



## 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, April 14, 2015

3:00 p.m. Room 1E

The meeting was called to order by Judy Resnick.

The following commission members/designees/guests were present: Vagos Hadjimichael, Booker DeVaughn, David Walsh, Jason Jakubowski, Mary Lou Aleskie, James Maroney, John Shemo, Judith Goldfarb, Lindy Lee Gold, Estela Lopez, Sally Reis, Judith Resnick and Benjamin Barnes.

The minutes from the January meeting were approved.

Judy Resnick welcomed the members back and discussed implementation steps and metrics. She turned the meeting over to Dennis Jones from The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

Comments not recorded.

Judy Goldfarb asked if Dennis would be taking questions or comments afterwards or as he goes along.

Response not recorded.

Judy Goldfarb shared that part of what she's found problematic is the alignment pieces. She asked if it was the Commission's purview and how do they address the chasm between higher ed and the public school system, pre K through grade 12.

Response not recorded.

Judy Goldfarb said that the other piece that she can't get her hands around is that she understands the concept of degrees and certificates of value leading to higher wage earning and that coming from the field of early childhood, which are the lowest wages earners, but is something of value, she asked if work that doesn't bring in higher incomes is something of no value.

Response not recorded.

Aims McGuinness discussed the pathway to further education being of some value.

Judy Goldfarb said that she understood that, but that NCHEMS discussed high priority degrees.

Response not recorded.

Secretary Barnes asked for an explanation of the correlation between the prior discussion and affordability.

Response not recorded.

Booker DeVaughn asked about narrowing the gap between the cost of attendance and family income, what does that mean other than having some type of tuition differential – how do you implement something like that.

Response inaudible.

Booker DeVaughn asked for clarification of need based at the state level.

Response inaudible.

Booker DeVaughn said that if tuition goes up, it would be reasonable to expect that state based financial aid will increase.

Response inaudible.

Aims McGuinness commented that it is also an issue of part of state appropriations being part of the equation. He continued that in another state they cut out 1/3 of funding of higher education, capped tuition at the same time and provided no additional funding for student aid. Aims went on to say in that in Connecticut, those 3 things have to be put on the table to determine affordability.

Secretary Barnes commented that it would be helpful in speaking about this, if the bullet about affordability target, to disaggregate. He went on to say that we should work to control the underlying costs of higher ed to ultimately make college more affordable and to work to address the amount of public subsidy that's going into the university system. Secretary Barnes indicated that generating an alternative source of revenue for higher education should also be looked at.

Aims McGuinness said that is exactly what they discussed last night with a legislator.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold stated that it doesn't address the major problem of the financial impact of having middle college and having students in public school and publicly funded getting their first year at no cost.

Comments inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael said this was the problem with the accreditation agencies, you cannot make a general statement about the number of credits, you have to look at the individual fields and colleges.

Comments inaudible.

Estela Lopez said we're trying to do early college so students graduate from high school with an associate's degree, but there is a cost to it.

Sally Reis discussed UConn's Early College Experience.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold said that it's her experience that the profile at community colleges has gotten younger as 4 year schools have become more expensive. She continued that these are students working full time and going to school, so a median family income has no bearing.

Comments inaudible.

Judy Resnick asked the members to please use the microphone when speaking.

Comments inaudible.

Aims McGuinness asked Dennis Jones if there is any way to document how many students are engaged in some kind of work experience internship.

Response was inaudible.

Aims McGuinness continued on to say that was something that the institutions could contribute.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold stated that she figured out what was making her so uncomfortable about certificates; somehow she would love to see if the Commission could define those students graduating with a nationally recognized credential rather than just some certificate.

Comments inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael asked Dennis Jones if it was possible to get data, a finer grain resolution, from age 25 to age 64. He continued that he doesn't know what's going on when 30 year olds or 40 year olds – is there a finer grain resolution?

Response inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael replied, something like that because conditions change over 30 – 40 years, you can't put them all together.

Response inaudible.

Estela Lopez raised a concern she had regarding discussion on increasing certificates. She stated that she does not want students in districts with an achievement gap directed to certificates.

Comments inaudible.

