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Potential Department of Education changes

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-chief



PHOTO | INSTAGRAM
Linda McMahon on Thursday, Feb. 13 at her confirmation hearing in Washington, D.C.

The Department of Education is in dire trouble after the Trump administration calls for it to be dismantled.

On Jan. 20, Donald Trump announced an executive order to end the Department of Education. Since his first term, Trump has been advocating to dismantle the Department of Education.

“Having the department being dismantled is alarming and concerning,” business finance major Madison Macomber, a freshman,. “Having my mother and many close relatives being in the field is a scary thing.”

Congress approved the Department of Education in 1979 and was launched in 1980 during former President Jimmy Carter’s administration.

“The Department of Education’s a big con job,” Trump said.

Just recently, Linda McMahon, who is the nominee for secretary for the Department of Education, had a confirmation hearing on Feb. 13.

“Fund education freedom, not a government run system,” McMahon said.

McMahon served as the Administrator of the Small Business during Trump’s first term.

Her limited experience in the educational field is concerning, even though she served on the Connecticut State Board of Education briefly.

United States Senator Chris Murphy who represents Connecticut grilled McMahon during the hearing.

“This isn’t a lack of trust. It’s not like a little bit of lack of trust. They’re lying,” Murphy said.

Murphy also asked if taking an African American course would violate the executive order.

“I’m not quite certain, and I’d like to look into it further,” McMahon said.

The hearing was plagued with multiple protestors as McMahon spoke.

Elementary education major Ava Catalano, a sophomore, is apprehensive about the future of education.

“I think it’s pretty scary as a college student and as someone who is going into the educational field,” Catalano said.

This proposal was not only Trump’s idea, but also the controversial Project 2025, which Trump repeatedly denied having relations to.

“I can imagine funding being taken away from schools and lower income families, and then the IDA (students with disabilities) being taken away,” Catalano said.

Noteworthy enough Trump can not abolish the Department of Education without Congress.

If this plan does go through then schools that teach African American studies will be erased, special needs programs will be no more, Civil Rights protections and other programs put in place will be erased.

“The funding helped me with college and paying for that,” Catalano said.

As of right now, McMahon has not been confirmed as secretary, however she most likely will be chosen as Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was confirmed as secretary of Health and Human Services on Feb. 13.

“You have my absolute commitment that I will uphold and protect those investigations, those to make sure that those students are treated fairly on both sides,” McMahon said.

First ‘Breastfeeding-Friendly Campus’

By Vicotria Cruz
Contributer

The university has taken a major step in supporting faculty and student parents by becoming the first university in the state to earn the title of a “Breastfeeding-Friendly Campus”.

Awarded by the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition, this highlights institutions that have made a commitment to creating a supportive and welcoming environment for all their students, employees and visitors.

“This just goes to show that institutions are totally capable of supporting students outside the classroom, everyone deserves the support they need to pursue higher education,” biology major Melany Villavicencio, a junior said.

Ensuring individuals who breastfeed have access to comfortable, private and well-equipped lactation spaces is part of the universities initiative to create a family-friendly campus.

There are many lactation spaces on campus currently, which can be found in Buley Library, the College of Health and Human Services, Jennings Hall, and the Wintergreen Building.

These rooms have been designed to provide a clean and quiet environment that is stocked with the necessary amenities.

Including privacy curtains, seating, electrical outlets, microwaves and informational resources.

Room 117 in the Buley Library can be reserved online with access provided at the Circulation Desk.

The room in the Wintergreen Building is the only room that offers open-access lactation rooms that can be locked from the inside for privacy.

The rooms in Jennings Hall and the College of Health and Human services require a key to be unlocked

The university’s faculty and staff have also recognized that some students may need more immediate assistance and so they have introduced temporary lactation spaces known as “swing spaces.”

They have been designated by faculty, staff, and student volunteers who are called Breastfeeding Champions.

Offices around campus that display the Breastfeeding Champion sticker use it as an indicator of a welcoming space where individuals can pump as needed.

Public health major Natalia Gillner, a sophomore, expresses her gratitude for the lactation spaces.

“It’s reassuring to know that our campus acknowledges the needs of breastfeeding students,” Gillner said. “I am glad to be a part of a community that recognizes how difficult early motherhood can be.”

The university is setting an example for other institutions in the state to foster a breastfeeding-friendly environment.

Through continued awareness and accessibility, the university can ensure that faculty and students feel supported and valued while they pursue their academic and professional development.

