



## State of Connecticut

### The Connecticut General Assembly

#### The Planning Commission for Higher Education

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 1800  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591  
PHONE: (860) 240-0271 / FAX: (860) 240-8833

#### Judith K. Resnick, Chairperson

#### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

3:00 p.m. Room 1E

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Judy Resnick.

The following commission members/designees/guests were present: E. Vagos Hadjimichael, Hedley Freake, David Walsh, Jason Jakubowski, Mary Lou Aleskie, Lois Schneider, John Bennett, Judy Resnick, John Schemo, Judy Goldfarb, Lindy Lee Gold, Michael Gargano, Sally Reis, Judy Greiman, Roberta, Willis, Kerry Kelley, and Kathy Marioni.

Members introduced themselves.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Judy Resnick reviewed the items on the agenda and said that there are two important tasks today: first is to have consensus that these are the right goals. We are looking for agreement around the conceptual framework for these goals. The second task is to look at options for the kind of entity to sustain these strategies. Judy discussed an email from John Bennett regarding the quality of education.

The suggested wording is: "The education associated with these credentials should be of high quality and reflect the deeper learning required to meet the intent of the goals."

John Bennett agreed with the wording suggested by Judy Resnick.

Judy Resnick reviewed the three goals: (1) increase educational attainment, (2) globally competitive economy and sustainable communities, and (3) affordability and asked if the commission members are in agreement that the goals before the commission are the correct goals to guide the strategic plan.

Vagos Hadjimichael shared that all the data the commission members have seen over the months certainly points to those goals and that he feels they are the correct goals.

Judy Goldfarb thinks the goals are great, but she has concerns about governance and is not sure if that's a goal, or it fits into another area of the plan.

Judy Resnick asked for clarification that by governance Judy Goldfarb is referring to the structure of higher education. Judy clarified that these goals are intended to be a framework for institutions and collections of institutions to figure out how they translate into specific actions, which is not necessarily in the commission's purview. She continued that will become something which each of the units of higher education, both public and private, will want to address themselves.

Aims McGuinness shared that the overall structure of the system is open for the means to get to an end. He continued that governance is a means to the end. We want to make sure that the institutional issues follow the guidance mentioned by Judy Resnick and that we want to stay out of issues that are the responsibility of the governing boards.

Roberta Willis asked for clarification if Judy Goldfarb was referring to institutional governance.

Judy Goldfarb replied that she sees there are separate structures for governance for different parts of higher education within the state system. She continued that we have a sense of two different ways of governing our college and university systems, so that we have systems, we don't have a system.

Aims McGuinness suggested that this issue be brought up within the context of the next part of the agenda. He went on to say that the intent of the goals is to provide a framework to create a synergy to achieve the goals.

Judy Resnick indicated that she agreed and hoped that we end up with a way in which all of higher education can work more collaboratively, with less siloed opportunities, with more of a cross functional working collaboration as opposed to in paper and written in words.

Mary Lou Aleskie thinks that the goals are solid, but within the document we reference a lot of language around the importance of culture, quality of life and in terms of retaining workforce, but we eliminate any conversation about the value of a liberal arts education. She continued that she thinks it is very important to point toward economic goals, but this document does weight heavily on what it means to have a great life style in our state, but it needs some language that points to a boarder commitment on the education front might be valued.

John Bennett agrees with Mary Lou Aleskie's comments, except he would change it from a liberal arts education to a liberal education, which applies to liberal arts and science but it also applies to engineering and all the other majors.

Judy Resnick shared that there will be some refinement to the document and that the discussion is a healthy one and that is where the commission members will need Dennis Jones and Aims McGuinness to help reflect some of these nuances that are important to get there.

John Schemo asked how that relates to the charge that the commission members have been given based on the legislative act. He continued, asking if it relates to it or not.

Judy Resnick replied that it absolutely relates to it, that it becomes the corner stone to the strategic plan, and what happens next is all of these goals and some deeper policy recommendations and strategies will come forward following the report, but that until the commission has agreement on the goals it is hard for Dennis and Aims to create the plan.

