

**NH Department of Education
Division of Higher Education • Higher Education Commission
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301 (603) 271-0257**

May 12, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Higher Education Commission
From: Edward R. MacKay, Director
Subject: Director's Report

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

As noted in the prior report, the Commission did not propose any legislation this session, but we are monitoring the budget and at this time there has not been any reduction to the Division budget as proposed by the Governor. However, support for the NH Scholars Program that was the top priority of the Department of Education and endorsed by the Governor, was eliminated in the House version of the budget. Efforts are ongoing to provide funding through the Senate. Other bills of interest are HB 577, which would establish a New Hampshire Children's Savings Account Program with pilot projects in Coos County and the City of Manchester, and SB 265, which would establish a New Hampshire achieving a better life experience (ABLE) savings account program based on federal legislation approved in December.

HB 577 has been approved by both the House and Senate, but the Senate version includes an amendment and must go back to the House, where it is expected to pass. Unfortunately, no funding for the pilot program is included and the Commission created to provide oversight will be charged with finding funding. SB 265 has widespread conceptual support, but House opposition exists to the creation of another commission to provide oversight (modeled after the "529" commission). It is expected to be approved without the commission component (with oversight possibly delegated to an entity such as DHHS) or have action deferred until federal rules are available (not expected until June, and therefore, the bill could possibly be retained until the next legislative session).

Although not associated with any current legislation, another statewide activity involving several members of the Commission and other representatives from the postsecondary education community, the Coalition for Business & Education created a working group to recommend a specific goal for workforce credential attainment by 2025. As Commission members know, the state faces substantial demographic headwinds and unless action is taken to increase the level of education in the future workforce, it is highly likely New Hampshire will endure a loss of economic vitality and quality of life. The Community College System of NH adopted the goal that 65% of the working age population in 2025 will have attained a high value postsecondary credential or degree, and that is the goal under review. Assistance in the development of the recommendation is being secured from the Lumina Foundation, the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, and NCHEMS, among others. It is

expected the Coalition will consider the recommendation during its July meeting, and the results will be reported to the Commission in October.

REPORT OF OUT-OF-STATE MEETINGS

The Director's only out-of-state travel relating to his Division and Commission responsibilities was attendance at the March 13, 2015, New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) meeting and annual awards functions. The NEBHE continues its efforts to promote the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), and is exploring other means by which it could be useful in promoting degree completion in the New England states. In fact, several staff traveled here to learn how and why NH public and private four-year institutions have such extraordinary rates of college completion (roughly 89% of students who start as full-time freshmen and continue full time will graduate within six years, the second highest rate in the country). Another example is possible inter-state transfer agreements that facilitate movement from two-year institutions to four-year schools without loss of credit. Through its Higher Education Innovation Challenge portion of its website, the NEBHE is encouraging institutions to examine its costs and provides tools for assisting in that process.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/OFFICE ISSUES/OTHER

There has been no change in staffing. The staff is collaborating in cleaning out old files housed in the Walker Building basement, including those relating to the six (6) financial aid programs repealed in 2011. This is a huge undertaking, but needed to reduce storage requirements and is very much appreciated.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ACTIVITY

In-State Colleges and Universities:

The New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) conducted a comprehensive evaluation site visit on March 8-11, 2015, to **Colby-Sawyer College** with the Director serving as the Higher Education Commission's observer. His report is attached, and can be summarized as follows.

Colby-Sawyer College was incorporated as New London Academy in 1837 "...for the purpose of promoting and improving the means of education and instruction in morality, science, and literature." After several minor name changes, the institution was renamed The Colby Academy in 1878, and Colby Junior College for Women in 1933. NH laws in 1943 authorized the college to confer degrees usually "granted by senior colleges whenever its curriculum is expanded to that of a senior college..." and in 1975 the institution's name became Colby-Sawyer College.

The NEASC granted continued accreditation in 1984 and the New Hampshire Postsecondary Education (now Higher Education) Commission followed with its continuing approval in the same year. The College is, therefore, authorized to offer the Associate of Liberal Arts, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees without a terminal date. Any new degree would need to be approved by the Higher Education Commission.

The NEASC team was led by Dr. John Bassett, President of Heritage University, and included six additional individuals from private institutions in New England. As a standard ten-year comprehensive visit, the team was responsible for reviewing Colby-Sawyer compliance with all eleven NEASC standards. And as is typical in this period of demographic hurdles for nearly all tuition dependent New England

colleges, the team thoroughly examined financial records and enrollment projections, and focused on areas cited in prior NEASC communications over the last decade as requiring attention. These areas included integration of online education and assessing student learning therein, diversification of revenue sources, increasing the number of full time faculty, improving retention/graduation rates, and reducing the tuition discount rate.

