Connecticut Faculty Union President Patty O’Neill Issues Statement On Alaska’s Drastic Cuts To Public Higher Education

New Britain, Conn. – The Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors watches with alarm as the Alaskan government stands on the verge of slashing funding to the University of Alaska system by a drastic 41 percent. These proposed cuts will mean severe immediate and long-term consequences.

Students will be immediately harmed by closures of institutions, reductions in programs of study, and the loss of faculty and staff. Students also will face significant obstacles in completing their educations and earning their credentials.

The long-term consequences will be economic for both individual students and for the state. Investing in universities has proven to strengthen economies through, among other things, the increased earning power of individuals with higher education degrees. These proposed cuts likely will result in a lowering of the GDP of Alaska and a lessening of state residents’ ability to build a better life for themselves and their families.

CSU-AAUP urges Alaska’s legislature to recognize that public higher education is a public good that must be invested in, rather than harmed beyond repair. In recognizing this, CSU-AAUP also urges legislators to act accordingly by investing in Alaska’s public higher education institutions rather than serving up draconian cuts that stand to put all of Alaska at risk.

– CSU-AAUP President Patty O’Neill

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CSU-AAUP represents more than 3,000 faculty, coaches, trainers, counselors, and librarians at the four Connecticut State Universities. CSU-AAUP believes quality public higher education should be made affordable and accessible to all individuals who want to pursue a degree at an institution of higher learning. We see higher education as an essential roadway to developing students’ abilities to think critically and become more engaged citizens of their communities. Through mentorships and guidance from their professors, students gain exposure to all forms of viewpoints, opinions, and interpretations. These work to move the needle toward acceptance and understanding, which in turn creates well-informed, thoughtful leaders of the future.