To reserve lactation rooms, students, staff and faculty must email vancourm1@southernct.edu.

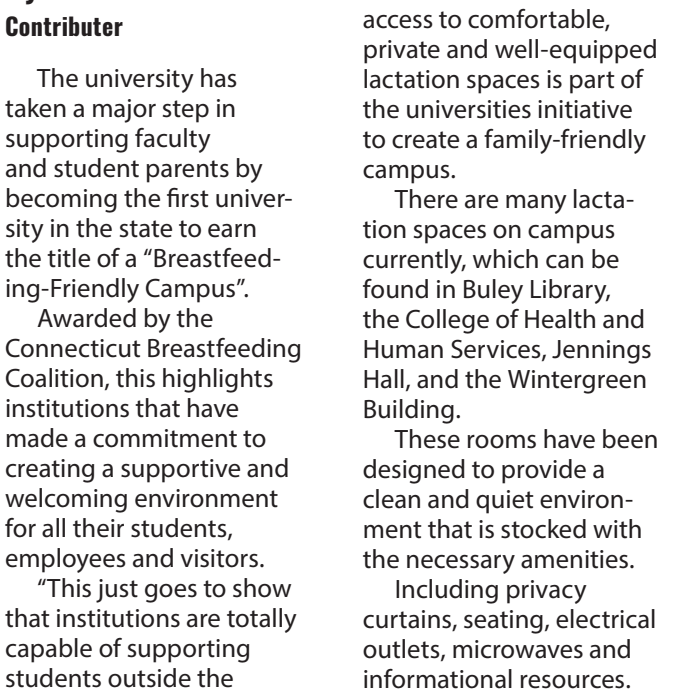


PHOTO | INSTAGRAM
A lactation flyer that supports breastfeeding on campus.

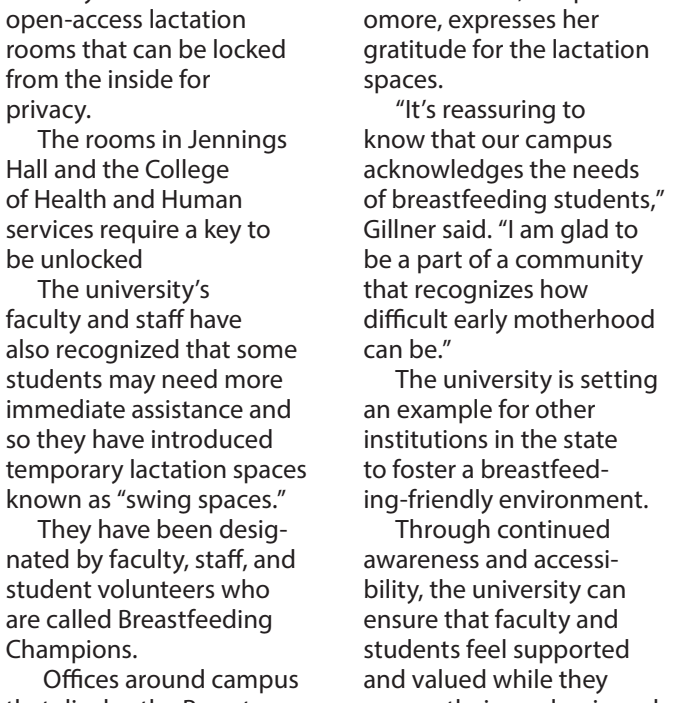


PHOTO | VICTORIA CRUZ
One of the various lactation spaces on campus on Feb. 13.

Chancellor Cheng issues an apology



PHOTO | CT INSIDER
Terrance Cheng, the current chancellor of the four CSCU’s.

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

The Chancellor of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, Terrence Cheng, issued his first public apology following reports of questionable spending practices.

Cheng’s apology was made on Feb. 11, during a session called by the state legislature’s higher education and government oversight committees at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, Connecticut.

Chancellor Cheng acknowledged the situation stating: “My actions have raised serious concerns about financial oversight and transparency.”

Throughout the meeting, Cheng repeatedly expressed regret as he was questioned about his spending.

“I am fully committed personally and professionally to building trust and confidence in our system and in my leadership,” Cheng said.

This apology came after a vote of no confidence from a group representing faculty and staff, along with the release of two state investigations.

He acknowledged that there will be a series of new system-wide policies that are deemed to ensure consistency and compliance.

“A new centralized p-card policy will be presented to the Board of Regents for approval as early as the end of this month, with a plan effective date of April 1, 2025,” Cheng said.