



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES APRIL 20-21, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

Meeting Held at Keene State College  
Alumni Center, Norma Walker Hall, Keene, NH

### Meeting Minutes

**In Attendance April 20:** Trustees present at meeting location: Chair Alex Walker, Vice Chair Jamie Burnett (second session), Secretary Kass Ardinger, Donald Birx, Zachary Christie, James Dean, Jackie Eastwood, Cathy Green, Patrick Griffin (second session), Shawn Jasper, Kevin Knarr, Christian Merheb, Peter Paul, Mike Pilot, Gregg Tewksbury (second session), Christiana Thornton, Melinda Treadwell, and David Westover. Trustees participating by videoconference: James Gray and Joel Nkounkou. Others participating in the meeting: Governor's Office representative Deanna Jurius.

**Call to Order:** At 8:31 am, Chair Walker called the meeting to order and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient for the conduct of business.

**Chair's Remarks:** The Chair noted that, as part of the System's ongoing effort to work collegially with the Legislature, four legislators from the Keene area would be welcomed at the post-meeting reception. The Chair then welcomed new trustee Patrick Griffin to the Board.

**Presidential Presentation, University of New Hampshire:** UNH President Jim Dean introduced UNH Chief Marketing Officer Danielle O'Neil, who presented on UNH's marketing campaign. CMO O'Neil explained the two objectives of the campaign (optimizing existing marketing efforts and identifying new revenue) and presented in detail on the steps to be taken to achieve the first objective. These include identifying and emphasizing UNH's unique qualities and focusing on how best to consistently and effectively communicate those qualities to audiences in a saturated market. Trustees encouraged the inclusion of alumni and guidance counselors in the campaign and asked questions regarding the metrics that would be used to measure a campaign's success, how price of attendance factors into marketing, and the possible benefits of focusing on student outcomes in a campaign.

**Recess Session 1:** At 9:20 am, Chair Walker recessed the Board until 4:45 pm, after the conclusion of the day's committee meetings.

**Return to Order Session 2:** At 4:45 pm, Chair Walker called the meeting back to order and noted the continued presence of a quorum.

**Presidential Presentation, Plymouth State University:** PSU President Donald Birx introduced PSU Athletic Director Kim Bownes and Associate Athletic Director Courtney O'Clair, who presented on PSU's athletics program. The presentation covered the program's scope, with over 600 students involved in interscholastic sports, and its beneficial effect on student recruitment and retention,

particularly among traditionally underrepresented student populations. The presentation also highlighted the academic impacts of the athletic program, including student-athletes achieving an average GPA of 3.1 in the past year, and the use of athletic facilities in classes for PSU's Health and Human Enrichment cluster. The presentation also noted that alumni associated with athletics also have a strong history of remaining engaged with the university after graduation, including through fundraising.

**Recess Session 2:** At 5:28 pm, Chair Walker recessed the Board until 9:00 am on Friday, April 21 at the same location.

**In Attendance April 21:** At 9:00 am on April 21, Chair Walker called the meeting back to order and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient to do business. Trustees present at meeting location: Chair Alex Walker, Vice Chair Jamie Burnett, Secretary Kass Ardinger, Donald Birx, Zachary Christie, James Dean, Jackie Eastwood, Cathy Green, Patrick Griffin, George Hansel, Shawn Jasper, Kevin Knarr, Peter Paul, Mike Pilot, Gregg Tewksbury, Christiana Thornton, Melinda Treadwell, and David Westover. Others participating in the meeting: Governor's Office representative Deanna Jurius.

**Presidential Presentation, Keene State College:** KSC President Melinda Treadwell introduced a presentation on athletics at KSC. President Treadwell noted that the campus is making a strategic investment in athletics as part of its recruitment, retention, and community engagement program, and described the recent successes of its interscholastic and club teams. President Treadwell then introduced KSC field hockey athlete Molly Edmark, who noted the high retention rate among student-athletes at KSC and led a series of presentations by KSC student-athletes Octavio Brito, Jr., Reagan Fleming, Jeff Hunter, Adessa Noyes, Jake Pearl, Haile Ratajack, and Ben Stafford. The presentations included discussion of the academic supports available to student-athletes, the programmatic commitment to athletic success, and student-athlete-led community engagement including support of the Special Olympics, Read Across America, K-1 basketball, and partnerships with mental health organizations. The student-athletes then engaged in small-group discussions with trustees. Trustees expressed deep appreciation and admiration for the students' time and their representation of KSC and USNH.

