



**Public Higher Education Task Force
Executive Order 2023-06**

**Final Report
March 27, 2024**

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*Please note that URL information for the Public Higher Education Task Force website is valid as of the report date. All links will remain active for the foreseeable future, but should any link be broken due to re-indexing of the website, original source information is available through the Division of Educator Support and Higher Education at the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Task Force Membership and Executive Order

Public Higher Education Task Force Members:

Stephen Appleby, Chair
M. Jacqueline Eastwood
Senator James Gray
George Hansel
Representative Rick Ladd
Richard Lavers
Butch Locke
Representative David Luneau
Jennifer MacDonald
Cathy Provencher
Mark Rubinstein
Edwin Smith
Nick Toumpas

Task Force Charge:

The Task Force is charged with the following duties pursuant to Executive Order 2023-06:

- I. The Task Force shall:
 - a. Investigate the strategic alignment of the Community College System of New Hampshire, the University System of New Hampshire and the State's anticipated needs for how postsecondary education will drive timely advancements for New Hampshire citizens.
 - b. Conduct meaningful due diligence on identified relevant issues inclusive of exploring and identifying models and methods to:
 - Increase opportunities to raise education attainment levels, in part, to meet workforce needs;
 - Improve accessibility and compatibility for students;
 - Avoid duplication of academic programs, where appropriate, while optimizing access;

- Create potential for economies of scale and synergy;
 - Enhance regional growth and development; and
 - Streamline administrative costs and obligations.
- c. Solicit input from a variety of stakeholders impacted by New Hampshire public higher education to identify strengths and weaknesses measured against current and projected demands and to inform decisions about necessary changes and investments.
- II. The Task Force shall consist of the following:
- a. The Governor, or designee
 - b. The Chancellor of the Community College System of NH
 - c. The Chief Administrative Officer of the University System of NH
 - d. The Commissioner of Education, or designee
 - e. One member of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate
 - f. Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each political party, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
 - g. Two members of the Community College System Board of Trustees, appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees
 - h. Two members of the University System Board of Trustees, appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees
 - i. Two representatives of business and industry, appointed by the Governor
- III. The Governor shall select the Chair of the Task Force from the members of the Task Force.
- IV. Each of the appointed members shall serve until the work of the Task Force is complete or until replaced in accordance with the above.
- V. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

- VI. Task Force members shall perform their duties without additional compensation and shall not be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending meeting of the Task Force.
- VII. The Task Force may, as it deems appropriate, appoint subcommittees for the purpose of examining specific topics within the charge of the Task Force.
- VIII. The first meeting shall occur on or before thirty days after the issuance of this Order and as frequently as the Chair determines thereafter.
- IX. All meetings of the Task Force shall be open to the public and be subject to the requirements of RSA Chapter 91-A.
- X. The Task Force shall provide a report of its findings no later than March 31, 2024.
- XI. The Task Force shall disband and discontinue its charge thirty days after delivery of filing its report of findings, unless such term is extended or modified by subsequent duly issued Executive Order or as otherwise required by law.

Task Force Process and Procedure

A number of prior legislative efforts have been undertaken to examine and improve public higher education in the State of New Hampshire, including the convening of the Public Higher Education Study Committee (RSA 187-A:28-a) to examine higher education concerns and HB 1530 (2022) to establish curricular transfer pathways between CCSNH and USNH. Efforts to address issues in public higher education have identified a number of good ideas, but more deliberate action is needed at this time.

A website was created, noted in Appendix A, to curate references, meeting minutes, staff notes, agendas, and public comment.

The Task Force organized on Thursday, December 21, 2023. The chair of the Task Force is Stephen Appleby, Director of the Division of Educator Support and Higher Education, New Hampshire Department of Education.

The Task Force met 12 times over three months for a total of 56 hours. The following is a review of each meeting. The minutes and notes are available on the Task Force website. A Public Comment session was held at each meeting.

December 21, 2023: The Task Force organized, reviewed the Executive Order, and prepared a meeting schedule. The Task Force heard from CCSNH Chancellor Mark Rubinstein and USNH Vice Chancellor Cathy Provencher on topics related to the current states of enrollment and finances.

January 5, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and discussed approaches to the work and logistics.

January 12, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and heard from Granite Edvance staff on higher education counseling and funding initiatives for college-seeking students.

January 18, 2024: The Task Force convened in Concord for presentations held on behalf of the CCSNH Board of Trustees.

January 19, 2024: The Task Force convened in Concord for presentations held on behalf of the CCSNH Board of Trustees.

January 26, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and heard from stakeholders from CCSNH and USNH (Presidents, Provosts, faculty, and students).

February 2, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and heard from former Chancellors of CCSNH and USNH.

February 23, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and held a publicized Public Comment session from 9am to 11am (no public comment in-person, and one public comment submitted via email) and discussed report recommendations.

March 1, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and discussed edits to the content of the executive summary and organization of short-term and long-term recommendations in the report template.

March 15, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and discussed edits to the content of the executive summary, organization of appendices, and categorization of recommendations in the report template.

March 22, 2024: The Task Force convened at NHED in Concord and discussed edits to the content of the executive summary, organization of appendices, and categorization of recommendations in the report template.

March 27, 2024: The Task Force convened an emergency meeting at NHED in Concord to review and accept that the report accurately reflected the work of the Task Force.

Executive Summary

Under Executive Order 2023-06, a dedicated Task Force was established to review, analyze, and recommend strategic alignments within the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) and the University System of New Hampshire (USNH). This initiative builds on previous efforts to accelerate the pace of change that we recognize is essential to meet the future needs of the students and the state of New Hampshire.

