INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS
Section 46a-68-93

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) supports and maintains a number of programs that benefit students, staff, faculty, potential employees and the community in ways that demonstrate the University's commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

Administrative Clerical Tuition Waiver Program

The Connecticut State University System (CSU) has an agreement with AFSCME Council 4 to provide a tuition waiver program to clerical employees, effective through June 30, 2025. Members of the Administrative Clerical bargaining unit, who are permanent and work at least 20 hours weekly, may take up to two courses per semester at any of the four State universities, tuition free. During the Fall 2023 semester, three (3) CCSU employees benefitted from this program: two (2) white females and one (1) Black female. During the Spring 2024 semester, one (1) CCSU employee benefitted from this program: one (1) white female.

Alternate Work Schedules

The University provides alternate work schedules for all employees, if requested and in accordance with union contracts. This assists the individual in maintaining a full-time job while meeting other responsibilities outside the workday.

Center for Teaching and Innovation

The mission of the Center for Teaching and Innovation is to provide the instructional and administrative faculty of Central Connecticut State University with a comprehensive development center that combines the opportunity to engage with new and novel pedagogies with the highest level of instructional design technological support needed to stay on the cutting-edge of pedagogical development. We are strongly committed to: assisting faculty with the successful integration of technology, providing an environment to engage in new and novel pedagogies or refine tried and true techniques, offering the opportunity for continuous growth and development in the delivery of course content in a supportive and encouraging environment. The CTI's goal is to provide instructional design services, technology assistance, and training to faculty and staff. CTI offers workshops and one-on-one assistance with Blackboard Learn, multimedia projects, MS Office, and more. The Center, located on the 3rd floor of the library, has classroom/workshop space, a conference room equipped for webinars, and space for creating and editing multimedia projects.

CCSU Scholarships

Scholarship funds are available to assist classified employees and their dependent children with educational goals at Central Connecticut State University. The University designates funds for both the dependent children and the employees enrolled in courses. Each semester, the Human Resources Office sends mass mailings to all classified staff to notify them of this opportunity. One scholarship was awarded during the 23-24 academic year to a dependent child of a Black male employee.

CCSU Drop-in Child Care Center

The university offers additional and much-needed assistance to student-parents with the CCSU Drop-in Child Care Center (ccsu.edu/childcare) that opened in the Fall of 2022. The center is located in Carroll Hall's lower level. Its proximity to the Willard DiLoreto parking lot and new parking garage provides student-parents with convenient access. Several grants are funding the center's operation, which enables the university to offer free services to student-parents who are registered for classes at CCSU.

The Mission of the CCSU Drop-In Child Care Center is to provide high-quality, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate educational experiences for children ages 3-12 years old, that is easily accessible and supportive to

the needs of our CCSU students, faculty, and staff. The CCSU Drop-In Child Care Center supports all learners through social and emotional learning, differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching. The Center provides high-quality preschool education and enrichment programs to support the needs of CCSU students, faculty, and staff. The Center strives to promote equity in education and seeks to provide educational advancement opportunities to strengthen the community.

The center prioritizes registration to accommodate student-parents; if space permits, faculty and staff will be welcome to register their child for a fee. They also offer summer enrichment programs. There is a summer program for children 3-4 called CCSU Fireflies and a program for 5–7-year-olds called CCSU Shooting Stars. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Drop-in Child Care Center served sixty-nine (69) students, faculty, and staff and had a total of eighty-two (82) registered children.

Center for Community Engagement and Social Research (CCESR)

CCESR brings together the important work of community engagement and applied research. The Center's primary goal is to integrate teaching, research, and service through community engagement. CCESR would like all students to engage in multiple experiential learning opportunities, for faculty to develop scholarship with a community focus, and for our community to work with us to address their most pressing needs.

In 2020, Central Connecticut State University became a proud holder of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. The Carnegie Classification® is the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education." In 2005, the Carnegie Classifications of Higher Education expanded to include Elective Classifications. The Elective Classifications honor institutions that have made incredible strides towards a specific theme, one of which being Community Engagement.

