
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 18

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION STATUTES.

SUMMARY

This bill requires public Connecticut higher education institutions to adopt a policy requiring new governing board members to complete specified training within a year after their appointment or election to the board. The bill establishes the required instruction and training topics, which include financial, legal and ethical, and institutional operation training topics, among others. By January 1, 2023, each institution must post on its website the training policy and a summary of the instruction and training board members received.

Additionally, the bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to make the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) central office a separate line item in its consolidated operating budget (see COMMENT). It also makes several conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

§ 1 — GOVERNING BOARD TRAINING

The bill requires BOR and the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT) to each adopt a policy by January 1, 2023, that requires new governing board members to receive instruction and training on the topics listed in Table 1 within the first year of their appointment or election.

Table 1: Training Topics for BOR and UConn BOT Members

<i>Board Operations and Member Duties</i>
A board member's duties to the state and the institution
Each board committee and its functions, including the executive committee

<i>Financial Matters</i>
Professional accounting and reporting standards
Business operations, administration, budgeting, financing, financial reporting, financial reserves, and endowment management for higher education institutions
Institutional advancement, including philanthropic giving, and fundraising initiatives
<i>Legal and Ethical Matters</i>
Methods for meeting the board's statutory, regulatory, and fiduciary obligations
State Freedom of Information Act
A board member's institutional and statutory ethical responsibilities
<i>Institutional Operations</i>
Development and implementation of institutional policies
Oversight of planning, construction, maintenance, expansion, and renovation projects that impact the institution's infrastructure, physical facilities, and natural environment
Workforce planning, strategy, and investment
Alumni programming, communications and media, government and public relations, and community affairs
<i>Student Issues</i>
Tuition, mandatory fees, and student debt trends
Student welfare issues, including academic studies, curriculum, residence life, student governance and activities, and general physical and mental well-being
<i>General Higher Education Issues</i>
Current and anticipated higher education issues
Other topics each governing board deems necessary

§§ 2-4 — BOR BUDGETING PROCESS

The bill requires BOR to make the CSUC central office a separate line item in the consolidated operating budget that it submits to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) (see BACKGROUND; see COMMENT). Under current law, the budget is itemized by the

Connecticut State University System, regional community-technical college system, and Charter Oak State College. Additionally, the bill conforms law to practice by requiring any tuition increase proposed by Charter Oak State College for the fiscal year covered by the budget to be included in the single higher education budget that BOR submits.

The bill also exempts central office appropriations from the same statutory limits on allotment reductions (i.e., rescissions) that apply to the public colleges and universities under existing law.

COMMENT

Missing Conforming Change

Existing law requires BOR to prepare and present to the governor and legislature consolidated operating and capital expenditure budgets for the Connecticut State University System, the regional community-technical college system and Charter Oak State College, developed according to the requirements for the budget it must submit to OPM (CGS § 10a-6(a)(9)). This provision is missing a conforming change adding the CSCU central office to the consolidated operating budget.

BACKGROUND

BOR Budget Preparation

By law, BOR must develop either a formula or program-based budgeting system for each institution to use when preparing its requested operating budgets. After reviewing and commenting on their budget requests, BOR incorporates them into a single budget request to submit to the OPM secretary that is itemized by the state university system, regional community-technical college system, and Charter Oak State College. The request has a proposed expenditure plan that includes the (1) total appropriation requested from the legislature, (2) amount to be appropriated from the General Fund, and (3) amount to be paid from tuition revenues (including any proposed tuition increases) (CGS §10a-8(a)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 3 (03/03/2022)