Section P
Element No. 16

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS
Sec. 46a-68-93
Innovative Programs

Under Section 46a-68-93(a) of the Affirmative Action Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, Western Connecticut State University ("WCSU" or "University") has participated in the development and implementation of programs not covered elsewhere in the Affirmative Action Plan, which continues to be an important part of the road to affirmative action. Accordingly, the University has developed programs for the campus community to create opportunities, not otherwise available, to achieve the full and fair participation of all protected group members. Within this framework, the University is proud to provide information on the accomplishments in this area. The programs included in this report will showcase the diverse environment at the University and an understanding of affirmative action while supporting a diverse workforce. The following initiatives attempt to step outside the traditional arena and are as follows:

(1) Summer Employment Programs: N/A
   During the reporting period, the University did not sponsor or create opportunities for summer employment programs.

(2) Youth Programs: **University's participation in on and off-campus programming**
   During the reporting period, the University participated in the following youth programs:

   During the 2020-2021 academic year and with the COVID-19 pandemic, youth programs have been modified to virtual engagements. To better explain the function of the following programs, WCSU sponsored high school sophomores and seniors from the participating Upward Bound program (please review section (9) re: Outreach for High School and College Students for more information about the Upward Bound program) hosted research and visual presentations for peers as a College and Career Fair (on each date) to provide visitors and participants with detailed information about various researched colleges (in-state and out-of-state, including Western Connecticut State University) as well as varying professions of interests by the participants (see provided attachments and documentation on report period virtual and in-person activities).

(3) Apprenticeships: N/A
   During the reporting period, the University has not sponsored or created apprenticeships or apprenticeship opportunities.

(4) Work Study Programs: **University's Federal Work Study Program**
   In order to prepare the next generation of workers, University students are encouraged to take on available internship opportunities at the University. The Federal Work Study Program is a federally funded program based on financial need. Because the program is financially need based, work experience is not the qualifying factor. In order to work under the Federal College Work Study Program, a student must have financial need, as determined by FAFSA.

   The dollar amount awarded under the College Work-Study Program to a student on his/her Award Letter, is not a guaranteed receivable. It is a fair estimate of what a student could earn. Work-Study is an allotment that students can earn if they have a job on
campus. It is not money that is directly deferred on their bill, or automatically applied while they are working. If a student does not put in the necessary hours or is released from employment for just cause, the money shown on the Award Letter will not be obtained. Student employees are utilized in all areas of the University from administrative offices to facilities/maintenance work crews.

During the reporting period, below is the list of the represented university students who had sponsored internships:

- AccessAbility Services - 1 WF
- Alumni Office - 1 WF
- Diversity and Equity - 1 HM
- Division of Student Affairs - 1 WM, 2 WF, 1 BM, 1 BF
- Enrollment Management - 1 HF, 1 OM
- Graduate Studies - 1 WF
- Honors Program - 1 WM, 1 WF, 1 OF
- Intercultural Affairs - 1 WM, 2 WF, 1 BM, 1 BF, 1 HF
- Macricostas School (Arts and Sciences) - 1 WM, 2 OF
- Office of Financial Aid - 1 WM, 2 WF, 1 BM, 2 HF
- Office of Admissions - 1 WM, 2 WF, 1 BF, 1 HM
- School of Prof. Studies - 1 WF, 1 BF, 1 OM
- VPAC - 1 WF, 1 BM, 1 OM, 1 OF

All student employees must be matriculated in at least 6 credits per semester to remain eligible to work on campus. Student employment is an integral part of the university and of university life for many students. Student labor benefits the school in almost every academic and administrative department on campus. The student’s employment can be related to his/her major and/or interests and work schedules can be arranged around the student’s academic schedule.

The University may employ up to 400 students during the academic year. The types of jobs available are as diverse as the students themselves. There is a complete list of jobs and their descriptions available for students to examine in the Office of Student Financial Services (see attached documentation). Students are paid biweekly with an hourly rate of pay contingent on the difficulty of the position and the experience of the student. The first paycheck is held back for two weeks, as required by the state.

Institutional Payroll is not based on a student’s financial need in relation to qualifying under the federal programs. Students are employed under this program based on the needs of the department, the availability of funds, and the student’s experience in specific areas. All federal and state funds are subject to federal and state regulations and the University will comply as mandated.
(5) Job Sharing Arrangements: N/A
During the reporting period, the University has not sponsored or created job sharing arrangements and/or opportunities.

