



**Connecticut State
Colleges & Universities**

*Asnuntuck Community College
Capital Community College
Central Connecticut State University
Charter Oak State College
Eastern Connecticut State University
Gateway Community College
Housatonic Community College
Manchester Community College
Middlesex Community College
Naugatuck Valley Community College
Northwestern CT Community College
Norwalk Community College
Quinebaug Valley Community College
Southern Connecticut State University
Three Rivers Community College
Tunxis Community College
Western Connecticut State University*

**PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH
LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

December, 2020

The Opportunity

The Board of Regents of the Connecticut State College & Universities (CSCU) invites nominations and applications for the position of President. This leader will succeed current President Mark Ojakian, who is retiring on December 31, 2020 after five years of valuable contributions to the System. He brought vision, stability and student-focused leadership to a System in transition amid a turbulent environment for higher education.

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of CSCU and is responsible for the overarching leadership and management of the entire CSCU System. The CSCU System comprises 17 institutions and serves more than 80,000 students with an operating budget of \$1.2 billion. The President is accountable for providing transformative leadership, focus, and strategic vision for the advancement of public higher education in the state of Connecticut.

The CSCU Board of Regents is seeking in its next President an effective leader committed to ensuring the continued transformation and success of the System. As a spokesperson for CSCU and higher education with the Governor, the General Assembly, the business community, and the public, this individual will have the opportunity to achieve the following professional and personal accomplishments:

- ✓ Lead a respected statewide System of public higher education that is in the midst of a transformation to further enhance the delivery of high quality, affordable, accessible educational opportunities.
- ✓ Oversee a diverse mix of two and four-year institutions and campuses as well as graduate education and the state's on-line college.
- ✓ Work directly with an outstanding cohort of Presidents, Community College Campus CEOs and senior leaders who are aligned with the achievement of the collective goals of CSCU and the state.
- ✓ Collaborate regularly with Connecticut's top elected officials and senior leaders in the private and civic sectors.
- ✓ Enhance success within the system by engaging with outstanding faculty who are leaders in their disciplines, skilled teachers and researchers, frequently in concert with students, to improve classroom learning and identify strategic solutions.
- ✓ Build recognition as an acknowledged and transformative leader in the field of higher education and participate regularly in collaborative initiatives with top leaders within higher education and in the broader communities throughout Connecticut and the region.
- ✓ Be a proven leader who manages a strong executive team, appreciates the importance of academic endeavors as key drivers for the state's vitality, and is skilled in navigating fiscal challenges.

The President will ideally reside in Connecticut, a state known for its rich quality of life, plethora of cultural options, science and technology strengths, and the diversity of its communities.

For more information regarding how to make a nomination or to express interest in this opportunity, please see the section titled "Procedure for Candidacy" near the conclusion of this document.

Connecticut State Colleges & Universities

CSCU is the state's public higher education system of community colleges, regional universities and the state's on-line college. Benefiting students, as well as Connecticut and its citizens, CSCU:

- Offers expansive access to affordable high-quality undergraduate and graduate full-time and part-time educational opportunities.
- Instills a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Promotes economic growth and workforce development.
- Provides vital services to communities and individuals.

Mission

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

Vision

The Connecticut State Colleges & Universities will continually increase the number of students completing personally and professionally rewarding academic programs.

Priorities

In June 2013, CSCU adopted – with valuable input from a broad array of System stakeholders – the following goals:

- **A SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR** - Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college.
- **STUDENT SUCCESS** - Graduate more students with the knowledge and skills to achieve their life and career goal.
- **AFFORDABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY** - Maximize access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable.
- **INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH** - Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast changing world.
- **EQUITY** - Eliminate achievement disparities among different ethnic/racial, economic, and gender groups.

CSCU Governance

Board of Regents

A 17-member Board of Regents governs CSCU. The Board's composition is as follows:

- **Board Chair**

The chair of the Board of Regents is appointed by the Governor and the Board of Regents elects a vice-chair and other officers from among its membership.