Roberta Willis said that as someone who helped craft the legislation it is very much the legislative intent that it would be included and that culture and arts were included specifically points to how important the legislature thinks they are.

Lindy Lee Gold shared that it is good that John clarified the difference between “liberal” and “liberal arts” and that she thinks it needs some focus.

John Bennett commented that the reason he is a stickler on this is that he doesn't think an education, no matter how valuable, if it's associated with employment, job related skills, needs to be done within the context of a liberal education because it's the only way you can maintain it. John continued that it isn't enough to be a trained employee; we need to educate people so that they move with the flow and also contradict the flow when they believe it is appropriate. He stated you cannot do that if you are just developing skills.

Judy Resnick indicated that she does agree with John Bennett, but she doesn't see a difference between education and good training because good training is education and it includes all of those problem solving, critical thinking skills, which she believes people think are inherent when people think of a liberal education. She shared that in CBIA's most recent survey, critical thinking is the highest level skill requirement by manufacturers.

Dennis Jones asked Sally, Mike and Judy Greiman to address the question of the extent to which these goals can serve as a useful framework within which the goals of the systems and institutions can provide an umbrella under which they can comfortably put their own goals. Dennis continued that he wants to be sure, before any more is put into this that down the road there is nothing that flies in the face of what the systems need to do.

Mike Gargano thinks the goals align with exactly what the State of Connecticut needs. He continued that the goals touch upon every one of the populations that provides a guide to all of us in how we're going to provide different forms of education to different forms of the cohort. Mike went on to say that, as the traditional student population continues to decline, one of the critical and most important things that we can do in post-secondary education is to address the adult population by retraining with certificates and creating stackable types of credentials, and other means of credentialization so that ultimately we have a more educated citizenry and a citizenry that is mobile and touches upon everything that my colleagues espouse with a liberal education. He continued that this aligns with what we are doing, it aligns with what is needed in the State of Connecticut and clearly credentials like certificates are part of the driving force that we need to pay a lot more attention to.

Judy Greiman commented that she thinks they are the right goals, and that they are the goals her institutions are addressing and understand the importance of stepping out even further on some of these and that they are clearly and concisely hitting the sweet spot of where the State needs to be. Judy shared that she has some slight concerns that by listing these targets, asking are these the only targets or are these examples of targets. She gave as an example that under affordability we don't have a target around state financial aid, she has some concerns. Judy continued that she thinks the goals are exactly right where we need to be.

Judy Resnick suggested that there will be some additions, a lot of flesh added and that the issue of affordability and financial aid are clearly on the radar screen.

Sally Reis agrees and thinks that while some of these are goals all of the intuitions agree to, there are mission differences and that ought to be noted at some point. She continued that UCONN does not have a lot of remedial education, UCONN has already reduced the attainment gap between whites and minorities over the last 15 years, UCONN is working on certificate programs, and UCONN continues to work on urban core areas with undergrad programs, and continuing to expand ECE, Early College Experience, so that students that are in the top 20% of their classes at Stamford and Hartford and Waterbury can actually come to UCONN and have up to a year, and even more, if they choose to take as many classes as they like, so number one, certainly not every one of the targets applies to us, but we certainly agree with it. Sally went on to say that the second is all about what we do with Next Gen, it's exactly how we sat down and thought about Next Gen and targeted our sources and our hiring plan to the workforce. UCONN spent almost a year looking at the jobs and what they needed to do, we agree with that, and we think we have done a good job with that. UCONN has just gone through an affordability study and we maintain that we are a very affordable university, were as the State contributions to the University have gone down we have increased our financial aid. UCONN agrees with that goal. Sally stated that while not all the targets apply to UCONN, the goals apply to UCONN.

Dennis Jones thanked Mike, Judy and Sally for sharing their thoughts. He continued that they thought they were on the right track, but wanted to be sure.

Judy Resnick stated that they each described the way in which they are already working on these goals and the way in which they apply and that is really the litmus test that this is in fact a frame work that resonates with all of higher education. She asked if there were other comments anyone would like to make.

