

Chronology and Critique of the BOR Plans and Projects, 2010-2017

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What follows is a analysis and critique of the plans and projects of the Board of Regents for Public Higher Education of Connecticut. It has been prepared by a university faculty member with 28 years service, and who served for 4 years on System level committees of the previous Board of Trustees of Connecticut State Universities, and is a member of the university Senate. Please submit to me any errors or omissions you feel need correction or addition.

Background to the BOR

In 2011 recently elected Gov. Dannel Malloy proposed the creation of a Board of Regents for public higher education (hereafter, BOR), with the stated objectives to save money through centralization of functions and economies of scale, and to assure efficient student transition from community colleges to universities. Initially, it was proposed that UCONN be part of the merged system, but following protest by UCONN this did not occur. That left the four CSU Universities (Southern, Eastern, Central and Western), 12 community colleges, and the Charter Oak State College (distance learning). For an initial period of time the Board of Higher Education reported to the BOR, with the unusual

result that program modifications from UCONN were transmitted from the BHE to the BOR of which UCONN was not a part. The BHE, now Office of Higher Education, was subsequently removed from the BOR.

Problems at the previous CSU Board of Trustees

The Connecticut State University System was created in 1983 with a Board of Trustees headed by a President as of the early 1990s, a Chancellor, for the four state universities: Eastern, Central, Western and Southern. The Community Colleges in CT began with the creation of the NorthWest Community College in the 1970s.

The last iteration of the BOT of the four CSU Universities was headed by a Chancellor, David Carter, succeeding its previous chancellor, Bill Cibes (former head of the Office of Policy and Management – OPM - under Gov. Weicker and a political science professor at Connecticut College). Carter was previously a faculty member (education at UCONN) and Pres. Of Eastern Connecticut State University. In 2010 controversy arose over salary raises to senior CSU administrators, including Carter, who in addition received a substantial (\$80k) retention bonus for staying on as Chancellor. There was also controversy over a procedure, subsequently ruled to be incorrect under state law, by which the President of Southern Connecticut State University was dismissed by the executive committee of the Board, but not by vote of the whole Board. A campaign for votes of non-confidence in Carter was launched by two faculty members at Southern and at Central, but neither university Senate voted non-confidence. Presentations by the protesters were made to elected officials, including the heads of legislative committees on higher education. The combination of the above factors formed the political backdrop to the newly elected Governor's proposal to dissolve the BOT of the four CSU's, and create a merged BOR for public higher education (with UCONN subsequently excused).

Establishment of the Board of Regents

Legislation to consolidate governance of public higher education in CT was passed in 2011, and entered into effect July 1, 2011. (Sec. 10a-1a, Chapt. 185 of the Statutes of the State of Connecticut. The Board consists of up to 21 members representing various constituencies within the state, with the President appointed by the Governor. The Board also has a Chairman, who presides at its meetings; day to day direction is provided by the President.

Major Issues and Events of the BOR

What follows is an effort to summarize, based on documents of the BOR, resolutions of faculty Senate, and reliable online reports of the major issues and events of the BOR:

Multiple Presidents (5) in 6 years at the BOR

The past 7 years is divided into the mandates of the 5 presidents as follows:

| Period | President | Note |
|------------|--------------------------|---|
| 07-01-2011 | Michael Meotti (interim) | Former Pres. Of United Way, CT; became executive VP under Kennedy |

| Period | President | Note |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| 09-12-2011 | Robert A. Kennedy | Formerly Pres. Of the Univ. of Maine |
| 10-12-2012 | Phillip Austin (interim) | Formerly Pres. Of UConn |
| 07-01-2013 | Gregory Gray | Formerly Chancellor of Riverside Community College District (3 colleges) |
| 09-28-2015 | Mark Ojakian (interim) | Formerly Chief of Staff to Gov. Dannel Malloy (Democrat) |
| 04-06-2017 | Mark Okakian | No national search; contract extended 3 years by Board |

Ref: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut_Board_of_Regents_for_Higher_Education

The full title is President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education of the Connecticut States Colleges and Universities. The abbreviation was initially CONNSCU, subsequently changed to CSCU. Of the five presidents, only one – Phillip Austin (interim 2012-2013) had previous experience in public higher education in Connecticut. The following are general issues which have characterized the BOR.

Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs)

Based on legislative intent, the Board has focused on Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs) by which community college students can be advised as to courses to take in their two year stay which would fully transfer (upon completion of their associates degree) to one of the four CSU universities. This work is largely conducted by two faculty members, one from the community colleges and one from a CSU university who are reassigned on a full time (or almost full time) basis to the BOR. A number of these TAPs have been produced, and students are in the “pipeline” to transfer on their basis. It has been noted that this work could and has been done by a very small subset of the over 150 staff at the BOR headquarters. Moreover, it is not clear how these TAPs once published will be updated to take into account curricular changes at the universities.

Distinct Missions of the CCs and CSUs

The legislature also intended that the Board clearly distinguish the distinct missions of the Community Colleges on the one hand, and the public CSU universities on the other.

“The Board of Regents for Higher Education shall develop and implement, not later than December 1, 2011, a plan for maintaining the distinct missions of the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College and report on such plan to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and appropriations in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a not later than January 1, 2012, and annually thereafter.” Ref: https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/pub/chap_185.htm#sec_10a-1c

It has been a consistent complaint of faculty at the universities that the Board in focusing its strategic planning almost entirely on the community colleges, including the current merger plan (“Students First”), has failed to fully understand the teaching, research and community outreach functions of the universities, other than through awards for excellence in teaching and research and conferences already initiated by the preceding

BOT/CSU. Moreover, proposals to consolidate the “back offices” of the universities have been seen as infringements of the autonomy of the institutions, especially as concerns financial operations and direct student services such as enrollment and registration.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)

Legislation creating the BOR also created the Faculty Advisory Committee, initially consisting of 7 members: 3 faculty from the community colleges, 3 from the state universities, and 1 from Charter Oak. The following year, 3 additional administrative faculty were added, one each from the CCs, CSUs, and Charter Oak. Additionally, in 2013 and 2014 the Chair and Vice-Chair were admitted as ex-officio, non-voting members of the BOR. They do not participate in closed sessions, but can serve on committees of the Board.

The FAC has acted to advise the Board on matters relevant to faculty (both teaching and administrative) and was very critical of Transform 2020 and “Design Thinking”, as well as significant aspects of “Students First” (to be discussed later in this document). The FAC also participates in annual conferences on shared governance and student success. Faculty serving on this body have closely followed the work of the BOR and acted as a kind of “loyal opposition” or principled opposition to misguided projects that the BOR has developed, along with suggestions for improvements to existing operations. Note: there is also a Student Advisory Committee, whose Chair and Vice-Chair also sit as ex-officio non-voting members of the Board.

Support Staff for the BOR: numbers and roles

The support staff on Woodland Street for the BOR has increased considerably from that of the previous BOT/CSU, even taking into account the addition of support staff from the previous Community College board. The number of staff, for a Board of just over a dozen members, has oscillated around 150. Currently, the breakdown is as follows for a total of 144 (based on the BOR Directory):

| Area | Number | Note |
|------------------------|--------|--|
| Academic Affairs | 13 | Includes a Vice President for Community Colleges and one for State Universities who are paid salary bonuses above their campus President salaries; two faculty (one CC, one CSU) as transfer articulation managers; and a full time Provost for Academic Affairs |
| Board Affairs | 1 | Administrative Assistant |
| Facilities | 9 | All CSU campuses have their own facility management teams |
| Finance | 22 | Second largest department |
| Financial Aid | 1 | Smallest unit, along with the next one |
| Government Relations | 1 | Smallest unit, along with preceding one |
| Human Resources | 8 | |
| Information Technology | 67 | Largest group, more than at the largest university in the system |

| Area | Number | Note |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---|
| Legal Affairs | 6 | |
| Nursing | 2 | |
| President’s Office | 3 | Includes the President and his Chief of staff, and an Associate for Board Affairs |
| Public Affairs | 4 | |
| Research and System Effectiveness | 4 | |
| Student/Academic Information Systems | 3 | Could be included in Information Technology area. |
| Total | 144 | Number has oscillated around 150 since inception of the Board |

Source : CSU Directories, at <http://www.ct.edu/directory>

The following points are worthy of note: (1) The largest department at the Board is constituted by Information Technology: 67 (or 70 including the three Student/Academic InfoSys staff), accounting for 46.5% of staff (using the lower figure) or 48.6% of staff using the larger figure. This is significantly more IT staff than the largest of the CSU universities, which has over 10,000 FTE and more than 300 full time faculty, as well as a similar number of staff. Some system IT support is required for the BOR itself and for those community colleges which do not manage their own IT – eg, which do not have their own email server, and for the common Banner database for the community colleges. But the total number far exceeds those needs, for a system office on Woodland Street with no faculty and no students.

