police	24,968	22,368	19,662	23,045	20,232	(4,736)	-19%
National Guard	1,021,377	1,145,528	1,096,110	1,466,346	1,250,131	228,754	22%
Dependent/Spouse 9/11	6,702	-	-	-	-	(6,702)	-100%
<b>CSCU Total Statutory Waivers</b>	<b>\$ 4,981,829</b>	<b>\$ 5,707,365</b>	<b>\$ 5,944,951</b>	<b>\$ 6,618,980</b>	<b>\$ 6,309,278</b>	<b>\$ 1,327,449</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>High School students - Dual and Concurrent enrollment*</b>	<b>\$ 3,180,535</b>	<b>\$ 6,045,685</b>	<b>\$ 7,491,398</b>	<b>\$ 14,604,538</b>	<b>\$ 21,368,603</b>	<b>\$ 18,188,067</b>	<b>572%</b>
<b>Contractual Waivers</b>							
AAUP	1,525,478	1,521,904	1,749,775	1,932,879	2,031,950	506,472	33%
SUOAF	1,324,656	1,670,341	2,248,833	2,848,814	2,740,551	1,415,895	107%
Classified BU	23,023	31,671	30,477	31,701	21,294	(1,729)	-8%
4C	371,576	382,247	456,963	432,783	425,418	53,842	14%
AFSCME	16,585	17,421	9,494	11,581	23,907	7,322	44%
AFT	16,394	13,478	8,734	19,972	35,014	18,620	114%
CCC Empl. Attending CSUs	268,038	290,034	382,799	420,698	451,897	183,859	69%
Management/Confidential	309,961	384,373	511,068	750,733	670,934	360,973	116%
<b>CSCU Contractual Waivers</b>	<b>\$ 3,855,711</b>	<b>\$ 4,311,469</b>	<b>\$ 5,398,142</b>	<b>\$ 6,449,161</b>	<b>\$ 6,400,964</b>	<b>\$ 2,545,254</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,018,075</b>	<b>\$ 16,064,519</b>	<b>\$ 18,834,492</b>	<b>\$ 27,672,679</b>	<b>\$ 34,078,845</b>	<b>\$ 22,060,770</b>	<b>184%</b>
<b>Notes:</b>							
* CT State CC - High School partnership students							
* CSUs.- High School students: concurrent and dual enrollment							

Connecticut’s statutory waivers for CSCU are mandatory benefits created in state law that require our institutions to waive (i.e. reduce) specified charges for eligible students. Depending on the specific statute, the waiver applies to tuition and may require the reduction of certain fees. Each campus verifies eligibility, then posts the waiver directly to the student’s account as a reduction of the billed tuition/fee amount (rather than a cash payment to the institution).

With respect to financial aid coordination, under Federal Title IV rules, CSCU is required to apply the statutory waiver to the student’s tuition prior to federal financial aid because the waiver reduces the student’s overall tuition bill for the applicable term. Federal aid such as a Pell Grant is disbursed after the waiver is applied based on the student’s eligibility and need. As a result, the financial impact of statutory waivers is largely borne by each of the CSCU institutions as waivers generally reduce a student’s tuition bill to near zero.

Since waivers do not come with an automatic, dollar-for-dollar external funding stream that makes the campuses whole; the approximate \$6-7 million dollars of statutory waivers required by the State each year are factored into the campus' annual budget. The following table provides the value of statutory and contractual waivers absorbed in recent periods.

## 11. What savings have been achieved as a result of community college consolidation? What other impacts have occurred? Have savings been achieved?

Please see attached [Students First report](#) in response to Question 11.

In 2017, the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the governing body for Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), announced its decision to merge the twelve community colleges under its purview into a single accredited institution. As the New England Commission for Higher Education (NECHE) noted in its April 2018 letter in response to CSCU's initial proposal, "Students First" was developed to address the fiscal challenges faced by the 12 campuses and the importance of improving student success. CT State Community College was launched on July 1, 2023, and is:

