

# Office of Higher Education

## *At a Glance*

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**JANE A. CIARLEGLIO, Executive Director**

**Established - 2011, CGS Sec. 10a-1d**

**Central office - 61 Woodland Street, Hartford, 06105-2326**

**Number of full-time employees - 25**

**2012-13 Recurring General Fund operating expenses - \$49.6 million**

**Organizational structure - Office of the Executive Director; Offices for Academic Affairs, Finance, and Student Services.**

## **Mission**

*Created in July 2011, the Office of Higher Education seeks to advance the promise of postsecondary education for all Connecticut citizens, and to advocate on behalf of students, taxpayers, and the postsecondary schools and colleges under its purview. The Office carries out its mission by assuring that students have access to postsecondary institutions which meet the highest standards of academic quality, by administering the state's student financial aid resources, by serving as an information and consumer protection resource, and by fostering interaction and collaboration among postsecondary institutions and other entities.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

The Office of Higher Education is charged by statute to uphold state standards of academic quality, to operate the award of state college aid funds, and to administer a variety of programs including the Alternate Route to Certification.

To maintain standards of quality, the Office licenses and accredits independent colleges and universities, licenses in-state programs offered by out-of-state institutions, and regulates the operations of Connecticut's private occupational and hospital-based schools. Legislation enacted this year made significant changes to streamline the process for licensure and accreditation, and extends the agency's regulatory oversight to Connecticut's barber and hairdressing schools.

As of July 2013, 20 non-profit and four for-profit independent institutions of higher learning, 59 private occupational schools, and 7 hospital-based schools were approved to operate in Connecticut; 14 out-of-state schools were approved to offer postsecondary programs in the state.

The agency's other major statutory responsibility is to administer state student financial aid programs which this year, in a major reform, were combined into a single, new \$42 million Governor's Scholarship Program. Other programs managed by the agency include the Alternate Route to Certification, the Minority Advancement Program, and the BW-Germany Exchange. In addition, the agency oversees the Higher Education State Matching Grant Fund, the Endowed Chair Investment Fund, and the reporting requirements for the Connecticut Higher Education Trust Advisory Committee.

Federal responsibilities include serving as the State Approval Agency for programs enrolling veterans, and as the state's lead agency for AmeriCorps, the national service program. The Office also administers the higher education portion of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program and the John R. Justice Grant Program.

## **Public Service**

Building a highly-educated workforce to meet Connecticut's economic and societal needs serves as the framework for the Office of Higher Education's public service activities.

To prepare talented adults to become teachers, the Office conducted its summer and weekend Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) programs. The summer 2012 program prepared 55 adults for certification in English, mathematics, life and physical sciences, and world languages. Fifty-six percent of the graduates hold master's and/or Ph.D. credentials.

ARC's 2012-13 weekend program prepared another 52 individuals to teach mathematics, music, life and physical sciences, and world languages (Chinese, French, Latin and Spanish). Fifty-two percent of these graduates have advanced degrees.

Seventy-two percent of this year's ARC graduates are prepared to teach in shortage areas.

Of Connecticut's 19 state-approved teacher preparation programs, ARC is the sixth largest, and is Connecticut's greatest producer of teachers in grade 5-12 math, physics, biology, chemistry, general science, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, German, Latin and other languages. Hiring rates show that ARC teachers are in high demand.

Retention rates are strong. Surveys completed by a sample of graduates indicate that 86 percent who completed ARC during 2002-06 are still teaching. Ninety-three percent of 2007-11 ARC graduates are also teaching. Approximately 41 percent of ARC graduates work in urban districts.

Many ARC teachers have received prestigious honors, including the national Presidential Excellence in Teaching for Mathematics and Science, Connecticut Teacher of the Year, and District of the Year. Since 2007, at least 48 of these honors have been awarded to ARC graduates. Several other graduates have completed additional training for administration certificates and are serving in various school administrative capacities. In preparation for professional development, career advancement, and/or future certification requirements, ARC graduates also may receive nine credits towards a graduate degree at Central Connecticut State University, and 12 credits towards a graduate degree at Eastern Connecticut State University.