It is not simply an award, but an evidence-based documentation of policies and practices that the University has developed and upheld. To receive the classification, CCSU had to prove that it has made strong commitments to instilling community engagement on an institutional level. CCSU is one of 357 institutions currently classified and is up for re-classification in 2024.

The following is a list of events and community engagement activities sponsored by the CCESR that took place during the 2023-2024 academic year (more information is provided in the Internal Communication Supplemental Information Section):

- September 29, 2023: Healthier Together Community Wellness Series
- October 19, 2023: Connecticut Supreme Court Hearings at CCSU
- October 26, 2023: (Don't) Just Vote
- December 6, 2023: Israel and Palestine: Historical Observations and Their Contemporary Implications
- January 19, 2024: MLK Day of Service
- May 2, 2024: Empty Bowls

Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS)

Over the summer, CCESR launched the Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS) Program. Our Center encourages all students to engage in experiential learning opportunities but understands that not everyone has the financial resources available to take on unpaid roles. As a result, the CEELS program was created. Students were able to apply and receive $18/hr with a maximum of $3,000. Priority was given to

students with financial barriers and those with internships engaging with local communities. Due to the success of the program, CCESR will continue to provide these stipends each semester.

CCESR Student Ambassador

One member of the CCESR team is our Student Ambassador. The Student Ambassador is a motivated, committed, and active student who believes in the mission of the Center: university-community collaboration is characterized by mutual benefit and reciprocity, and we need to integrate teaching, research, and service through community. Our Center also values the importance of experiential learning and strives to provide students with multiple opportunities, including internships, volunteer work, and service-learning projects.

To spread that message to as many students as possible, the Student Ambassador provides outreach to student clubs and organizations, tables at student-centered campus events (i.e., Club Fairs, Open House, Admitted Students Day, etc.), and assists CCESR in our various events and service projects. In addition to their work with students, they also serve as a student voice in our collaborations with community partners by sitting on our Community Engagement Advisory Board and Civic Engagement Task Force.

This position has an expectation of an average of 5-10 hours a week (some weeks will require no hours, some might require 10), with occasional weekend work.

O'Neill Public Service Scholarship

In 2009, the O'Neill Public Service Scholarship was established to honor the legacy for the late Governor William A. O'Neill. He appreciated the value of education and, as governor, increased funding to Connecticut colleges and Universities. As a result, a portion of the earnings from the O'Neill Endowed Chair, housed within CCESR, is used to support scholarships for undergraduate students who are pursuing a degree program leading to a career in public service (e. g., government, education, not-for-profit, etc.).

These scholarships are specifically intended to support students in CCSU's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) who seek to follow the remarkable example set by Governor O'Neill during his long and distinguished career of public service. The EOP program assists with enrollment at CCSU for high school graduates or general equivalency diploma (GED) recipients who are the first in their family to attend college, are low-income or are from traditionally underrepresented groups at the university level.

Since 2009, the Chair has provided over $330,000 in Governor William A. O'Neill Public Service Scholarship program funds for EOP students.

John Lewis Institute Scholars

Central Connecticut State University launched the John Lewis Institute for Social Justice on Feb. 25, 2022, which is now housed under the Center for Community Engagement & Social Research & O'Neill Chair. The Institute seeks to empower a new generation of leaders to follow Lewis's call to build a better and more just world, one that is marked by hope and focused on liberation. Their collective work is designed to create intellectual and civic spaces to allow for a deeper understanding of the roots of injustice, while also fostering and nurturing efforts to eliminate it.

Working with cohorts of student Social Justice Scholars, the Institute's goals include developing their leadership and advocacy skills, while helping them to explore public service careers. The wider goal of the Institute is to engage with the campus and the local community around Social Justice issues.

Students can apply to be a part of a JLI cohort and, if selected, will receive a scholarship of $750 per semester. During their two years as a JLI Scholar, they will attend a retreat, participate in seminars and scholar development, complete an internship, create a CCSU Social Justice Program or Initiative, and participate in a free spring break service trip. At the end of the two years, JLI Scholars will be recognized for their work and receive a Presidential medallion to wear at commencement.