Roberta Willis brought up a question asked earlier about the targets and whether or not another target would be added. She continued that one of the things under affordability is what our policy is in Connecticut in terms of financial aid and is it the best we can do, the most equitable way and are we reducing student loans. She continued that she thinks that is something we need help with.

Dennis Jones stated that is one that will be specifically address in the near future.

Aims McGuinness shared that in particular under goal two they were purposely written to reflect somewhat what Sally was saying, that institutions play different roles and that the targets will reflect the diversity of missions which will be important, rather than having one measure that will apply to everyone.

Judy Resnick said that the ultimate end goal will be inclusivity. Judy continued that she would like to make sure that the group has consensus, that she doesn't think a formal vote is needed. She asked for thumbs up or thumbs down.

All thumbs went up.

Judy Resnick thanked Aims and Dennis for their work and the commission members for their work on this. She continued that this diverse group arrived at a place everyone can live with and hang their hat on. She asked the members to now move their thinking process to - as the plan gets fleshed out, what happens to the plan going forward and how do we create a sustainability to that plan.

Dennis Jones said that it would be useful to remind everyone that when we had the last conversation about goals Vagos put on the table the question about how do we get this done, how do we give it legs, how do we make sure that it goes beyond just three nice goals on a piece of paper. Dennis continued to say that is the next part of the conversation is that some type of entity has to take the responsibility for this. The people in the entity have the job of paying attention to this agenda, not the individual institutions, not the systems, but that the entity attends to these goals. He shared that is the next conversation.

Aims McGuinness commented that there needs to be a way to draw together the whole system, including the independent sector, in a way that will move the system as a whole towards these goals. Aims continued that each of the state systems are bureaucratically organized that way, but the independents play a really critical role, so how do you get synergy among these elements and it's important it be connected with the P20 efforts in the state because Connecticut cannot get to the goals without everything from early childhood education to better high school completions to adult education. He went on to say that the Commission has talked about this and the Commission has talked about criteria and that in order for these things to work we really need the major civic, business and cultural leaders of the State involved and behind it. Aims continued that there are leaders in different parts of the state who need to be drawn together into this effort.

Aims went on to say that one of the critical parts of this that in NCHEMS' experience around the country if you enburden these kinds of activities with the points in the last bullet the regulatory and administrative tasks drives out attention to policy. So we would strongly urge that you think of something that is not encumbered that way because it will in time lose its credibility. He continued that one way to look at that is in the sequence of the State budget process. Most states begin assembling their budgets for two to three years out by discussing what the major strategic priorities for the state that ought to form the budget process for the next year. If you think of an entity that can feed into that process and be helpful to the Governor and the legislature in saying that in the next four or five years what are the major areas for investment. In some respects the investments in UCONN were that kind of strategic investment. Aims said that what you would see in the outcome of this policy entity saying, yes those were important investments, but there are a whole set of other complementary investments related to getting to the 70% goal, the engagement of higher education and the future of the state, and affordability, so the best kind of entity you have is one will be listened to by the major influential leaders in shaping that long term investment policy for the state. In some ways an entity sitting off here with a set of vested interests, disconnected from any credibility with the Governor and the legislature is going to have zero impact. It has to have the potential of influence with the state.

Vagos Hadjimichael suggested that regarding the composition of the entity Aims was referring to there is a major gap because there is no one from education, the academic world, and he thinks there obviously should be someone from education. He continued that he sees the project as supply and demand and the supply is the academic institutions and that he can't envision an entity that deals with these things without education being included in the entity and he believes it is a major gap.

Aims McGuinness offered the pros and cons of Vagos' suggestion. He continued that this is really focused on demand and that NCHEMS' experience throughout the country overwhelmingly you get these entities with a majority or a large membership of the entity made up of the people who are the providers it quickly deteriorates in its credibility, because it's making recommendations focused on the needs of the population, so what you end up having are people who have had significant leadership roles. For example, in Virginia the major organizer of the entity like this has been Chair of the Board of

the University of Virginia. He's now Chair of the Board of Princeton University but he happens to have been the founder of the Weather Channel and is a major civic leader, so you can get built into this people who have played roles, and the second point is that these entities, where they don't work well unless they have very strong advisory and consultative processes, are exactly the groups you're talking about. He went on that it's a role of advice rather than necessarily deemed upon the entity. This is not a prescribed thing so Vagos' point is perfectly legitimate, we are listening to you, but there are pros and cons to your suggestion.