It is perhaps surprising that the smallest departments at the BOR (other than the single individual servicing the board itself) are Financial Aid and Government Relations, given the obvious importance of these areas.

Note: The number of staff currently at the System Office is lower than when it was first established, as the system office also listed Charts a Course staff (an elementary ed. program) and the Board of Higher Education (now Office), which are no longer part of the CSU system.

Annual Cost of the System Office

The current “Students First” plan calls for savings in the order of \$41 million per year. The System Office itself costs, on average at least \$35 million per year. The following are the most recent figures available to this author:

| Year | Total | Comment |
|------------------|---------------|--|
| 2010 | \$ 34,644,075 | First year of BOR |
| 2011 | \$ 37,765,547 | Increase of nearly \$3 million |
| 2012 | \$ 35,206,076 | May reflect removal of BHE and Charts A Course |
| 2013 | \$ 35,022,766 | Stable |
| 2014 | \$ 33,325,376 | Decrease of 1.7 million |
| 2015 (estimated) | \$ 38,290,873 | Projection |

Source: System Office Spend and Savings – FY10 through FY 15 (Proj)
Excel SpreadSheet

Given the bloated size of the staff at the System Office, accounting for the largest fraction of the BOR budget, at app \$ 21 million to \$ 25 million per year, it is safe to estimate 2015-16 and 2016-17 at least at the average for the preceding 5 years, app. \$35,000,000. Extrapolated to the end of the current fiscal year that would make 8 years x \$35,000,000 or app. \$ 280,000,000, over ¼ of a billion dollars, for rather slender results – essentially, the failed or failing projects to be listed below, exclusive of the comparatively small amount (essentially, 2 faculty salaries and support staff to assist them) spent on the Transfer Articulation Policies, whose application has only just begun.

Period of Robert A. Kennedy as President

The first full time president, Robert A. Kennedy (previously, President of the University of Maine) appointed his interim predecessor, Michael Meotti, as executive Vice President.

Resignation of Robert Kennedy as President

Kennedy, along with Meotti, was forced to resign after just one year, in Oct. 2012 as the result of the following controversies:

a/ Despite a state-wide public sector salary freeze, Kennedy awarded pay raises to executive staff, including \$48,000 to VP Meotti;

b/ Pressure by Kennedy and Meotti had been placed on several community college presidents to take “expedited separations” in what was perceived by stakeholders as an attempt to force a consolidation of the community colleges;

c/ Kennedy himself had been absent for 6 weeks from the System Office, on what he termed “professional development” at his summer home in Minnesota. Ref:

<https://ctmirror.org/2012/10/12/embattled-board-regents-chief-resigns/>

Period of Gregory Gray as President

Following a national search, Robert A. Gray was appointed President of the BOR. He had previously been the chancellor of the Riverside Community College District, which incorporated three community colleges in California.

Transform 2020

Gray proposed a major reorganization of public higher education known as “Transform 2020”. The plan for the project, for which up to \$20 million had been allocated, was outsourced to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a group with no previous experience or knowledge of public higher education in Connecticut. At a cost of more than \$1.9 million the BCG produced a total of 36 “Road Maps”, incorporating 743 “Milestones”, most of which were imaginary or unfounded on consultation with faculty and staff at the campuses. At least 12 of the constituent units of ConnSCU (as it was then termed) voted non-confidence. Ref: <https://ctmirror.org/2015/08/14/gray-resigns-as-president-of-connecticut-college-system/>

Attempted Closing of the Meriden Satellite Campus

In addition, Gray had previously attempted to close the Meriden campus of the Middlesex Community College, located in the district of Sen. Dante Bartolomeo, co-chair of the Higher Education committee. Following disclosure of the plan, the Senate passed a law requiring legislative approval for the closure of any higher education campus. Ref: <https://ctmirror.org/2015/04/08/senate-to-rebuke-gray-stop-meriden-campus-closure/>

“Go Back to Get Ahead”

