

Full statements on President Robert A. Kennedy's resignation

Robert A. Kennedy, former president of the Board of Regents for Higher Education

“After taking some time to think about what is in the best interest of our state and this new organization, our colleges and universities, the faculty, staff, presidents and, of course, our students, I have decided to submit my resignation to Board Chairman Lewis J. Robinson this morning. I do so with a heavy heart, understanding that this isn't the way in which I thought my tenure would end in Connecticut, but also with a great deal of optimism that, ultimately, the Board of Regents for Higher Education will succeed greatly in its efforts to move a change agenda focused on preparing students for the global economy in which they will compete, and becoming a critical partner in the state's workforce development efforts.

“The issues with which we've dealt over the past few days have become a distraction to that important work, and, as an educator all my life, the most important thing to me is the success and support of our students. For that reason, I believe my resignation will allow the critical issues of the Board and its agenda to be addressed in a different light than they might otherwise be.

“I'd like to thank Governor Malloy for allowing me this opportunity. Over the past year, I have been overwhelmed by the dedication of the presidents, faculty and staff on the campuses and central office, the members of the Board of Regents, and greatly impressed by the caliber of our students. These people are truly the reason why I know this change agenda will succeed for the betterment of our students and the state.”

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy

“Bob's decision is the right one.

“There have been many accomplishments at the Board over the last year, and Bob deserves a lot of credit for those accomplishments. He's a smart, decent, thoughtful individual who has spent many years working to improve education systems. Our state universities, community and technical colleges are better off for Bob having spent the last year here in Connecticut, and I thank him for his service.

“It's unfortunate that the events of the past week have damaged the credibility of the central office, but they have. And that credibility needs to be restored as quickly as possible.

“As I said yesterday, it is now time for the Board to step in and take whatever actions are necessary to restore confidence and credibility in the central office.”

Lewis Robinson Jr, chairman of the appointed Board of Regents

“I have accepted President Kennedy's resignation, and thank him for his service. I'm sure this was not an easy decision at which to arrive, but I appreciate his willingness to put our

students first. Since meeting him, I have appreciated President Kennedy's commitment to our change agenda, his willingness to move it forward, and his commitment to the principles of an affordable, accessible higher education experience for the students in our state. I wish him the best.

"As we move forward, it's clear we still have much further to go. Aside from the important and immediate work of reviewing the issues of the past few weeks, and formulating the policies and procedures to ensure something like this doesn't happen again, the Board of Regents is focused on pushing the kind of change agenda that, guided by strong leadership and clear policy and process, will ensure our students are better prepared to enter the job market and play a critical role in the workforce development efforts in our state. This agenda also includes issues on which we've already begun to work – a seamless transfer and articulation agreement across our institutions to better enable to students to move between our schools; a reform of remedial education and a stronger partnership with our K-12 peers to help aid that, and ways in which we can invest more in the education of our students.

"I look forward to working with the Board and its new leader, and the presidents, faculty, students and staff on these and other issues."

Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford, the co-chairwoman of the Legislature's Higher Education Committee

"I am proud of the accomplishments that the Board of Regents has achieved in the past year, from making transfers between colleges easier to breaking ground on three new community college manufacturing centers to beginning the process of changing the way we deliver remedial coursework. These are all positive changes for state students.

"Unfortunately, Dr. Kennedy's recent missteps have become too much of a distraction to our students and on our campuses. Nothing should detract the Board of Regents and its central office from making ongoing, positive, daily progress toward our goal of restructuring Connecticut's higher education system to be more efficient, effective and affordable.

"I am proud of the bipartisan, public position that the leaders of the legislature's Higher Education Committee took yesterday regarding Dr. Kennedy in calling for his resignation. We did our due diligence by meeting with the Board of Regents leadership, by talking with professors and students and Regents members, by asking tough questions and demanding strict accountability. We acted in an informed and deliberative manner, and I believe our non-political approach contributed to Dr. Kennedy's decision to resign.

"I now look forward to the Board of Regents establishing guidelines and procedures to ensure that Dr. Kennedy's errors are not repeated, and that our ongoing higher education reorganization for the betterment of students proceeds in a timely and efficient manner."

Lawrence Cafero Jr., R-Norwalk, the legislature's House Minority Leader

“It is unfortunate that President Kennedy’s brief tenure had to end this way but it is in the best interests of the higher education system and everyone else involved. I applaud Mr. Kennedy for recognizing the dire nature of the developments of the last few weeks.

“However, a full inquiry by the Higher Education Committee is still warranted to answer questions regarding the tenure of the 12 community college presidents. Two college presidents have stated publicly that their future employment was directly linked to the Oct. 31 deadline to respond to offers of and early buy-out.

“The co-chairs of the Higher Education Committee initially rejected the assertion of the presidents but have had little to say on the subject since the controversy of the staff raises emerged. The Board of Regents’ view of how the newly merged system will best serve the needs of thousands of students remains unclear. That must be the focus as we move forward.

“The relationship between the Board of Regents and the central staff and figuring just who is in charge must be settled.”