David Walsh shared that he has strong feelings in support of his colleague in terms of concern for the presence of educators, people with professional backgrounds in education, particularly in the university systems and community colleges, so as a Political Scientist, David asked about not having leadership from minorities, from organizations like unions. He continued that he thinks the current situation has not been successful in Connecticut and he added that the business community has the majority of influence, but they've been narrowly self-interested at times. He continued that one thing that is missing is someone who has any sense of what the Connecticut State Universities are really like and requested a group on the board who has familiarity with the institutions that are going to have to be used here and someone who is going to represent interests other than those who are entrenched and already pro administrative structures.

Aims McGuinness said that David pointed out an interesting question because NCHEMS is referring to an entity that is dramatically different from anything that exists today in Connecticut. He continued that this body will have before it the goals that the Commission members approved and its charge will be to monitor the progress towards 2025 and whether the State is achieving those goals and that in the deliberations people may try to drag the group down into details that it should not be concerned with. Aims indicated that if they do drag it down into that detail, the whole thing will collapse. Aims then discussed Virginia as an example and how they faced the problem of narrowing the minority gaps, dealing with major disparities between northern Virginia and the rest of the state. Northern Virginia is about 138% of the national per capita income; the rest of the state is about 87%. They have urban core issues of poverty. Their governor, along with business leadership, put together an entity called [The Council on Virginia's Future](#) which is aimed at the future set of goals, that are very similar to these, but they expressed them differently. The agenda of the Council is the on future quality of life of the people of Virginia. It is not about administering UVA, in fact it has nothing to do with administering UVA. That group is chaired by the Governor, House and Senate leadership, and a set of prominent business and civic leaders. They have been advocates for the goals but not getting down into how the institutions are governed.

David Walsh said that what he was just emphasizing was the fact that when this entity is finally constituted it should include people who have some real understanding about what the systems' elements are like and how they can perform what they've done historically and not just go with retired state legislators and so forth.

Aims McGuinness shared that these things work better when you develop an action plan. He continued that using these goals will give the Governor and legislature a way of questioning the systems as to their progress.

Kathy Marioni added to David's comments that the criteria would probably not apply to most younger adults and you need to have that presence involved as well. She explained that the design criteria for this leadership entity would probably not allow for younger adults to be part of this.

Aims McGuinness commented that he thinks what Kathy is really underscoring is diversity of the population. He continued that if you look at the population that is totally out of the conversation it is this group that is not college and career ready, they are recently out of high school and they are largely African American, Hispanic or Latino populations that are unrepresented, so if you have all the would be young students who are the leaders of state government they are not representatives of the next generation of students.

Lindy Lee Gold stated that Aims just said the magic word that they have all been thinking about, and that is diversity, and her other concern is that when these commissions are appointed what generally occurs is that it is often not people who are representing constituencies, and they are not necessarily the people with the clout. She continued that much like the model of the Stamford partnership, which has different goals and a different agenda, it really has to be the specific person or constituency by title and she agreed that there needs to be union representation, there needs to be a thoughtful process about the various constituencies that it would take to really move this forward.

Aims McGuinness suggested that what the group is discussing, which relates to community and economic development, that if you look at who is involved in regional community development and economic development you wouldn't necessarily always say that the leadership of that group is in fact by the membership of those bodies is diverse as we are discussing, he continued that he believes there needs to be a mandate that even though the membership may not have complete diversity, there has to be a way to engage those populations. Aims shared that it requires a lot of sophistication to participate as the members of the Planning Commission do, but that does not mean that anyone should be ignored and that the issue of diversity and representation is something to work on.