EOP - The Educational Opportunity Program

In 1968, Central Connecticut State University established the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Presently, it offers 204 students from Connecticut high schools seniors who do not meet the regular admissions criteria but have the desire and motivation the opportunity to attend Central Connecticut State University. Accepted students must complete a comprehensive five-week summer academic and residential program to begin the fall semester as full-time matriculates. During the summer, EOP students are provided an all-expense paid tuition, room, board, books, and supplies. Students are registered for Math, Writing, History and Physical Education. In addition, they are taught Study Skills, Time Management, Learning Skills and how to navigate university resources. During the academic years' students are provided with intrusive support and EOP Staff works closely with CCSU's faculty and university departments with assisting students with retention and graduation.

As of Fall 2023, 179 students continue to be served (57% male and 43% female). This year these students identified as 44% Hispanic, 53% Black, 11% White, 5% Asian, and 2% Other.

Employee Assistance Program

The University, in conjunction with the Lexington Group, Inc., offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This program is a free, short-term counseling, assessment, and referral service available to employees and eligible family members. EAP counselors are available for six sessions of short-term counseling. The EAP offers confidential assistance to employees in the identification and resolution of personal problems. Its' objective is to reduce problems in the workforce and to retain valued employees. The Lexington Group also provides seasonal newsletters with tips for healthy living and stress relief. During the reporting period, 51 cases were opened, 135 clients were served, there were 11 management contacts, there were 0 management consultations, and 23 cases were closed. The annual utilization for the EAP was 14%.

Employee Appreciation

The President of CCSU, Dr. Zulma Toro, held an Opening Meeting on September 14, 2023. During the meeting the President highlighted faculty and staff achievements. In addition, Dr. Toro announced the recipients of the Distinguished Service Awards for the 2023 academic year. The President's Office held a Spring Semester Kick Off on February 6, 2024 and CCSU Faculty and Staff End-of-Year Celebration and Commencement thank you on May 31, 2024.

Scholarships assisting in the diversification of our CCSU student population are as follows:

Travelers EDGE – Empowering Dreams for Graduation and Employment

CCSU's Travelers EDGE (Empowering Dreams for Graduation and Employment) Scholars Program is a mature, grant-funded program offering full tuition, fees, and book scholarships to program participants. Travelers EDGE leverage the strengths of the University with those of The Travelers Companies. Working with specific pipelines of students, the objectives are to retain students in business or business-friendly majors through to completion to degree attainment, while simultaneously developing career-ready qualified professionals to the insurance

and financial services industries. Travelers' goal is to build a pipeline of qualified workers while specifically targeting first-generation and underrepresented groups from Hartford and New Britain. Key elements of the program are academic support and coaching, peer mentoring, and the executive mentoring necessary to build the mindset and skills necessary to succeed in academics, internships, and on to career. Eligible students who meet GPA criteria earn the opportunity to interview for robust experiential learning via internships at Travelers.

An agreement with The Travelers Companies Inc and CCSU continues. The scholarship will enhance a pipeline of qualified workers to the insurance and financial services industry while building awareness of careers at Travelers. A key element of the program is the recruitment of students from CCSU's existing network of high school partners, community and school-based collegiate awareness programs, and Capital Community College's Capital Crossroads to Careers program to ensure that scholarship recipients also represent diverse social, economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds.

CCSU built upon the experience to attract its tenth Freshmen Cohort. Each incoming cohort typically consists up to five incoming first-year Travelers EDGE Scholars. These students attend specific high schools in the program's talent pipeline. Now in its sixth year as recognized pipeline partners, New Britain High School (NBHS) Academy of Finance Program continues to put forth talented students. Each partner school also receives separate grant funding to assist in critical components targeting student success and professional development. In 2021, New Britain High School's TRIO Program was added as an informal partner, allowing more deserving students with the opportunity to become a program participant.

