Dr. Gray began the meeting with an anecdote from his lunch with students. He described what they loved most about Western as the faculty and their programs of study and that what they most dislike is that they “have to leave.”

Dr. Gray then outlined the priorities for the Board of Regents, which include the following:

- **Restore trust and integrity to the ConnSCU system.** This is “not easy. We are public employees and open to scrutiny. We are open book. Transparency goes two ways.” In this last remark, Dr. Gray specifically referred to the media. He stated that he is not only speaking for the media, but he acknowledged that the media was present at the meeting.

- **Dr. Gray continued by outlining the goal to create a ConnSCU system:** “We are building an organization from scratch.” He proposed that the BOR must integrate three already established entities: the Community Colleges, Charter Oak, and the four state universities. He concluded that this is “harder than from scratch” because each of these three entities has its own structure, hierarchy, and policy procedures.

- **“What should this plan be?” “How are we going to improve student learning?”** Gray asked these questions and answered with a reference to Jim Collin’s philosophy of going from “being very good to being very great.” (Added Note: The following link may be helpful for this reference to Dr. Gray’s statement: [http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/good-to-great.html](http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/good-to-great.html).)

- **Plan for the Community Colleges:** “Community colleges will always have an access mission” and will “focus on workforce development.” The state of CT has identified 5 career clusters, and each should have a corporate sponsor (based on the IBM model): Allied Heath, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Financial Services, and Hospitality. Community colleges should also develop more Early College Programs.
“What is the plan for the 4 CSUS? Dr. Gray noted the following: At Western, there is an Arts building. Signature programs include meteorology and JLA. A common thread for all CSUs will be teacher education programs.

According to Dr. Gray, Charter Oak will experience the “greatest transformation” in the new plan. In one of many references to the SUNY system, Dr. Gray referred to Empire State College, SUNY’s online college with a 2012-2013 enrollment of 22,000.

The “Plan for the System” will include a common application for admissions and technology that will be updated to better serve students. He noted that he had to explain to the BOR that this did not necessarily mean saving $. “If you try to save $, you forget that the changes are to better serve students.

Dr. Gray stated that his goal is to increase student enrollment, which “drives our tuition.” He cited the fact that the number of high school graduates in the state of CT is going down and proposed to increase enrollment through three strategic initiatives: 1) early college programs; 2) Charter Oak; and 3) Transfer students.

Dr. Gray recommends a “seamless curriculum” for ConnSCU. He offered a model from Florida’s Miami Dade Community College. The same syllabus at Miami Dade is used at universities where students will transfer credits. He seemed to suggest further development beyond transfer and articulation or common course numbering so that faculty would be teaching the “same course” with the “same syllabus” at community colleges, charter oak, and the four CSUS.

Dr. Gray reiterated the plan to merge the three systems and stated that “Governor Malloy wants it done fast” while the “Board of Regents wants it done right.”

Question and answers:

1. Dr. Emilio Collar, Associate Dean of the Ancell School of Business, asked a question regarding online courses and programs at Western. If these are to be centralized at Charter Oak, how does that impact the CSUS? Each CSU has its own online courses and programs, and these are an important source of revenue.

Dr. Gray’s response: “If it were up to me, all students would have to take courses online.” He remarked that knowing how to learn online should be an essential part of general education. He also said that he did not see Charter Oak as the “universe of online education” and that “Charter Oak would be the administrator” of online education. For example, rather than various online courses of History 101 “with 6 students here and 5 students there,” the plan would “centralize History 101 online through Charter Oak.” He also suggested that the “academic delivery budget could benefit” from taking one section of a course with multiple sections and offering it online. He gave the example of Psychology 101. The university could offer three sections face-to-face and add an online section from Charter Oak.
2. A student graduating in Political Science asked a question about redundancies in courses at different schools and whether elimination of “redundancies” was a goal across the system.

Dr. Gray’s response: “I will check on it. If you give me your email, I’ll get back to you.”

3. A non-traditional student from History returned to the topic of online courses: “I’m concerned with taking online courses with faculty we don’t know.” The student noted that students at Western take online courses with faculty at Western and often develop relationships with those faculty members in an intellectual community.

