



BOARD OF TRUSTEES SEPTEMBER 2024 STRATEGIC RETREAT

Meeting Held at University of New Hampshire-Manchester Multipurpose Room
88 Commercial Street, Manchester, NH
(September 20, 2024)

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Trustees present at meeting location: Chair Mike Pilot, Vice Chair Kass Ardinger, Secretary Kevin Knarr, Donald Birx, Jamie Burnett, Elizabeth Chilton, MJ Condon, Ethan Dupuis, Frank Edelblut, Sen. James Gray, Cathy Green, Patrick Griffin, Kevin Knarr, Rep. Rick Ladd, Brian McCabe, Mackenzie Murphy, Joël Nkounkou, Catherine Provencher, Wayne Semprini, Christiana Thornton, Melinda Treadwell, and David Westover. Also in attendance and participating: Community College System of New Hampshire Chancellor Mark Rubenstein, and Brian Prescott.

Call to Order: At 8:02 am, Chair Pilot called the meeting to order and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient for the conduct of business.

Chair's Remarks: Chair Pilot introduced Dean Mike Decelle, who gave a brief summary of recent events at the Manchester campus, welcomed new trustees Maureen Beauregard, Elizabeth Chilton, Brian McCabe, MJ Condon, and Ethan Dupuis, and noted that the Board was gathering at a unique time where the challenge facing the System is reduced demand for higher education rather than increasing demand and there is a need to reconfigure how the System delivers its services.

Presentation by Brian Prescott, NCHEM: Brian Prescott of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems presented to the Board on trends in higher education. The presentation included data on national enrollment trends showing that private and non-flagship public universities have seen sharply lower enrollment over the past five to ten years. The board also received data on the migration of students into and out of New Hampshire and reductions in the number of high school graduates in region, the rate at which those graduates choose to attend college, and the unique dependence of the System on tuition given state funding levels. Trustees discussed the implications of the data and the need to consider alternative ways to meet the demands of students. Need to review actual mission/audience to be served

Presentation by CCSNH Chancellor Mark Rubenstein: Chancellor Rubenstein presented to the Board on the work being done by the Community College system and how it interacts with both the University system and the state K-12 system. The presentation highlighted the expansion of the state early college program and the chance for collaboration between the K-12 system, CCSNH, USNH, and industry within the State. The presentation also contained an overview of CCSNH's operations, faculty, and programs. Chancellor Rubenstein also highlighted CCSNH's key future objective of

redesigning its administrative structure and discussed with trustees how that redesign might interact with future collaboration with USNH.

Recess: At 12:44 pm, Chair Pilot recessed the meeting for lunch.

Return to Order: At 1:30 pm, Chair Pilot called the meeting back to order.

Update re: Governor’s Task Force on USNH-CCSNH Collaboration: Chancellor Provencher led an update on the report recently issued by the Governor’s Task Force on USNH-CCSNH collaboration. While the report identifies myriad opportunities for closer collaboration, the task force, USNH, and CCSNH all understand that the work will need to be implemented in waves. The initial focus will be on admissions pathways, with the goal of aiding students and creating an ecosystem where talent stays in state. USNH and CCSNH are also working on a direct admission program that would allow CCSNH graduates who meet certain benchmarks to be auto-accepted into a USNH institution. The K-12 system’s initial step will be to strengthen work to connect HS students with in-state higher education. The initial wave of projects will also include the colocation of the USNH system on the campus of NHTI by summer 2025. Given the amount of work needed to implement this initial wave of recommendations, there is no short-term plan to work toward combination of USNH and CCSNH at the administrative or statutory level.

Ten-Year Directional Model and Campus Financial Plans: Vice Chancellor & Treasurer Karen Benincasa presented a *pro forma* five-year model of the System’s finances. The model was designed to project the System’s operating margin and cash flow over the next five years if the System and its institutions made no material changes to their operations. It incorporated assumptions vetted by all three institutions as well as demographic projections reviewed by the New Hampshire state demographer. The model projects both operating budget and liquidity challenges for the System in the coming years, particularly as projected incoming classes reach their nadir in 2029. Trustees discussed the assumptions underlying the projections and received clarification from staff. Trustees tasked the Presidents’ Council with developing a strategy to address the challenges identified by the model and with presenting that strategy to the Board in June 2025.

President’s Report: UNH President Elizabeth Chilton updated the Board regarding a community forum she held at UNH earlier in the week. The forum revealed the need to augment internal communication in both quality and quantity in order to build the trust needed to bring about change. There were also a number of questions regarding the May 1 protest on the UNH campus. UNH has created a dedicated free speech page to ensure that UNH is transparent in its policies and practices. President Chilton also shared that UNH will begin a strategic planning process this year with the goal of coming to consensus on how scarce resources should be best deployed to carry out UNH’s mission. That process will also include a shift to a new strategic budget process. President Chilton concluded by expressing her optimism about UNH’s strengths in research and student success.

Chair’s Summary Report Out: Chair Pilot noted that the day’s presentation had underlined the need for urgent action to preserve the system’s financial stability. While ongoing collaboration efforts with CCSNH and the prospect of more robust budgeting processes at UNH will partially address the issues, they will not bridge the gap alone. Trustees discussed possibilities such as increased state funding and better understanding of the State’s goal for higher education funds. Trustees further discussed the possibility of creating space for additional discussions on financial matters through extending the Fridays of business meetings, additional Financial Affairs Committee meetings, or an additional retreat day. Chancellor Provencher indicated that she and the institutional presidents plan to have their own

facilitated retreat with the goal of bringing further ideas back to the board later in the year. A consensus formed that work should be done toward developing a system-wide strategic vision to be brought back to the board at a later time.

Adjourn: At 3:52 pm, Chair Pilot expressed gratitude for the dedicated work of the staff and trustees, called for further business and, hearing none, adjourned the meeting.