

A Message from President Ojakian

CSCU-President <CSCU-President@ct.edu>

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To: CSCU-President <CSCU-President@ct.edu>

Dear CSCU Community,

Today we come to the end of an academic year like no other and begin week twelve of remote work. As a result, we have all had to change our daily lives in small and significant ways to do our jobs and manage our family lives. I appreciate all that you have done to make our campuses and system function for our students. That work is not over as we plan for fall 2020 but we've learned a great deal and will be ready to welcome our students in August.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to send my condolences to all of you who have lost family and friends to COVID-19. Far too many people have passed away here in Connecticut and across the country over the last 12 weeks and we will forever remember this loss.

The events of the past weekend also leave me deeply saddened. Throughout the country, we saw the effects of generations of systemic racism on individuals, communities, states and our nation. We saw heartbreak and anger spurred by the murder of George Floyd; a tragedy which has origins in our nation's founding and has never been rectified. We - as a system and as individuals - must redouble our commitment to social justice and recommit to the hard work of fundamental change.

As the state's public institutions of higher learning, change starts with us. Our community colleges alone serve two thirds of the state's undergraduate students of color. Yet even within a system that aims to be an on-ramp to upward mobility, students of color fall behind at a disproportionate rate. The COVID-19 crisis has further magnified the racial and socioeconomic gaps that exists in Connecticut. We can and must do better.

I know that the commitment to equity runs deep among our faculty and staff, and I thank all of you for your good work to improve opportunities for marginalized students - and thank you for continuing it during these challenging and unprecedented times.

Let's each do our own small part toward the overall goal of increasing societal equity.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Ojakian