The Task Force heard from various constituent groups that make up New Hampshire's public higher education ecosystem. Through this testimony, two reoccurring themes emerged. First, all CCSNH and USNH campuses are delivering high-quality training and degree programs to students. Second, shifts in demographics and the needs of students, as well as the expectations of employers for a skilled workforce, require our institutions to take bold and immediate steps to work more effectively together.

The Task Force, in its pursuit of immediate and impactful changes, outlined a collaborative blueprint for ensuring alignment of New Hampshire's higher education systems for the current and projected needs of students and the state. Through a combination of immediate initiatives and long-term recommendations, these actions will enhance accessibility, promote efficiency, improve affordability, and prepare New Hampshire's citizens for the future. The Task Force did not have sufficient time to recommend fundamental changes to the structure of the two systems, nor to identify what funding would be needed to implement the initiatives and recommendations noted. These decisions would require deeper analysis and legislative action.

Implementing the recommendations in this report will require continued and intentional work over a longer period of time. The New Hampshire Legislature's Public Higher Education Study Committee, as enhanced by HB1450, should provide a mechanism to continue this work and receive regular status reports on the initiatives and recommendations of this report.

The commitment to fostering a collaborative environment between CCSNH and USNH, engaging with stakeholders, and aligning educational offerings with student preferences and industry needs, underscores the state's dedication to preparing its residents for lifelong learning. A strong public state higher education system is essential for the citizens and organizations of New Hampshire to maximize their individual and collective opportunities. The Task Force strongly recommends that higher education remain a top strategic priority for state leadership and receive adequate resources and investments that allow systems to undertake the recommended work ahead.

While the Task Force was charged with looking at the strategic alignment of the public higher education systems in New Hampshire, any such effort must also address the affordability of higher education for New Hampshire students and families. The alignment between our two systems, in partnership with K-12 education, together with recommendations to increase and accelerate programs providing access to college level learning to more high school students, will enable the systems to better address the needs of stakeholders, drive the state's economy,

and ensure the foundation for a strong democracy.

Workforce development initiatives highlight the importance of aligning educational outcomes with industry needs and leveraging online platforms to expand reach and efficiency. The Task Force recognizes that workforce and economic development are not solely the responsibility of the public higher education systems, but rather a shared responsibility undertaken in the State's best interests utilizing a holistic approach that includes regional partnerships with K-12 education, career and technical schools, adult education, business and industry, and state and local government.

The Task Force's recommendations include coordinated academic program development and delivery, innovative student engagement, streamlined credit transfer processes, and enhanced operational efficiency. These recommendations aim to reduce financial barriers to higher education, making it more accessible to New Hampshire residents to better address the needs of stakeholders, drive the state's economy, and ensure the foundation for an active and engaged citizenry.

Task Force Recommendations

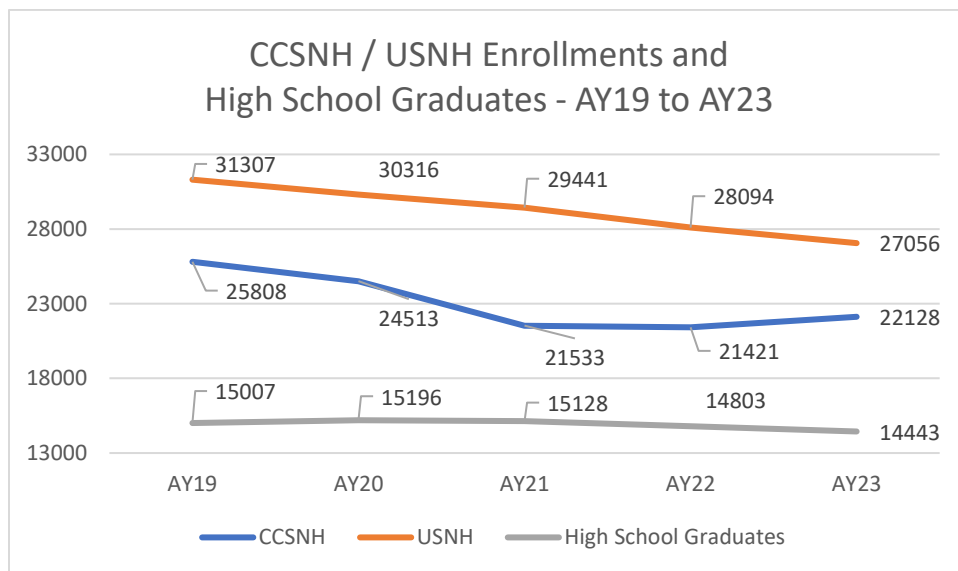
Overview and Findings

New Hampshire is a state of approximately 1.4 million residents with approximately 62% (868,000) being of working age. Each year, approximately 12,500 students graduate from our public K-12 system (with up to several thousand more graduating from other sources), with approximately 60% seeking post-secondary education. The number of high school graduates is projected to decline by an average of 1.5% per year for the next decade. The current figure also reflects a decline of about 25% over the past 20 years. Thirty-nine percent of the state’s population over age 25 holds a bachelor’s degree or higher, leaving 61% of residents who do not hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.

CCSNH has an addressable market within the state not only of high school students and graduates but also hundreds of thousands of state residents who require ongoing education throughout their working careers. In fact, close to two thirds of CCSNH enrollments are age 23 and older.