Lessons learned from the close attention given to this program are shared with Travelers and across the Travelers EDGE Partner System, internally at CCSU with faculty members with whom Dr. Wall shares ideas, and in committee work such as within the School of Business. Dr. Wall has spoken at numerous academic conferences about important lessons drawn from her work. In AY 2023-2024, the Travelers EDGE Program once again identified area professionals (SME's) who work directly with Travelers EDGE Scholars on an as-needed basis to support their learning. Specifically, these professionals work as "academic coaches" in math/statistics and accounting. Additionally, a new coach to serve students enrolled Computer Science and Cybersecurity majors was hired. SME's are typically graduates of CCSU Masters' Degree programs, and in their service to the Travelers EDGE Scholars, work directly under Dr. Wall's direct supervision. Often, these Coaches share a diverse, cultural background like those the Travelers EDGE Program serves. Academic institutions including those that focus on meeting diversity missions such as the University of Connecticut, and in Minnesota, Augsburg University and Metro State University are also part of the larger Travelers EDGE program.

CCSU continues to define itself as an excellent partner that produces exceptional results. Metrics such as GPA and number of interning Scholars indicate the program's goals of creating career-ready individuals, are evidence of our commitment to program goals. In terms of GPA, 32% of Travelers EDGE Scholars receiving Dean's List Honors (Spring 2024), including four students who earned President's Honors. In fall 2023, 35% of scholars made Dean's List, with two making President's List Honors. In AY 2023-2024, 12 scholars completed their bachelor's degree. Of those, 8 accepted full-time offer at Travelers, 4 of which are in Leadership Development programs.

CCSU's Travelers EDGE program places emphasis on preparing its participants for internship opportunities at Travelers. CCSU is recognized in the partnership for the highest retention and graduation rates, as well as the highest conversion rate to full-time opportunities at Travelers. These metrics also produce ongoing awareness of the strength and readiness of academic programs at CCSU. To this point, going forward into AY 2024-2025, CCSU remains a preferred partner in Travelers prestigious Financial Leadership Development Program (FLDP) as Summer Interns who then have the opportunity to convert to full-time. A single CCSU student was selected for this elite summer Internship program (Travelers did a limited external recruiting program in fall 2023. Additional leadership development programs followed FLDP into making CCSU a targeted and strategic recruiting partner.

CCSU continues to place students in Leadership Development and Development Program summer internships. This includes the Engineering Development Program and Product Management Development Program. Feeding this pipeline, 7 Travelers EDGE Scholars completed Summer Leadership Program Internships at Travelers, and 2 did so in other organizations.

Overall, our Travelers EDGE Program produces a retention rate in the mid-ninety percent range. To-date, all but three Travelers EDGE Scholars who interned during his or her tenure in the program-and who then graduated-has converted to full-time employment with Travelers or within the Insurance and Financial Services Industry. Thus, CCSU Travelers EDGE fulfills the dream of opportunity through college access, academic excellence, internship success, graduation, and importantly to Travelers, CCSU remains a beacon of success within the academic partner institutions that comprise this wonderful diversity partnership.

The Travelers EDGE Program scholars work diligently to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them. The program produced the following statistics for the period of August 2023 to July 2024:

- Dean's List Honors, Fall 2023 = 35% (11 of 31 students); 2 earning President's List Honors

- Dean's List Honors, Spring 2024 = 32% (9 of 28 students); 4 earning President's List Honors

In AY 2023-24, 12 students completed bachelor's degrees in their major field of study:

- 8 accepted full-time offers at Travelers Companies
- 100% of students were eligible to intern at Travelers in Summer 2023

Rainbow Breakfast

Rainbow Breakfast is an event that is held every academic year, typically in October. It honors and celebrates the LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff at CCSU. It also is where the Rainbow Awards and the Richard S. Spada and Robert G. Childers Scholarship are distributed. The Rainbow Awards honor a student and a faculty or staff member who exemplify what it means to create a safe space, educate others on LGBTQ+ topics, and do this in an intersectional way, while the Scholarship is presented to two students who identify with the LGBTQ community and have exhibited integrity, leadership, and perseverance in overcoming personal adversity in their quest for a higher education.