For in-service teachers, the Office of Higher Education awarded \$703,453 in federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to five teacher professional development projects in mathematics and science. The projects – led by Albertus Magnus College, Central Connecticut State University, Quinnipiac University, the University of Hartford working with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc., and PIMMS at Wesleyan University - will serve 164

teachers of 19,695 students across 11 districts. The projects were selected from 11 applications received following a competitive review process. Operated by partnerships of colleges and school districts, the projects aim to strengthen teacher content knowledge and instructional skills. This year, priority was placed on proposals which address the new Common Core State Standards and specific content areas in mathematics and science.

The agency's Education & Employment Information Center (EEIC) counseled nearly 10,000 persons seeking training and new careers via its toll-free hotline (800/842-0229), website and by participating in college and career fairs across the state. In addition, the EEIC fields the majority of inquiries received by the Alternate Route to Certification, and student complaints related to independent colleges and postsecondary career schools.

A major portion of the agency's public service role is carried out by the Connecticut Commission on Community Service which is housed in the Office of Higher Education. The Commission provides intensive, community service opportunities to meet education, environmental, health, and other pressing community challenges. The Commission sponsors AmeriCorps, the national service initiative, by awarding federal AmeriCorps dollars to nonprofit agencies to respond to local needs. In exchange for service, AmeriCorps members receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of up to \$5,550 that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994, more than 11,000 Connecticut residents have served more than 15 million hours and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$33.2 million.

This year, AmeriCorps provided more than 830 individuals the opportunity to serve at community-based organizations such as the Regional Youth/Adult Social Action Partnership (Bridgeport), the Knox Parks Foundation (Hartford), the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut (New Haven), LEAP (New Haven), and Teach for America-Connecticut. AmeriCorps members tutored and mentored children, supported veterans and military families, provided health services, restored the environment, responded to disasters, increased economic opportunity, and recruited and managed volunteers.

Connecticut leveraged dozens of AmeriCorps members to assist with the recovery efforts after Super Storm Sandy. Two teams volunteered in 5 shelters throughout the lower Fairfield County during the immediate weeks following the storm's hit. AmeriCorps members helped with bulk distribution and logistics in the American Red Cross's drop off headquarters in Middletown, as well as bulk distribution and feeding in Bethel. AmeriCorps members have continued to assist in the Hurricane Sandy recovery effort. In New Haven and Fairfield counties, members helped to develop Public Assistance project worksheets that include reimbursement for emergency protective measures as well as permanent damages. Members serving in Windsor coordinated data collection and analysis efforts. Lastly, AmeriCorps members are serving with Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County have made more housing available to survivors of Hurricane Sandy who are unable to receive support from FEMA. The members helped with repairing a home for boys in Stamford, building new homes for residents in Bridgeport, helping with new construction and rebuilding by painting, installing windows and doors, decking and framing houses, building and transporting wall panels, and preparing work sites.

In March, the Corporation for National and Community Service named 14 Connecticut colleges and universities to the 2013 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal distinction an institution of higher education can receive for its commitment to bettering their communities through community service and service learning.

This year the University of Connecticut had the unique merit of being one of only five institutions to be named a Presidential Awardee in the 2013 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

In April, five Connecticut college students and staff were honored at the Commission's annual Higher Education Community Service Awards ceremony for their work in helping others through community service. This year, 15 Connecticut colleges submitted 41 nominations for the three award categories of Individual Student, Student Group and Special Award for projects led by faculty and staff. Recipients are selected based on their ability to design projects which distinctly serve a community, incorporate originality and unique approaches, substantially raise student participation, and address community problems.

The Office of Higher Education continued to operate the Minority Advancement Program (MAP), which gives middle and high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds the skills, knowledge and academic support they need to succeed in college. MAP provides funds, on a competitive review basis, to Connecticut colleges and universities to support activities that strengthen student readiness for college as well as retention and graduation. MAP consists of two grant programs: the Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program (ConnCAP) and the Connecticut College Access and Success Program (ConnCAS). For 2012-13, the four programs funded by ConnCAP provided 400 middle and high school students with counseling and other college preparation activities. Eleven colleges received ConnCAS funds to provide opportunities to 650 students for academic development and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education beginning with their first semester of matriculation.