Aims McGuinness added that they would need to be sure that existing certificates have built in clear pathways to credit bearing courses.

Comments inaudible.

Booker DeVaughn asked if it wouldn't be helpful to also to know the percentage of students who enter the university system who have some credits from the community colleges so we know what kind of flow exists.

Comments inaudible.

Unknown speaker: “. . . PA 12 40 dictates where there is 3 different levels and we'll have demographic information in there and we'll also have Pell eligibility as a proxy for low income so that we can look at the success rates of those that are Pell eligible vs. those that are not. But it's too soon to report on the gateway success because just last fall they just confronted their remediation. We need some time before that becomes an outcome we can report on.”

Comments inaudible.

Estela Lopez said that what they need to report is based on changes that are made.

Comments inaudible.

Sally Reiss commented that it was on UConn's web site and that she doesn't think UConn has it by age, but that they can get that information.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold brought up another figure that would be useful, just because a certificate is awarded, doesn't mean that it is education interrupted, it just means along the way. She asked if it were possible to get a measure of the number of students who got certificates as a part of their journey, or as the goal.

Response inaudible.

Aims McGuinness brought up that there is a bill before the legislature that will gather more information on the nature of certificates.

Comments inaudible.

Aims McGuinness commented that going back to the adult one, isn't this a state where they need to do much better on the associate degree level participation.

Response inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold said that she thinks that regarding the figure with our manufacturing centers, now with the community colleges in multiple locations, that you will see there are a lot more credentialed.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold stated that it may be a little late to comment on the strategy, but she doesn't believe that keeping young people in state to go to school is as good an answer as providing internships during the summer that engage them in state.

Comments inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael said that the issue of quality is a national issue, not just an issue in Connecticut. He continued that at the meetings that were held last year with employers, they gave ideas of what they consider a quality education, in terms of their needs. He went on to say that employers are looking for some cultural things, being on time for work, good communication, the ability to deal with logic and computers – we had very definitive statements from employers. Vagos thinks the Commission should go back and enumerate some of those statements the Commission received from employers – they provide a certain guide.

Response inaudible.

David Walsh asked if the conversation could back up. He stated that the studies show that we're going backwards. He asked if the first metric in all of this be state aide per capita to education at every level we talk about.

Response inaudible.

David Walsh said that before we begin with these very sophisticated metrics, one of the basic points he'd like to see is more courses offered each semester by all institutions, more students brought into the system in some way, and enhancing programs in the summer.

Response inaudible.

Aims McGuinness commented that NCHEMS has been deeply involved with the assessment of student learning and one of the lessons from that is that it's very hard to have external assessments have an impact on internal improvements. He continued that there is almost an inverse relationship between external assessment and motivation. NCHEMS is not suggesting some relatively simplistic new way to measure learning at the state level, but we do need to have some evidence about this and NECHEMS does need the members' help with ideas – what would be good indicators that will have a constructive impact.

Comments inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael said that in all the institutions he's familiar with, this conversation is going on all the time. He went on to say that if this Commission is going to do anything, we have to come up with some radical new ideas, strategies and so on. Vagos continued that on the issue of revenue stream, we should consider a public/private collaborative scheme endowment for higher education that would produce a steady base and we have to pay attention to why certain people don't go to college.

Jason Jakubowski said that one of the areas the Commission may want to look at is the population served by the new "Go Back to Get Ahead" program.

Comments inaudible.

Estela Lopez said there has been an increase of 86% of STEM bachelor's degrees from 2003, which she feels is connected to the investment the state made during that time.

Comments inaudible.

Aims McGuinness stated that the reason for the second objective was to say that engagement of all the institutions in a region had to involve, or recognize the contributions to building an economy.

Comments inaudible.

Lindy Lee Gold shared that she had reviewed scholarship applications and the students' definitions of community service are very broad ranged and that they won't be very useful.

James Maroney asked if NCHEMS was looking for a number of hours, or just a percentage of students who participate in community service.

Response inaudible.

James Maroney asked for confirmation that NCHEMS was looking more for community engagement than community service. He then asked if the partnerships for the metrics have been described.

Response inaudible.

