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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 9, 2017

A regular meeting of the Higher Education Commission was held at 3 Barrell Court, Concord, New Hampshire at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9, 2017. The following members were present:

Todd Leach, Chair  
Michele Perkins, Vice Chair  
Steve Appleby (via telephone)  
Donald Birx  
Sr. Paula Marie Buley  
John Curran  
Steven DiSalvo  
Susan Dunton  
Frank Edelblut  
Ross Gittell  
Anne Huot (via telephone)  
Scott Kalicki  
Peter Koch  
David Mahoney  
Michele Perkins  
Mark Rubinstein  
Melinda Treadwell

The following members were unable to attend:

Jim Fitzgerald  
Mark Huddleston  
Paul LeBlanc  
Eli Rivera  
Lindsay Whaley

- 1) Chair Leach called the meeting to order and bid farewell to Cathy Yeager, Transcriptionist, and Scott Kalicki, who will be retiring as President of Lakes Region Community College, thanking them for their service.
- 2) Mr. Koch moved, seconded by Sr. Paula Marie, to accept the minutes of February 7, 2017. The motion passed without dissent.

- 3) Chair Leach introduced the new Commissioner of Education, Frank Edelblut, and asked those present to introduce themselves. Commissioner Edelblut thanked everyone and expressed his desire to work closely together to agree on some type of framework that helps students find their way through the system and the successful launching into the career space here in New Hampshire.

Commissioner Edelblut informed the Commission that Dr. Thomas Horgan was the individual who unanimously came forward to be named the new Director of the Division of Higher Education, replacing Ed MacKay. The State Board will be meeting Thursday, May 11, 2017 and his recommendation will go before the full Board. [Note: The State Board of Education received Commissioner Edelblut's recommendation and responded enthusiastically to the selection of Dr. Horgan].

Chair Leach stated that the Executive Committee served as the Search Committee for the Director's position. Director MacKay explained the Search Committee performed the initial screening and brought Tom Horgan's name forward to Commissioner Edelblut. After the Commissioner consults with the State Board of Education (no vote is required, simply consultation) the recommendation moves to the Governor, who will first determine whether to place Tom's name in nomination, and then seek confirmation by the Executive Council.

- 4) Director MacKay presented MCPHS University's request to offer the Master of Science in Nursing without a terminal date. The MCPHS University submitted an Expedited Review request to offer the Master of Science in Nursing at its Manchester campus. The MCPHS School of Nursing has been offering this program at its Worcester campus and online for several years and, unfortunately, began to offer the program in Manchester without completing the normal internal approval process with the Higher Education Commission. The first cohort of five (5) students began the program in the summer of 2013 and there are currently twelve (12) students enrolled. Upon discovering the oversight, MCPHS University immediately contacted this office and stopped admitting students to the program pending authorization from the Higher Education Commission. The University apologized for moving forward without prior approval and made assurances that steps have been taken to ensure that such an error would not occur in the future. The Expedited Review report was reviewed and found to meet all Commission standards.

It was recommended the Commission vote to approve the MCPHS University to offer the Master of Science in Nursing without a terminal date and to align approval with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and the N.H. Board of Nursing.

This was with the requirement that it provide the Commission with copies of all correspondence and reports to/from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education and the N.H. Board of Nursing. Additionally, the Commission would be invited to attend any site visit(s) as an observer, determined upon receipt and review of correspondence and reports.

Sr. Paula Marie moved, seconded by Mr. Kalicki, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent.

- 5) Director MacKay presented New England College's request for continuing approval to offer the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges held a Focused Evaluation visit on October 31, 2016 that included a review of the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. On behalf of the Commission, Dr. Richard

Gustafson independently reviewed all material and provided a very positive assessment. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges confirmed the positive review (though the formal letter has not been received), and it was recommended the Commission vote to approve New England College to offer the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership without a terminal date, with the condition that copies of all materials (including annual reports) to/from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges be forwarded to the Commission. Additionally, the Commission would be invited to attend any site visit(s). Participation as an observer at site visit(s) would be determined upon receipt and review of correspondence.

Ms. Treadwell moved, seconded by Mr. Rubinstein, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent, with Ms. Perkins abstaining.