As part of the Office of Higher Education's BW-Germany Exchange, 58 Connecticut students attended universities in Germany while 57 German students came to Connecticut for a semester or two. In addition, 30 Connecticut students attended summer language institutes in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Connecticut's partner-state.

The BW-Germany Exchange serves students from Connecticut's public and independent colleges and universities. Of the students studying in Germany this year, 70% are from public institutions, and 30% are from independents. The University of Connecticut and Yale University continue to be the most active participants.

Engineering and German remain the most popular majors of Connecticut students, while the German students concentrate on English, economics/business administration and engineering. Nine Connecticut engineering students performed six-month internships at German companies and research laboratories including Porsche (Stuttgart), Audi (Heilbronn), Bosch (Stuttgart), Max Planck Institute (Stuttgart) and Fraunhofer ISE (Freiburg).

To date, 10 University of Connecticut engineering students have completed internships at Fraunhofer, one of Germany's largest applied research institutes which focus on innovation and technology transfer.

### **Improvements/Achievements 2012-2013**

During its second year, the Office of Higher Education focused on two major initiatives to 1) institute greater equity and predictability in the distribution of state funds for college aid, and 2) streamline the process for approving new academic programs offered by Connecticut independent colleges and universities.

In the first major reform of the state's college financial aid system in 30 years, the Office of Higher Education worked with the Office of the Governor, state lawmakers and colleges, in designing a statewide financial aid program called the Governor's Scholarship Program. This new, student-centered program consolidates the state's existing programs into a single program effective July 1, 2013. It will provide both need-based awards, and need- and merit-based awards to eligible Connecticut residents pursuing their first associate's or bachelor's degree at eligible institutions in Connecticut. The Governor's Scholarship Program was approved by the State Legislature through Public Act 13-247.

While developing this new program, the Office continued to administer the state's three major student financial aid programs: the Connecticut Aid to Public College Students Grant (CAPCS), the Connecticut Aid to Independent College Student Grant (CICSG), and the Capitol Scholarship Program (CSP). This year, overall funds for student aid totaled \$45 million, by far the bulk of the agency's \$49.6 million budget. The three programs served approximately 25,500 undergraduate students enrolled in Connecticut's public and private colleges and universities, providing need- and merit-based financial aid to ensure that younger citizens have the opportunity to achieve a college degree.

In addition, the agency administered other programs which encourage students to prepare for careers in particular areas of study. The federal John R. Justice Grant Program is a loan reimbursement program for public defenders and prosecutors who commit to working in their current jobs for at least three years. Connecticut received \$127,441 for 2012, which was distributed to 77 grantees.

To strengthen diversity in the state's teacher workforce, the Office of Higher Education awarded Minority Teacher Incentive Grants to 83 minority students, and loan reimbursement stipends to 35 former grant recipients who are now teaching in Connecticut. The Office awarded similar grants from private funds to minority students selected as Weisman Scholars who are preparing to teach math and science in particular. In addition, the agency awarded loan reimbursement stipends from private funds to four former private grant recipients.

The agency's other major focus centered on improving the process for academic program approval. These efforts culminated in the passage of Public Act 13-118 which shortens the process by eliminating approvals required previously by the Advisory Committee on Accreditation and State Board of Education. The new law gives the Office of Higher Education 45 days to act upon proposals, and creates an appeals process for those applications which have been denied.

During 2012-13, the Office of Higher Education followed existing procedures in evaluating 52 proposals for the licensure of new academic programs submitted by Connecticut independent colleges, and 11 proposals for re-licensure of academic programs submitted by out-of-state colleges. Additionally, the agency reviewed four applications for institutional re-accreditation, and three applications for re-licensure of programs offered by out-of-state colleges. A record number of graduate proposals were approved, including three doctoral programs, 20 master's degree programs, and two advanced graduate certificates. Quinnipiac University's new program in medicine was the first medical school approved in Connecticut in over 50 years.

Approved applications for program accreditation totaled 27, enabling colleges to graduate students and confer degrees for the first time. Of these, two were at the certificate level, ten were at the bachelor's level, seven were graduate certificates, four were at the master's level and four were at the doctoral level. Looking across fields of study, eight were in health sciences, three

were in business, two were in engineering, and three were in security and protective services with the remainder in the liberal arts and other subjects.