USNH has an addressable undergraduate market of college-going high school graduates from both New Hampshire and from other states. Approximately 50% of USNH students are from out-of-state, making USNH the largest importer of young talent from outside New Hampshire. In addition, USNH provides graduate level opportunities to students who may need or wish to pursue a credential beyond a bachelor’s degree. These numbers have helped to guide the Task Force in its discussions.

The Task Force would be remiss if it did not establish a sense of urgency relative to this near-term and longer-term work. A brief look at enrollment trends helps to establish this priority:



In the above chart, the enrollment summary data for CCSNH is based on a combination of credit, early-college and workforce. USNH data reflects a combination of all undergraduate and graduate students. High school graduate data reflects a combination of public high schools, public academies, public charters, interstate and nonpublic students.

The Task Force identified three broad themes which encompassed all of its short-term initiatives and long-term recommendations:

- Increase student educational attainment (more students through access and affordability, and K-12 partnerships)
- Administrative efficiencies
- Workforce and Economic Development

Increase Student Educational Attainment

The ability to afford the cost of higher education is cited by many individuals and families as one of the main reasons they do not even seek to apply to a college or university. This coupled with the prospect of facing loan re-payment obligations upon graduation create an attitude of “why even bother” when it comes to considering education after high school. For older adults who may have had some college/university experience and might consider going back to school, even part-time, the question of affordability looms large when other financial obligations are already in place.

We are dealing with a very debt-aware generation fueled by the ballooning costs of higher education over the past several decades. This concern is only going to grow and influence decision-making. This has a tremendous impact on our ability to attract students from both in state and out of state.

Successfully addressing the issue of affordability by keeping costs low and financial aid strong can be a determining factor in enrollment growth and student persistence. The success of the impact of offering low costs for tuition/materials, strong financial aid support, and loan repayment management services depends upon the effective use of the many awareness and access initiatives described in this report.

Awareness of public higher education options in New Hampshire and facilitating access to educational pathways is essential to meeting state workforce challenges. Visibility of programs through marketing efforts alone cannot be expected to provide sufficient impact. It is essential that public higher education awareness begins with enhanced collaboration with K-12 partners. Keeping students in New Hampshire begins with examining feeder options for public higher education, such as dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities, while recognizing the need for cost-effectiveness.

It is important to recognize that keeping New Hampshire students in New Hampshire is only part of the solution to the enrollment issue. Marketing efforts beyond state borders, as well as

touting New Hampshire advantages, provides a means of offsetting student attrition to out-of-state programs.

Examining current admission processes and student supports to streamline public higher education access will ease points of friction students currently experience as they try to navigate various processes – applications and admittance, financial aid, and student services – as they pursue educational opportunities.

Administrative Efficiencies

The public higher education campuses and centers are special resources of the State of New Hampshire. They deliver highly respected accredited academic programs to every region of the state and enjoy the support and affection of today's citizenry and of the generations of alumni and friends served in years past. Our well-educated citizenry is the foundation of our vibrant economy and enhances the cultural, spiritual, and intellectual fabric of our communities. This resource requires stewardship and forward-looking vision to ensure that the strategic and efficient deployment of these resources are aligned to meet the educational and workforce needs of our state.

Within the distinctive missions of CCSNH and USNH there are opportunities for collaboration and alignment that can achieve efficiencies of operations, avoid unnecessary duplication of programs and services, and enhance affordable access to higher education for all.

The alignment of effort also requires the engagement of other New Hampshire organizations and agencies such as the public schools, childcare services, the data services of our state, business and industry leaders, and health care services. Public education is not an island - it needs partners to achieve its full potential.

Alignment of educational organizations present significant challenges and, as we have learned from the experiences of other states, must be approached with patience and discipline. Significant alignments tend to emerge organically following a natural progression of cooperative and collaborative successes.

There are abundant opportunities to examine deliberate academic program development and delivery efforts for the sake of optimizing program offerings for New Hampshire students. It is important to ensure that students have access to the appropriate public higher education institutions for their unique needs and circumstances, and to have the opportunity to seamlessly change programs and schools, should those needs or circumstances change.

Examining curricular alignment and course transferability will help to keep public higher education pathways open to students, keep programs affordable, prevent loss of credit, and provide credit opportunities for experiential learning. Supplementing course transferability through admission processes that break down barriers between the systems of acceptance of

students graduating and transferring is essential to retaining students and supporting them through graduation.

Public higher education in New Hampshire also stands to gain significant enrollment benefit through targeted efforts to improve online program offerings and online course delivery. Online options provide much-needed flexibility to students, and online course offerings support educational attainment for working professionals, which in turn presents online programs as attractive opportunities for diverse learners with unique needs.

Workforce and Economic Development

Strong, vibrant, and sustained workforce development initiatives responsive to the education and training needs of New Hampshire's employers, public and private, are an essential responsibility of the state's public higher education enterprise.

The establishment of active and ongoing statewide and/or regional groups to assess needs, coordinate resources, support training initiatives, and measure results will ensure an effective workforce development program for the state.

The identification of labor sector demand, employer needs for training, and projected areas of job growth are central to a responsive and effective workforce development initiative.

Given the regional differences in the state's business communities, workforce initiatives must be tailored to these distinctive regional needs.

The following sections summarize short-term initiatives and long-term recommendations, and are non-prioritized lists arranged alphabetically. It should be noted that short-term and long-term categorization is not based on time, but instead divides the tasks into those that the systems can immediately begin or fully undertake on their own versus tasks that will require legislative, accreditor, or other external approval for implementation.

