



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 23, 2025

KEENE STATE COLLEGE
KEENE, NH

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Committee members present: 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 (remote); Jennifer Higgins Pitre; Christiana Thornton

Other trustees present: Cassandra Ardinger; Donald Birx; James Burnett, III; Elizabeth Chilton; Brendan Finn; James Gray, designee for the president of the NH Senate (remote); 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; Gregg Tewksbury

Other participants: Vinay Bhaskara, Nathaniel Bowditch; Kimberly DeRego, Jeremy Heidenreich, MB Lufkin, Jeanette Riley, Kirsti Sandy

Call to Order

On behalf of Committee Chair Griffin, who was unable to attend the meeting, Vice Chair Semprini called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Consent Agenda

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

Consent Items:

Action – Approval of June 26, 2025, Minutes

Information – Top NH Occupations Requiring Postsecondary Education

Enrollment Update: Fall Census 2025

Kim DeRego, vice provost of UNH enrollment management, reported on residential institution undergraduate, graduate, and online enrollment and net tuition revenue systemwide. The information included topics of CCSNH associate degree transfers, non-enrolling applicant perspectives, and enrollment strategy. KSC and PSU enrollment management leaders, MB Lufkin and Jeremy Heidenreich, joined Kim in a discussion with trustees about strategies to counteract demographic and market pressures and declining cultural confidence in the higher education value proposition.

Enrollment Update: College Vine

Vinay Bhaskara, co-founder of College Vine, a company that provides AI support for college operations, joined remotely to introduce the AI tool newly adopted by the three USNH institutions to assist with outreach and recruitment. A live demonstration of a telephone conversation with an AI recruiter was conducted. College Vine was described as a force multiplier that offers personalized 24-7 communications at scale with applicants and

prospective students with an analytic capacity to inform recruitment strategy. Once fully implemented, the next phase will develop AI assistance in areas of student services and student success.

Student Success: Retention, Persistence, and Graduation

The provosts presented information on data analytics and initiatives designed to support student retention, persistence, and graduation. Acknowledging that myriad combinations of variables can impact a student's successful completion of their program, the provosts shared examples of the many ways in which students are supported through integrated, campuswide strategies that strive to holistically advance academic, social, and emotional well-being. Discussion of the institutions' first-to-second-year retention and four-year/six-year graduation rates and targets included the budgetary implications of improved persistence.

University System Student Board (USSB)

Student trustees and USSB representatives reported on plans to build cross-campus USSB and student body governance collaboration to inform student belonging and retention priorities. Through two initial systemwide forums, the student leaders intend to share insights, identify challenges, and develop coordinated solutions in key areas of concern to students that impact retention. Initial outcomes and policy recommendations will be presented in March, and an impact summary and continuation plan will be delivered in June. Board Chair Pilot commended the students for demonstrating "systemness" in practice.

Closing Remarks

Vice Chair Semprini stated that the March meeting will take an in-depth look at USNH's response to NH workforce and employer needs, and how USNH's "product" measures against that of our competition.

Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