Not untypical of specific System Office projects was “Go Back to Get Ahead” which was intended to recruit individuals who had not completed higher education to return to complete their degree, usually an associate’s degree at a community college. Of a \$1.5 million allocation for the first year, ½ was spent on software and system office staff. All that remains of this project is a two line web page which states “The Go Back to Get Ahead program has now ended. The Go Back to Get Ahead program received nearly 9,000 inquiries and enrolled over 1,400 Connecticut residents in the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities from June 2014 to March 2015. Thank you to everyone who took part in this program, and each of the seventeen [Connecticut State Colleges & Universities](#).” No further details on retention or graduation rates, or reasons for discontinuing of the program are provided. Ref: <https://www.gobacktogetahead.com/>

Resignation of Pres. Gray

Faced with the non-confidence votes at CSCU campuses and public dissatisfaction in particular over the BCG contracts, Pres. Gray resigned in mid August 2015, with the following statement: “Please be informed of my intent to resign my position as President for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities as of Dec. 31, 2015.” Ref: Ref: <https://ctmirror.org/2015/08/14/gray-resigns-as-president-of-connecticut-college-system/>

Period of Mark Ojakian as President

In 2016 Governor Malloy named his former Chief of Staff, Mark Ojakian to head the BOR as President, in the expectation that he would avoid the elementary political mistakes committed by his predecessor Gregory Gray. Pres. Ojakian had no previous experience in public higher education, in Connecticut or elsewhere. Ojakian was initially named as interim President, and then reappointed by the Board for a three year term in 2017. No national or affirmative action search was conducted to fill the post, despite Board policy implemented during the previous President’s hiring. Pres. Ojakian was renewed for a three year term in 2016, from Aug. 31, 2017 to Aug. 32, 2020 as permanent president, again without a national affirmative action search. Ref: <http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/article/20161209/NEWS01/161209918/ojakian-embraced-by-cscu-regents-contract-extended>

Contract Renewal

One of the first controversies surrounding the new President was the release of the management proposals for the AAUP Collective Agreement between teaching faculty and the CSCU administration. A request to delay release was turned down by the union

on the grounds that the BOR knew the deadline and should be prepared. The Board proposal as released had crossed out all mention of travel funds, faculty development funds and other monetary items, eliminating the articles that mentioned them. It also called for management to have the ability to relocate faculty from one university to another, without maintenance of tenure. This and related issues resulted in an unprecedented faculty mobilization and protests at the system office headquarters at Board meetings, despite claims by the President that eliminating the travel, development and other clauses was a “clerical error”. The contract, as finally negotiated, eliminated the forced movement of faculty, restored funding for travel, research and faculty development, extended the contract to five years with the first three at zero pay raises, mandated three furlough days in the current (2017-18) year of the contract, with pay raises in the final two years. Ref: <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/University-faculty-see-wear-red-over-contract-6673972.php>

Students First

Pres. Ojakian has focused his energies on a plan known as “Students First” aiming at the consolidation of the community colleges into a single unit, the Community College of Connecticut, and consolidating “back office” functions of the four CSU universities, for a projected \$41 million dollars per year savings – just over the amount the CSCU system office itself consumes each year.

Non-Confidence Vote

This plan, like its predecessor “Transform 2020” was developed with little or no campus faculty or regional stakeholder input. Moreover, in requiring consolidation or double-duty for administrative staff, it is in violation of existing collective agreements. Reaction was not long in coming: shortly after the BOR meeting of April 2017, at least one university senate voted non-confidence in the Board for lack of prior consultation with faculty, centralization of needed local functions, unchecked growth of the system office, undemocratic procedures of approval and the overall deleterious effect on constituent campuses. Ref: <http://connecticut.cbslocal.com/2017/04/24/ccsu-faculty-votes-no-confidence-in-ojakian-regents/>

NEASC Concerns

A preliminary version of the proposed reorganization was submitted to NEASC, the accrediting body for colleges and universities in the North East US. In response, a two page letter was sent by NEASC to Pres. Ojakian indicating: (1) insufficient details were provided to allow for even a preliminary response, and (2) there are concerns about institutional governance and shared governance (eg: faculty responsibility for curriculum)

“Design Thinking”

