



BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting Held at USNH System Office
5 Chenell Dr., Suite 301, Concord, NH
(February 15, 2024)

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Executive Committee members present at meeting location (USNH System Office, 5 Chenell Dr., Concord, NH 03301): Alex Walker, Jamie Burnett, Kass Ardinger, Jackie Eastwood, and Cathy Green. Executive Committee members participating by videoconference: Morgan Rutman. Other Trustees present at meeting location: Don Birx, Jim Dean, Shawn Jasper, Christiana Thornton, and Melinda Treadwell. Other Trustees participating by videoconference: Eric Carter, Emily Coutermarsh, James Gray, Mackenzie Murphy, Peter Paul, and David Westover. Others participating by videoconference: Governor's office representative James Gerry.

Call to Order: At 4:01 pm, Chair Walker called the meeting to order, had the roll called, and noted the presence of a quorum sufficient for the conduct of business.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: On motion made by Trustee Eastwood and seconded by Trustee Green, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of December 15, 2023, as follows:

***VOTED,** that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of December 15, 2023, as presented in the materials of the agenda for this meeting.*

Updates from Campus Presidents: PSU President Don Birx updated the committee on the recent successful Ski Day at PSU, a national championship won by a PSU track athlete. President Birx also shared that PSU's NECHE accreditation process was nearly complete and, based on preliminary feedback from the review team, is expected to yield a positive report and full accreditation.

KSC President Melinda Treadwell shared positive data regarding increased student retention and interest in on-campus dining and housing options. Trustees asked President Treadwell for her opinion on the cause of the improved retention rates, which she credited to enhanced mentorship for new students and KSC's efforts to better target students who would succeed at KSC. President Treadwell also updated the committee on recent athletic successes at KSC.

UNH President Jim Dean presented highlights from his recent "State of the University" address, which included UNH being named the top value public research university in New England, and #7 nationally, and increases in research funding per faculty member and undergraduate graduation rates (with national rankings possible in each category). President Dean also discussed recent visits to Lanza and Fidelity, two leading employers of UNH graduates, as part of UNH's enhanced efforts to

streamline the graduation-to-employment path. Finally, President Dean provided a status update on recent labor organizing efforts on campus.

Update from Chief Administrative Officer: CAO Cathy Provencher noted the presence of new student trustee Eric Carter and welcomed him to the Board. CAO Provencher and Trustee Eastwood then updated the committee on the progress of the gubernatorial task force examining the future alignment of New Hampshire's public higher education entities. The task force has met several times and heard from faculty, former system leaders, and other stakeholders and is beginning to compile thoughts for its forthcoming report. Trustee Eastwood noted discussions had taken place regarding the number of open jobs in the state and the need for USNH to raise awareness of its importance to the state. CAO Provencher noted that the task force faced a difficult challenge in meeting its charge given the relative lack of concrete proposals to date. CAO Provencher and Governor's Office representative James Gerry stated that the task force must confront the question of whether merger between CCSNH and USNH should be part of the long-term plan for public higher education. The task force's report is expected by March 31.

UNH Presidential Search: Trustee Burnett updated the committee on the status of the search for the next President of UNH. He noted that the search remains on pace, with meetings ongoing with the System's search consultants. Placeholder dates (contingent on there being no unexpected delays or issues) for Board interviews with finalists have been set for April 11 and 12.

UNH Budget Reset: President Dean updated the committee on the recent budget reset action at UNH. President Dean noted that UNH had identified a \$13.1 million shortfall that had to be addressed. The shortfall was overcome by a combination of reductions in supplies and services, moving expenditures to grant funding where possible, and reductions in force affecting approximately 70 employees. Nearly all of the affected employees were staff rather than faculty. The reductions in force were challenging for all involved. Decisions were made by unit leaders to reflect the fact that the loss of employees would necessarily lead to a reduction in the number of activities and programs UNH undertakes, and the unit leaders were best placed to decide which activities best contributed to UNH's mission and operating margin. Discussions about which activities to maintain will be ongoing, although no other significant layoffs are expected in the near term.

Adjourn: At 5:35 pm, Chair Walker called for further business and, hearing none, adjourned the meeting.