



COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OF RHODE ISLAND  
Office of the President

To: Brenda Dann-Messier, Commissioner for Higher Education

From: Meghan Hughes, President 

Re: Transmittal of FY19 Budget Request - Revised

Date: November 2, 2017

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While nationally community colleges are experiencing significant reductions in enrollment as the result of an improved economy, demographic shifts lowering the number of high school graduates, and competition from 4-year institutions, I was recently delighted to report that the Community College of Rhode Island is experiencing at least a 47 percent boost in our enrollment of new full-time, first-time, Rhode Island high school graduates as a result of the Rhode Island Promise program.

This influx of students forms the basis for the positive message and the college's presentation of the Revised FY18 Allocation and the college's FY19 Budget Request as revised and recommended by the Finance and Facilities Committee. The Council will note that while the total student FTE count declines by 27 students in the 2018 Revised Allocation from the 2018 projections presented a year ago, there is a notable shift from part-time (-655) to full-time attendance (+628).

We have been focused on communicating to students that taking 15 credits per semester is a key strategy to graduating on time, and we know it is critical to CCRI improving its graduation metrics. The RI Promise initiative requires a student to complete 30 credits in a year, and we stress this message to all our students through our Advising and Counseling sessions. We know these efforts, along with the improvements we have seen through the implementation of the Master Schedule and with the major initiative to implement Guided Pathways over the next two years, will keep our students on track to graduate.

The collaboration between Student Services and Academic Affairs resulted in an exceptional job of implementing the RI Promise program in an extraordinarily short amount of time. With approximately 43% of the new students qualifying for Pell grants, it is anticipated that CCRI will fully utilize the \$2.75M allocated for this program in this fiscal year. CCRI has provided an estimate to OPC that a supplemental budget request may be required in excess of the \$2.75M for FY18 due to the successful launch. The initial program success, coupled with the anticipation of

a larger second cohort of students next fall, leads us to include an estimate of \$6.35M required in State RI Promise funding for FY19.

Another key program that supports students moving to graduation more quickly is the Dual Enrollment program. This program allows high school students to enroll at CCRI full-time during their senior year. The success of this program has also proven to be fiscally challenging for the State. My team found it rewarding to work with staff from OPC, RIDE, and representatives from the cities and towns to identify alternative funding and program remodeling options. Our goal is to permit this program to operate in the future without continued draining of CCRI's limited resources.

Nationally, high-performing community colleges improve student success through more intrusive advising and mentoring. To ensure that the two-year pilot for the Promise program becomes a model for higher education in Rhode Island, CCRI is investing \$500,000 in FY18 and FY19 in direct student support initiatives, including 4 new FTE's for advising and counseling, significant tutorial funding, as well as enhanced peer-to-peer and cohort sponsorship measures. These dollars, coupled with donations from generous private contributors, will allow the college to implement nationally-proven models that improve student outcomes around persistence and graduation.

In addition, we have garnered substantial private donations to the Foundation in support of grants to improve student retention and RI Promise. In order to advance the college's mission, we have included in FY18 a new Development Director position. The goal is that this position, and any future similar FTE's, will become self-supporting, generating more than sufficient revenues to offset their cost, while growing a future fundraising base to support the college's efforts.

CCRI is a driver for both credit and non-credit workforce development for the State of Rhode Island. The partnership between the Westerly Skills Center, managed by OPC, Electric Boat, and CCRI, is an example of a highly successful non-credit job training program. Under the leadership of newly-hired Vice President for Workforce Development, Julian Alssid, we have a plan to grow this segment of fee-based, fiscally self-supporting workforce development, and it is also included in both FY18 and FY19. Key labor market areas of demand will be the focus of fostering employer partnerships and creating applicable training programs in concert with those specific industries and employers. These efforts will be aligned with the credit activity of CCRI with the goal of supporting our students to graduation and quality employment.

The FY 17 Retirement program initiated by CCRI was a tremendous success, enabling the college to increase the diversity of our faculty with new hires, while reallocating resources to areas that align with our objectives, timelines, and mission. We envision offering an incentive program again in the future taking lessons learned from FY 17.

The FY18 Allocation and the FY19 Request have been developed in support of the initiatives mentioned above and consistent with the emerging strategic direction the college has identified in concert with our college community and our consulting team:

## **Enhancing Student Success and Completion**

## **Expanding Partnerships and Programs**

## **Strengthening the Effectiveness of our Organization**

While the FY18 Budget includes a 7% combined tuition and fee increase, consistent with the directive, FY19 does not include any such recommendations. The total increase required in FY19 is 3.3% more than the FY18 operational budget. A modest increase in enrollment with a continued trend toward full-time versus part-time enrollment will yield \$687,411. Other college revenues are anticipated to increase \$651,568, primarily from Workforce Development initiatives. Consistent with the recommended distribution that 25% of a \$9M pool in State funding be allocated to CCRI, \$2.3M is included as increased state appropriation – 4.6% over the current year. This represents the first installment of a 5-year plan to stabilize the state's investment in Rhode Island higher education by allowing for better fiscal planning by the system and the institutions.

CCRI is appreciative of the commitment by the State that this level of funding will further improve the affordability of CCRI as a first choice for higher education in Rhode Island. In reconciling CCRI's initial budget request of \$3.6M in new state funding to the Performance-Based Funding level of \$2.3M, a reduction of \$1.3M in our submission was required. As we shared with the Finance and Facilities Committee, the items removed from our submission were as follows:

- Elimination of 4 new positions (\$351,000). These include a Conduct Officer, Coordinator of Disability Services, Director of Development, and an Assistant Purchasing/AP Manager. These new positions would have supported student success, increased our capacity to cultivate new donor relationships, and provided resources to assist our Office of Business Affairs in supporting our college community
- Reduction in technology funding (\$500,000). These funds would have been used for technology initiatives that would enhance digital support services for our new Promise students.
- Delay filling vacant positions (\$457,000). We will hold 5.5 positions vacant for FY19 to achieve these savings. We will continue to review all vacancies as they occur and determine the best use of open FTE position consistent with college priorities.

CCRI remains steadfast in our dedication to providing quality education and training to our nearly 15,000 students so that they can graduate, transfer, and move into high-quality careers here in Rhode Island.