



State of New Hampshire

GENERAL COURT

CONCORD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 28, 2023

TO: Honorable Sherman Packard, Speaker of the House
Honorable Jeb Bradley, President of the Senate
Honorable Paul C. Smith, House Clerk
Honorable Tammy L. Wright, Senate Clerk
Honorable Chris Sununu, Governor
Michael York, State Librarian

FROM: Representative Rick Ladd, Chairman

SUBJECT: Final Report of the Public Higher Education Study Committee
RSA 187-A:28-a (HB 401, Chapter 292:2, Laws of 1995)

Pursuant to RSA 187-A:28-a (HB 401, Chapter 292:2, Laws of 1995), enclosed please find the Final Report of the Public Higher Education Study Committee.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would like to thank those members of the committee who were instrumental in this study. I would also like to acknowledge all those who testified before the committee and assisted the committee in our study.

Enclosures

cc: Members of the Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

Public Higher Education Study Committee

RSA 187-A:28-a through 28-d

January 1, 2023 - January 1, 2024

Representative Rick Ladd, Chairman
Representative Maureen Mooney
Representative Oliver Ford
Senator Ruth Ward
Senator Donovan Fenton

Representative Mel Myler
Representative David Luneau
Senator Lou D'Allesandro

Committee Duties: RSA187-A:28-c

- I. The committee shall study, among other things, the following:
- (a) The operation of public higher education.
 - (b) The goals and purposes of public higher education.
 - (c) The organization of public higher education.
 - (d) The size of public higher education.
 - (e) The financing of public higher education.
 - (f) Any other areas which will act as a guide to the legislature and trustees in formulating policies for the future.
 - (g) The economic effects of student activities on higher education campuses as reported in studies by the university system of New Hampshire and municipalities. The committee shall study possible solutions and recommend legislation. Possible solutions for the committee to study include payments to the municipalities by institutions of higher education in lieu of taxes; additional fees or assessments; and any other remedy suggested by the municipalities affected by higher education campuses.
- I-a. In addition to the duties set forth in paragraph I, the committee shall study the feasibility of granting state franchise rights to the providers of on-line education courses which may include but is not limited to, the institutions of the university system of New Hampshire and the regional community-technical college system. The committee may consult with any individual or organization with information or expertise relevant to this aspect of the committee's duties.
- I-b. In addition to the duties set forth in paragraph I, the committee shall monitor the transition of the regional community-technical college system to a self-governing community college system.
- II. The committee shall act as liaison between the university system, the community college system of New Hampshire, the general court, and the public to promote better understanding and communications between public higher education, the general court, and the public.
- III. The committee shall hold at least 4 meetings per year to be called by the chairperson.

Higher Education Study Committee - Meeting Dates and Summary of Topics Addressed

A. November 15, 2023

- September 2023 HB 1530 Update Report: CCSNH/USNH, establishing curricular transfer pathways (Provost Wayne Jones, Chancellor Mark Rubenstein, Chancellor Catherine Provincher)
- Transfer Pathways: Working Together for NH
- Public Higher Education Task Force to Study the Strategic Alignment of Public Higher Education in NH: Governor’s Executive Order 2023-06
- LSR 24-2633.1

B. June 5, 2023

- Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch, PSU, High Impact Practices, and Culminating Senior Practices of Career Attainment
- Dr. Wayne Jones, UNH, discussed alternative pathways to the Bachelor’s Degree in response to a WSJ article, “College Doesn’t Need to Take Four Years.”
- HB 1530...Curricular Transfer Pathways

C. April 14, 2023

Post-Secondary Teacher Preparation Programs: PSU & KSC

- i. Brian Walker: Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation
 - ii. Tanya Sturtz: Associate Dean in the School of Arts, Education and Culture
- SB216, Relative to changes regarding the requirements for civics education in grades K-12. (How do higher education teacher preparation programs prepare graduates for the teaching of Social Studies and Civics?)

D. March 27, 2023

- Update on HB 1530
- Update Session Legislation: HB 516, Freedom of Speech and other bills associated with Higher Education
- PK – 12 Teacher Preparation Programs at CCSNH and USNH
 - i. Enrollment trends
 - ii. Available of loan forgiveness programs
 - iii. HB 654: one-year certificate of teaching eligibility/ alternative pathway post-secondary courses
 - iv. Discussed student enrollment, retention, student completion rates at CCSNH and USNH.
- Briefly discussed WSJ article dated 2/3/23, “College Doesn’t Need to Take 4 Years.”