The NEASC team provided an exit interview on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, to a packed auditorium of faculty, staff, students, and senior management. Chair Bassett commented on the extraordinary levels of campus participation and engagement with the self-study process, attendance at accreditation team sessions during the visit, and complimented the strong leadership team for its work.

Dr. Bassett commended the College for executing on an ambitious strategic plan, making difficult decisions such as reducing the staff by 16 positions while adding 14 full time faculty, and pursuing many cost saving initiatives, including bringing physical plant maintenance “in-house” (it had been outsourced). The institution has made dramatic changes to the composition of its student body over the last several years, moving to a campus with more than ten percent international students in the most recent class plus a significant number of domestic minority students. The budgetary burden of creating this vibrant, enriched multi-cultural environment has been substantial, with these students receiving very high tuition discounts.

It was also noted that 80% of classes are now taught by full time faculty, learning outcomes assessment has been institutionalized on campus, retention rates have improved, and in the last year there was a slight decrease in the tuition discount rate. Moreover, the Board recently approved a new bond that will upgrade some facilities and has initiated a major capital campaign -- all indications of the continued sense of urgency to address issues.

Some challenges remain, and include the need to invest in reducing deferred maintenance, ensure distance education is fully incorporated into the academic structure, intentionally integrate co-curricular and academic learning expectations, and continue to vigorously pursue revenue diversification and lower tuition discount rates. However, as Dr. Bassett emphasized, the campus has a firm sense of its own identity and a culture of transparency and mutual respect that will serve it well and provides confidence in the collective capability to overcome any obstacles.

The visiting team will present its report to NEASC by the end of May, 2015, and the NEASC Commission is expected to review the report and take action at its subsequent meeting. That report will not be available for review prior to the Higher Education Commission meeting, but should be released prior to the Fall meeting and any recommendation for Commission action provided at that time.

Continuing approval by the Higher Education Commission is aligned with NEASC reviews, and any concerns identified by the Commission observer to such reviews. The observer verified the College is meeting Commission standards as stated in the Administrative Rules, Hdc 400.

At the November 21, 2014 meeting of the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, it was voted to extend accreditation to **New England College**. The next comprehensive visit is scheduled for Spring 2024, with the requirement that the College submit an Annual Report on Finance and Enrollment (ARFE) by December 1, 2015 for consideration in Spring 2016. The College must also submit an interim (fifth-year) report for consideration in Spring 2019.

The **New Hampshire Institute of Art** forwarded its Enrollment, Faculty and Finance Survey submitted annually to the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. The Institute also forwarded its required ARFE Report to the NEASC. The NEASC considered the report at its March 6, 2015 meeting and deferred approval until receipt of additional information.

In another example of collaboration among NH institutions, the Institute opened its residence halls to the University of New Hampshire-Manchester students. Students will be able to live in residences this fall under a new partnership announced on Tuesday, April 21, 2015. UNH-Manchester students can also enroll in graphic design courses offered at the New Hampshire Institute of Art that complement UNH-Manchester's Bachelor of Arts in Communication arts curriculum.

The New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) conducted an implementation visit to **Rivier University** on April 13-14, 2015 for the Doctor of Psychology. The Director met with the NEASC visitation team and no issues were identified that warrant Commission attention.

Thomas More College of Liberal Arts forwarded a letter to the NEASC to provide an update by April 3, 2015 for consideration at the NEASC's April meeting that included a budget-to-actual report for FY 2015; a statement of cash flow (with projections) from June 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015; and a report on Spring 2015 enrollment.

Upcoming NEASC Activity:

Hellenic American University – Interim Report due Fall 2015
Mount Washington College – Comprehensive Evaluation October 4-7, 2015
Thomas More College – Focused Evaluation November, 2015
Northeast Catholic College – Biennial Evaluation visit November 8-11, 2015

Out-of-State Colleges and Universities:

Administrative approval was granted to the following institutions from non-SARA states to operate in New Hampshire and offer online degrees that require a practicum/internship/clinical:

Fitchburg State University (Fitchburg, MA) – Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, approved to offer the following degrees until June 30, 2017:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)
- Master of Science in Forensic Nursing

Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) – Accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, approved to offer the following degrees until June 30, 2017:

- Master of Arts in Communication
- Master of Arts in Museum Studies
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Digital Curation
- Master of Science in Nursing
- Doctor of Nursing

Saint Joseph's College (Standish, ME) – Accredited by the NEASC, approved to offer the following degrees until June 30, 2017:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Master of Science in Nursing
- Master of Science in Education

University of Texas at El Paso (El Paso, TX) – Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools, approved to offer the following degrees until June 30, 2017:

- Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Practitioner
- Master of Science in Nursing – Nursing Education
- Master of Science in Nursing – Nursing Systems Management

University of Vermont (Burlington, VT) – Accredited by the NEASC, approved to offer the following degrees until June 30, 2017:

- B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders
- B.S. in Medical Laboratory Science
- B.S. in Medical Radiation Sciences
- M.D. in Medicine
- B.S. in Nursing
- Ph.D. in Physical Therapy

Closed School Transcripts:

FY 2015: As of April 30, 2015, we have processed 646 college/university transcripts @ \$20 = \$12,920 and 88 career school transcripts @ \$20 each = \$1,760, generating a total of \$14,680.