Short-Term Initiatives

- Admissions Process – streamline acceptance processes to proactively accept CCSNH students with a predetermined GPA at USNH schools. Also, explore automatic acceptance of New Hampshire high school students at CCSNH as well as early and often notification.
- Broadly publicize current workforce training opportunities already available through CCSNH and USNH, and place an emphasis on building a true, coordinated workforce non-credit training organization.
- Co-locate the CCSNH and USNH system offices in shared working space to foster the streamlining and coordination of common administrative functions to reduce duplication and improve efficiency. This could include both student-facing services as well as more backroom operational areas such as budget and finance, human resources, and facilities management.
- Common Admission – utilize consistent admission and financial aid processes for students for both systems and eliminate customer service friction points for students from application through program completion. Examine survey tools and survey data from students related to why institutions were chosen, and why students opted to transfer or withdraw – are the right survey tools being utilized, and/or the right questions being asked?
- Coordinate the use of outreach to schools and families via the Trio, Granite Edvance, Gear-up, and the Program Promise – Granite Guarantee programs.
- Develop 3-year bachelor's degree programs, including online delivery, to raise the level of educational attainment and to make bachelor level degrees more affordable. This initiative will ultimately require accreditor approval but will also require significant pre-work to prepare for approval, hence its inclusion as both a short-term initiative and long-term recommendation.
- Develop short term training and certification programs, as well as changes to course design to better align traditional academic programs with business demand. This represents a commitment to maintaining awareness of needs and trends, and to focus on economic growth.
- Engage the business communities in the state with a systematic and continuous set of dialogues between industry and the two public higher education systems, using NH state workforce and demographic data and industry data to determine areas of projected job growth and need. Solicit employer ideas to help reimagine higher education/training in those areas. The goal is to listen to the workforce needs and segment responses by region

and demography, utilizing the Collaborative Economic Development Regions (CEDRs) with key New Hampshire industries such as:

- Healthcare
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Tourism / Hospitality
- Education
- Science and Technology
- Ad-hoc as needed

These groups would support the initiatives and financial sustainability of New Hampshire public higher education sufficient to provide students opportunities that correspond to workforce needs and that bolster economic competitive, civic, and cultural strength throughout the State and our local communities.

- Enhance and expand CCSNH's early college (dual-enrollment) initiatives to give students an attractive pathway to post-secondary education, thus reducing costs and debt burdens.
- Establish a centralized workforce development point of contact for CCSNH and USNH. This would be the conduit for any outreach events, training development and employment opportunities, and give businesses a single point of contact.
- Examine space utilization in the CCSNH and USNH systems to identify partnership opportunities (buildings/ campuses) for delivering academic programs and services.
 - River Valley Community College (RVCC) and Keene State College (KSC)
 - Great Bay Community College (GBCC) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH)
 - USNH and New Hampshire Technical Institute (NHTI)
 - Could USNH completion programs be delivered on CCSNH campuses? Likewise, could CCSNH bring over some of its programs, particularly in Keene and Plymouth?
- Facilities - evaluate opportunities to co-locate state agencies or projects on CCSNH and USNH campuses, particularly in those instances where there is alignment between populations served and the educational opportunities. There are already some examples involving New Hampshire Employment Security (NHES) and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) partnering with CCSNH in this manner.
- Give special attention to the workforce needs of the state's health care system, which is experiencing immediate worker shortages in a wide range of occupations. Establish a focused working group to develop a plan to meet these needs.
- Implement a common platform for supporting transfer equivalencies, including experiential and workplace-based learning and industry-recognized credentials, to support efficient navigation for students.

- Expand the use of online delivery to support access to learning opportunities for working adults, coupled with campus/educational center locations to support hybrid programs and services. A goal should be to deliver training online or to anyone within a 30-minute drive of their home to effectively bring workforce training to individuals at convenient times and locations.
- Model and calculate what resources would be needed to offer a “last dollar in” program of free tuition at CCSNH institutions. Use the same name, The Granite Guarantee, for all levels of public education and promote essentially no-cost college/university tuition for PELL eligible New Hampshire students.
- Partnerships – K-12, CCSNH, USNH, and Granite Edvance - Establish intentional and ongoing partnerships between K-12 (including career and technical education), CCSNH and USNH to include specific and measurable goals and outcomes that will continue and change as needed. Collaborate with Granite Edvance and other organizations to implement a statewide training program for New Hampshire high school principals and guidance counselors regarding USNH and CCSNH offerings as a state-funded initiative. Strengthen the engagement of middle and high school students, families, and guidance counselors, alongside industry, to promote public higher education in New Hampshire and increase uptake of cost-saving opportunities that lead to careers [e.g., early college (dual enrollment), financial aid availability for lower income students, credit transfer to USNH, and certifications in CTEs].
- Program Development – develop graduate programs at Keene State College, as well as expand graduate programs (including online options) at Plymouth State University.
- Provide a mechanism to evaluate whether high school students taking advantage of early college use the credits earned to further their education at CCSNH and USNH. A National Student Clearinghouse subscription could provide an opportunity to determine whether secondary students are using their dual and concurrent enrollments to attend New Hampshire institutions.
- Recruit employers to assist graduates with loan repayments when they begin working in “member” companies and organizations.
- Sponsor workplace-based learning to earn industry recognized certificates and credentials.
- Transfer Credit and Curricular Alignment – Evaluate curriculum for credit transfers and expand credit opportunities for experiential work along with an aggressive expansion of dual enrollment and focus on the 25–44-year-old demographic to counter enrollment decline. Focus needs to balance streamlining expense while also looking for new revenue

opportunities by creating new options, including online delivery, for those wanting or needing education.