(6) Internships: University's Career Success Center
The University's Career Success Center sponsors the Cooperative Education Internship Program which helps to prepare students to become job world ready and to progress confidently toward graduation and launch meaningful careers. Whether you are a first-year student, about to graduate or already have graduated, The University has an employer resource system named "HANDSHAKE" to provide all students with an important source/link to various internship referrals, career-related events, and career exploration tools. Most importantly, HANDSHAKE is the main platform that the University uses to post internships, job opportunities, and other important career-related information.

For more information about these programs, please visit:
http://www.wcsu.edu/careersuccess

(7) Day Care Programs: University's Child Care Center
During the reporting period, the University discontinued the use/function of the Child Care Center.

(8) Creation of New Positions: N/A
During the reporting period, the University has had no need to create new positions within the University.

(9) Outreach for High School and College Students: University's Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs
The University's Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs include the following programs:

ConnCAP/Upward Bound
The ConnCAP/Upward Bound Program is a year-round, college preparatory program serving 140 Danbury High School students from grades 9 through 12. The Excel Program is a middle-school (Broadvue, Rogers Park and Westside Academy) feeder program for the ConnCAP/Upward Bound Program, currently serving 90 students in grades 7 and 8. The ConnCAS/EA²P Program is a year-round academic enhancement program serving underprivileged college students.

Excel Program
The University Excel Program is an opportunity for middle school students to develop their academic potential and achieve their goal of admission into a post-secondary educational program upon completion of high school. The program serves Broadview, Rogers Park and Westside Middle School students in families where neither parent has completed a 4-year college degree and/or low-income families whose taxable income is within our eligibility guidelines. The Excel Program is a year-round program currently serving up to 90 middle school students in the 7th – 8th grades.
This program begins recruiting students at the end of 6th grade to develop and strengthen their academic skills. The Excel Program is a feeder program for ConnCAP/Upward Bound and the majority of students continue on to participate in the high school. ConnCAP/Upward Bound will continue to edify and focus their academic and social-personal needs throughout high school in preparation for entrance into a post-secondary educational program.

A mandatory six-week, nonresidential summer program is conducted on the campus of Western Connecticut State University. The summer program, in conjunction with ConnCAP/Upward Bound, is designed to prepare students academically and socially for the upcoming school year. Students are given English, to strengthen their Language Arts and Writing Skills; Math, to strengthen their Mathematical skills.

During the academic year, each student meets with an academic advisor who monitors his or her academic and behavioral progress. Student progress is shared with parents at the end of each marking period, during parent conferences. The Excel Program works collaboratively with students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors to assure that students will work towards their academic potential.

The Excel Program involves students in their school and community through club meetings, community service and field trips, thereby enabling the facilitation of a sense of community and unity developed over the summer. The program is funded through the Connecticut Department of Higher Education along with additional support from the Danbury Board of Education. In short, the University Excel Program stands for respect for others, respect for yourself, and the pursuit of lifelong learning!

**ConnCAS/ EA³P (Educational Achievement and Access Program)**

The University's ConnCAS/ EA³P (Educational Achievement & Access) program provides support for underrepresented and underserved students to successfully transition from high school to college and to continue completion of an undergraduate degree. The students' preparation for college is enhanced by their participation in a five (5) week residential program before starting college in the Fall semester. Student support and academic counseling are continued throughout the academic year. During the ConnCAS/EA³P residential summer program, academic courses in math and English will be reinforced with tutorial sessions designed to prepare students for academic life.

Transitional workshops and campus presentations are created to promote achievement and student success in college. Students will also participate in leadership and teambuilding activities provided by our P.A.S.S. program (Programs for Achieving Student Success), Wide Angle Vision and various other departments on campus throughout the summer and academic year. The transition to college is much simpler for ConnCAS/EA³P students when they begin their college careers in the Fall semester at the University. Students become familiar with the campus and faculty and will have support from the ConnCAS/EA³P staff and counselors.
For more information about the above-noted programs, please visit:
http://www.wcsu.edu/pcaap/

(10) Reassignments: N/A
During the reporting period, the University has had no need to create reassignment opportunities within the University.