Rainbow Breakfast also hosts a speaker, and speakers cover various topics from politics to activism to storytelling, depending on who they are and what relevant topics make sense. Generally, the focus is to celebrate the community and come together as a campus community to support each other. This visible support from campus community members helps LGBTQ and allied students, faculty, and staff feel more welcomed and supported.

Lavender Graduation

Lavender Graduation is a program that began in 1995 at the University of Michigan and now takes place in colleges and universities across the country. It celebrates the academic achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and ally (LGBTQI/A) undergraduate and graduate students. This event acknowledges the unique challenges, experiences, and accomplishments that these students face during their pursuit of higher education and thanks them for their contributions to campus life, diversity, and their fields of study. Having completed degrees in higher education and become positive role models for younger LGBT

students, this ceremony also thanks them for their perseverance through sometimes turbulent and hostile life and school experiences.

This program was first brought to CCSU as a capstone project completed by two students of the graduate program for Counseling in Student Development in Higher Education. It is now an institutional effort offered annually by the CCSU LGBT Center and the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Since 2010, CCSU has recognized 125 LGBTQ and Ally students in our annual Lavender Graduation Ceremony. Each Lavender Graduate receives a certificate of recognition and a rainbow cord and tassel to wear during commencement exercises.

Minority Recruitment & Retention

To continue to enhance the recruitment program, the Office of Equity & Inclusion and Human Resources work with the SUOAF/AFSCME Minority Recruitment and Mentoring Committee (MRMC) and AAUP Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee (MRRC) to develop strategies to attract a diversified pool of applicants for employment.

The AAUP (Faculty) MRRC is charged with the responsibility of assisting search committees to recruit members of minorities and other protected groups; to assist the University in retaining such members; and to engage in such other actions as will satisfy the above purposes. Last year the University awarded $14,296.21 to one (1) White Female, two (2) Black Females, and five (5) Asian Male minority faculty in the following disciplines: English (Latinx Literature); Finance; Psychological Science; Manufacturing and Construction Management; Accounting; Marketing; Management and Organization; Literacy, Elementary, and Early Childhood Education.

The SUOAF/AFSCME MRMC (Professional Non-Teaching Faculty) is charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending qualified minority candidates to search committees after the promotional process has been followed. The committee ensures that mentoring arrangements are available for newly appointed minority employees. The mentors are charged with responsibility for enhancing the professional development of minority employees. The program eligibility was changed in 2022 to remove eligibility criteria based on length of service. All otherwise eligible members are now eligible for MRMC funding for the full duration of their employment. This reporting period showed some changes due to contract negotiations and a smaller committee due to the fact members of the committees had expired terms of office. The committee focused on reviewing applications for professional development. In addition, the Committee held monthly meetings to discuss how to best communicate the availability of funds, ease the application process, and learn about how other offices function and what it takes to run events.

Performance Excellence Award for Support Staff

The Performance Excellence Award for Support Staff is designed to distinguish individuals or teams for their contributions to the University. These employees consistently exhibit performance and behavior that exemplify the University's values. Permanent classified employees and Management/Confidential employees who are at or below salary grade 35 are eligible to be nominated for this award. The Award is presented during Employee Appreciation Week each year.

Faculty Day & the Excellence in Teaching Awards Ceremony

On Friday, May 3, 2024, the Excellence in Teaching Award Committee held an award ceremony recognizing the achievements of CCSU faculty. In celebration of Central's 175th year in teaching, the 2024 Awards Day was a new experience with the focus on teaching. Highlights of the event include the following: a conversation with President Toro and Provost Kostelis; a brief look back at 175 years of teaching at Central; commendations for EIT, Distinguished Service Award (DSA), and Connecticut State University Professors (CSU); presentation of Excellence in Teaching Awards 2024: Honor Roll, Semi-Finalists and Finalists will all be individually recognized by the dean of their respective school.