- Unified Accreditation – begin with the implementation of NECHE accreditation for CCSNH as a single, statewide college with locations throughout the state (unified accreditation) and evaluate whether changes to USNH accreditation would be beneficial.
- Use Open Educational Resources (OER) to lower the cost of course materials and textbooks to lower overall costs for students.

Long-Term Recommendations

- Analyze the physical assets and program utilization across both systems on an ongoing basis. This should include space utilization and the potential to share facilities. System offices should continue working to eliminate redundancy and inefficient use of physical resources.
- At the State level, explore opportunities to alleviate dependent care responsibilities and enable more working age New Hampshire adults to pursue additional educational attainment and enter the workforce (e.g. comprehensive pre-K, elder care programming).
- Community Engagement Projects – CCSNH and USNH partnering with K-12 – Increase collaboration in New Hampshire between public higher education and local communities: Expand community engagement efforts by USNH and CCSNH working alongside the K-12 public education system, business and industry, and state government in communities throughout the state to collaborate on community engagement projects and initiatives.
- Create a centralized online support group and investigate initiatives to meet student needs, including developing a multi-lingual capability for some markets, and a freshman year online option for USNH at a reduced tuition cost.
- Expand student support programs for first-generation college seekers - These programs have a far-reaching impact, allowing first-generation students onto campus earlier than other students before the school year starts; helping them select courses and providing them with mentors to be able to discuss problems and ideas and helping to keep them enrolled and be successful. Currently, these programs are available on some campuses utilizing federal funding, but it is not clear whether these programs are available on all campuses.
- Explore offering CCSNH courses and programs, including those that might duplicate USNH offerings, on USNH campuses, as well as offering USNH courses and programs (including bachelor's degree completion opportunities - similar to what PSU has done with Education in Berlin) on CCSNH campuses.
- Implement a common Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform.
- Improve ability to transfer from CCSNH to USNH - Upon completion of HB1530 requirements, commit to a continued review of credit transfer pathways each year, with priorities informed by State workforce needs, industry input, and revenue opportunities, with a goal of seamless credit transfer between systems.
- Inter-system and intra-system coordination of scheduling done to achieve effective, coordinated delivery of instruction and full transferability.

- Investigate efficacy of tuition freezes in driving enrollments and determine if there is a cost benefit to freezing tuition.
- Legislation to provide seed capital to companies that license UNH research (noted in the 2019 Public Higher Education Study Committee report).
- Leverage emerging artificial intelligence (AI) to achieve cost savings and improved services.
- Marketing (including a deliberate branding strategy for each system and settling upon a common “Guarantee” program that is the same at each system) – Coordinate messaging to the citizenry of the value of higher education, with thematic marketing efforts between CCSNH and USNH to market the experience of higher education in New Hampshire to New Hampshire students, and to recruit out-of-state students, informed by industry needs. Strengthen the Running Start program and keep it relevant to reduce the price of public higher education and increase opportunities for educational attainment for those who take advantage of the program.
- Study the possibility of having the two systems under one governing board and one chancellor, recognizing there are both disparate and common missions. This will provide many opportunities for sharing a multitude of functions that are provided by both systems, as well as alignment in delivering post-secondary credentials and degrees to benefit our students, the workforce, the economy, and New Hampshire quality of life.
- The need to change and redesign the future of public higher education is clear and will require the State policy makers as partners. Given the biennial budget and legislative process, a rolling six-year plan updated every two years is recommended. The first two years of the plan would tie to the biennial budget process. Years three and four, become less detailed and offer the legislature a view beyond the two-year funding. Thereafter, a more strategic view using an environmental scan to continuously monitor and assess implications of things that may present challenges.

Reporting and Assessing Progress

To ensure the action-oriented intent of this report remains intact, the Task Force recommends an ongoing assessment of alignment strategies and continued collaborative work around the recommendations presented. The Task Force unanimously recommends the language of the HB 1450 (2024) draft below, current as of the date of the report with the understanding that the final version of HB 1450 may differ, including regular quarterly and annual reporting from CCSNH and USNH, along with specific guidance for focused efforts in collaborative areas, including:

- Increasing opportunities to raise education attainment levels, in part to meet workforce needs
- Improving accessibility and compatibility for New Hampshire students
- Minimizing duplication and compatibility for New Hampshire students
- Enhancing regional growth and development
- Streamlining administrative costs and obligations

There are opportunities for pilot projects that have been outlined in the recommendations of this report, and the Task Force recommends that these pilot efforts be looked at regularly and systematically in order to continue to expand enrollment, decrease system expenses, and address New Hampshire workforce needs. The chancellors will prioritize the items recommended and develop proposed budgets for the initiatives and recommendations.

HB 1450 as amended by 2024-0964h

Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

AN ACT _____ requiring the university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire to further work toward implementing comprehensive higher education alignment strategies and findings identified in the governor’s public higher education task force report.

Amend the bill by replacing all after the enacting clause with the following:

- 1 New Section; Public Higher Education Strategic Alignment. Amend RSA 187-A by inserting after section 28-d the following new section:

187-A:28-e Public Higher Education Strategic Alignment.

The university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire shall consider and work collaboratively toward the implementation of strategies identified in the report of the public higher education task force, established by Executive Order 2023-06, as necessary to successfully meet projected demands for

New Hampshire higher education.