(11) Positive, Results-Oriented Program(s) designated to achieve Affirmative Action:

**Faculty Development Funds:** Under the terms of the CSU-AAUP contract, Article 9.6 and 12.10.1, the University annually allocates funds for faculty development, "which shall be construed broadly to mean activities by and for members that enhance their ability to be productive and innovative professionals." A maximum of $1,200 may be granted to any individual full-time faculty member and $600 to any individual part-time faculty member. The Faculty Development and Recognition Committee reviews and grants funds that are available to many individuals, so prior use of the Fund as well as merit of activity will be considered. In cases where the dollar total for approved applications exceeds available funds in a given funding period, preference will be given to applicants who have not been awarded full funding in the previous fiscal year." Applications for "in-house" workshops do not have a specified maximum funding level, but will be reviewed on the basis of merit and numbers of individuals across the University community who will benefit from the workshops. Proposals from AAUP members may be co-sponsored with non-members.

For more information about this Fund and application guidelines, please visit:
https://www.wcsu.edu/facultystaff/handbook/pages/fac-fund-app.asp

**Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee:** This AAUP bargaining unit committee meets regularly with the Chief Diversity Officer to develop strategies to attract a diverse faculty applicant pool. Additionally, the Committee frequently reviews proposals to support faculty attendance at workshops and conferences which expand their knowledge of their particular discipline. During the reporting period, the University continued its support of teaching faculty’s attendance at professional conferences as well as assisting with relocation costs of new faculty members to the Danbury area.

For more information about this Committee and application for funds, please visit:
http://www.wcsu.edu/minority/

**Minority Recruitment and Mentoring Committee:** This SUOAF-AFSMCE bargaining unit committee meets regularly with the Chief Diversity Officer to discuss recruiting strategies and to develop programming which enhance the work environment for employees, including highlighting career opportunities both internal and external to the University. During the reporting period, the University continued to encourage and support administrative staff attendance at professional conferences.

For more information about this Committee, application and guidelines, please visit:
https://wcsu.edu/suoa/documents/MRM%20Application.pdf
University’s Fall and Spring Semester Diversity (Virtual) Events Calendar
At WCSU, we believe in fostering a dynamic and vibrant learning environment by engaging our university and local community in thought-provoking discussions about issues that matter and meaningful programs to create culturally competent citizens. Every Fall and Spring semesters, the University’s Office of Diversity and Equity sponsors and promotes the use of the University Diversity Events Calendar. This calendar is posted on the primary university webpage (each applicable semester) to offer the university (and general) community an opportunity to become involved in high-impact events, information sharing, ideas and insights on issues of social justice and equity.

To access the University’s Semester Diversity Events Calendar (virtual links and copies attached), you can visit the Office of Diversity and Equity website link(s) at:
https://www.wcsu.edu/diversity/diversity-virtual-activities-calendar-fall-2020-draft/
https://www.wcsu.edu/diversity/spring-2021-diversity-virtual-events-calendar/

University’s Community Service/Volunteer Opportunities:
The University provides students and employees with opportunities to participate in community service projects and/or volunteer options (on and off campus). Many participants get involved through their athletic teams, student organizations, fraternities and sororities, and other organizations. Regardless of a student’s major and/or a participant’s interests, there are many opportunities for either a student and/or employee to become involved. Volunteer opportunities can last anywhere from a few hours over the course of a day or weekend for special events to major commitments of time and energy. Volunteer work provides students and/or employees with training and skills that can be invaluable to you in the participant’s current (or future) career endeavors.

For more information about the University’s community service/volunteer opportunities, please visit: http://www.wcsu.edu/community-service/volunteer-opportunities/

Western’s Day of Service
During the 2020-2021 academic year, the University did not schedule/host its annual Western Day of Service due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As time continues with the progress of campus operations managing COVID-19 vaccinations, in-person events will continue to be re-evaluated until further notice.

Generally, this community service event where over 600+ volunteers register to help not-for-profit organizations in the Greater Danbury Area. From reading to elementary school students, painting stairwells, sorting through donated clothes, cleaning, pulling weeds or washing fire trucks and ambulances, there was something worthwhile for every participant to do everywhere around the Danbury area.

For more information about this event, please visit: http://www.wcsu.edu/community-service/western-day-of-service/
Fairfield County’s Community Foundation – Giving Day
On February 25, 2021, the University participated in “Giving Day” powered by Fairfield County’s Community Foundation Giving Day to raise money for local nonprofit organizations in just 24 hours through online donations. It invites those who love Fairfield County to come together and make an incredibly powerful, collective impact by supporting local nonprofits. Students and staff are encouraged to offer any donation amount to support this effort, and to promote a means to create change in Fairfield County, focusing on innovative and collaborative solutions to critical issues impacting the community.

