



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2026

PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY
PLYMOUTH, NH

MEETING MINUTES
Draft

Attendance

Committee members present: Patrick Griffin, chair; Wayne Semprini, vice chair; Matthew Ash; Ludmilla Cejka; Erin Ciempa; Delaney Cote; Caitlin Davis; Ethan Dupuis; Luca Fortin; Tim Hoheneder; Shawn Jasper; Jessica O'Brien; Jennifer Higgins Pitre (remote); Christiana Thornton; David Westover

Other trustees present: Cassandra Ardinger; Maureen Beauregard; Donald Birx; James Burnett, III; Elizabeth Chilton; Paul Dean (for John Corbett), Governor Ayotte's designee; Brendan Finn; James Gray, designee for the president of the NH Senate; George Hansel; Kevin Knarr; Rick Ladd, designee for the speaker of the NH House of Representatives; Brian McCabe; Joel Nkounkou; Peter Paul; Michael Pilot; Catherine Provencher

Other participants: Nathaniel Bowditch; Kimberly DeRego, Jeanette Riley, Kirsti Sandy

Call to Order

Committee Chair Griffin called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He thanked Committee Vice Chair Semprini for chairing the October meeting, and he thanked Presidents Birx and Chilton for their leadership during challenging times. Trustees echoed the sentiment with a round of applause.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the consent agenda containing the following items was duly moved, seconded, and approved by roll call vote.

Consent Items:

- Action – Approval of Minutes October 23, 2026
- Information – Top NH Occupations Requiring Postsecondary Education
- Information – Enterprise Risk Management Plan Update
 - Enrollment and Retention
 - Student Success and Well-being

Enrollment Management and Strategy

Kim DeRego, vice provost of UNH enrollment management, reported on the spring 2026 enrollment census and fall 2026 admissions status, noting the disruption of direct admit applications on fall enrollment predictions. She presented information about the convergence of market pressures – continued demographic changes, federal policy, increased nonconsumption and competition, and changing application behavior – that are reshaping the higher education landscape and the enrollment environment. Trustees discussed competition and approaches to counteract external forces. Chair Griffin indicated that future discussion about brand differentiation in the marketplace will be critical for sustainability.

Academic Program Review

The provosts presented information describing a rigorous program review and continuous assessment and improvement process, involving quantitative analysis. The information was presented in the context of institutional mission, regional accreditation, program quality and sustainability, student and workforce demand, faculty engagement, and shared governance. It was noted that over the past five years, program closures outpaced or kept pace with new programs across the system. Trustees engaged in discussion about new program development factors that include alignment with institutional goals, return on investment, and demand/competition. It was noted that regional accreditation has been evolving to allow institutions to more quickly adopt innovation and to support assessment of institutional sustainability.

University System Student Board (USSB)

Student trustees and USSB representatives reported on a student forum convened in January, attended by 5 USSB members and 10 student government representatives. The forum provided the opportunity for student leaders across the system to share insights and to develop coordinated, collaborative, student-informed solutions to challenges in areas of enrollment, the student experience, and USNH student leadership continuity. They reported on the student leaders' perceptions of the student experience, with a focus on communications. A second forum will be held in April to develop objective monitoring, with a follow-up report to the committee in June.

Closing Remarks

Chair Griffin noted that committee meeting discussions are organized around a unified, aspirational theme, and he recapped this meeting's focus on enrollment and retention: bringing students in, keeping programs relevant, and engaging student leaders.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.