February 7, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100  
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Chairs and Members of the New England Commission of Higher Education,

I write to share additional information and insights related to the partnership and systemwide services Achieving the Dream (ATD) has provided to Connecticut’s community colleges as they move towards merging their twelve institutions into one.

For the past three years (2019-present), ATD has partnered with the faculty, staff, and administrators at Connecticut’s community college campuses as well as system leaders in their work to design and build Connecticut State Community College (CT State) as a student-centered institution that holistically serves and supports the needs of all its students.

This work has included:

**Institutional Capacity and Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessments**
ATD supported the twelve campuses in administering the Institutional Capacity and Pathways Scale of Adoption Assessments with a facilitated World Café with each campus to discuss the results. Leveraging this foundational work, the campuses developed action plans to build capacity to scale the implementation of Guided Pathways, monitor progress and use data to foster continuous improvement. Given the rapid changes forced upon campuses to meet student needs during the pandemic, ATD also facilitated COVID-19 reflection sessions to identify effective strategies to inform future work and build adaptive capacity for ongoing change and improvement.

**Holistic Student Support Services**
ATD provided coaching and technical assistance to the Holistic Student Support Redesign (HSSR) Guided Pathways working group as they developed policy and practice recommendations to improve equitable educational and workforce outcomes. This work was codified into board policy for CT State.

**Equity**
ATD provided coaching, professional learning opportunities, and technical assistance as state-wide teams worked to examine and redesign structures, processes, and attitudes that have resulted in institutional performance gaps for Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Indigenous, and other historically underserved populations. ATD facilitated all-campus book
talks based on *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*, full day professional development sessions for each region focused on building equity-minded campuses, and supported faculty, staff, and administrators as they developed, and signed, an equity definition, statement, and pillars to guide CT State’s future work around equity.

**Teaching and Learning Capacity Building**
ATD provided training and professional learning sessions to support the implementation of evidence-based high-impact practices, including culturally responsive and affirming teaching, equitizing the syllabus, curriculum analysis using CUEs Equity Scorecard and Document Review tools, and the application of excellence in teaching and learning using frameworks and resources contained in the Achieving the Dream Teaching and Learning Toolkit.

**Data and Evaluation to Support a Culture of Inquiry and Evidence**
ATD supported system leaders in identifying and defining the key performance indicators to include in the statewide dashboards, leveraging participation in the Postsecondary Data Partnership, to advance equity and monitor the impact of pathways on metrics predictive of completion. When equity gaps were discovered, ATD facilitated sense-making sessions to determine why gaps exist and identify the policies, programs and practices that were creating barriers or accelerating student success. ATD also provided training in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) framework to support the team gathering data to inform the enrollment management plan.

**Customized Coaching**
ATD provided targeted coaching support to tackle key systemwide and college challenges and help the campuses build the readiness and capacity to advance identified student success and equity goals.

Achieving the Dream looks forward to continuing to partner with CT State to support the faculty, staff, and administrators at the campuses and in the system-office in their institutional transformation journey to achieve equitable educational and workforce outcomes and catalyze economically vibrant communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen A. Stout  
President and CEO  
Achieving the Dream