- **4<sup>th</sup>** largest open access associate degree granting community college in the nation.
- Occupies **4.9 million** square feet in real estate in Connecticut with **12** legacy campuses and **33** instructional sites.
- Enrolling **65,000+** students seeking associate degrees, certificates, and workforce credentials.
- Our students come from each of the **169** cities and towns in Connecticut. **90%** of our alumni stay in Connecticut after graduation and become CT taxpayers.
- We are a majority minority serving institution representing the mosaic of Connecticut's population. **30%** of our population are LatinX.
- **57%** of our students are Free Community College/ Mary Ann Hanley Award recipients.
- **4.3%** increase in enrollment fall 2024- fall 2025.
- Since becoming CT State, **39%** of our students are taking at least one course at more than one of our campuses.
- **3** students are first generation.
- Leads the community college sector in New England with a **72%** fall to spring retention rate and have improved our overall student graduation rate by **12** points.
- CT State ranked **14<sup>th</sup>** most affordable community in the nation for affordability by Wallet Hub (four consecutive years in the top 15)
- Received the Higher Education Excellence Award (HEED) from Insight into Diversity Magazine (2025).
- CT State adds **\$3,000,000,000** to the Connecticut economy annually according to our environmental scan by Lightcast.

**12. In CSCU’s budget hearing testimony, it indicates that 40% of employees are non-students facing. Can CSCU provide the dollar amount associated with that figure, and a breakdown of what that 40% includes?**

As part of the annual financial statement audit conducted by external auditors, CSCU’s financial statements are required to disclose a summary of its expenditures based on “functional classification”. A summary of those results from the FY25 audit are below and bifurcate costs between direct student and non-student facing services.

	Wages & Fringe Benefits	Vendor Costs	Total Expense
Instruction	\$ 430,702	\$ 18,959	\$ 449,661
Academic & Library Support	\$ 96,563	\$ 26,663	\$ 123,225
Student Services	\$ 120,850	\$ 19,396	\$ 140,246
Auxiliary Enterprises	\$ 14,250	\$ 45,554	\$ 59,804
<b>Direct Student Services</b>	<b>\$ 662,364</b>	<b>\$ 110,572</b>	<b>\$ 772,936</b>
Physical Campus Operations	\$ 67,210	\$ 92,363	\$ 159,573
Public & Community Service	\$ 6,176	\$ 4,775	\$ 10,950
Institutional Support & Admin	\$ 116,588	\$ 50,531	\$ 167,118
Research	\$ 4,345	\$ 2,887	\$ 7,232
<b>Non Student Facing Services</b>	<b>\$ 194,318</b>	<b>\$ 150,556</b>	<b>\$ 344,873</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 856,682</b>	<b>\$ 261,127</b>	<b>\$ 1,117,809</b>

The expenditure table above, shown as a percentage of overall cost is as follows:

	Wages & Fringe Benefits	Vendor Costs	Total Expense
Instruction	39%	2%	40%
Academic & Library Support	9%	2%	11%
Student Services	11%	2%	13%
Auxiliary Enterprises	1%	4%	5%
<b>Direct Student Services</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>69%</b>
Physical Campus Operations	6%	8%	14%
Public & Community Service	1%	0%	1%
Institutional Support & Admin	10%	5%	15%
Research	0%	0%	1%
<b>Non Student Facing Services</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>31%</b>

The results of the previous table show that 69% of CSCU’s total expenditures are directly tied to student services, with the majority related to personnel costs (59%).

*Glossary:*

<b>Instruction</b>	Activities that are part of an institution’s credit and non-credit bearing instruction programs.
<b>Academic &amp; Library Support</b>	Support services including educational materials such as libraries, audio-visual services, and academic technology.
<b>Student Services</b>	Includes the offices of admissions and the registrar and activities that contribute to students’ well-being and social development outside the context of the formal instruction program. This includes expenses for student activities, cultural events, student newspapers, intramural athletics, student organizations, intercollegiate athletics, counseling and career guidance, student aid administration, and student health services.
<b>Auxiliary Enterprises</b>	Costs of residence halls, food services, intercollegiate athletics, college stores, parking.
<b>Physical Campus Operations</b>	Expenses for the operation and maintenance of the institution’s physical buildings including janitorial and utility services; repairs and renovations of buildings, furniture, and equipment; care of grounds; security; disaster preparedness; safety; and central receiving.
<b>Public &amp; Community Service</b>	Non-instructional services for the benefit of individuals and groups that are external to the institution including community service programs and conferences.
<b>Institutional Support &amp; Admin</b>	Includes expenses for centralized activities such as legal services, fiscal operations, information technology, space management, employee personnel and records, procurement, storerooms, printing, and transportation services, various support services to Faculty, alumni relations, fundraising, executive level management and administrative staff.
<b>Research</b>	Activities specifically organized to produce research, whether commissioned by an agency external to the institution or the institution itself.