- **15 Voting Members**

9 - appointed by the Governor.

4 - appointed by legislative leadership, of whom one is a specialist in K-12 education and one each is an alumnus or an alumna of the Connecticut Community Colleges, Connecticut State Universities, and Charter Oak State College.

2 - students chosen by their peers as Chair and Vice-chair of the Student Advisory Committee.

- **6 Non-Voting, Ex-Officio Members**

Commissioner of the Department of Education, Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner of the Department of Labor, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee.

Among many responsibilities, the board adopts an operating budget for the CSCU system; sets statewide tuition and student fee policies; establishes financial aid policies; reviews, licenses, and accredits academic programs; adopts policies addressing human resources operations; and, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders, conducts searches for and selects campus leaders. In addition to governance responsibilities, the board also holds broad responsibilities for development and coordination of statewide higher education policy. Currently, the board appoints the CSCU President, the three community college regional presidents and the 17 campus leaders as well as the Interim President of the proposed CT State Community College.

The Board of Regents conducts much of its work through the following committees:

- Audit
- Academics and Student Affairs
- Finance & Infrastructure
- Human Resources and Administration
- Special Committee on Collective Bargaining

CSCU System Office

The CSCU System office is headquartered in Hartford. Members of the staff assist the Board of Regents in its work through the Board's Committee system. This staff also implements Board policies as well as recommending System-wide policies and initiatives. Under the leadership of the President, System office staff members advocate on behalf of the 17 CSCU institutions and facilitate collaboration and efficiencies among the institutions. The total CSCU budget is \$1.22 billion and the total workforce is 11,900 (5200 FT and 6700 PT) Revenues are drawn from tuition and fees (\$511M), housing and food (\$63M) and the state appropriation (\$635M). The System office is supported by a staff of 183.

The core System offices reporting to the CSCU president through the Chief of Staff/Chief Operating Officer and the VP of Academic and Student Affairs/Provost are:

- **Finance**
Developing fiscal and administrative policy, and providing professional advice, fiscal analysis and recommendations on sound financial planning
- **Government Relations**
Working with members of the CT General Assembly and the state's federal delegation on higher education and workforce development
- **Human Resources**
Overseeing the employment terms, personnel policies and work-force environment for CSCU employees. Also accountable for collective bargaining, relationships with CSCU's unions and non-bargaining unit employees, and managing employee benefits
- **Information Technology**
Facilitating the collaboration and coordination of information technology across CSCU institutions and the System.
- **Public Affairs & Marketing**
Advancing initiatives and programs across CSCU institutions and increasing public awareness of our colleges and universities.

- **Research & System Effectiveness**

Providing transparency and accountability to internal and external stakeholders and advancing use of business intelligence across CSCU.

- **Sponsored Programs**

Overseeing the effective and efficient management of System-wide grants for the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities.

- **Academic and Student Affairs**

Overseeing student affairs and system academic policy and standards including, but not limited to, program approval, academic standards and transfer policy. Monitors and evaluates institutional effectiveness and viability.

CSCU President

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the CSCU System and has broad responsibilities, including:

- Advising the Board of Regents on System-wide policy.
- Conducting System-wide planning.
- Coordinating and arbitrating among the institutions.
- Assisting the institutions in achieving performance goals in accordance with their adopted performance accountability plans.
- Overseeing technical assistance to institutions such as legal, human resources and financial services.
- Reporting to the Board at its regularly scheduled meetings and outside the meeting schedule whenever appropriate
- Performing the duties the Board of Regents may assign and implementing Board policies.

The President is responsible for providing transformative leadership, focus, and strategic vision as Chief Executive Officer of the System. In conjunction with – and at the direction of – the Board of Regents, the President is expected to develop and implement strategic plans and directions for quality growth of the System and its component institutions, including plans that foster collaboration with other universities and partnerships with corporations and non-profit organizations for the advancement of public higher education and workforce development activities in Connecticut.