Programs offered by Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA)

Put the Nail In It Campaign https://www.safehorizon.org/put-the-nail-in-it/

In the fall semester of 2023, OVA led the #PuttheNailinIt campaign. It is a project dedicated to bringing awareness to prevalence of domestic violence victims. Created by the brand Safe Horizon. Its mission is to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of domestic violence. In this campaign, students would take a vow promising to take their part in ending domestic violence and not staying silent. There were 5 tablings in the student center throughout the fall of 2023 in which the CCSU community members signed a pledge and/or painted one of their fingernails purple, to show their support for victims of domestic violence. Additionally, the local YWCA and Prudence Crandall Center tabled alongside the OVA to show students our collaborative effort with the community and have the community see individuals who work at these organizations face to face.

The Clothesline Project https://theclotheslineproject.org/

OVA organized and implemented the Clothesline Project in the Spring of 2024. The Clothesline Project is a visual display that bears witness to the violence against women. During the public display, a clothesline is hung with shirts. Each shirt is decorated to represent a particular woman's experience, by the survivor herself or by someone who cares about her. This project is done to help with the healing process for people who have lost a loved one or are survivors of this violence; to educate, document and raise society's awareness of the extent of the problem of violence against women; and to provide a nationwide network of support, encouragement and information for other communities starting their own Clothesline Project. The OVA worked with teams, classes and the CCSU community at large to decorate shirts which were later displayed at a full day event in Willard-DiLoreto Hall.

Denim Day https://denimday.org/

Denim Day activities were facilitated by OVA in the Spring of 2024. This campaign began after a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped the person who raped her remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. Denim Day is now recognized worldwide, and the OVA organized for the CCSU community to participate and wear jeans to stand in solidarity with rape victims. Additionally, there were 5 tablings held throughout the spring semester to raise awareness regarding this campaign.

Ruthe Boyea Women's Center

The Ruthe Boyea Women's Center exists to provide resources, to advocate, to inform, and to support personal development. The Center offers a variety of services for and about women. The Center sponsors educational and cultural programs designed to promote gender equity, knowledge of women's rights issues, leadership, and independence. It offers information and applications for scholarships pertaining to women including the Ruthe Boyea Scholarship. The Center encourages understanding and cooperation among women of varied socio-economic groups, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, races and sexual orientations. The Center aims to help find victims of violence, assault or harassment find the resources they need and act as their advocates in the process.

Latina Leadership and Personal Development Support Group: A weekly support group for and about Latina women. The goals of the group are to empower and support participants to successfully adjust to college life and effectively use their college experience to achieve their educational and career goals.

United Sisters Leadership Group: A weekly support mentoring and empowerment group for African American females. Discussions related to balancing academic and family responsibilities, and the development of leadership skills.

School of Engineering, Science, and Technology (SEST) – Student Services Center

The Student Services Center provides academic advising to declared and undeclared majors in the School of Engineering, Science, and Technology. We effectively communicate available co-ops, internships, and job opportunities and establish close personal and institutional relationships with local manufacturing companies, and secure internship and co-op positions for SEST students. The Center provides tutoring in various academic areas. Faculty serve as role models and mentors for students who are enrolled in the School's programs and provide students with access to specialized equipment beyond the regular classroom and laboratory. Student employees staff the Center. Special attention is paid to ensure a diverse student workforce in the Center.

SEST Activities Contributing to Recruitment of Students from Underrepresented Groups

<u>The Technology & Engineering Education Department</u>

The TEE Collegiate student club members volunteer their time to assist and judge at the following CCSU and State Association events throughout the year:

- FFL (First Lego League Robotics) student competition.
- The annual Sea Perch Submersible Robotic Competition
- The Electra-thon – electric vehicle competition was

<u>The Technology & Engineering Education Department</u>

The Central CARES student club sponsors the national program for "Go Baby Go" that puts disabled and immobile children into small electric cars.

<u>Computer Science Department - K-12 computer science support</u>

CCSU CS department has a long history of collaboration with CTCSTA (CT Computer Science Teachers Association). On the near horizon, in the state is certification for K-12 computer science teachers. Several of the legislators spoke about this at the CS4CT summit and the App Challenge. According to the chairperson of the Connecticut Board of Education, no university in CT offers any formal training for CS teachers. We would like to step up and offer the AP courses AP Computer Science, and AP Computer Science Principles.