Vagos Hadjimichael suggested that instead of using the word diversity, to use the word integrity and credibility in particular because unless this entity is credible across the board it's not going to be able to carry the day.

Jason Jakubowski discussed that students are becoming more savvy consumers. He commented that with regard to the new entity his first reaction is that it is the old Board of Governors for Higher Education without teeth, which was done away with just two years ago. He continued that the old Board of Governors of Higher Education had real regulatory authority over certain subject matters; this new one would be just an advisory council.

Aims McGuinness said that Jason made a really good point, but that is not what NCHEMS is talking about. Aims went on to say that trying to get states a way to focus on these long term agendas is what Dennis and he have spent their lives on and the history across the United States is the entities like the Board of Governors are really failing to carry out the role we are talking about for the very reasons mentioned. He continued that they have lost their ability and credibility to represent the public, and states are eliminating them. Aims shared that they are also working with California where there is a need for a leadership group to talk about the future and to do so in a way that complements and draws together various institutions of higher education. Governor Brown of California eliminated their Board of Governors because it was doing the items mentioned that will not help. Aims said they are working with California to find a way to establish this entity without creating another state agency. Aims asked the Commission members to think outside the box on this matter and think about how do we create something else that will work.

Jason Jakubowski said that from a practical standpoint he doesn't want the Commission to turn a report into the legislature and have them look at it and say that we're recommending they do something they just did away with a couple of years ago, even if it's not exactly the same.

Dennis Jones commented that one of the things it's important to keep pointing out is that the old Board of Governors had the oversight of the CSUS and community colleges that was its real job, and the reality is that a very large part of getting to the goals that we just talked about lie in the hands of the independent sector and in Connecticut one has to be very cognizant of how you build policy, not just for public institutions, but for public priorities and when we talk about the public priorities in this state they generate about half or a little bit better of the baccalaureate degrees and almost all of the certificates, then you have to get very serious about how you forge public policy that encompasses the whole enterprise, not just have some manor of regulatory authority over the public sector institutions. What we are really trying to craft is something that says yes we're building this for all of Connecticut and for all of Connecticut institutions and at the same time trying to keep from trodding on the prerogatives and responsibilities and the authorities of systems and the boards thereof.

Judy Greiman reminded members of the Commission for Educational Technology, which was a legislatively created commission that included business, unions, higher education, K-12 and was set with very specific legislation that listed the mandate of the commission, who needed to be on it as well as overarching state goals on educational technology and it came about because all of the players at this table and several other tables were all working at cross purposes. She continued that the commission was not doing those things but was charged with checking on the appropriate entity to ask what they were doing to reach the goals and that when the commission came into being the state goals were articulated and all of that happened. She continued that in many ways she sees the entity this Commission is charged with establishing in the same way as the Commission for Educational Technology. We are going to have articulated state goals and we need some entity that is not the regulatory entity to ask what is happening to reach the articulated state goals. She offered that stake holders need to be at that table, not in some advisory group but they need to have credibility with the stake holders.

Aims McGuinness mentioned that the other reality is that the majority of its focus may not be on higher education, it's on the people of the state. He continued that he is working with Ireland about the same type of issue and the trick is that higher education in Ireland touches every dimension of the future of that country, particularly the issues related to arts and culture are really critical to the future of that country. Aims went on to say that if the leadership of higher education is appended to the education department and is seen as a subdivision of education, its link to the other dimensions of government and policy in that country are totally wiped out, so this needs to be the entity that labor and other departments see as coming together, in fact it is bridging all the siloes in Connecticut government. The issue then is that the means to that end is the universities. Aims agrees that if universities are the means to the end they ought to have some sensitivity to the institutions and understand how they are being used. Aims continued that this is not a commission to coordinate higher education in the state. He suggested that an entity that can provide strategic recommendations where the state ought to invest might be a helpful entity.