I. The university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire shall, in accordance with findings identified in the public higher education task force report, develop and implement system-wide higher education alignment strategies to:

- (a) Increase opportunities to raise education attainment levels, in part to meet workforce needs;
- (b) Improve accessibility and compatibility for New Hampshire students;
- (c) Minimize duplication of academic programs as appropriate while optimizing access for students;
- (d) Create potential for economies of scale and synergy;
- (e) Enhance regional growth and development;
- (f) Streamline administrative costs and obligations; and
- (g) Continue collaborative work establishing curricular pathways for the transfer of program and degree credit across institutions in the 2 systems pursuant to RSA 187-A:16-c and RSA 188-F:6-a.

II. The board of trustees of the university system of New Hampshire and the board of trustees of the community college system of New Hampshire are encouraged to collaboratively develop and implement pilot projects to align administrative functions under guidance, monitoring, and legislative oversight of the public higher education study committee established pursuant to RSA 187-A:28-a. The public higher education study shall include technical support from the director of higher education, New Hampshire department of education, who shall serve as a non-voting committee member.

III. The chancellors of the university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire shall submit joint quarterly progress reports, addressing higher education strategic alignment outcomes, to the public higher education study committee beginning with the calendar quarter ending June 30, 2024, or as requested by the committee. Beginning November 1, 2024, and each November 1 thereafter, the chancellors shall submit an annual report regarding implementation of comprehensive higher education alignment strategies and findings to the governor and council, the senate finance and education committees, the house finance and education committees, the board of trustees of the university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire, and the commissioner of the department of education.

2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill directs the university system of New Hampshire and the community college system of New Hampshire to work collaboratively toward implementation of the comprehensive higher education alignment strategies identified in the report of the public higher education task force, established in Executive Order 2023-06.

Appendix A – Executive Order Initiatives and Recommendations Matrix

The Executive Order Matrix categorizes the specific recommendations of the Task Force and links the recommendations to the Executive Order. The recommendations are designated as short-term initiatives and long-term recommendations based on whether the individual recommendations would require legislative changes or have an accreditation impact.

Task Force Initiatives and Recommendations	Executive Order Link
<p>Short-Term Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission Process – streamline acceptance processes to proactively accept CCSNH students with a predetermined GPA to USNH schools, and notification of automatic acceptance to CCSNH for high school students. • Broadly publicize current workforce training opportunities • Co-locate the CCSNH and USNH system offices in shared working space to foster the streamlining and coordination of common administrative functions. • Common Admission – utilize consistent admission and financial aid processes for students for both systems and eliminate customer service points. • Coordinate the use of outreach to schools and families using Trio, Gear-up and other techniques. • Develop and launch a 3-year bachelor’s degree program. • Develop short-term training and certification programs. • Engage the business communities in the state with a systematic and continuous set of dialogues between industry and the two public higher education systems. • Enhance and expand early college and other dual enrollment initiatives. 	<p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Alignment</p> <p>Access</p> <p>Access/Attainment</p> <p>Attainment</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Attainment/Workforce</p> <p>Access</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a centralized workforce development point of contact for CCSNH and USNH. • Examine space utilization in the CCSNH and USNH systems to identify partnership opportunities (buildings/campuses). • Facilities – evaluate opportunities to co-locate state agency or projects on CCSNH and USNH campuses. • Give special attention to the workforce needs of the state’s health care system. • Increase access to dual/concurrent enrollment. • Increase the use of online delivery to provide access to workforce opportunities. • Model and calculate what resources would be necessary to offer a “last dollar in” program of free tuition to CCSNH institutions. • Partnerships – K-12, CCSNH, USNH and Granite Edvance to promote public higher education in New Hampshire. • Program Development – Develop graduate programs at Keene State College and expand graduate programs at Plymouth State. • Recruit employers to assist graduates with loan repayments when they begin working. • Sponsor workplace-based learning to earn industry recognized certificates and credentials. • Transfer credit and curricular alignment. Evaluate curriculum for credit transfers and expand credit opportunities for experiential work. • Under joint leadership of CCSNH, USNH, and industry partners, establish statewide and/or regional advisory boards to include K-12, CCSNH, USNH and other workforce related organizations. 	<p>Workforce</p> <p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Access</p> <p>Access/Workforce</p> <p>Access/Affordability</p> <p>Marketing/Access</p> <p>Attainment</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Workforce</p> <p>Access/Attainment</p> <p>Workforce</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unified Accreditation – begin with the implementation of NECHE accreditation for CCSNH as a single statewide college with locations throughout the state and evaluate whether changes to USNH accreditation would be of benefit. • Use Open Solution Resources (OER) to lower the cost of course materials and textbooks. • Utilize the Joint House and Senate Public Higher Education Study Committee to monitor the progress on the initiatives and recommendations in this report and to permit the longer-term study of alignment for the CCSNH and USNH. 	<p>Alignment</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Assessment of Progress</p>
<p>Long-Term Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze physical assets and program utilization across both systems for space utilization and the potential for shared facilities. • At the state level, explore opportunities to alleviate dependent care responsibilities to enable more working age adults to pursue educational opportunities. • Community Engagement projects for increased collaboration. • Eliminate institutional competition through program duplication where duplicate programs are not needed. • Expand student support programs for first generation college students. • Expand online offerings and potential consolidation to a single platform across both systems. • Examine offering CCSNH courses and programs, including those that might duplicate USNH offerings, on USNH campuses, and whether USNH can offer their courses and programs on CCSNH campuses, like what PSU has done with programs at WMCC in Berlin. 	<p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Access/Affordability</p> <p>Awareness/Access</p> <p>Alignment</p> <p>Access/Attainment</p> <p>Alignment/Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Administrative Efficiency/Attainment</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a common Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform. • Improve ability to transfer from CCSNH to USNH building upon HB1530 initiatives. • Coordinate Inter-system and intra-system scheduling done to achieve effective coordinated delivery of instruction and transferability. • Investigate the efficiency of tuition freezes in driving enrollments. • Legislation to provide seed capital to companies that license UNH research. (from 2019 report). • Leverage emerging artificial intelligence (AI) to achieve cost saving and improved services. • Coordinate marketing messaging where appropriate. • Study having the two systems under one governing board and one chancellor. • Develop a rolling six-year plan, updated every two years to align with the biennial budget and the legislative process. 	<p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Access</p> <p>Access/Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Access/Affordability</p> <p>Alignment</p> <p>Administrative Efficiency</p> <p>Alignment</p> <p>Alignment</p> <p>Assessment of Progress</p>
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Appendix B – Website – PHE-TF