At about the same time, the Academic Affairs department of the BOR developed a multipage document, entitled “Design Thinking”, which attempted to extend BOR control from back-office functions to campus teaching, in violation of faculty governance over curriculum. The document advanced the concept of a “network of faculty” across

the institutions, in opposition to institutional autonomy. The document met with unanimous condemnation by all faculty who spoke at the May 2017 meeting of the BOR. Ref: <https://ctmirror.org/2017/05/11/another-day-another-flare-up-between-ojastian-cscu-faculty/>

“Student Success Through Quality Instruction”

At its June 2017 meeting the Board of Regents of CSU, a presentation was made, entitled “Student Success Through Quality Instruction” by the ACUE (Association of College and University Educators), which aims to “better support CSU’s 6,700 (sic) faculty, to make instructional quality a strategic driver of student retention, graduation and learning”. ACUE is a recently organized association directed by former higher education administrators, and headed by an individual (Jonathan Gyorko) who has previously supplied “educational services” to the State of Connecticut, and is currently suing the state for non-payment of fees. The program involves -- at a cost reported to be in the millions of dollars, supposedly to be paid by external donors -- teaching faculty the basics of “preparing an effective syllabus”, “motivating your students”, “delivering an effective lecture”, etc., all of which fall within existing faculty competences and which are evaluated and assisted at the institutional level through existing structures.

This project has been tried out on a provisional basis at two community colleges and two CSU universities, with results unknown and never communicated. At least one CSU university has rejected participation in the project as: “... unnecessary and redundant to existing university-based programs and criteria for evaluating and improving teaching; developed without faculty consultation; and involving external funding and influence over teaching, an area of exclusive faculty control.” Ref: http://web.ccsu.edu/facultysenate/files/Supporting_Documents_2017-18/Resolution%20in%20Opposition%20to%20CCSU%20Participation%20in%20the%20ACUE.pdf

Information Technology

As with the previous BOT/CSU, the BOR/CSCU continues to favor proprietary software costing in the tens of millions of dollars (including maintenance and upgrades) over equivalent open-source software available at a mere fraction of the cost (with no purchase fee). Recent projects include the upgrade of the Banner database management system, which exists in 5 instances (one for the CCs, 4 for the CSUs: one each). Provided by the Ellucian Co., this software provides access modules and front-end presentations (on desktops/laptops, tablets and even cell phones). The initial cost has been bonded at \$15 million dollars; final cost may be up to \$30 million (Bonding Commission, Jan. 2017, to . Acct. No. 17171-CCC78000-43360) It is not clear that competitive bidding was involved, or that less expensive software was considered. A planned upgrade for the Blackboard course management system would also likely be in the millions to tens of millions, when open-source and equally if not more reliable software used by larger university systems is available at a fraction of the overall cost (eg: Moodle), as well as OpenOffice (replacing Microsoft Word) and many others.

As noted above, the largest department at the System Office is Information Technology – even though the SO does not directly service any classes. Many if not most of that staff could be employed filling vacancies at the campus level, with at most a significantly smaller group to service otherwise unmet community college needs and the specific

needs of SO staff. Yet at the same time the System Office of the BOR is once again hinting at centralization of campus level Information Technology services, despite the well known aphorism that IT help is local. An attempt to centralize IT by the previous BOT/CSU known as the “SITES” project failed due to its violation of existing collective agreements and opposition at the campus level from both IT staff, faculty, and campus administrations.

Student First Planning Teams

In order to placate clearly expressed concern and opposition to Students First, the BOR established 6 “planning teams” consisting of selected administrators, faculty and staff from various campuses (community college and universities) to come up with the proposed savings in Students First: \$28 million from the community colleges through consolidation into one institution, and \$13 million from consolidation of “back office” functions at the universities (which would remain distinct institutions). The results did not meet expectations, failing to indicate how the total of \$41 million annual savings could be achieved: Ref: <http://www.ct.edu/studentsfirst/planning>

An examination of the six reports indicates the following:

1) Facilities Management: Almost all of “cost savings” is to be due to campus level reductions: eg \$1.5 millions from limiting facilities overtime, and \$2.05 millions from energy conservation, none of which is due to centralization of anything. Most of the rest of the projected “saving” is due to position attrition or elimination of positions at specified community colleges. Note: There will be a “System Office new Project Manager position” for \$170,000 (non-saving or COST).