- 6) Director MacKay presented the New Hampshire Institute of Art's request for continuing approval to offer all degrees. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges held a Comprehensive Evaluation on April 3-6, 2016 and Director MacKay served as the Commission observer. At its November 18, 2016 meeting, the New England Association of Schools & Colleges voted to continue accreditation with the requirement the Institute submit an Annual Report on Finance and Enrollment by January 10, 2017 – a report which was completed, reviewed and approved. A report to the New England Association of Schools & Colleges regarding strategic planning and assessment of student learning is due October 1, 2017, and the New England Association of Schools & Colleges will conduct a Focused Evaluation visit in the spring of 2018. An Interim (Fifth-Year) Report in the spring of 2021, and a Comprehensive Evaluation in the spring of 2026 will complete the currently planned New England Association of Schools & Colleges cycle.

The Institute did not meet the U.S. Department of Education's financial aid responsibility composite score for fiscal 2016 and does not anticipate meeting the score in fiscal 2017. Efforts in achieving enrollment and retention goals are meeting with success and financial aid compliance issues of past years have been corrected.

The New Hampshire Institute of Art changed its accreditation status with the Office of Federal Student Aid at the U.S. Department of Education to list the New England Association of Schools & Colleges as its primary accreditor, and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design as a secondary accreditor.

It was recommended the Commission vote continuing approval until June 30, 2019 for New Hampshire Institute of Art's existing academic degree programs, with the requirement that:

1. It provide the Commission with copies of all correspondence and reports to/from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, and
2. The Commission would be invited to participate as an observer to the New England Association of Schools & Colleges site visit in the spring of 2018, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design site visit in 2021/2022, any other site visit(s) that either Association might schedule, including the New England Association of Schools & Colleges Comprehensive Evaluation in 2026.

Mr. Kalicki moved, seconded by Ms. Dunton, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent.

- 7) Richard Gustafson presented Northeast Catholic College's request for continuing approval to offer the Associate of Arts in Liberal Studies and the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges held a Focused Evaluation visit on November 6-8, 2016 and Richard Gustafson served as the Commission observer. His report stated that the College is making good progress with its strategic initiatives, especially in fundraising, recruitment, retention, and outcomes assessment; however, concerns persist in the College's ability to meet its enrollment and financial goals.

The New England Association of Schools & Colleges took up the report on April 20-21, 2017, and while the College has not received written notification of the results, President George Harne received word from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges that the College's accreditation would be extended. The New England Association of Schools & Colleges currently plans to conduct a Comprehensive Evaluation for initial accreditation in spring, 2018, and the College needs to present evidence of financial viability in its self-study.

It was recommended the Commission vote to approve Northeast Catholic College to offer the Associate of Arts in Liberal Studies and the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies until December 31, 2018. This approval was with the condition that copies of all materials (including annual reports) to/from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges be forwarded to the Commission. Additionally, the Commission would be invited to attend any site visit(s). Participation as an observer at site visit(s) would be determined upon receipt and review of correspondence.

Mr. Koch moved, seconded by Mr. Kalicki, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent.

- 8) Director MacKay and James Margeson IV presented the request from St. Joseph School of Nursing for continuing approval to offer the Associate of Science in Nursing. The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges held a site visit on November 15-16, 2017. James A. Margeson IV, Administrator for the Veterans Education Services and Office of Career School Licensing, served as the Commission observer for the site visit.

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (previously the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission) will hold a site visit in the fall of 2017. The N.H. Board of Nursing held a re-evaluation of the program on April 20, 2017. These entities expressed concerns with the School's decline in licensure examination pass rates.

The Commission requested the School address several questions raised as a result of the observation and in prior reviews. That report was received on April 7, 2017, and was responsive to the identified concerns.

The N.H. Board of Nursing has not completed its review, and given that entity authorizes nursing licensure in the state, it is important to stay closely aligned with their approvals. Given this status and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing site visit in the fall where the Commission will send an observer, it was recommended the Commission vote to continue degree-granting approval for the Associate of Science in Nursing through June 30, 2018. This approval was with the condition that copies of all correspondence to and from the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools & Colleges, the N.H. Board of Nursing, and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing be forwarded to the Commission. Additionally, the Commission would be invited to attend any scheduled site visit(s). Participation as an observer at site visit(s) would be determined upon review and receipt of related correspondence.

Mr. Curran moved, seconded by Ms. Treadwell, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent, with Sr. Paula Marie abstaining.

