



# Constitution

Updated February 2021

## **PREAMBLE:**

The members of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges establish this Constitution for our Union in order to protect and advance the rights of every member, both individually and collectively. In order to achieve this goal, unity and collective action is needed from each of us.

Together, we seek to determine educational policies relating to class size, curriculum, admissions, academic standard, and hiring practices. We strive to guarantee shared governance in all other matters of professional concern.

The Congress is committed to expanding the role of underrepresented groups in the academic institutions, the legislative arena, and all other areas in which the Union operates.

Recognizing the diversity of its membership and committing itself to the equality of all members, the Congress guarantees that, within the organization, no member shall be discriminated against because of age, gender, race, religion, political affiliation, sexuality, ability, or national origin.

Further, the Congress commits itself to the proposition that all groups within the Congress shall participate or have representation at all levels of the decision-making process. The Executive Board, with the advice of the Delegate Assembly, shall be the guarantors of this Preamble. The right of a member or group of members to be heard by both bodies shall not be abridged.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the "Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges", hereinafter referred to as "the Congress" or "the 4Cs."

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Congress shall be to organize and represent various groups of bargaining unit members affiliated with or represented by the Congress under the appropriate federal, state, and/or municipal law and negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreements; advance the interest of its members by, in particular, seeking to determine wages, benefits, and working conditions.

## **ARTICLE III: UNION MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1. Eligibility

To be eligible for union membership, an individual must be a member of a bargaining unit organized and/or represented by the Congress. Only those individuals paying dues as established by the Delegate Assembly shall be union members.

In determining eligibility to vote in statewide elections or to serve in elected office, part-timers who join the 4Cs shall be considered members for the entire academic year, even if they only teach in one semester.

### Section 2. Rights

Each member of the Congress, subject to reasonable rules established by the Delegate Assembly for the conduct of the Congress' affairs, shall have:

- a) equal rights with all other members of the Congress in the exercise of the rights of Congress membership;
- b) the right to vote for state officers of the Congress, for representatives to the Delegate Assembly and for chapter officers in the respective chapters, the right to vote in state referenda, and the right to vote on contract ratification in each bargaining unit represented by the Congress;
- c) the right to a copy\* of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Congress constitution, and the annual financial report of the Congress;
- d) the right to be a candidate for election or appointment to any office or committee of the Congress;
- e) the right to attend any meeting of a chapter, the Delegate Assembly, or the Executive Board, other than executive sessions, with voice, as well as membership meetings;
- f) the right to examine any financial books, records, and/or accounts kept by the Congress in support of any financial reports the Congress has produced;
- g) the right of access to all agreements and memoranda of understanding between the Congress and the employer other than the settlement of grievances; h) the right to file internal complaints against the Congress or its officers.

### Section 3. Retired Congress Members

Any retired member of the bargaining unit represented by the Congress shall be entitled to be a member of the Congress and to attend chapter meetings at the last academic institution of employment or at that academic institution nearest to their place of residence, except that they shall not have a vote on any questions of dues, arbitration, contract settlements, or job action and shall not be eligible to vote in union elections or to serve on the Delegate Assembly or Executive Board or as a chapter or state Congress officer. Retired members' annual dues shall be set by the Delegate Assembly.

\* "Copy" shall mean an electronic copy made available to all members through the Union's Internet webpage. Any member may request a paper copy from the Union and said paper copy will be provided.

## **ARTICLE IV: DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

### Section 1. Composition

There shall be a Delegate Assembly of the Congress composed of the representatives elected by each chapter. There shall be up to five such representatives elected by each chapter.

### Section 2. Elections

Each chapter shall elect its representatives to the Delegate Assembly on a biennial schedule in odd number years.

Delegate Assembly elections may be held in concert with 4Cs statewide officer elections. If a chapter so chooses, ballots will be prepared by the Congress on behalf of each chapter and voting will occur using the same procedures as outlined for statewide officer elections. Chapters must nominate delegate candidates and notify the statewide election committee by the March Delegate Assembly meeting.