The Office also evaluated six programs applying for simultaneous licensure and accreditation, and 14 program modifications.

Regarding the state's private occupational schools, the Office of Higher Education approved three new schools, re-approved 12 existing schools, addressed 16 formal complaints, and issued student refunds due to unexpected school closures.

This year, 11 occupational schools closed -- the highest number in years. The most traumatic was the sudden closure on December 30 of Butler Business School in Bridgeport and The Sawyer Schools in Hamden and Hartford, impacting more than 350 students. To help students regain their education footing, the Office of Higher Education conducted information sessions, took possession of the schools' files, and instituted a process for distributing transcripts. In addition, the agency worked with other schools to help students complete externships, and successfully sought legislation to enable these students to graduate.

As required by legislation, by December 2012, the Office of Higher Education approved the operation of all Connecticut hospital-based occupational schools which offer training to the public outside of their employee base.

As the Connecticut State Approving Agency (SAA) for veterans' education benefits, the Office of Higher Education processed 72 initial, revised and updated approval functions for institutions eligible to enroll veterans; conducted eight inspection and 48 compliance survey visits to schools and colleges; and provided information to active duty service members and veterans regarding their educational benefits at 61 outreach events. Staff reviewed 189 programs for degree and non-degree granting institutions at approved facilities, participated in the 2012 Veterans Stand Down and in numerous job fairs for veterans, and conducted a workshop for certifying officials from non-college degree facilities.

### **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

The Office Higher Education provides comprehensive information on trends in postsecondary education. In November, the Office reported that fall 2012 enrollment at Connecticut colleges and universities topped 200,000 for the third year and broke previous records for the fifteenth straight year. The annual increase of 1,281 students brought the new total to 202,858 students; however, at 0.6% growth, Connecticut has experienced two consecutive years of a near flat growth rate.

Nearly all of the increase is due to more students enrolling part-time. The data show that the vast majority of students in Connecticut are enrolled at one of the community colleges or at a regional independent institution. Statewide, full-time enrollment declined slightly from fall 2011, with 1,089 fewer students for a total of 128,092. In contrast, the number attending part-time grew 2.1% to 74,766 students.

Undergraduate enrollment rose 0.9% – nearly all in part-time enrollment – to 167,725. This is the highest number of part-time undergraduates since 1994. Graduate enrollment declined 2.9% to 35,133.

The latest graduation statistics show that Connecticut colleges and universities awarded 42,503 degrees in 2011-12, up 5.7% from the previous year. This is the eleventh consecutive year of growth.

As in previous years, the number of degrees and certificates earned was closely related to earlier enrollment trends. The surge in college enrollment that occurred a decade ago, prompted by more traditional-aged college students, has translated into gains in the number of degrees earned this past year. Over the last decade, changes in enrollment account for 99 percent of the number of conferred. This high level of association suggests that the number of degrees and certificates may continue to increase.

Half of all awards (49.2%) were bachelor's degrees, 24.6% were master's and 15.4% were associate's degrees. The largest increase was in bachelor's degrees of which 974 more were awarded in 2012 than in 2011. The number of associate's degrees also increased, while the number of master's degrees remained essentially flat. Public colleges produced 83% of the associate's degrees, 54% of the bachelor's degrees and 33% of the master's degrees.

Women earned 59.6% of all degrees, growing 0.6% over 2011. Women earned more degrees than men at every degree level, and slightly more than half of all the degrees earned by women were earned at public colleges.

A total of 9,505 degrees and certificates were earned by individuals from minority groups in 2012, representing 22.3% of award recipients, up from 20% in 2011. These figures indicate increased racial and ethnic diversity among college graduates compared to previous years. Black students earned 7.9% of awards compared to 7.3% in 2011; Hispanic students earned 8.3% of awards compared to 7.1% in 2011; Asian or Pacific Islander students earned 4.5% of awards compared to 4.1% in 2011, and white students earned 62% of awards compared to 61.7% in 2011. Award recipients whose race and ethnicity is unknown earned 9.7% of awards compared to 11.9% in 2011.

The proportion of degrees in criminal justice outpaced growth in all other areas followed at some distance by social sciences, and science, technology, engineering and math. Conversely, the proportion of degrees conferred in business fell.