It is important that the President brings a record of effectiveness in political and governmental arenas to foster ongoing support and resources to meet the goals and objectives of the CSCU System. The President is expected to work tirelessly to advance CSCU on its pathway to excellence, and to embrace the Board of Regents' broad-based strategic priorities.

As the CEO of the System, the President ensures that institution Presidents as well as the Interim President of the proposed CT State Community College are responsive to Board policies and priorities and the Board is informed about Presidents' needs and issues. The President promotes and ensures a collaborative working relationship among the System institutions. The President also oversees all search processes established by Board policy for community colleges' campus CEOs, University Presidents, and community colleges regional presidents. The System CEO recommends candidates for the Board's consideration for appointment.

The CSCU President reports directly to the Board of Regents. The CSCU President supervises the 4 university presidents, the president of Charter Oak State College, the 3 community college Regional Presidents, the CSCU Provost and VP of Academic and Student Affairs and the CSCU Chief of Staff/Chief Operating Officer. As such, the CSCU President annually evaluates these leaders and reports a summary of evaluation results to the Board.

Within this relationship, the Presidents serve as the CEOs of their institutions with a high degree of delegated authority, and work to advance the quality and impact of their institutions within the mission approved by the Board. The Presidents are also expected to work as part of a team to advance the Board and System agenda.

Leadership Priorities

The next President of CSCU will have a complex mix of strategic, administrative, financial, and advocacy responsibilities. Beyond the day-to-day duties of managing the System, the next President will want to put a particular emphasis on the following priorities:

Ensure the State of Connecticut's continued support for—and investment in—the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

In recent years, the majority of U.S. states have been reducing (or keeping flat) their appropriations for higher education. This will be even further compounded in the next budget cycle given major drops in state revenues due to the pandemic. The state has historically acknowledged that CSCU is a key driver of Connecticut's economic development. CSCU's academic programs should continuously reflect the state's workforce needs and required skills to boost economic growth and increase individual opportunities.

As the principal champion of CSCU's mission with public officials, the next President must build strong relationships with key elected officials - especially the Governor and General Assembly – in order to convey CSCU's "value add" that ensures the state's continued investment in its mission. The President must aggressively reach out to key leaders in the legislature, local government, the corporate sector, and the civic sector to personally build alliances and convey a high level of enthusiasm and confidence for the System and its universities and colleges.

Enhance CSCU's capacity to deliver public higher education in an effective, efficient and affordable manner

The next CSCU President must bring a leadership style and strategic agenda that will warrant CSCU's continued respect and significance within the state of Connecticut. The President will be expected to seek out new areas that leverage the strengths of each campus and forge an even stronger System. This includes exploiting further opportunities for academic, financial and programmatic synergies among the CSCU campuses in order to gain further efficiencies and optimize the delivery of academic programs to CSCU students.

A major initiative towards achieving these goals was launched in 2017 under the banner of Students First, and is aimed at achieving significant improvements in student success, equity imbalances, and financial stability. This plan involves two specific administrative strategies. The first being the development of a single administrative infrastructure to eliminate redundant functions System-wide and provide shared services to all colleges and universities. The second is the merger of the 12 individually accredited community colleges into one accredited and managed college with campuses remaining open at all current locations statewide.

This initiative is a major priority for the Board and is moving forward with completion anticipated by 2023. The next CSCU President will be expected to be an engaged leader during its final implementation phases. With this plan and others, the President will serve as a forceful advocate of higher education transformation and should model entrepreneurial behavior that facilitates this and other new areas of opportunity for CSCU. The President will foster the organizational, cultural, and behavioral changes necessary to realize such change.