Aims McGuinness stated that this is really a means to an end. He continued that the future of Connecticut depends on creating communities where people want to live and one of the ways you do that is through partnerships between higher ed institutions and the communities.

James Maroney shared that was what he envisioned.

Aims McGuinness commented that this is related to sustainable communities and that Connecticut has a real problem of places where people are not going to be able to live because of costs. He continued that one way to resolve this is to have students engaged working on community solutions. Aims indicated that resolving these issues has a lot to do with internal academic policy and reward systems for faculty. He went on to say that NCHEMS is not looking for indicators that just list all the wonderful things being done, we want a measure and to identify what needs to be improved.

Vagos Hadjimichael said that the word partnership is not the correct word; what NCHEMS described is really outreach that the universities extend to the towns, like what Trinity College did with the neighborhood it is in, or it could be partnership like what MIT has with Boston with intellectual property transfer.

Response inaudible.

Secretary Barnes commented that is because our income is higher than the national average.

Comments inaudible.

Aims McGuinness added that it is worthwhile to look at the information institution by institution and to realize that at the institutions that are serving more low income students, this figure is high. He continued that the second group that tends to be high is independent institutions that don't have large endowments to be able to provide accessible student aide. Aims commented that the average student debt at Yale is \$14,000, which is half of what it is at public institutions.

Secretary Barnes asked how affordable certificate programs are in private institutions. He continued that he suspects they are not very affordable as comparable programs in public institutions and that a lot of traction may be able to be made on affordability by expanding certificate programs in public institutions. Secretary Barnes continued that affordability at the certificate level won't affect the numbers the Commission is trying to attain, but affordability by socio-economic status, by race, by degree program, by institution and by circumstances of various kinds – those may allow the Commission to be more targeted in how we direct public resources to keep college more affordable and how we direct other types of aid.

Aims McGuinness responded that in some cases public money can be used to leverage private money. He continued that to the extent that private institutions put their own resources behind affordability, a little public money would go a long way to assure some of those students are served.

Dennis Jones commented that the data are pretty clear that for folks in middle to upper income families the affordability issue affects choice of institution but not whether or not they go to college. He shared that for low income students affordability affects whether they go to college or not. Dennis stated that the only students they have income information on are Pell Grant students, so they have no income information on students who do not apply for a Pell Grant.

Lindy Lee Gold said that she would think it is true if we are looking at our urban areas.

Vagos Hadjimichael stated that among the 25 plus students a large number are non-traditional students, which means they take course work at night while they have full time work and have families. He continued that in most instances, the employer will reimburse the student for tuition, so is it possible to get data on how many of the 25 plus students are non-traditional?

Response inaudible.

Vagos Hadjimichael stated that was not entirely true, but a large percent. He continued that they are financing course work differently than those younger than age 25, and he repeated that there is reimbursement from employers and that there appears to be a ready-made partnership with the education of that cohort.

Dennis Jones replied that one of the realities of tuition assistance programs is that the proportion of employees that take advantage of them is abysmally small and also there is a cash flow problem associated tuition assistance programs because education institutions require that students pay upfront and employers reimburse the employee only after they completed the course successfully, so it is months later before the employer reimburses the student for their out of pocket costs.

Vagos Hadjimichael said Dennis was absolutely right, but it's something we can do something about.

Dennis Jones said that it represents another revenue stream that we don't take enough advantage of. He continued that the question for the commission members is how do we go about closing gaps on issues that we don't have good metrics on.

Mary Lou Aleskie said she wanted to go back to communication, she thinks there are a lot of metrics, but the discussion is about affordability, not accessibility and she wonders if there isn't more information that the commission members could have about the ability to communicate, assess things critically, to have the drive that our mainstream families do to overcome these barriers. She would like to find a way to advance critical observation and communication skills beyond workforce skills.

Unknown speaker: “As Mary Lou was speaking, I was thinking about where Judith had originally started, right. I’m talking about K12 education or preK12 education and you had said that we are not really responsible for that, but in terms of accessibility, how do we not think about that and how do we not incorporate that. When you talk about partnership I think about that. I think about pre K through 12 and I don’t just think about in terms of how do you start developing those soft skills early I think that’s where you start.”