### 13. How is institutional financial aid distributed across the institutions?

The data tables provide a breakdown of all financial aid by source for each Institution; Table A shows FY2025 actual figures, while Table B presents the FY2026 Projection at Mid-year Review of financial aid distribution to CSCU students.

**Table A**

	FY25 Actual				
	Total	Federal (1)	State (2)	Merit and Other (3)	Institutional
	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Aid (4)
<b>Central</b>	51,025,175	21,423,606	6,195,902	4,386,899	19,018,768
<b>Eastern</b>	29,760,893	7,736,693	2,640,088	3,376,334	16,007,778
<b>Southern</b>	48,500,858	20,822,320	7,101,252	6,199,279	14,378,007
<b>Western</b>	22,294,679	9,409,652	3,811,314	1,820,784	7,252,929
	\$ 151,581,605	\$ 59,392,271	\$ 19,748,556	\$ 15,783,296	\$ 56,657,482
<b>CT State Community Colleges</b>	143,089,327	\$ 87,500,653	\$ 35,516,913	\$ 759,707	\$ 19,312,052
<b>Charter Oak</b>	\$ 7,921,078	5,288,353	682,527	29,760	1,920,438
<b>CSCU Total Financial Aid</b>	\$ 302,592,010	\$ 152,181,277	\$ 55,947,996	\$ 16,572,763	\$ 77,889,972

**Table B**

	FY26 Projection				
	Total	Federal (1)	State (2)	Merit and Other (3)	Institutional (4)
	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Financial Aid	Aid
<b>Central</b>	68,973,898	38,524,733	5,853,338	3,957,827	20,638,000
<b>Eastern</b>	29,183,115	7,136,175	2,199,622	3,108,855	16,738,463
<b>Southern</b>	47,775,763	19,295,968	5,186,981	6,057,026	17,235,788
<b>Western</b>	22,825,423	9,570,796	2,503,738	1,826,575	8,924,314
	\$ 168,758,199	\$ 74,527,672	\$ 15,743,679	\$ 14,950,283	\$ 63,536,565
<b>CT State Community Colleges</b>	142,267,237	\$ 88,426,288	\$ 34,163,242	\$ 1,156,352	\$ 18,521,355
<b>Charter Oak</b>	\$ 9,157,933	6,346,024	802,000	-	2,009,910
<b>CSCU Total Financial Aid</b>	\$ 320,183,369	\$ 169,299,983	\$ 50,708,921	\$ 16,106,635	\$ 84,067,830

**Notes:**

- (1) Federal PELL Grant, Federal SEO Grant, Federal TEACH Grant and Federal Work-study Program
- (2) Roberta Willis Scholarship Program, CT Scholastic Achievement Grant, Mary Ann Handley Award (PACT)
- (3) Merit and other private scholarships, Foundation scholarships and Alumni scholarships
- (4) Institutional Aid represents: Institutional grants, SEOG and Work-study match

## 14. What plans do we have to transfer credits from Community Colleges more easily transferred to our CSUs?

In July of 2024, the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) unanimously approved the [CSCU General Education Transfer Credit Alignment Policy](#). The new policy will help to eliminate the barriers of transferring general education credits between the two- and four-year CSCU institutions and provides transparency on how courses will be applied to CSCU four-year institutions' degrees.

The policy applies to all Connecticut State Community College (CT State) students and eliminates the risk of CT State's general education courses and credits not transferring to CSCU's four-year institutions that include Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western Connecticut State Universities, and Charter Oak State College (COSC). The goal of the policy is to guide more CT State students into transferring to regional universities and COSC.

This policy was designed and developed to improve the educational outcomes of CT State students by protecting their time, money, and efforts as they seek to vertically transfer to our four regional state universities and Charter Oak State College. The new policy simplifies academic planning and allows students time to explore majors with minimal risk of losing credits.

The General Education Transfer Credit Alignment Policy helps to retain students within the CSCU system by eliminating barriers in navigating specific general education requirements between CSCU institutions; reducing the risk of CT State's general education courses not being applied as general education courses at CSCU receiving institutions; decreasing the risk of students taking excess credit hours; and simplifying academic planning for vertical transfer between CT State to CSCU's four-year institutions.

The policy is a category-to-category alignment of CSCU's two-year and four-year general education course categories, offering students more consistency and flexibility.