Public Higher Education Task Force – Main Page

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-educator-support-and-higher-education/public-higher-education-task-force>

Executive Order 2023-06

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt336/files/documents/executive-order-2023-06.pdf>

Task Force Members

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-educator-support-and-higher-education/public-higher-education-task-force/public-higher-education-task-force-members>

Meetings, Minutes and Agendas

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-educator-support-and-higher-education/public-higher-education-task-force/public-higher-education-task-force-meetings>

Resources

<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-educator-support-and-higher-education/public-higher-education-task-force/public-higher-education-task-force-resources>

Appendix C – Current System Initiatives - CCSNH

Prepared by CCSNH at the request of the Public Higher Education Task Force

CCSNH specific initiatives

1. The CCSNH Board of Trustees has authorized the System to initiate discussions with State policymakers, the US Department of Education, and the New England Commission on Higher Education to develop a roadmap to support accreditation of CCSNH as a single, statewide community college, maintaining its presence throughout New Hampshire, but enabling more seamless access to high-quality educational programs and services for students and more efficient operations.
2. CCSNH initiated integration of IT as a systemwide function in 2023 and is continuing to evolve that organization, enhancing user experience and the more efficient allocation of resources to support growing demands for cybersecurity and service. The CCSNH Board of Trustees has approved the identification of additional opportunities for systemwide administrative integrations to support more seamless experiences for students and for achieving efficiencies to support investments that enhance learning outcomes.
3. Focusing on the alignment between the needs of learners and CCSNH's unique attributes, the System has identified expansion of our early college programs and our efforts to support adult learners as two key systemwide initiatives for the future. Integral to the latter, but contributing to the efficacy of both of these efforts, will be investments made to strengthen the quality and scope of services to support online learning and those that help to ensure alignment between our curricula and the expectations of employers and other stakeholders who rely on our graduates.

Appendix D – Current System Initiatives - USNH

Prepared by USNH at the request of the Public Higher Education Task Force
USNH Initiatives to Address Changes in Higher Education

USNH has been tackling changes in the higher education landscape for years. Below are examples of ongoing initiatives with the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH), and some specific to USNH. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Initiatives with CCSNH

1. Transfer pathways between CCSNH and USNH: While there were hundreds of specific campus articulation agreements between CCSNH and USNH institutions in effect, the work initiated in response to HB 1530 has been focused and intentional to have clear universal pathways for the top thirty majors CCSNH students could follow in support of New Hampshire workforce needs. This phase of work should be effectively complete by June 30, 2024, but ongoing partnerships and pathways between the two systems will continue beyond what is required by HB 1530. A beneficial outcome from the HB 1530 work has been regular bimonthly meetings with USNH provosts and CCSNH Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs which serve to break down barriers.
2. With the support of a Mellon foundation grant, Humanities faculty have been collaborating on humanities course offerings between CCSNH and UNH. In March 2024, we will include KSC and PSU in those faculty discussions as we prepare for the next Mellon grant submission.
3. Sharing of space:
 - a. System office: The USNH system office is working with NHTI to move its office in February of 2025 when the USNH lease at 5 Chenell Drive expires. A team from USNH and CCSNH has met and plans to do walkthroughs at NHTI on March 12, 2024. While this will require some one-time fit up investment by USNH, it is estimated this will save USNH ~\$250,000 annually. Also, it will increase collaboration between the two systems.
 - b. RVCC at Keene State: River Valley Community College has a location on the Keene State campus.
4. The two systems coordinate on many government relations issues when addressing state and federal legislation that impacts higher education.
5. Procurement:

a. Current Joint Contracts:

- Zoom – expiring in 2024
- Kaltura – expiring in 2024 – currently working together on a joint renewal
- Canvas – expiring in 2024 – currently working together on a joint renewal
- RVCC Keene building lease – current lease expires 6/30/24 – been working with the RVCC team on putting together a new lease document and extension
- USNH Wide Area Network Service
- USNH Data Center Service
- USNH PIRC Centralized Climate Survey Data Collection

b. Vendors we have worked with together but have separate contracts:

- ATI (negotiated pricing together) – renewed in 2023 and discussed renewals for USNH and CCSNH together – we were able to negotiate out the 18% cost increase originally proposed to both entities
- UPS (determined Sourcwell contract was best value) – both were using a NASPO/UPS agreement prior to UPS terminating that agreement – parties worked together on analysis to determine best go forward consortium contract
- Hire Right (CCSNH leveraged existing relationship) – USNH pointed CCSNH to USNH current supplier and made the connection for CCSNH to leverage the USNH relationship – no impact to USNH contract
- LinkedIn Learning (CCSNH leveraged existing relationship) - USNH pointed CCSNH to USNH current supplier and made the connection for CCSNH to leverage the USNH relationship – no impact to USNH contract

c. Opportunities Discussed, but alignment was not possible then for distinct reasons. The two systems continue to align contract expiration dates where possible:

- Garbage - Waste Management
- Bookstore - Barnes and Noble
- Food Service - Chartwells
- Moving services
- Vehicle purchasing

6. Outreach and Enrollment Center (OEC): The OEC was founded eight years ago by the USNH. Its mission is to perform outreach and to receive inbound inquiries with the primary goal to secure students in the right seats and to retain them through graduation across USNH and CCSNH institutions based on projects requested by those institutions.