Alternately, Chapter delegate elections may be held during a scheduled membership meeting between March 15 and April 30. At least fifteen (15) days notice of the meeting at which said election shall take place shall be given to each chapter member.

### Section 2A. Replacement Elections

Should a delegate position become available midterm, Chapter delegate replacement elections may be held during a scheduled membership meeting. At least fifteen (15) days notice of the meeting at which said election shall take place shall be given to each chapter member.

### Section 3. Meetings

The Delegate Assembly shall meet at least twice per fall and spring semesters and at other times at the call of the President or the Executive Board. Upon petition of one-third of the delegates, a special Delegate Assembly meeting must be called. Thirtythree (33) percent of the membership of the Delegate Assembly shall constitute a quorum at either a regular or a special meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Minutes of Delegate Assembly meetings shall be made public.

The agenda for Delegate Assembly meetings is set by the President. All Delegate Assembly members may submit agenda items to the President but must do so no later than eight (8) days prior to the Delegate Assembly meeting. The President is responsible for replying to agenda requests and informing Delegate Assembly members if their agenda requests will be included.

### Section 4. Powers

Except as provided elsewhere in this constitution, the Delegate Assembly shall be the governing body of the Congress and shall have the power to transact the business of the Congress and to review business transacted on behalf of the Congress. The Delegate Assembly shall approve the annual or biennial budget of the Congress. The Delegate Assembly shall have the authority to establish additional standing committees.

### Section 5. Recall

Delegates may be recalled by the chapter they represent. Should two-thirds of the members present at a chapter meeting vote to recall a Delegate then, within four weeks of said vote, a chapter membership referendum shall take place on the issue of recall and, upon a majority vote of those casting ballots, said individual(s) shall be removed from office. At least fifteen (15) days notice of the meeting at which said referendum shall take place shall be given to each chapter member.

## **ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE BOARD**

### Section 1. Composition

There shall be an Executive Board of the Congress composed of the elected officers of the Congress; the Political Director; the Grievance Officer; and the Presidential Aide(s).

Statewide Elected Officers (see Article VII for duties and powers):

President

Secretary

Treasurer

Public Division Vice President from Teaching Faculty

Public Division Vice President from Community College Professionals (CCPs)

Two (2) Public Division Vice Presidents from Part-timers

Private Division Vice President

Diversity Officer

Membership Officer

### Appointed Officers

- a) Political Director: The Political Director shall be nominated by the President and confirmed by vote of the Delegate Assembly. The Political Director oversees the union's legislative campaigns, and works with the union's lobbyist and with other labor representatives.
- b) Grievance Officer: The Grievance Officer shall be nominated by the President and confirmed by vote of the Delegate Assembly. The Grievance Officer works with the staff to provide grievance training to chapter officers, and generally provides assistance to grievants.
- c) Presidential Aide(s): The Presidential Aide(s) shall be nominated by the President and confirmed by vote of the Delegate Assembly. The Presidential Aide(s) shall assist with special projects as assigned by the President. There shall be up to three (3) Presidential Aides.
- d) The Political Director and the Presidential Aide(s) may concurrently hold any elected position of the Congress.

## Section 2. Powers

The Executive Board shall focus on union operations and also act for the Congress in all matters between meetings of the Delegate Assembly.

The Executive Board may authorize expenditures by the Congress of non-budgeted funds up to \$5,000 without approval by the Delegate Assembly. For budgeted line items, the Executive Board may authorize expenditures up to 10% more than budgeted for any one line item.

Actions of the Executive Board, including all increased expenditures, must be reported to the next session of the Delegate Assembly. The Delegate Assembly may vote to approve or reject any decisions which have not yet been implemented.

All members, both elected and appointed, of the Executive Board are voting members of the Board and Delegate Assembly.