- 9) The American University of Madaba has approval by the Commission, but must obtain accreditation by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges by 2020 to retain that status. The Commission has regularly reviewed written materials and normally would visit the campus periodically, but due to the turmoil in the region over the last several years, no trips were scheduled. Dr. Steve Harvey, an individual with great experience in international education, was recommended by Richard Gustafson to conduct a site visit on behalf of the Commission. Dr. Harvey presented an oral report on his just concluded visit to Amman, Jordan, which included meeting with staff and students, touring the facilities, and finding University officials to be very cooperative. He will provide a full report at the October 10, 2017 meeting.
- 10) Director MacKay presented a request to provide clarification and documentation of the person designated to enter into a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of the N.H. Department of Education, Division of Higher Education. When the Commission was a separate entity (the Postsecondary Education Commission), the Director had clear authority to enter contracts. When the Commission was shifted under the N.H. Department of Education, Commissioner Barry also became the Commission Director and signed all documents. The statute appears to grant the Director authority to sign such contracts, and action by the Commission will confirm approval for that delegation. It was, therefore, recommended the Commission vote to grant authority to the Director of the Division of Higher Education – Higher Education Commission, under the N.H. Department of Education, to enter into contracts with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to fulfill the Commission’s function as the State Approving Agency.

Mr. Mahoney moved, seconded by Mr. Kalicki, to accept the recommendation. The motion passed without dissent.

- 11) On the motion of Mr. Kalicki, seconded by Mr. DiSalvo, the Commission voted to recommend the appointment of Dave Mahoney to the N.H. College Tuition Savings Plan (“529”) Advisory Commission. The motion passed without dissent, with Mr. Mahoney abstaining.
- 12) Director MacKay presented meeting dates for 2017/2018 as follows:
  - Tuesday, October 10, 2017 @ 2:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, February 13, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, May 8, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Treadwell moved, seconded by Ms. Huot, to accept the above meeting dates. The motion passed without dissent.

- 13) Director MacKay presented highlights of the Director’s Report. Major highlights included:
  - a. Update on the 2017 Legislative Session and time spent at the Legislative Office Building testifying/observing at hearings/sessions. Prospects for approval of the previously identified bills are minimal with the exception of HB 641, relative to high school students participating in dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment program, and specifically, the Community College System of New Hampshire’s Running Start and Early College Programs. Funding of \$1.8 million over the biennium is being sought for funding of STEM and STEM-related courses. The bill language has been attached to SB 101,

which is likely to receive House approval and then go to a committee of conference for consideration, and possible inclusion in the budget. Also SB 228, which would establish the New Hampshire college graduate retention incentive partnership (NH GRIP) and encourage employers to assist students with paying down college debt, has bipartisan support and a minimal cost – hence potential for approval.

- b. Update on Commissioner Edelblut including the position to administer the N.H. Scholars Program as one of the N.H. Department of Education’s priorities, with operational support for the Scholars program plus I Am College Bound and FAFSA Completion to come from Division reserves.
  - c. Update on the New England Board of Higher Education’s regional initiative, “Commission on Higher Education & Employability,” with Governor Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island agreeing to lead the Commission. In addition to N.H.’s adoption of “65x25” attainment as a goal, every New England state faces similar workforce challenges and this is a collaborative effort to identify solutions and best practices. Commission members Todd Leach, Ross Gittell and Paul LeBlanc serve on the New England Board of Higher Education Commission, along with House Education Committee Chair Rick Ladd and Sara Colson, director of the Business & Industry Association/N.H. Charitable Foundation supported Workforce Accelerator 2025 organization. The New England Board of Higher Education Commission is scheduled to make recommendations prior to the end of the calendar year, and some are expected to have implications for postsecondary education.
  - d. Update on the increase in the number closed school transcript requests, with submissions tripling since the closure of Mt. Washington (formerly Hesser) College and the pace likely to continue with the closure of Daniel Webster College.
  - e. Update on the informative Research and Studies Report compiled by Jan Fiderio and recommendation the Commission members review the article summaries. The very positive response to the *Status of Higher Education in New Hampshire* report was also cited.
  - f. Update on the increased activity in the Office of Career School Licensing, with James Margeson IV now serving as the primary contact since Kimberly Kenneally’s recent retirement.
  - g. Update on the Veterans Education Services, noting more than \$50 million in benefits going to more than 8,000 veterans and their dependents over the year.
- 14) Director MacKay thanked his staff (Patti, Jan, James, Pat, and RuthAnn) and the Commission members for their unqualified support and encouragement to engage in activities outside traditional Director responsibilities, including 65X25, I Am College Bound, and FAFSA Completion. The Division has embraced moving beyond the critical and necessary “consumer protection” function to activities that increase college and career readiness, and timely completion of degrees. Most importantly, he thanked his colleagues for being tremendous friends with shared goals, and is very inspired and comforted knowing Tom Horgan will lead the Division and Commission in continuing this important work.

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Leach thanked Director MacKay for his outstanding work in his role as Director, stating he will be missed.