- U.S. News Best College Rankings? A number of top tier institutions have withdrawn and do not participate in the ‘rankings.’ Do NH publics participate in the Ranking Survey/ List?
- Reviewed Final Report: Study Committee for Post-Secondary Education dated March 19, 2021. Findings addressed questions related to: Governance, Affordability, Accessibility, Vision for Post-Secondary Ed., Institutional Mission and Vision, Legislature’s Role. Merger Implementation and Impact, and Recommendations

Public Higher Education Study Committee Updated Report:

Higher Education Enrollment Trends: High school enrollment levels in New Hampshire have dropped 14% since FY12. NH high school attendance in FY12 stood at 60,460 students, and in FY23 secondary student attendance totaled 52,187. This decline in public high school attendance is having a marked impact on New Hampshire’s higher education systems.

As high school enrollment in New Hampshire has declined over the past decade, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, and Keene State College are faced with enrollment challenges that are impacting revenue and academic programming. To attract and keep graduating high school students in New Hampshire, the post-secondary system must be sustainable and affordable. To meet these challenges, the Community College System New Hampshire offers very successful programs such as Running Start, Early College, eStart, and Dual and Concurrent Enrollment providing high school students affordable pathways designed to meet high demand careers in NH. The four-year system has also taken a number of measures to attract our shrinking public school population. The “cluster model” and “High Impact Practices” emphasizing partnerships with industry and community are working to better prepare NH’s higher education to meet future demographics and workforce projections for New Hampshire. In addition, UNH is rated as one of the best research institutions in the Nation. Nonetheless, the changing landscape of post-secondary education in New England and throughout the country has placed competing pressure on our education institutions, residents and the legislature that require the state to balance in the coming years.

For higher education to remain competitive, affordable, accessible, and cost effective, the committee discussed the Governor’s Executive Order Establishing the Public Higher Education

Task Force to Study the Strategic Alignment of Public Education in New Hampshire. The study committee supports the need to move forward in addressing relevant issues identified in the Executive Order:

1. Increase opportunities to raise education attainment levels, in part, to meet workforce needs;
2. Improve accessibility and compatibility for students;
3. Avoid duplication of academic programs, where appropriate, while optimizing access;
4. Create potential for economies of scale and synergy;
5. Enhance regional growth and development; and
6. Streamline administrative costs and obligations.

In addition to the above need to develop a plan for the strategic alignment of higher education in New Hampshire, the study committee has also followed up on HB 1530. HB 1530 directs CCSNH and USNH to partner in creating and sustaining accessible curricular pathways for at least 30 programs in which the community college student can transfer into a bachelor's degree program and optimize the utility and affordability of their degree. The pathways should be flexible, easily understandable, and represent programs that meet students' interests and workforce needs. The September 2023 report issued to the committee is attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roderick M. Ladd, Jr

Representative Rick Ladd

Chair, Public Higher Education Study Committee

HB 1530 Update

September 2023

Goal of HB 1530

HB 1530 directs CCSNH and USNH to partner in creating and sustaining accessible curricular pathways for at least 30 programs in which a community college student can transfer into a bachelor's degree program and optimize the utility and affordability of their degree. The pathways should be flexible, easily understandable, and represent programs that meet students' interests and workforce needs.

Actions Taken

We have formed three working committees to facilitate collaboration within and across the systems: a leadership team including the Provosts from USNH and the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs from CCSNH, a team of representatives from all USNH institutions and one CCSNH leader, and a third team of representatives from all CCSNH institutions. We collected the data on (1) CCSNH transfer student enrollments across all programs in USNH, (2) programs that were in workforce demand in New Hampshire, (3) existing pathways across the various institutions in the two systems, and (4) the different transfer rules and policies across the USNH institutions. These data sets were used to identify the 30 highest priority programs and the order of approach based on existing curricular pathways.

Data collected on current pathways and policies have been consolidated into a common lexicon to facilitate streamlining pathways and simplifying communications to students. Analysis has been done to identify differences in practices that either need to be resolved or can be accommodated within universal pathways. USNH has purchased and CCSNH is considering purchasing TES: a software tool that will contain all course equivalencies from CCSNH institutions and USNH institutions, thus clearly communicating and reducing uncertainty for students and advisors around transferability of courses. The USNH Outreach and Enrollment Center (OEC) began a regular gathering of transfer advisors, admissions and registrar personnel across all institutions in both systems in working groups to address advising materials, communication strategies, and TES implementation. As an institutionally neutral organization, the OEC is uniquely positioned to host communications and answer questions of students, parents, and advisors.

Results to Date

The top 30 programs have been identified (see next page), and 10 of them have completed or close-to-completed universal pathways¹. Of the top 30 programs, all but 4 have at least one pathway that acts as a starting point for expanding access to students through development of a more universal pathway. We are actively pursuing pathway development in the four programs without any pathways: Computer Science, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Early Childhood Education. Training of community college advisors on the use of pathways has been started. The OEC will facilitate communications and helpdesk functions as we develop sustainable technological solutions.

Next Steps

Continue the detailed, collaborative work of pathway development, pathway expansion for greater access, and course equivalency database development. Continue the work of training, resource development, and process development to simplify the student and advisor experience. Explore options for ensuring sustainability of pathways and processes.