## Section 3. Meetings

The regular session of the Executive Board shall take place four times per year. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called at the discretion of the President or by four members of the Executive Board. All members have the right to attend Executive Board meetings other than executive sessions with voice. Minutes of Executive Board meetings shall be made public.

## Section 4. Compensation for Executive Board Members

Compensation for all Executive Board members shall be set by the Delegate Assembly and awarded by the President based on individual performance.

## **ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES**

There shall be the following standing committees of the Congress: Diversity and Inclusion, Finance, Membership, Part-Time, and Political Action. Wherever possible, committees should work with chapters to solicit representation from all chapters. Each committee, once formed, will report to the Delegate Assembly and shall meet at least twice during the academic year. Each committee chair will produce an end of the year report for review by the Congress membership.

Every six years, the Delegate Assembly shall decide whether to convene a committee to review the Constitution and By-laws. In even numbered years, the Delegate Assembly shall form an Election Committee.

Other committees may be established on an ad hoc basis by the Delegate Assembly.

Each standing committee shall elect its own chair annually, each fall. However, the Constitution and By-laws Committee shall be chaired by the Secretary. Compensation for elected committee chairs shall be set by the Delegate Assembly and shall be awarded by the President based on individual performance.

#### Section 1. Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is charged with addressing issues of equity and parity within the member institutions, increasing career advancement opportunities for underrepresented groups, and promoting an appreciation of our diversity. In addition, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall monitor the system-wide Diversity Fellows Program. The Diversity Officer shall be a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

#### Section 2. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall include the President and Treasurer, who shall both be ex-officio nonvoting members. The Finance Committee provides oversight of the fiduciary, budget, and investment process of the Congress. It reviews and recommends policy for adoption by the Executive Board. It implements and monitors approved policies. It guarantees that there is an open, full, and complete accounting of all Congress fiduciary, budget, and investment matters. It provides to the Executive Board, the Delegate Assembly, and the members periodic reports on the state of the Congress' finances and drafts the Congress' annual budget. It has the right to receive all reports and other information relevant to fiduciary, budget, and investment matters. The Finance Committee shall meet on a regular basis, at least four times in every academic year, and shall elect a Committee member to serve as chair.

#### Section 3. Membership Committee

The Membership Committee promotes union membership and deals with non-contractual matters. Among its responsibilities are the planning and organizing of membership conferences, the construction and use of member surveys, the promoting of relationships with other professional organizations, as well as the exploration and development of strategic alliances with potential allies. The Membership Officer shall be a member of the committee. The union staff shall be ex-officio members of the committee.

#### Section 4. Part-time Committee

The Part-time Committee addresses issues of concern to part-time employees. The committee looks to advance the interests of part-timers through the collective bargaining process and through other means. The committee works to inform part-timers about the Union and seeks to involve more part-timers in Union activities. The two (2) Public Division Vice Presidents from Parttimers and the Private Division Vice President shall be members of the committee.

The Part-time Committee's main mission is to transparently and comprehensively inform and advocate for the rights of part-timers, advocate and organize for the availability of funding for conferences, education, and professional memberships.

Where possible, the committee should be involved or informed in matters affecting part-timers.

#### Section 5. Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee reviews candidates' records and positions, participates in candidate interviews, makes recommendations for endorsement to the Delegate Assembly, and mobilizes support for selected campaigns. The Political Action Committee does not consult with the union's lobbyists, but may consult with the union's Political Director, when appropriate.

#### Section 6. Constitution and By-Laws Committee

Every six years, beginning in 2026, the Delegate Assembly shall decide whether or not to convene a Constitution and By-Laws Committee. The Committee, chaired by the elected Secretary of the 4Cs, is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to the 4Cs Constitution and organization by-laws to the Delegate Assembly.

#### Section 7. Elections Committee

During even numbered years, an election committee responsible for the election process shall be formed.

