The Community Colleges and the State Universities have distinct missions and serve students, communities, and the state in different ways. Shouldn’t the shared metrics you are developing be specific to the type of institution?

One of the real strengths of the state universities in comparison to other higher education institutions is that the vast majority of our courses are taught by faculty with PhDs – rather than by graduate students – and in comparatively small classes. This greatly increases contact and relationships between faculty and students. Shouldn’t this strength be included in the value proposition?

In developing the common set of metrics on which to measure the universities and colleges are you aiming to move the system toward performance-based funding?

In streamlining support functions across the system, do you anticipate that there will be fewer employees at the respective campuses and more located in Hartford?

In the Transform 2020 value proposition, the upper left specifies that the system will provide “greater preparation to achieve life and career goals,” yet all of the specified features identify ways of providing worker training to meet business needs. Is this emphasis appropriate? Aren’t Connecticut employers broader than that?

Much of Transform CSCU 2020 seems to be oriented toward workforce development and training programs, system efficiencies, and degree completions. This emphasis appears to be at the expense of a focus on student learning, academic rigor, and the advancement of educational goals. Shouldn’t we focus more on educational values and student learning?

The open-ended responses to the Transform survey of business and civic leaders indicate that respondents prefer to hire graduates with the hallmarks of a liberal education: strong reading and writing skills; critical thinking skills; the ability to work with others and collaborate; social, cultural, and political understanding; and understanding of ambiguity. But, the emphasis in Transform seems to be on a very limited interpretation of work force development. How do you account for this discrepancy?

There are in curricular and other initiatives in Transform that will require approval by faculty governance bodies like departments and faculty senates, and other initiatives that may require negotiation with the campus unions. When, how, and on what issues do you plan to engage these groups?

Can you explain Transform’s “Academic Program Optimization” initiative? Is it aimed at reducing the number of programs offered by all four universities? Is it aimed at terminating low enrollment/low completer programs? Are such terminations part of the initiative or elsewhere in Transform? How will such decisions be made, by whom, and using what criteria?

I understand that the “System-Wide Policy Transparency” initiative is largely complete and has been presented to the Steering Committee—with no input or feedback from outside the initiative team. Can you tell us that that initiative entails and when it will be presented more broadly to the campuses for comment?
I understand that most, if not all, of the initiatives associated with instructional technology are essentially complete, including plans for high tech classrooms. Have the goals and initiatives under IT emerged through discussions with educators and faculty? Have faculty been involved in the design of classrooms or course delivery software?

Transform 2020 calls for increasing the number of on-line and hybrid courses taken by CSCU students, and for the Universities to be evaluated on that issue through shared metrics. Given the research on the limited educational value of on-line courses for the sorts of students that enroll at CSCU schools, why do you consider this wise?

In Transform CSCU 2020, the academic planning initiatives are just getting started, but the list of metrics that the campuses will be measured on appears to be nearly complete. Will the metrics be modified and changed as the academic plans unfold? [And: why was this done without faculty input?]

The shared metrics proposal for Transform 2020 contains elements not discussed in other documents, such as average FTE students and credit hours per faculty. What does that mean? Why do you assume that it is too low? What is the consequence of increasing that number of FTE students per faculty credit hour? Isn't the presence of elements in the metrics that are not in the other Transform documents a problem for your transparency initiative?

Why are the Universities being marginalized in the new CSCU structure? Why are there no plans to improve graduate education or emphasize our excellent Honor’s programs and liberal arts educations?

If our enrollment increases, it probably comes at the expense of enrollment and therefore funding at either the other Universities or the community colleges. How do you plan to create a system out of institutions that compete with each other for enrollment and funding?

Why does the System spend so much money on Blackboard Learn when open source software like Moodle is less expensive and does the same thing, perhaps better and with fewer threats to faculty intellectual property?

The Transform 2020 documents indicate that Early College programs—that offer college courses in the high schools—will reduce remediation and decrease time to degree. How is that possible? If students cannot pass high school courses at the universities (which remediation courses are), how can they pass college courses in the high schools? Aren’t you watering down the curriculum?

I understand that the BOR is contemplating the purchase of advising software called Degree Works. I have reservations. If we use this program as it is meant to be used, advisers—in other words faculty—will monitor every course add/drop or failing grade of every advisee. That means hours and hours of more time from faculty. Faculty are not data entry workers. Why is it that when I registered for courses by hand turning in sheets of paper each semester it took 5 minutes, and now students need us to plan their lives?

Transform 2020 is, in part, aimed at helping students transfer seamlessly from campus to campus. But this also encourages swirling—i.e. the practice of students taking courses at more than one college or university. But this means that they may not develop strong relationships with faculty or peers or have any “home” institution. Research shows that first time college students do better when they develop a long term ties to a single institution. Why are you then encouraging swirling?
Department chairs and faculty at CCSU have been concerned for years about administrative creep in their positions. Transform 2020 seems to be continuing this problematic trend at the expense of student learning and faculty creative activity. Why should we support this initiative?

The creation of the BOR was supposed to save money. How much has been saved by the consolidation of the two systems? How is the expansion of the System Office impacting this savings?

Why is the BOR spending so much money on consultants (BCG, Sibson Consulting, Maguire Associates and others), when faculty expertise is available on the campuses?