Mary Lou Aleskie responded that it’s about a shift in culture and sustaining that change in culture and becoming more of a community state-wide as opposed to isolated communities.

Estela Lopez discussed how to get to a quality education.

Aims McGuinness asked if a lot of this was at the heart of what we must have at institutions about what the quality of an undergraduate graduate education is. He asked how many institutions use the survey of student engagement.

Sally Reis responded that UConn does.

Aims McGuinness stated that is one indicator of whether or not your students feel engaged.

Booker DeVaughn said that as far as he knows the community colleges continue to do this.

David Walsh said that the kind of data that the members are looking for is available at the department level.

Booker DeVaughn commented that the Commission has discussed non-traditional students and how non-traditional may be more traditional and that as the members look at low income students and non-paid internships – that can produce a burden for that student who is working their way through college. He does not want to see more non-paid internships for low-income people who are working their way through college.

Comments inaudible.

Judy Resnick said it is now the law for students at the collegiate level to receive college credit or remuneration, so the idea of free labor is a thing of the past. She brought the members back to Dennis’ question about the gaps in terms of some of the metrics. Judy asked the members how should we go about doing that, and what part do we want to play in it. She reminded the members that part of Dennis’ and Aims’ job was to collect research and data, but some of the work the members have to do ourselves.

Aims McGuinness commented that some of the metrics will be filled individually, like the data on developmental ed can be done by CSCU, but there are issues that cut across and it would be helpful to have commission members work on those. He asked if any commission members would like to work with a few other members on a further refinement of this particular area.

Vagos Hadjimichael asked if they could send an email identifying the areas NCHEMS would like information on.

Sally Reiss said it would also be helpful to have a sense of to what end. She doesn’t mind providing the data, but her guess is that given what the goals are, NCHEMS has a lot of what they need and they’ll



spend a lot of time defining partnerships, economic development and various projects happening, but she's not sure that's central to the mission of what the Commission is trying to achieve.

Aims McGuinness asked Sally if the end be a report that has indicators that reflect the plan.

Sally Reiss said again, her question is to what end. She continued, is NCHEMS looking for partnerships that seem to increase retention or graduation.

Aims McGuinness said that to respond to that he and Dennis will take on the assignment of creating a better definition of the gaps.

Mary Lou Aleskie asked if it makes sense for the members to also be soliciting the business sector for input about successful paid or credit practicum oriented programs that have generated results. She asked if all the data come from the education institutions or should we assess outcomes that are already in place in the community.

Aims McGuinness replied that because of the time limits, he and Dennis will take on the assignment of defining 4 or 5 areas that they feel will be a productive use of time.

Vagos Hadjimichael asked Judy Resnick if beyond the current discussion, is there anyone in the state government who is breathlessly waiting for the commission's report, and if so, when.

Judy Resnick replied that the commission does have time parameters and that the Governor's Office is very interested in what the Commission is doing.

Dennis Jones responded that on the question of certificates, that the Commission has had impact and he thinks there are 2 other areas where the Commission has impact. He continued that there are 2 bills in the legislature now; the first one cleans up a lot of prior legislation with the most important part being that the goals established by the Planning Commission will be put into statute. Dennis said the second bill creates a task force to develop a strategic outcomes-based plan for financing higher education that shall be aligned with the goals and benchmarks for higher education recommended by the Planning Commission for Higher Education.

Judy Resnick said she doesn't think those 2 key pieces of legislation would have moved forward had there not been interest in the work the commission is doing.

Aims McGuinness said that he and Dennis will do their assignment and that he thinks this is the major task between now and September.

Dennis Jones added that he and Aims will be doing some things in the meantime and went on to discuss policy audits they will be doing on campuses around the state.

Judy Goldfarb said she would like to add a cautionary tale – the early childhood field developed an early childhood teacher credential and there is a state law that says a certain percentage of this workforce has to have a bachelor's degree and a certain percentage has to have an associate's degree, there is legislation now to remove the early childhood teacher credential and also to grandfather in the 25 to 64 year old population because they don't want to get the degrees, they don't feel they need the degree and it moves out the date for the requirement of the degrees.

Judy Resnick commented, well noted.

The meeting was adjourned.