<u>Engineering Department - CCSU All Girls STEM Summer Program</u>

The CCSU All Girls stem program, non-residential summer program for female high school students from New Britain and surrounding areas was. Outreach is continuing to the students in effort to inspire the next generation of female engineers and scientists to explore different aspects of what it means to be in a STEM related field. Participants will engage in activities that highlight different engineering and science disciplines under the guidance of CCSU faculty, staff, and students.

<u>Engineering Department - National Summer Transportation Institute</u>

The goal of this program is to improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills by providing high school students, minorities, young women, and disadvantaged youth with awareness regarding careers in transportation and to encourage them take transportation-related technical curricula in pursuit of a transportation career.

Young Engineers Summer STEM Workforce Development Program for 7th-9th grade students, and many programs developed by SEST faculty for youth from 2nd-12th grade in cooperation with Continuing Education. Industrial Advisory Board contributes significantly to the program development by providing expertise and knowledge of current technologies and creating alliances with regional industries. Each program which is accredited from national organizations in SEST shall have an Industrial Advisory Board composed of appropriate industrial representatives. The Board assists and recommends to faculty and administration matters concerning: student recruitment, evaluation and suggesting modifications of existing programs and courses, analysis of needs and the development of new courses and programs to meet the identified needs and assist in recruiting and advertising for full-time and part-time faculty positions in the school.

Random Hacks of Kindness Jr.
This program is aimed at introducing 4th-8th graders into what coding is in the context of "Coding for a Cause" as they build programs to help out non-profits. The event is hosted by CCSU's Computer Science Dept., Computer Science Club, with support from the Center for Community Engagement.

Tech It Out- There were many faculty from SEST who were involved in the program - There were eight (8) programs that served 107 kids during summer of 2024. The following is a list of the programs and how many students were involved:

Program Title	**# Of Students**
Designing and Creating Sculptures with Multiple Materials and Technologies	6
Become a Designer with Photoshop	8
Coding & Creating: Python Level 1	9
Coding & Creating: Python Level 2	8
Learn to Animate with Adobe Animate	7
Make Your Own Game with Unity	10
CREC Math, Science, and Bio-Engineering Academy	17
CREC Build & Create Academy	42
TOTAL	107

SEST is home to several student clubs/associations, including, but not limited to: National Society of Black Engineers, the Society of Women Engineers, International Society of Automation, Engineers without Borders, Society of Automotive Engineers: Formula, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers, Association of Technology, Management & Applied Engineering, Technology & Engineering Education Collegiate Association, Lunar Exploration Club, Multi-Powered Vehicle Club (formerly Human Powered Vehicle) , Construction Management Club, Chemistry Club, Biology Club, Computer Science Club , Geology and Planetary Sciences Club , Math Club , Physics Club, Sigma Gamma Epsilon (Theta Zeta Chapter), CARES Club, and Combat Robotics Association.

University Ombudsperson

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides an extensive service that facilitates fair and equitable resolutions to concerns that arise within the university. The Office remains a strategic part of CCSU's commitment to pursuing educational excellence with productivity, due process, and fairness. The practices of the Office of the University Ombudsperson reflect the values and principles expressed in the University's mission and vision statements.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson advocates for fairness, equity, justice, and humane treatment at CCSU. From these principles, the University Ombudsperson offers an impartial, objective, informal alternative for resolution of concerns for students, faculty, staff, and management. Acting as an impartial third party, the University Ombudsperson informally investigates complaints, resolves differences through mediation, expedites processes or advocates for specific actions and, based on experience in dealing with individual cases, presents options for procedural changes within the University. To the extent permitted by law, consultations with the University Ombudsperson are confidential. The Ombudsperson reports directly to the University's President. During the 2023-2024 academic year, The University Ombudsperson had 158 visitors presenting 172 issues/concerns.