For more information about this event, please visit:
https://fccfoundation.org/community-impact-fund/center-nonprofit-excellence/giving-day/

University’s Provost Blog
Initiated in October 2018, Dr. Missy Alexander, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs has launched a monthly blog that highlights topics ranging from accreditation initiatives, developing of new academic curricula and assessment plans, strategic planning initiatives, and recent trends in higher education. The blog has been distributed virtually and is available to the university community.

For more information about this initiative, please visit:
https://wcsuprovostblog.com/author/wcsuprovost/

Additionally, during this reporting period and with the assistance of students (and/or student clubs/associations), staff and the local community, the University once again sponsored many widely-publicized events:

- WCSU for Holistic Health Studies – Health, Fitness and Wellness Fair (Cancelled due to COVID-19)

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the University did not schedule/host its annual Health, Fitness and Wellness Fair due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As time continues with the progress of campus operations managing COVID-19 vaccinations, in-person events will continue to be re-evaluated until further notice.

In past semesters, the University hosted a Health, Fitness and Wellness Fairs in the Bill Williams Gym in Berkshire Hall on the university’s Midtown campus. There were multiple exhibitors from campus and the local area providing information and interactive exhibits, as well as students presenting their internship experiences for the IHHS. This event was free and open to the public. 33 vendors were registered to present at the fair. Among other presentations, healthy food and giveaways, the vendors include: Cucumber and Chamomile with demonstrations of reflexology and reiki; do-TERRA Essential Oils with lessons on how to integrate oils into a healthy lifestyle, accompanied by free hand massages; Murphy Family Chiropractic presented a postural and spinal alignment screening; The Patient Whisperers provided group and individual relaxation hypnosis sessions; and Wells Valley Cat
Rescue presented the benefits of being a cat owner as well bringing adoptable kittens to socialize.

For more information about this event, please visit: http://www.wcsu.edu/news/2018/04/09/wcsu-to-host-health-fitness-and-wellness-fair/

- **Spring 2022 Semester M.F.A. Artist (Virtual) Lecture Program**

Various artists whose paintings, illustrations, sculptures and mixed-media works have been widely exhibited to critical acclaim across the United States and abroad will discuss their artistic philosophies and creative process during the Western Connecticut State University fall semester Master of Fine Arts lecture series continuing from **February 2022 to April 2022**. All (virtual) lectures, sponsored by the WCSU Department of Art M.F.A. in Visual Arts program, were arranged at the Visual and Performing Arts Center on the WCSU Westside campus, 43 Lake Ave. Extension in Danbury. Virtual admission was free and the university community and public was invited to register for this virtual event.

For more information about the various virtual event(s), please visit: https://www.wcsu.edu/art/category/art-events/

- **WOW: What's On at WCSU? Virtual Student Calendar**

The Division of Student Affairs ("Student Affairs") at WCSU, as an integral partner in the university experience, is dedicated to the achievement of excellence in all student endeavors. Student Affairs is committed to preparing students for lifelong learning and leadership as ethical and responsible citizens in a diverse and global community. Student Affairs has created a virtual student calendar called WOW to educate our students on the various opportunities, initiative and events (virtual and in-person) on our campuses.

For more information about this virtual student initiative/calendar, please visit: https://www.wcsu.edu/wow/events/

- **December 1, 2021: World AIDS Day**

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the University did not schedule/host Inter-Cultural Festival due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As time continues with the progress of campus operations managing COVID-19 vaccinations, in-person events will continue to be re-evaluated until further notice.

The University’s Office of InterCultural Affairs and the Gay-Straight Alliance participated (at past events) in World AIDS Day in the lobby of the Student Center on the WCSU Midtown campus. During this academic year, WCSU has launched the Pride Center, and as such, a representative from the Pride Center and the AIDS Greater Danbury Project (i.e., APEX Community Care) will work collaboratively
on scheduled events/presentations. The event will be free and open to the campus community.