FY 2014: As of April 30, 2014, we processed 589 college/university transcripts @ \$20 = \$11,780 and 93 career school transcripts @ \$20 = \$1,860, generating a total of \$13,640.

COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE GRANT (CACG)

Submitted by Jan Fiderio

The Governor and Council approved use of the remaining balance in the former CACG to support the New Hampshire Scholars initiative and the second year of the “I Am College Bound, I Applied” initiative to encourage high school seniors to apply to college and in particular, students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. The pilot program was offered in six high schools this year, with Governor Hassan kicking off a week of activities at Concord High School. The program is planned for the week of November 16th this year and is expected to include 10-15 high schools.

RESEARCH AND STUDIES

Submitted by Jan Fiderio

A survey of postsecondary career schools licensed under the Division of Higher Education will soon launch, and is being conducted in conjunction with Kimberly Kenneally (Office of Career School Licensing) and James Margeson IV (Veterans Education Services). We hope to conduct the survey annually to answer these questions and more: How many New Hampshire residents attend career schools? How many career-school students receive credentials? How many veterans are served by New Hampshire’s career schools?

Please review the attached “**Director’s Report: Spring 2015 Research and News**” for a recap of newsworthy articles and reports. Issues being highlighted for this report include:

- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) break the for-credit barrier (again) with Arizona State University and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign programs. New MOOC-based offerings follow in Georgia Institute of Technology footsteps.
- Political interest grows for accreditation alternatives and limited federal aid eligibility for micro-credential providers and higher-education upstarts.
- Gathering workforce data continues to gain support.

IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) PROGRAM SUPPORT

Submitted by Jan Fiderio

April 8 was the deadline for the Fall Enrollment, Finance, Human Resources, and Academic Libraries IPEDS surveys. Despite updates and changes, all New Hampshire Title IV eligible institutions successfully completed the 2014-2015 academic year surveys.

OFFICE OF CAREER SCHOOL LICENSING

Submitted by Kimberly J. Kenneally

The Office of Career School Licensing function continues its performance as required by RSA 188-G:1-10, and as of May 5, 2015, will highlight the following since the last report to the Commission:

- InterCoast Career Institute’s President, Geeta A. Brown formally announced its voluntary closure on September 5, 2014, for the Salem, NH branch location and on April 14, 2015, Ms. Brown communicated with the Office of Career School Licensing that the teach-out was complete and all pertinent closing information was collected.
- Currently there are eighty one (81) licensed career schools in the State of New Hampshire.
- Seven renewal applications are pending review. Four applications are waiting for additional information.
- Two new schools have been approved: Dara’s Paw Spaw, Peterborough, and Empire Beauty School, Hooksett.
- Two entities requesting licensure in New Hampshire:
 - Birth Midwifery School – Strafford and Rockingham County
 - Massage Envy School - Manchester

Please direct any questions regarding these activities to Kimberly Kenneally at (603) 271-6443 or e-mail kimberly.kenneally@doe.nh.gov.

VETERANS EDUCATION SERVICES

Submitted by James A. Margeson IV

The Veterans Education Services team continues to grow the program, and hopes to continue to do so. Below are some of the activities that were conducted by the Veterans Education Services team from February, 2015 through April, 2015.

- Conducted **7** Compliance Visits
- Approved **50** new programs

- Disapproved **3** programs
- Conducted **2** NH SCO Training & Planning Committee meetings
- Attended VA Section 702 webinars
- Attended VA East Region Education Service webinar
- Attended Military Child Education Coalition Training
- Attended the 2015 NASAA Mid-Winter Training & Business Meeting (in Washington, DC.)

We are also working with both the Chancellor of the University System of New Hampshire and the Chancellor of the Community College System of New Hampshire to ensure that the State meets the July 1, 2015 deadline for the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act 2014 Section 702. This is a bill passed by Congress stating that all public colleges and universities must waive residential requirements for Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans and dependents and enable those individuals to immediately be charged only the in-state tuition rate. Both systems have been very cooperative in implementing policies to ensure eligible NH veterans and dependents can take advantage of this program.

Please direct any questions regarding these activities to James Margeson at (603) 271-8508 or by e-mail to James.MargesonIV@doe.nh.gov.