Work Life Balance

The CCSU Work-Life Balance Committee, a sub-committee of the Committee on the Concerns of Women (CCW), is focused on providing leadership in facilitating the integration of work and study with family/personal life at Central Connecticut State University. Their mission supports the broader goals of creating a healthy and productive environment for men and women across the life span and contributing to the well-being of future generations.

Over the past decade, academic institutions have increasingly begun to focus attention on the importance of work/family issues for students, faculty, and staff, generating rapid growth in the number and variety of campus programs designed to address work/family needs. Their focus is to encourage the university to develop strategies for all members of the campus community to better balance their Work-Life arenas. They believe it is necessary and important to work with individuals from various organizations and groups on campus in order to achieve this important endeavor. To assist in creating the best work-life balance possible for faculty, staff, and students they have created various online resources to aid in this goal. CCW has established a "clearinghouse" website (www.ccsu.edu/wlb) that serves as centralized places for information on available resources, services, and programs on or related to work-life balance concerns.

During the 2023-2024 term, the Work Life Balance sub-committee, listened to the faculty and staff and the reoccurring theme was there was still a need of health and personal wellbeing activities and discussions on an on-going basis. The committee spent time researching best practices and working on how to help faculty and staff. In efforts to promote self-wellness, the committee will be hosting a Faculty and Staff Wellness Day on October 24, 2024, in collaboration with the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The day-long event will feature health screenings, healthy food sampling, chair massages, therapy dogs, activities, and giveaways. The other theme that was reoccurring was what can leadership do to assist their staff in achieving Work Life Balance. The committee found some best practices in that area and provided it to leadership for consideration.

Career Development Office

College Internships and Practicums

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. Internships are typically a one-time work or service experience related to the student's major or career goal and may be a requirement for graduation. The internship plan involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internships can last for a semester or be completed over Winter or Summer break, can be paid or unpaid, and the student may or may not receive academic credit for

performing the internship. All internships receiving credit must be approved by the Department Chairperson of the student's major.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) Internships

Cooperative education programs, or co-ops, provide students with work related to the student's major or career goal. Cooperative Education is a structured program that integrates classroom learning with the practical hands-on experience in a field related to a student's academic or career goals. The fundamental purpose of Cooperative Education is for students to have an opportunity to learn under real-life work conditions. The Co-op program is a partnership between students, educational institutions, and employers, with specified responsibilities for each party. The Co-op Program consists of a work block which is six-months of full-time paid employment and is coordinated through the Career Development Office at Central. Students may register for up to six credits during their co-op experience but are not required to register for classes during the experience. CEW credits are awarded to allow a student to work yet maintain their full-time status. These credits, however, are not educational credits and may not be used towards program requirements for graduation. Co-op participation is approved by the Director of the Career Success Center.

Career Fairs

Career Fairs were held in the Fall of 2023 where 1,200 students were able to connect with over 240 employers. As a result of these Career Fairs there was an increase in internships, co-ops programs, and part time job opportunities. The Career Fairs included: Accounting and Finance Career Fair, Fall Career and Internship Career Fair, Computing and Digital Tech Career Fair, Construction Management Career Fair, Engineering and Construction Management Career Fair, First Gen Job Fair and Fashion Show. Spring 2024 Career Fairs included: Student Worker Job Fair, Spring EAB Career Fair, Spring All Majors Career Fair, Construction Management Career Fair, Engineering and Manufacturing Career Fair, Business Career Fair, and Education Event Fair.

Central's Student Networking Night was held on April 11, 2024. The event delivered fun and practical tips for students to network with employers. Co-sponsored with Central's Office of Community Engagement and Social Research and the Greater New Britain Chamber of Commerce, this event featured Cathy Donahue, CCSU Marketing professor and recipient of the 2023 Excellence in Teaching Award, leading an interactive workshop for students and area professionals on how to make impactful intros. Students enjoyed practicing their new elevator pitches in real time as they mingled from table to table with 20+ local employers. The event was so successful, expect two networking events in the 2024-2025 academic year.