**Consent Agenda:** By motion made by Trustee Pilot and seconded by Trustee Tewksbury, the Board unanimously voted to approve the consent agenda as follows:

**VOTED,** that the Board of Trustees approves the minutes of its meeting held on January 19-20, 2023 as presented.

**CAO Update:** Chief Administrative Officer Cathy Provencher updated the board on recent testimony before the Legislature regarding the System's operating budget and HB 74, related to employee time off. CAO Provencher then updated the Board regarding a forthcoming bond offering which will refinance existing debt and provide funds for the renovation of Hetzel Hall. Trustees asked questions about whether the transaction is expected to impact the System's credit rating; CAO Provencher opined that it likely would not.

**Presidents' Reports:** Chair Walker noted that written reports from the campus presidents were available in the meeting materials. UNH President Dean additionally reported that UNH-Manchester student Jonathan Weinberg had been selected as a Truman Scholar and that UNH's cheer team recently won a national championship. President Dean also spoke to the challenges of political polarization in the current higher ed environment. Trustees offered to share the work that the

System's institutions do on the issue of free speech. KSC President Melinda Treadwell informed the Board that David Westover has been elected to another term as KSC alumni trustee.

**Proposed Amendment to Board Bylaws Article VI: University System Student Board:** By motion made by Trustee Christie and seconded by Trustee Green (with the affirmative vote of no fewer than fourteen trustees required), the Board unanimously voted to approve an amendment to its Bylaws as follows:

**VOTED**, on recommendation of the Executive Committee and University System Student Board, the Board adopts the proposed amended Board Bylaw Article VI as presented in the materials for this meeting.

**Educational Excellence Committee Report:** Committee Chair Eastwood presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting. The report centered on academic programs to be added or removed in the coming academic year at the campuses. Those changes are described in detail in the materials attached to the committee meeting agenda.

**Audit Committee Report:** Committee Chair Tewksbury presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting. The audit committee received reports from the System's external auditor on the audit plan for the coming year, and from staff on Environmental Health & Safety. The committee then reviewed and approved the annual enterprise risk management report, which sets out the most salient risks facing the system in the coming year.

**Governance Committee Report and Related Board Discussion:** Committee Chair Ardinger presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting. The committee further discussed the status of the Granite State College student trustee post-merger and has agendized additional discussion so that additional information is made available to the committee. The meeting also included a review of the Board's self-evaluation survey, discussion of whether to include a diversity competence component in the new trustee orientation process, and the process for beginning the Board's consideration of the interim chancellor role.

Committee Chair Ardinger then sought Board input on a Presidents' Council proposal to change the Board's meeting schedule by moving from five meetings annually to four meetings annually. Trustees discussed the proposal at length. The majority of trustees who spoke were supportive of the proposal. Trustees also expressed concerns regarding the need of the Board to remain actively engaged during a period of challenge in the industry, the possibility that the change could lessen the ability for trustees to engage with students on campus, and the impact on student participation in Board meetings. Chair Walker will take the discussion into account and bring a proposed meeting schedule to the Board in June.

**Investment and Capital Planning Committee Report:** CAO Provencher presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting, which included portfolio performance updates showing the endowment up 4.5% year-to-date and the short-term portfolio up 2.4% year-to-date. The committee also reviewed cash flow projections and received a report on a reorganization of the System office's financial department.

**Financial Affairs Committee Report:** Committee Chair Pilot presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting which included the need for strategic planning, and a review of the effectiveness of the most recent SERP.

**Nomination Committee Report:** Committee Chair Green presented the report of the committee's April 20, 2023 meeting. The committee nominated Alex Walker as Chair, Jamie Burnett as Vice Chair, and Kass Ardinger as Secretary for the 2023-24 governance year, and proposed that Cathy Green, Morgan Rutman, and Gregg Tewksbury serve on the Nomination Committee for that same governance year. Consistent with the Board Bylaws, the slate of nominated officers will come before the Board for action in June.

**Further Business:** Trustee Hansel asked that the Board consider adding a discussion regarding intra-system competition to the next Board retreat. USSB Chair Lynch thanked the Board for its approval of the revised USSB structure and asked the Board to consider what input the Board would like the USSB to provide it. Trustee Jasper asked for additional information about the goals of campus DEI programs. Trustee Tewksbury echoed Trustee Hansel's point that the System's success must be measured collectively across public institutions, with the possible inclusion of the community college system. Trustee Murphy asked whether it would be possible for the Board to receive a presentation from campus enrollment managers to help the Board learn how to better support campus enrollment and retention.

**Chair's Closing Remarks:** Chair Walker and other trustees again praised the interactions they were able to have with KSC student-athletes on the day.

**Adjourn:** At 11:42 am Chair Walker called for further business and, hearing none, adjourned the meeting.