Mary Lou Aleskie stated that one of the challenges we have in the state is all the regional, city agenda driven organizations that try to embody some portion of what this commission is trying to do and what we have in these goals, which are so well articulated, is a platform for unifying our state in a way that we may not have in other places, but to do it only with education as a focus won't advance the unification, so whether it should be some inventorying of other entities that feed into this in terms of building



consensus and advancement before we think about what this commission looks like, but she doesn't know how practical that is. She continued that we need to get everyone growing together in one way.

Aims McGuinness indicated that the reality is that there may be multiple groups but the public and independent institutions of this state are the largest most significant entities within most of these regions and they are the major platform that a lot of this work done. He continued that to put it in a negative way, if those institutions are inwardly directed and focused on their own self-interest, the capacity of those organizations cannot be sustained. If they are engaged together it supports a whole network of other arts and culture and other supporting activities, so the reality is higher education is a major platform in this state for getting greater synergy.

Dennis Jones commented that most of this at some point becomes driven by the relationships, not structure. So in some ways, the best you can hope for out of structure is that you build the capacity, that you jump start the network, that you pulled together the folks who need to be talking to each other and start building some habits of working and playing together in ways that haven't been the case. Dennis went on to say that we are trying to think of ways to keep the agenda going and keep the right people at the table.

Mike Gargano said that the leadership team in many ways can help all of us in higher education. Mike commented that having only been with the Board of Regents for three months that there are many bureaucratic policies that hinder them in many ways in doing their business and this leadership team might help to navigate that from a much different lense from what we've been successful in being able to do. He continued that there is great value to giving strong consideration of how this gets erected and how it actually would support our work. He continued that it also presents opportunities and that it will create collaborations.

Aims McGuinness said that one of the real honest policy review observations about this state is that it is extremely skilled at building silos and groups competing with each other. One of the criteria would be to not reinforce those, and one of the things that needs to happen in the periodic assessment of progress is to be really honest about the barriers to the kind of collaboration Mike spoke of, which will inevitably relate to the funding incentives.

Dennis Jones shared that Connecticut is really good at is building one off solutions and demonstration programs and saying we've got this really big problem, let me give you this little solution for it and we'll put a little money behind it and it keeps accumulating, like putting one more barnacle on a boat. Connecticut has reached the point that there are so many barnacles that the boat can't move. Dennis commented that there needs to be some keel scraping and to back up and notice there are about five really big things like funding strategies, how do you really do student financial aid and let's re-conceptualize some of these things on a much larger scale. Small solutions that are someone's favorite idea to get funded aren't getting Connecticut where it needs to be. Dennis brought up the need to restructure some of the basic ground rules under which institutions operate in such a way that they have incentives for certain kinds of behavior and that there are devises – at the end of the day it's about good presidents leading good institutions – so how at the state level, at the policy level create an environment in which that can happen. Dennis said that it can happen in a way to get to state goals and not just institutional rankings. He went on to say that when we speak of the leadership team, we are speaking about the venue for those conversations, in which the issues get identified and in which some recommendations for policy change go forward to the folks who can make policy changes.

Jason Jakubowski commented that it sounds like there is no disagreement on the underlying policy, but we get plenty of good ideas that get tanked because they are not presented in the right way, so as we are developing this idea for a policy leadership entity we have to keep semantics in mind.

Dennis Jones thanked Jason and noted caution well taken.

Aims McGuinness commented that the Commission members can start having an impact with the goals by having a discussion among the existing multiple networks in the state, including the institutions, about how your work is connecting the pieces. He suggested testing the goals in the groups the Commission members are involved in.

Roberta Willis said that she thinks it's really important that the group has discussed this and can have time to think about what the entity might be for the next meeting.

Aims McGuinness shared that it is important that in September that the Commission come to closure on the set up options that are realistic

Judy Resnick asked if there might be some material that could be distributed on some of the models that are out there, in particular on 2 models that may fit the needs for Connecticut. She agreed with Roberta's comment that each member needs to take a good look at this, remember this is not an organization that is going to control, it is an organization whose job it is to watch out for these three goals that all the Commission members agreed on and to figure out how to advise the policy makers, the legislature, the government as to the progress of these goals. Judy shared that September 9<sup>th</sup> is the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.