2/ Financial aid: centralization will COST \$883,000 including \$308,000 for out-sourcing of a “verification plan” to a third party vendor and another \$75,000 for outsourcing of a “financial literacy plan”. Savings of \$2,000,000 (exactly!) are projected revenue increase due to increased enrollment – not because of better institutional outreach and recruitment by institutions, but “due to improved verification and timing” (plans for which are to be out-sourced).

3/ Financial affairs: \$1.4 million from “purchasing efficiencies”, \$1.3 million from 5% personnel reduction. Additional savings are not specified and the report simply notes: “We are committed to achieving this level of savings at a rate that is practicable”.

4/ Human resources: Savings of \$400,000 to \$500,000 by elimination of 4 positions; long term savings (not defined) due to “functioning as a coherent whole, rather than as 17 separate operations.

5/ Information technology: \$1.1 million from eliminating “duplicate operations across the administrative systems”, including \$330,000 from cell phones savings (reduction in the number used).

6/ Institutional research: The report has many administrative diagrams (organigrams) but no indication of any \$ savings.

It is clear from this summary that (a) The working groups were unable to find the targeted savings through consolidation of “back office” functions; (b) some reports propose increased costs (eg: Facilities Management for the system office project manager, and Financial Aid for two “financial literacy” and “timing” reports to be outsourced), a total

of nearly \$1 million of additional costs; (c) the project overall increases System Office staffing and aims at control via centralization of functions needed at the campus level.

CT Community College Management Consolidation

Most recently, the BOR received a report (in the form of a PowerPoint presentation) entitled: “Students First: CT Community College Management Consolidation”. This report specifies organizational diagrams for the prospective “CT Community College Model” and forms the basis of the work plan leading to approval of the merged community college system:

1/ The current organization of one CSCU President (Ojakian) and 12 Community College Presidents (CEOs), each assisted by a CFO (chief financial officer) and CAO (chief academic officer: perhaps a dean in some cases) would be replaced by one Chancellor, assisted by a Vice Chancellor, a CCC (Community College of Connecticut) Provost, a CFO, a Vice-President for Enrollment Management and 3 Regional Presidents, as the 12 community colleges would be regrouped in three regions. For example, North West Community College would be in Region 2.

2/ Each Community College would have a “campus” Vice President; for each of three regions, the Regional President would double as the campus Vice-President.

3/ Detailed organigrams for the larger and smaller/medium CCs are also included. For example, a larger campus (5 campuses, eg Norwalk) would have Deans for Student and Academic Affairs; “smaller/medium” campuses would have only a Dean for Student and Academic Affairs (7 campuses, eg: NWCC). All campuses would have Associate Deans, at least 3 in all cases.

Upon analysis, this appears to be a shifting of names rather than a significant reduction of positions. The 12 current Presidents are replaced by 12 campus Vice Presidents, three of whom are also Regional Presidents. Chief Academic Officers are apparently eliminated from each campus, but two Deans are maintained for larger campuses (2 x 5), and one Dean for smaller ones (1 x 7). Thus there are 12 Vice-Presidents and 17 Deans who are retained.

The only place where significant reductions seem to occur is for CFOs, but the organigram presented for current community colleges does not explicitly specify their positions and it is unclear how many of them there currently are (presumably, at most one per campus). How financial operations are to be handled is also unclear, though if the System Office staff were to handle this, additional positions might be needed, and campus level implementation and control of financial decisions would be compromised.

The organigrams for the campuses (large and small/medium) are also vague as to “Regional/System Positions” which are indicated as Institutional Research, Human Resources, Finance Support and System IT, with an equally vague statement: “Possibilities will exist for position sharing across campuses”. Whether local campuses will retain their current names is not explicitly stated. Ref:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0T3NPgtzt06UjVUOHqtaDk2bjU3anE4YUxqaGFLNjBEUnN3/view>