### **ARTICLE VII: STATEWIDE OFFICERS & ELECTIONS**

#### Section 1. Statewide Elected Officers

The elected officers of the Congress shall be a president, secretary, five vice presidents (public division VP from teaching faculty, VP from CCPs, two (2) public division VPs from part-timers and private division VP), Treasurer, Diversity Officer, and the Membership Officer. These officers represent all members of the Congress. Each elected officer will prepare and submit an end of the year report to the Delegate Assembly and for review by the Congress membership. Only active union members may serve in Officer positions.

#### Section 2. Elected Officer Duties and Powers

- a) President: The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Congress and shall administer the Congress' affairs. The President, in consultation with the officers, shall assign the duties to staff. Further, the President or their designee is available to represent the Congress at meetings, such as SEBAC, SEIU, BOR, and at the Legislature. In addition, the President prepares at least four reports for the Delegate Assembly and membership each year.
- b) Secretary: The Secretary is responsible for producing a clear and correct recording of Executive Board meetings, Delegate Assembly meetings, and other union meetings within one (1) week of the meeting date.
- c) Public Division Vice President from Teaching Faculty: The Vice President is primarily an advocate for public division faculty on issues before the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly.
- d) Public Division Vice President from CCPs: The Vice President is primarily an advocate for the public division professional staff on issues before the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly.



- e) Two (2) Public Division Vice Presidents from Part-timers: The Vice Presidents are primarily advocates for public division part-timers on issues before the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly. The Vice Presidents are members of the Part-Time Committee.
- f) Private Division Vice President: The Vice President is primarily an advocate for members of the Private Division on issues before the Executive Board and Delegate Assembly.
- g) Diversity Officer: The Diversity Officer shall be a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. In addition, they shall advise the President, Executive Board, and Delegate Assembly concerning issues of diversity and inclusion that impact union members and promote inclusion in all Congress endeavors.
- h) Membership Officer: The Membership Officer shall be a member of the Membership Committee and provides leadership for all activities under its jurisdiction.
- i) Treasurer: The Treasurer is the Financial Oversight Officer of the Congress. Candidates for the position will be required to have special knowledge in areas pertinent to fiscal management. Working closely with the President, the Finance Committee Chair, the Office Manager, and all financial vendors employed by the Congress, the Treasurer ensures the accuracy and timeliness of financial reports, documents, transactions, and all other financial activities of the Congress. In addition, the Treasurer works with the Finance Committee to prepare the annual Congress budget.

### Section 3. Elections

The ten statewide elected officers shall be elected directly by the membership of the Congress. The term of each office shall be two years. The elections shall be held in April of odd number years. Voting will occur by secret ballot and elections results shall be certified all in consultation with federal Department of Labor (DOL) standards. Elected statewide officers will begin their term of office the first Friday in May.

### Section 4. Election Procedures

During even numbered years, an electioncommittee responsible for the election process shall be formed and approved at the November meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The Committee shall be composed of members not running for an elected office and should reflect a broad representation of members from all chapters. By the following March meeting of the Delegate Assembly, the Committee shall have solicited nominations for each elected office. Nominations may also be made from the floor at that March session of the Delegate Assembly. At the end of the March meeting, nominations will be closed, and the Committee will proceed to compile the candidates' names in preparation for the ballot. During April the committee shall also be responsible for supervising the election and certifying the election results, all in consultation with DOL standards.

### Section 5. Recall

Any Executive Board member may be recalled using the following procedure. A two-thirds vote of the members present for a Delegate Assembly meeting shall initiate such a recall. Within four weeks of said vote, a membership referendum shall take place on the issue of the recall and, upon a majority vote of those casting ballots, said Executive Board member shall be removed from office.

### Section 6. Vacancies

If any office other than the President becomes vacant by reason of resignation from office, incapacitation, death, termination of union membership, or recall, the Delegate Assembly may, at its option, fill the vacancy for the unexpired term of office or mandate an election by the membership for that office.