For more information about this event, please visit:
http://www.wcsu.edu/newsevents/event.asp?event_id=44403

- **Health Promotion and Exercise Science Department Annual Academic Internship Fairs and Events**

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the University did not schedule/host the annual internship fair due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As time continues with the progress of campus operations managing COVID-19 vaccinations, in-person events will continue to be re-evaluated until further notice.

The Health Promotion and Exercise Science Department hosts its annual internship fairs as well as academic events to connect local employers with students who need to obtain 450 unpaid hours with a local agency to complete their graduation requirements and earn up to 12 credits. Also, in collaboration with the Institute for Holistic Health Studies, university sponsored events are hosted throughout the academic year to offer students, staff and the university community with an opportunity to engage in and explore different aspects of holistic and integrative health through programming and instruction.

For more information about the Institute for Holistic Health Studies, please visit:
http://wcsu.edu/ihhs/

- **Visual and Performing Arts Center 2021-2022 Seasons**

On September 27, 2021, the University welcomed more than 200 guests to experience the creative process at work at the gala opening of its new Visual and Performing Arts Center ("VPAC"). Students, faculty and staff were on hand to "put the building through its paces" in a multitude of spaces, including the Concert Hall, Studio Theatre, Art Gallery, Painting Studio, Recording Studio, Scene Shop, Dressing Rooms, Sculpture Studio, and M.F.A. Studios. In the weeks since the gala opening, the new facility has enhanced the artistic and academic experience for students, faculty, staff and patrons.

At 130,000 square feet, this uniquely designed facility is divided into three distinct wings: Theatre Arts, Music and Visual Arts, all connecting together in the stunning lobby with a ramp bridge that appears to float high above. Students taking courses in the art wing benefit from light shining through double-height, northern-exposed windows in the spacious painting and sculpture studios. They work in photography and graphic design studios equipped with both the latest computer technology and the legacy technology of traditional film development. The Art Gallery features northern-exposed light, a Panelock 200 display system, all atop beautiful maple flooring.
Music students rehearse and perform in the Veronica Hagman Concert Hall, which features a tri-level, in-the-round seating experience for an audience of up to 350; variable acoustics; state-of-the-art performance audio and lighting; 5:1 HD recording and two Concert Grand pianos: a Steinway Model “D” (Hamburg) and a Yamaha CFX, the flagship of the Yamaha concert piano line. A recording studio houses WCSU’s new Audio and Music Production degree program and features a Solid State Logic Duality audio console — the finest in the industry.

Theatre students perform on the facility’s Main Stage Theatre and Studio Theatre — both loaded with technology and functionality beyond many Broadway venues. Two theatre rehearsal studios, both equipped with audio/visual technology and sprung dance floors complement the university’s increasingly popular musical theatre program. Dressing rooms, practice rooms and individual Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts studios are all incorporated into the spaces, designed for students so they may experience a professional-quality arts education.

During the reporting period, the University’s Visual and Performing Arts Center (“VPAC”) has held various exhibitions, performances and galleries to showcase our student achievements in Theatre Arts, Music and Visual Arts.

To access the interactive calendar of events held at VPAC, please visit: http://www.wcsu.edu/svpa/events/

On February 23, 2019, Dr. John Clark, University President and Brian Vernon, Dean for the School of Visual and Performing Arts, hosted a community concert in honor for Marian Anderson, a musical and civil rights icon who lived in Danbury. Mrs. Anderson was the first African American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera and later in life was recognized with several awards, including the Medal of Freedom. She sang at the inaugurations of presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. This celebration introduced the University’s campaign for the Marian Anderson initiative to raise funds to rename the School of Visual and Performing Arts in honor of Marian Anderson.

For more information about the University initiative, please visit: http://www.wcsu.edu/svpa/mariananderson/

- **2021-2022 Career Success Center Job Fairs**

  During the 2021-2022 academic year, the University did not schedule/host an in-person/on-campus Career Fair due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As time continues with the progress of campus operations managing COVID-19 vaccinations, in-person events will continue to be re-evaluated until further notice.

  On May 20, 2022 and May 21, 2022, the University’s Career Success Center hosted virtual student job fairs which connected over 100+ local (and regional) employers
with students seeking both permanent and summer employment opportunities. The University's Career Success Center Job Fairs are open to all University students and alumni as well as students and alumni from Eastern Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, and Southern Connecticut State University.

For more information about the University’s job fairs with the Career Success Center, please visit: https://www.wcsu.edu/careersuccess/career-fair/