Some Conclusions

1. The “merging” of the Community Colleges and the four state CSU state universities has resulted in a succession of presidents (five in seven years), and a bloated system office bureaucracy (averaging 150 in any given year, currently 144), for an annual cost of app. \$35 million and more than \$ ¼ billion over its brief lifetime – an unstable leadership (5 Presidents in 7 years) combined with excessive costs.
2. One of the major reasons for the merging – efficient and transparent student transfer of credits from the CCs to the CSUs – has resulted in Transfer Articulation Policies (TAPs) – developed largely by two faculty assigned to the System Office, at a fraction of the overall cost of the BOR.
3. The BOR has almost entirely failed to uphold the legislative mandate of distinguishing between the distinct mandates of the CCs and that of the CSUs and has focused instead on “merging” the two distinct areas of public higher education.
4. Faculty serving on Faculty Advisory Committee have closely followed the work of the BOR and acted as a principled opposition to misguided projects that the BOR has developed, along with suggestions for improvements to existing operations. The Board, despite advice to the contrary, has persisted in failed or failing projects which put in jeopardy academic excellence, institutional autonomy and shared governance.
5. Transform 2020, the first major initiative of the BOR was a failure, mispending nearly \$2 million on an out-sourced plan which failed to incorporate faculty input, which was unrealistic and rejected by faculty, resulting in system-wide votes of non-confidence and the resignation of the President.
6. The second major initiative of the BOR “Students First” suffers from many of the same problems as the preceding Transform 2020 – with no faculty input at its inception, out-sourcing of finance plans to third parties, increased hiring for the System Office and attempts to centralize campus support staff along with possible “position sharing” across campuses; non-respect of the collective agreement for administrative faculty, non-respect of teaching faculty governance over curriculum, concerns expressed by the NEASC accrediting agency, and planning team reports which fail to account for the projected \$41 million in annual savings.
7. The consolidation of community colleges into a single institution does not significantly reduce the number of executive positions, and so does not produce its expected major part of the \$28 million per year savings; moreover, it does not take into account the role of community colleges as local institutions with local stakeholder financial and civic support.
8. The planned consolidation of “back office” operations of the four CSU universities will not produce the expected \$13 million in savings, and is detrimental to the autonomy of the institutions, in particular local control over financial operations in order to implement campus policies, and local offering of information technology services and support.

9. The system office is unwilling to consider cost-saving measures such as a significant reduction in its own IT staff, many if not most of whom would be better employed filling vacancies and needs at the campus level. Additional and substantial savings could be achieved through the use of open-source software which is inexpensive, scalable and secure.
10. The System Office is cut off from the academic reality of the constituent institutions, as evidenced by the ill-conceived “Design Thinking”, and dubious outsourcing of development of teaching skills proposed in “Student Success Through Quality Instruction”.
11. Overall, the CONNSCU/CSCU “experiment” has cost ¼ of a billion dollars just for System Office operations, and within a short time will reach 1/3 of a billion, with very few positive results (other than the TAPS, with application still to be seen).
12. The BOR has generated controversy and after controversy with little or no progress towards real accomplishments that substantially improve public higher education; it has wasted tens and indeed hundreds of millions of dollars, along with the time spent developing failed or failing projects, indicating that the decision to establish it needs to be reviewed, and simpler, more responsive and less expensive structures developed to replace it.

A simplified Alternative

What might this look like? Here is a simplified initial proposal:

1. Eliminate the merged System Office and Board of Regents, and restore Board of Trustees, one each for the Community Colleges and the State Universities. Reduce administrative bloat at all levels.
2. Limit the number of support staff to a fraction of those currently employed and impose a maximum size and budget for each of the two System Offices, taking into account only needed functions which do not duplicate already existing ones at the campus level. Rather than centralizing with resultant bureaucratic bloat, decentralize to produce real savings.
3. The University System office would only require a small team of IT personnel to serve the needs of the Board and its staff; the rest could be offered positions at the campus level as these become available through retirements or resignations.
4. The Community College System office would require a larger IT staff as some community colleges do not have their own email servers or other IT services; but the grossly inflated 67 member IT department would be considerably reduced.
5. Replace costly and burdensome proprietary software in areas where comparable open-source software is available which is scalable and secure.
6. Eliminate all out-sourcing of planning and project management by consulting groups and third parties; there are sufficient resources within the systems to accomplish these tasks if these tasks are conducted with real, not sham consultation of all stakeholders.
7. The Transfer Articulation process should be maintained as a working group established between the State University and the Community College systems, with (as at present) a small number of teaching faculty assigned to the task, with some support staff for technical needs, all of which would be under the supervision of the Chancellors of the two systems.
8. Savings in the millions, and more likely the tens of millions per year could thereby be achieved without consolidating or closing any campuses, consolidating “back offices” at universities or diverting needed campus funds to system operations.