Additionally, CT State Community College offers a "Transfer Ticket" degree program. These programs are associate degrees designed for transfer to Central, Eastern, Southern, Western, and Charter Oak. Upon completion of a Transfer Ticket, students will be guaranteed to have only 60 remaining in the reciprocal bachelor's degree at the four-year institution. When students pursue a Transfer Ticket associate degree, they are paired with an academic advisor who will help them choose their courses. The degrees can be attained without incurring extra expenses or requiring extra credits.

After completing a Transfer Ticket associate degree, students can transfer to any Connecticut state university as a junior, confident that you have only half of the degree requirements remaining in your major. Students can pursue a Transfer Ticket associate and bachelor's degree

on a full-time or part-time basis. Financial aid is available for qualified students. Over 80% of those students who graduate with a Transfer Ticket and pursue a bachelor's degree within the CSCU System.

*Additional Information:*

- **CSCU Transfer Council:**

Established in Spring 2023, following participation in the Aspen–AASCU Transfer Intensive, the [CSCU Transfer Council](#) serves as a systemwide body of faculty and staff. It provides recommendations to eliminate transfer barriers, promotes a culture of seamless student progression, and reports directly to the CSCU Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

- **Transfer Explorer:**

Through the [ACT Project](#), CUNY and Ithaca S+R developed the CUNY Transfer Explorer, a public tool showing real-time course applicability across CUNY institutions. Building on this model, four philanthropic foundations are funding development of [Transfer Explorer](#) to be hosted by ITHAKA. Connecticut, Washington, and South Carolina institutions are being recruited as the first implementation cohort. The tool will provide program-level transfer applicability using automated feeds of course equivalencies, catalogs, and program requirements.

- **CSCU Strategic Transfer Engagement Plan (STEP) Pilot:**

[STEP](#), the Transfer Council's first approved recommendation, identifies students' transfer intentions—including destination, timing, and academic interests—to support coordinated advising between CT State and CSCU four-year institutions. This initiative benefits students and enables institutions to target resources effectively.

- **WCSU and CT State Seamless Transfer Pilot:**

Through grant funding and professional development provided Arizona State University's Design Accelerator, Western Connecticut State University and CT State Community College partnered to develop a Transfer Auto-Admit Pilot. The pilot was designed to eliminate barriers by identifying CT State graduates interested in WCSU. By establishing a data sharing agreement, providing a transfer and removing all out-of-pocket expenses; the two institutions were successful in onboarding (acceptance to registration) participants to Western in as little as three days.

## 15. How is the block grant funding CSCU receives apportioned across the institutions?

### **State University Block Grant**

For the Connecticut State University (CSU) block grant; Board of Regents Resolution #09-67 requires that the CSU distribution methodology for the state block grant should be reviewed biennially and agreed to by all four institutions. The current distribution model was approved in October 2021. The distribution model includes the following criteria:

#### Base Funding

- Allocates a common base funding level of \$11M for each university to cover basic costs of operations.

#### Variable Funding

- Allocates the remaining block grant (after subtracting the System Office cost) based on the 3-year average enrollment FTE of full-time and part-time students with out-of-state students weighted by a ratio of 2.4 to 1. The calculated three-year average FTE is based on the annual average of Fall and Spring semesters per census data published by the Office of Decision Support and Institutional Research (DSIR).

#### System Office Cost:

- A portion of the block grant will continue to be assessed to support System Office operations. The amount of these funds will be established by the BOR within its approval of the annual spending plan.

<b>General Fund Block Grant</b>			
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>State Universities</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>		
Central	52,407,616	55,336,377	60,517,404
Eastern	31,526,935	32,580,717	34,203,015
Southern	50,055,641	52,607,585	57,166,044
Western	31,453,284	31,924,137	32,790,708
System Office	8,304,343	8,617,965	9,040,487
<b>Total State Universities GF Block Grant</b>	<b>\$ 173,747,819</b>	<b>\$ 181,066,781</b>	<b>\$ 193,717,658</b>
	<b>% Distribution</b>		
Central		31%	31%
Eastern		18%	18%
Southern		29%	30%
Western		18%	17%
System Office		5%	5%
<b>State Universities GF Block Grant</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>% Inc(Dec) year-over-year</b>		
Central		5.6%	9.4%
Eastern		3.3%	5.0%
Southern		5.1%	8.7%
Western		1.5%	2.7%
System Office		3.8%	4.9%
<b>Year-over-year Inc(Dec) GF Block Grant</b>		<b>4.2%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