### Section 7. Succession

In the event of a Presidential resignation from office, incapacitation, death, termination of union membership, recall, or temporary absence, the office of secretary succeeds to the Presidency and holds the office for a maximum of thirty (30) days.

The Delegate Assembly may, as its option, fill the vacancy for the unexpired term of office or mandate an election by the membership for that office.

### Section 8. Protection of Election Rights

- a) Members shall have at least fifteen (15) days from the date that ballots are available to submit their ballots.
- b) There shall be no discrimination for or against any candidate for office with respect to the use of the membership lists or in the distribution of campaign literature by the Congress.
- c) All candidates shall have the right to be present or have a designated observer at any ballot counting.
- d) The Election Committee shall determine appropriate safeguards and procedures for each election to guarantee a fair election and to receive challenges.
- e) The vote count shall indicate the vote for each candidate by respective division and chapter and the vote total.
- f) No union funds shall be expended to support the particular candidacy of anyone for Congress office.
- g). Appeals must be filed within 10 calendar days from the date the election results are announced. Appeals must be submitted in writing, by persons eligible to vote in the election, and must state the dates, times, and persons involved and cite the law, rule, or Constitution and By-Law provision allegedly violated. The Election Committee shall rule on all appeals by May 15.

### Section 9. Bonding

Provision shall be made for the bonding of those state Congress representatives responsible for the handling of financial matters in excess of \$100 to the full extent of their fiduciary responsibility.

## **ARTICLE VIII: CHAPTERS**

### Section 1. Structure

The Union shall be comprised of Divisions and Chapters. Such Divisions and Chapters shall be determined by the Executive Board and approved by the Delegate Assembly.

## Section 2. Divisions and Chapters

The Division and Chapter structure of the Congress shall be as follows:

- a. Public Division
  - i. Asnuntuck Community College
  - ii. Capital Community College
  - iii. Gateway Community College
  - iv. Housatonic Community College
  - v. Manchester Community College
  - vi. Middlesex Community College
  - vii. Naugatuck Valley Community College
  - viii. Northwestern Community College
  - ix. Norwalk Community College
  - x. Quinebaug Valley Community College
  - xi. Three Rivers Community College
  - xii. Tunxis Community College
- b. Private Division
  - i. University of Hartford

All representation rights shall reside with the Congress.

Each chapter shall have at least three officers consisting of an officer from CCPs, one from faculty, and one from part-timers. One of these officers may serve as a designated grievance officer. Chapter officers are responsible for calling chapter meetings and assisting members with problems and grievances. Staff Organizers shall be available to orient and assist officers with grievances. A representative to the Delegate Assembly may simultaneously hold chapter office.

The chapter has no binding representation rights under the law, all of said rights residing in the state Congress. No statement or utterance by any chapter officer or spokesperson is binding upon the Congress.

Each chapter shall try to unite its members on important issues; to convey its judgments to the entire Congress through their representatives to the Delegate Assembly; and to communicate with, educate, and mobilize the local members in regard to Congress policies and decisions.

## Section 3. Chapter Elections

Each chapter shall elect its chapter officers and representatives on a biennial schedule in odd number years.

Chapter elections may be held in concert with 4Cs statewide officer elections. If a chapter so chooses, ballots will be prepared by the Congress on behalf of each chapter and voting will occur using the same procedures as outlined for statewide officer elections. Chapters must nominate candidates and notify the statewide election committee by the March Delegate Assembly meeting.

Alternately, Chapter elections may be held at a campus during a scheduled membership meeting between March 15 and April 30. At least fifteen (15) days notice of the meeting at which said election shall take place shall be given to each chapter member.

Chapter Officer and Delegate Assembly Representative terms begin the first Friday in May.

#### Section 4. Chapter Budget

The Delegate Assembly shall allocate funds annually for each chapter based on the number of chapter members as of March 1.

#### Section 5. Chapter Officer and Part-Timers Delegate Compensation

Compensation for Chapter Officers and Delegates who are part-timers shall be determined via the annual Congress budget process.