Funded by USNH, the OEC is a first stop for CCSNH transfer applications and is designed to surround all students with resources and services at critical points in their decision processes, application and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) submittal, and forward throughout their associate or bachelor experiences. Team members reach out through call, text, email or with voicemail drops to provide timely and critical information that assists with open houses, FAFSA sessions, registration pushes, first generation resources, outreach to alumni, parents, inbound inquiries, and provides check ins with new students during critical periods of stress and as they navigate their first few weeks as enrolled members of their communities. Securing students requires investment in marketing, advertising, and advising to attract a student to CCSNH and USNH.

USNH specific initiatives

1. WorkDay/ERP Implementation: USNH is implementing a new Enterprise Resource Planning system to take advantage of current technology. The Finance and Human Resources components will go live in December of 2024. The student information system (SIS) is currently in the design and planning stage and is scheduled for go-live in 2027. This new system will provide USNH with consistent business processes and data definitions across the enterprise. It will also allow USNH to leverage technology to automate many manual and inefficient processes that exist.
2. Restructure of back office administrative work: Starting in 2020, USNH restructured many transactional business processes and administrative functions under shared services. (Note: prior to this initiative there were already shared general counsel, treasury, debt, risk/insurance, internal audit and more.) The restructuring was done as a cost savings measure as well as to prepare USNH for the WorkDay implementation. Examples include enterprise technology, human resources, accounts payable, accounting, travel and expense reimbursement, PCI compliance, procurement and more. Student-facing shared services will be included as part of WorkDay Student Information System (SIS) design.
3. Academic program assessment: The provosts from the three USNH institutions, who make up the Provost Council, undertook significant work to assess academic program overlap across the system. The addition of academic programs at any USNH institution is now shared with, discussed, and approved by the Provost Council. Eighteen universal programs were identified which had strong enrollment on all campuses. Other programs are being evaluated with an eye toward minimizing under-enrolled classes and maximizing student opportunities across the system.

As a model for the future of system collaboration, the Provosts Council meets monthly to discuss shared issues of student retention and success. Recently, they established

the Education Program Advisory Committee (EPAC). This brings together education faculty across Keene, Plymouth, UNH, and College of Professional Studies (CPS) online faculty leadership to optimize collaboration in support of teacher education and licensure across the state.

4. Retention efforts: All three USNH institutions have implemented programs and initiatives to increase retention of students through graduation. This serves to benefit students through completion and improve revenue performance. All institutions are seeing improved retention rates, and all three campuses now exceed national averages.
5. Facilities planning: USNH will have a system wide facilities master plan complete in June 2024. This will inform us how best to deploy capital investments to optimize our campus's performance and plan for future needs. USNH budgets approximately \$55 million of its own resources on capital investments/deferred maintenance each year, exclusive of state capital funding and gifts. In addition to the master plan initiative, USNH has demolished buildings at KSC that are no longer needed, is consolidating or eliminating leases, and is selling property where appropriate (the former Granite State College building in Concord is the most current example.)
6. Multi-year financial planning: Each year USNH models multi-year financial projections using various assumptions including, but not limited to, enrollment, financial aid, cost increases to evaluate future financial gaps and to identify strategies to fill those gaps. It then tests those assumptions against actual performance for the next round of modeling.
7. Executive councils: USNH has executive councils that meet monthly and are made up of the functional leaders from the three institutions and the system office. These councils serve to ensure there is a sharing of information across the system. Executive Councils include Academic Excellence/Provosts, Finance/CFOs, Human Resources, Student Affairs, Communications, and Technology.

Appendix E – Possible Shared Functions of CCSNH and USNH

Below are possible functions that USNH and CCSNH could share, subject to more comprehensive evaluation of these opportunities and the development of project plans that account for resources, timeline, policies, practices, and staffing (in no particular order).

Many of the functions below would require technology changes to align the systems. Without more work and analysis, it is not possible at this time to estimate what cost savings might be achieved, if any. Of note, some of the items below do not have consistent business processes and policies within each system and would require time for analysis and adaptation.

1. IT
2. Payroll
3. Treasury & banking
4. Accounts payable, accounts receivable
5. Accounting and financial reporting
6. Financial planning and analysis
7. Endowment investing and reporting
8. Tax
9. PCI compliance
10. Internal and external audit (including federal uniform guidance)
11. Title IX
12. Institutional research
13. Procurement
14. Government relations
15. General counsel
16. Conduct/due process
17. Risk Management
18. Campus Safety
19. Capital planning and facilities management
20. Environmental health & safety
21. Labor contract management and negotiations
22. HR functions such as onboarding, recruiting, benefits management
23. Shared office space
24. Financial aid expertise
25. Student billing
26. Some academic program delivery
27. Shared campus space
28. Pre- and post-compliance on sponsored programs