Dr. Gray shared an anecdote from a meeting he had 15 years ago when he made the same comment across the table from an administrator from the University of Phoenix. He said that from that meeting, thanks to the University of Phoenix example, he became convinced that faculty in online classes can connect just as well with students as faculty on campus through technology.

The same student also asked a second question regarding what the BOR is going to do to support the Humanities?

Dr. Gray answered with an anecdote from twenty years ago. At that time, as a Business dean, he addressed English faculty explaining that they were important for vocational training for creative problem solving, communication skills, etc. He remarked that they did not agree with his idea, but he still believes that the humanities reinforce all professional programs and are therefore important.

4. Another student asked about student representation on the BOR.

Dr. Gray responded that the “BOR was created two years ago and went through hell.” He said that it is just starting anew as a board and encouraged anyone interested, including students, to come to open meetings.

Perhaps reading a confrontational tone in the student’s question about representation (?), Dr. Gray suggested to the student that rather than “fighting against” an issue, he should understand that “no one wants to raise tuition,” including students, faculty, the BOR, the legislature, the governor. Dr. Gray then asked: “Rather than fighting, how can we collaborate?”

Regarding the tuition issue, Dr. Gray offered some ideas for innovative national models to follow. For example, if tuition could be guaranteed for four years for the student, the student could agree to pay 15% up front for all four years.
5. Mr. David Boyajian, an adjunct faculty member who has taught at Western and Norwalk Community College for 16 years, stated that 70% of faculty in the ConnSCU system are adjuncts. He asked what impact faculty can have when they are on campus for 5 hours a week.

Dr. Gray pointed out that there are current plans to hire full-time faculty across the system, with many ongoing searches. “My hope is that my plan will have support for more faculty from the legislature.”

6. Sue Wolf, CSU Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Advancement, returned to the topic of online education. “If this is centralized, if more than one school offers History 101, who decides who gets to offer the course?”

Dr. Gray’s response was brief: “I want this to be fair and equitable. Let’s not duplicate courses and let’s be efficient. I don’t have those details.”

7. Another WCSU staff member made a comment that Higher education should offer a variety of perspectives and asked why not allow schools to offer their own online classes? “History 101 is different depending on the professor.”

Dr. Gray answered: “Enrollment at Western is down 15%. Can you afford to do this?”

8. Dr. Margaret Murphy, Professor of English, expressed concern about a point in a document sent by email prior to the meeting: “2013-2016 Strategic Initiatives, Connecticut State Universities, October 2013” with “Connecticut State Colleges & Universities / Board of Regents for Higher Education” on the front page. (Added Note: It was later clarified by Provost Gates at the Senate meeting that President Schmotter shared this draft document because it had already been released on other CSU campuses, first by President Miller at Central.)

The point raised by Dr. Murphy is located on Page 2, bullet point 6 under the heading “Forces that Drive State University Planning and Operations”

- “Constraint to change and agility implicit in Collective Bargaining Agreements (especially AAUP and SUOAF)”

Dr. Gray replied that the document had been written before he was hired and that he had no comment. He said that he had not read it and that he did not mean to “cop out.”

9. Ms. Janet Ohles, Associate Director of Library Services, asked about the future of the “individual identities” of the four CSUS.

Dr. Gray answered that each institution will maintain “autonomy” and “academic integrity” within the system, “much like SUNY.”
10. There was continued discussion regarding the mystery document circulating with initiatives for the Connecticut State Universities.

Dr. Patricia O’Neill, Associate Professor of Psychology and WCSU-AAUP President, followed up to Dr. Murray’s question in reference to the document circulating with initiatives for the Connecticut State Universities.

Dr. Gray: “I won’t comment on that document.”

Mr. Vijay Nair, President, Connecticut State University AAUP, clarified that the document was released by Dr. Miller at Central in November 2013.

Dr. Gray: “I thought that wasn’t true. It bothers me.”

11. Dr. Patricia O’Neill presented the final question: “Does Empire State College control all online education in SUNY the way you envision it for Charter Oak.

Dr. Gray: “No.”