Why Labor Is Calling For Greater Accountability and Transparency At CSCU

- The Board of Regents consolidation plan has been shrinking the budgets at the state universities and community colleges while directing that money and resources into their own pockets and to outside consultants.

    - Since the announcement of “Students First” in April 2017 the system office budget has increased from $30.3 million in 2017 to $46.7 million for fiscal year 2020 – that is a 54 percent increase for the system office budget. Meanwhile, total expenditures for the 12 community colleges have fallen.

    - Nearly $15 million has been transferred from the community colleges to the System Office, some of which has been spent on outside contracts such as Inceptia for Financial Aid, CMD for a call center, and outside consultants for IT and HR support. The extent of which outside consultants is being used is not fully known because of the lack of transparency in CSCU’s financial statements.

- “Students First” has promoted a “brain drain” with colleges losing experience, knowledge, and expertise as it moves towards a top-down model of administration with no accountability:

    - 80 teaching faculty who left in the last year have not been replaced, along with a large number of non-teaching faculty.

    - Nine college presidents have left.

    - Regionalized leadership as proposed in IT, Institutional Research and other administrative areas will not be able to foster the collaboration necessary to sustain innovation and engagement on the campus level as they will report directly to the System Office.

    - There is no public plan to guide institutional changes needed for accreditation:

    - The BOR’s 2018 Substantive Change Request to CSCU accreditor NEASC, now NECHE, was not approved.
    - NECHE’s response to the BOR’s 2019 April Update cited 24 different standards that were not adequately addressed.
    - The BOR's gamble that the system office will eventually find a way to meet accreditation standards risks the very existence of the community colleges while ensuring that there will be years of uncertainty and dissension.

- “Students First” is ill-conceived and flawed:
    - Last May, 11 community colleges and two state universities voted No Confidence in "Students First," President Ojakian, and the Board of Regents.
    - Consolidation will lead to loss of control over curriculum and, with that, the direct assessment of how to design programs that best meet the needs of students and Connecticut’s local communities.

    - The June 2018 consolidation timeline calls for a General Education program and the redesign of roughly 200 programs. This should be near completion and approval, yet not a single program has been created.

- Higher education mergers in other states have saved little or no money. There are no documented examples of mergers achieving the 4.5 to 5 percent savings as the BOR forecasts.
- The Board of Regents was created in 2011 to save money and reinvest the savings in the classroom and direct student services by merging the four state universities and the 12 community colleges. In its nine-year history, the BOR has done just the opposite. A series of BOR-led reorganization and cost-reduction schemes have ended in failure while racking up millions in outside consultancy fees.