Intensify CSCU's efforts to improve the quality, access, affordability, and completion of public higher education

The CSCU student bodies are highly diverse, comprised of many first-generation students. The vast majority of students come from Connecticut and will remain as long-term residents of the state. As such, public support for CSCU will be influenced by the System's successes in areas such as:

- Advancing the quality of its institutions while maintaining the affordability of its programs;
- Aggressively working to overcome the disparities in student achievement;
- Supporting college completion, especially for low-income and underrepresented populations;
- Giving students convenient access to educational programs and accommodating their needs for flexibility in transferring and/or changing programs.

These must be continued priorities for the next President, who will need to work closely with each CSCU institution to ensure that plans are in place to push higher levels of "nimbleness" and student-centric responsiveness that lead to progress in these areas. CSCU should build and

enforce a culture of data-driven decision making that influences System and campus strategies aimed at improving enrollment, retention, graduation rates and employment opportunities.

Serve as a thoughtful steward of CSCU's resources and identify and secure new sources of support

CSCU's finances – like most institutions of higher learning – are currently stressed due to the impact on enrollment of COVID. While the budgets have been balanced using reserve funds, this is not a sustainable option going forward. It is imperative that new sources of revenue be identified. The next President must encourage the campuses to explore opportunities to build new resource capabilities. While student tuition and the state's appropriations comprise a large part of the CSCU budget there will be continued downward pressures on both of these revenue sources. Partnerships with the private sector, expansion of the student base, and private philanthropy are avenues for supplemental resources to serve the CSCU mission. An example of a compelling partnership is the Teamworks workforce development plan, which will train skilled workers to support Connecticut's 4,100 manufacturers.

The value of higher education is encountering increasing skepticism across the country, as the public is becoming wary of the increasing cost of post-secondary education. Parents and students are more focused on the return on their investment through their tax dollars and tuition checks that support colleges and universities. Through its president, CSCU sets high standards for accountability and fiscal prudence. The new President is a primary interface between the System and the General Assembly and must make it clear from the outset that CSCU does add value to students and to the economy and that the System must continue to be effective and efficient in its delivery of education.

Attract, develop and retain outstanding leadership talent

One of the core strengths of CSCU is its leadership at both the campus and System levels. The component institutions are served by a diverse mix of high performing leaders, each of whom brings a style compatible to their respective campus or System entity. As the CEO of the System, the President must continue to build, nurture, and support exceptional leaders (especially those Presidents and senior executives reporting directly to the President). As such, the CSCU President will be drawn on to effectively mentor, develop and engage these leaders.

Preferred Qualifications and Qualities

CSCU seeks a leader who ideally presents most if not all of the following professional and academic qualifications:

- **Solid academic credentials**, preferably an advanced or terminal degree. A candidate without such academic credentials who has demonstrated extensive and successful executive-level experience leading a complex public, private or non-profit organization will be considered if she or he presents the qualities and intellect that will complement the academic focus of CSCU institutions.

- A personal appreciation for – and commitment to – CSCU’s longstanding culture of **shared governance**, where the opinions of faculty, staff, and students are sought out and considered in System and campus decisions. Ideally, candidates should have experience in – or practical understanding of – collective bargaining.
- **Governance and Board experience** gained as a community/corporate board director, board chair, commissioner, governmental appointee, or a similar leadership role through which he or she has demonstrated successfully the skills necessary to counsel and advise the Board of Regents with respect to policies, initiatives, and goals for CSCU.
- An outstanding reputation for **executive-level management** with the documented ability to lead change and growth, along with a clear understanding of the financial sophistication required to manage a financially complex institution (including the expertise to oversee the preparation of the annual operating budgets for CSCU and its component institutions and oversee the budget preparation and submission to the Governor). Problem-solving aptitude and crisp, timely decision making will be particularly valuable here.
- Extraordinarily effective **advocacy skills**. The President represents and articulates CSCU’s academic and administrative policies, needs, and concerns to the general public and constituencies at the community, state, regional, and national levels. As the face and voice of CSCU, the President will be called on regularly to speak compellingly on behalf of the System and its campuses and must have fully developed communications and messaging skills, including the ability to interact regularly and effectively with the media.
- Proven ability to **develop, advance, and fortify alliances** with business, industry, government, academia, public schools, and community groups. The President is expected to ensure that CSCU is a leader in regional economic development, directing the establishment of opportunities to foster mutually beneficial local and state-wide community relations and outcomes.
- A keen **understanding of the governmental process**, with skills and political savvy to ensure that legislative goals are identified and met.
- An appreciation for the **unique nature of a system** of related entities, and how to best harness the collective assets of a multi-faceted enterprise.
- The ability to **balance the oversight** of CSCU components, functioning as a leader and mentor to the Presidents, and ensuring that the System staff is fully attentive to the needs of each institution. The instincts and commitment to building a workplace culture that attracts and retains the best talent.
- A working appreciation for **information technology and social media**, and the potential for these platforms to enable innovations in teaching and learning.
- Personal experience in successfully leading people and organizations through mission and culture change.