**CT State Community College block grant**

In July 2023, the twelve separately accredited community colleges consolidated into the singly accredited CT State Community College. The data table below presents the FY25 and FY26 distribution of the CT State block grant for the three components: the CT State College (12 campuses and colleges office); System Office; and Shared Services administered by System Office, as follows:

<b>General Fund Block Grant</b>			
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>CT State Community College</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>		
CT State CC (12 campuses and college office NB)	\$179,952,354	\$196,700,887	\$210,742,909
System Office	22,882,150	17,895,281	17,342,001
Shared Services	5,660,837	6,075,856	6,632,717
<b>Total CT State GF Block Grant</b>	<b>\$208,495,341</b>	<b>\$220,672,024</b>	<b>\$234,717,627</b>
	<b>% Distribution</b>		
CT State CC (12 campuses and college office NB)	86%	89%	90%
System Office	11%	8%	7%
Shared Services	3%	3%	3%
<b>Total CT State GF Block Grant</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**16 & 17. What is the system office's budget for FY 26? How many people work in the system office? What is the system office's budget as a percentage of the total CSCU budget? Provide system office and shared services within system office numbers and provide a list of the shared services functions.**

Per the most recent BOR adopted FY26 Mid-year Projection, *the System Office budget represents 2% of total CSCU operating budget.*

**System Office:**

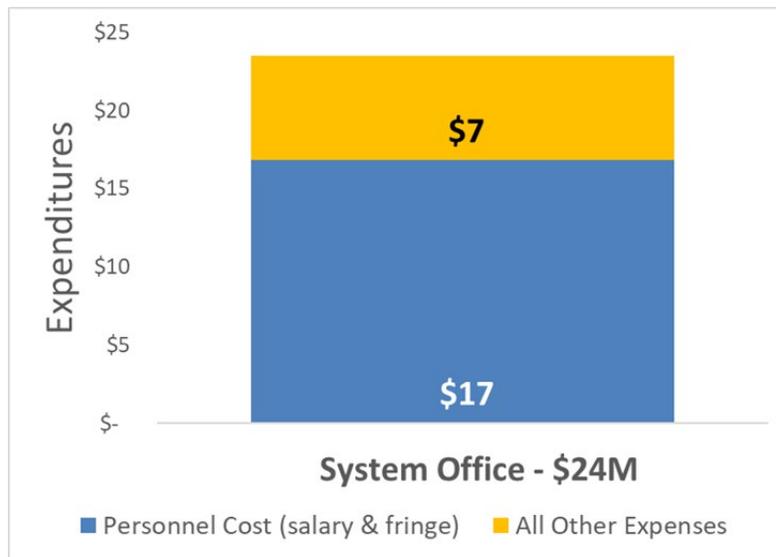
	<b>FY2026 Mid-year Projection</b>	
<i>Millions (\$)</i>	<b>System Office</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Personnel Cost (Salaries and Fringe Benefits)	\$	17
All Other Expenditures (OE)		7
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>CSCU Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,285</b>
<b>% of Total CSCU Operating Budget</b>		<b>2%</b>

The CSCU System Office comprises core management functions essential for systemwide governance and oversight. These include the Chancellor’s Office, Board Affairs, External Affairs, Legal Department, Academic and Student Affairs, HR/Labor Relations, Decision Support and Institutional Research, Finance and Administration and the newly establish Office of Compliance and Audit.

The CSCU System Office serves as a resource hub that aligns priorities, removes friction, advances partnerships, and advocates for institutions and learners, allowing its colleges and universities to focus on delivering educational excellence.

The System Office continues to evaluate where we can adapt to changing demands, invest strategically, and align operations with the priorities of **Central Connecticut State University, Charter Oak State College, CT State Community College, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and Western Connecticut State University.**

<b>SYSTEM OFFICE</b>		
<b>82.5</b> Total Headcount	<b>KEY FUNCTION AREA</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
		Academic and Student Affairs
	Accounting	2
	Board Affairs	2
	Finance and Budget	5
	Compliance and Audit	5
	Chancellor's Office	4
	External Affairs	7
	Facilities	5
	Human Resources & Labor Relations	8
	Institutional Research	3
	IT	15.5
	Legal	7
	Business Services and Procurement	7.5