#### Section 6. Chapter Operation

Except as otherwise restricted by this Constitution or law, the chapter may operate as it sees fit, either under a constitution or by-laws, or established past practice. Copies of any constitutions and/or by laws must be filed with the state office of the Congress.

### **ARTICLE IX: REPRESENTATION RIGHTS**

#### Section 1. Contract Negotiations and Ratification

##### a) Negotiations for the Public Division.

Contract negotiations for the members shall take place under rules set by the Delegate Assembly, which shall seek at least one member from each chapter within the division to serve on a Negotiating Team. Initial contract demands must be approved by a majority vote of the Delegate Assembly.

##### b) Negotiations for the Private Division.

Contract negotiations for the members shall occur in a democratic manner. The Negotiating Team shall seek to include representation from each school. Initial contract demands should be shared with the members at the chapter.

##### c) Ratification.

Any contract agreements shall be ratified by the members covered by that agreement. Contract ratification shall be achieved through a majority of those voting by secret ballot, either at a general membership meeting called by the President or the officers of the Congress or by electronic ballot, at the discretion of the Delegate Assembly.

#### Section 2. Grievance and Arbitration

a) Level I Grievances. Such grievance resolutions shall be agreed to only in collaboration with the appropriate authorized state- level grievance representative.

b) State Level II. Only those individuals authorized by the Delegate Assembly may sign agreements resolving grievances.

- c) Arbitration. Decision to proceed to arbitration on any grievance shall be made only after a majority vote for such action by the Delegate Assembly.
- d) The President or their appointee in consultation with the Delegate Assembly shall assign duties to the staff relative to this Article.
- e) Grievances in the Private Division will be handled in accordance with the provisions of their Contract. If the Contract includes Arbitration, the decision to proceed shall be made only after a majority vote for such action by the Delegate Assembly.

## **ARTICLE X: DUES**

The dues of the Congress shall be determined by the Delegate Assembly. Dues shall be paid in a manner prescribed by the Delegate Assembly.

## **ARTICLE XI: INTERNAL COMPLAINTS**

If a member has a complaint against the Union or any of its officers with regard to the conduct of the affairs of the Union, the complaint shall be presented to the Delegate Assembly. Within thirty (30) days, the Delegate Assembly shall provide notice of a hearing and, within thirty (30) days thereafter, the opportunity to be heard before the Delegate Assembly to all members involved.

Thereafter, the Delegate Assembly shall respond to said complaint within sixty (60) days. The Delegate Assembly may extend the time limits stated herein for good cause.

## **ARTICLE XII: OPERATING PROCEDURES**

### Section 1. Meetings

Conduct of meetings of the Delegate Assembly and Executive Board or committees thereof shall be in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except insofar as they are superseded by by-laws adopted by the Delegate Assembly.

### **ARTICLE XIII: REFERENDA**

The Delegate Assembly may put any question to a referendum vote of the membership of the Congress. Said referendum shall be conducted by secret ballot. Approval of the questions shall be by a majority of those casting ballots. The results of all referenda shall be submitted to the Delegate Assembly for consideration.

### **ARTICLE XIV: UNION AFFILIATION**

Any questions of affiliation of the Congress with any other state or national union shall be determined only by a referendum vote of the Congress membership.

### **ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS**

In addition to the periodic review of the constitution by the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, as specified in Article VI Sec. 6, any member may propose changes using the following procedure.

#### Section 1. Proposal

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by a three-fourths (75%) majority of the Delegate Assembly or by a petition of twenty five percent (25%) of the members of the Congress.

#### Section 2. Voting

Said voting shall be conducted by secret ballot.

#### Section 3. Ratification

The amendment shall become operative by a vote of two-thirds of the Congress members casting ballots in said referendum during the academic year.

### **ARTICLE XVI: CONSTITUTION RATIFICATION**

This constitution shall become operative upon a three-fourths vote of the Congress members casting ballots in said referendum during the academic year.