CSCU seeks a leader who ideally presents most if not all of the following personal qualities:

- A personal philosophy and moral compass representing the highest standard of ethics and integrity—and who will lead others by the same example.
- A natural commitment to students and their well-being, and an on-going commitment to sharing in their academic and co-curricular activities.
- A keen appreciation for the rich diversity of CSCU and its campuses and a demonstrated and personal commitment to the enhancing the diversity of faculty, staff, and student populations, celebrating cultural diversity and a fostering a culture of inclusion throughout the System and the communities it serves.
- A leadership style that is transparent, forthright, and approachable, and engenders confidence and trust through seeking consensus.
- A personal style that can genuinely adapt to the styles and personalities of the diverse constituents with whom the CSCU President will be working.
- The fortitude and temperament to deal with outside pressures, opposition, and the general "noise" that arises when high profile, transformative initiatives are being advanced.
- Relationship building skills that reflect a genuine interest in others and that seek ways to achieve mutual goals.
- Communications skills that include reflective listening and the ability to speak powerfully and effectively in both formal and spontaneous settings.
- A compelling and energetic personality with a demonstrated history of strategizing, setting appropriate and reasonable goals, and achieving those objectives with personal integrity and through establishing a culture of accountability.
- High energy and demonstrated leadership capacity to shape, articulate, lead, and implement the purposeful, engaging, and dynamic mission of CSCU in the twenty-first century.
- A genuine passion for higher education – especially public higher education - and its role in transforming individuals and communities, along with a deep respect for academic faculty and staff for their contributions to the academy's mission.
- A leadership style that conveys wisdom and intelligence, and engenders broad-based respect that inspires institutional accountability, efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and the ethical and effective performance of all leaders within CSCU.
- The ability to understand and recognize the important role the campus leaders and their executive teams play in the overall success of CSCU – and the capacity to step back at times to encourage the Presidents and their campuses to take the lead.

- A high degree of self-confidence but expressed with humility, humor and selflessness, with the ability to let others take the limelight and attention as appropriate to the occasion.
- The instincts and courage to challenge the status quo and motivate people and organizations to excel and innovate.

Procedure for Candidacy

Nominations, expressions of interest, and applications are invited. Interested individuals should provide a letter describing their interest in and qualifications for the position and a current CV. This material should be sent via email to CSCU's consultants at [WK candidate portal](#).

This search will be conducted with respect for candidate confidentiality. To receive full consideration, applications should be received by February 5, 2021. The Search Committee and Search Advisory Committee will host interviews in late February and the intent of the Board of Regents is to finalize and announce an appointment by May, 2021.

Confidential inquiries, nominations and questions concerning this search may be sent by email to WittKieffer consultants John Thornburgh and Lucy Leske at CSCUPresident@wittkieffer.com.

The CSCU System is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans.

The material presented in this position specification should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Connecticut State Colleges and Universities documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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