**Shared Services:**

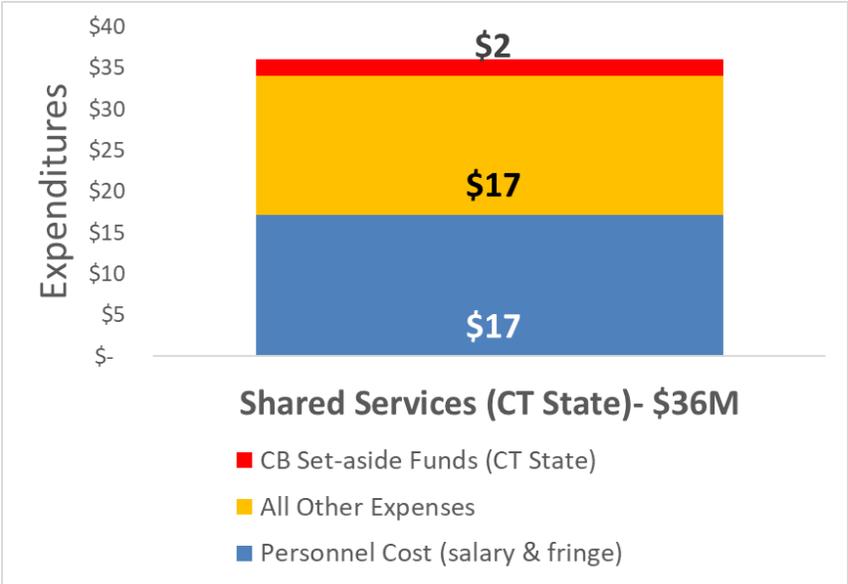
<i>Millions (\$)</i>	<b>FY2026 Mid-year Projection</b>	
	<b>Shared Services</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Personnel Cost (Salaries and Fringe Benefits)	\$	17
All Other Expenditures (OE)		17
CB set-aside funds (CT State CC)		2
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>CT State CC Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>490</b>
<b>% of Total CT State CC Operating Budget</b>		<b>7%</b>

Shared Services focuses on operational functions that support all CSCU colleges and universities, with a majority serving CT State Community College as part of the one-college consolidation model. This structure enhances efficiency, reduces costs, and improves service quality across the system.

**SHARED SERVICES**

107.5 Total Headcount	KEY FUNCTION AREA	
	Key Function Area	Headcount
	Accounting	20
	Facilities	4
	HR Operations	13.5
	IT	34
	Payroll Operations	14
	Business Services and Procurement	22

*A comprehensive review of System Office and Shared Services functions is underway to better align departments with the needs of CSCU’s colleges and universities. The headcounts provided are mid-year projections and may be revised upon completion of the review this fiscal year.*



## System Office & Shared Services:

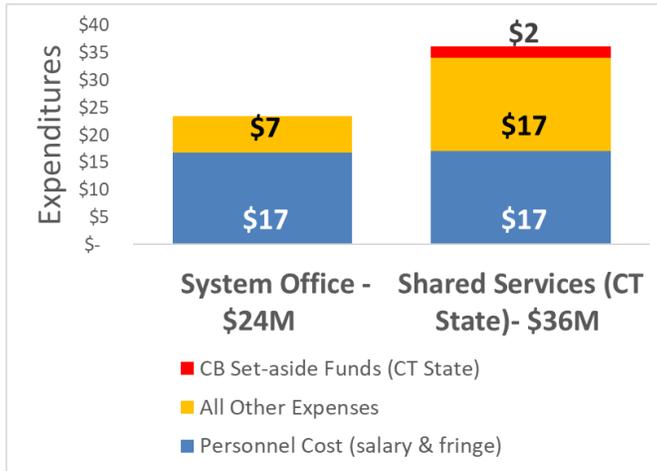
Millions (\$)

### Expenditures

Personnel Cost (Salaries and Fringe Benefits)  
 All Other Expenditures (OE)  
 CB set-aside funds (CT State CC)  
**Total Expenditures**

### FY2026 Mid-year Projection

	System Office	Shared Services
Personnel Cost (Salaries and Fringe Benefits)	\$ 17	\$ 17
All Other Expenditures (OE)	7	17
CB set-aside funds (CT State CC)		2
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 24</b>	<b>\$ 36</b>



## System Office/Shared Services FY26 Mid-year Proj - Revenue and Expenditures

