



## STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU  
Governor

March 28, 2024

Dear Members of House and Senate Leadership,

I am pleased to provide you with the report issued by the Public Higher Education Task Force established by Executive Order 2023-06 to study the strategic alignment of public higher education in New Hampshire. My primary goal in issuing this executive order was to accelerate the conversation around the future of public higher education in New Hampshire. We are fortunate to have excellent institutions here in the Granite State with both the University System of New Hampshire and the Community College System of New Hampshire. However, there are clear obstacles faced by higher education both regionally and nationally and it is critical that New Hampshire faces these challenges head on.

Affordability of a college education is top of mind for students and families. Smart and strategic alignment within our public higher education systems can deliver a better, more convenient, and yes, more affordable education for those students and workers looking to continue their education beyond high school. Traditionally, discussions about alignment have been limited to administrative functions but by encouraging shared spaces, shared delivery systems, and shared workforce, alignment in these institutions will continue to grow organically and will spread across academic pathways and academic delivery.

This drive to make public higher education more affordable to our students and families does not start and stop with our higher education systems. As recommended in this report, we need start this effort before college by expanding the college credits available to our state's high schools. This will increase educational accessibility for more students and families. This type of strategic partnership between public higher education and K-12 education will improve access, affordability, and attainment as well as making opportunity more equitable.

Expanding convenience in how public higher education is available and accessed is imperative to be able to attract the students of tomorrow. While our public higher education systems should never sacrifice academic quality in the name of convenience, expanding our online educational offerings throughout public higher education, while maintaining high expectations around educational quality, is a necessity for future growth. Such convenience is being demanded by our students and needs to grow at a much faster pace.

The Task Force's recommendations recognize that alignment not only needs to start before college but also needs to stretch beyond the walls of our public higher education institutions. Business, industry, and our state workforce partners like Business and Economic Affairs and Employment Security need to further develop, expand, and sustain partnerships with public higher education. These partnerships will help ensure the educational pathways being

institutions. Business, industry, and our state workforce partners like Business and Economic Affairs and Employment Security need to further develop, expand, and sustain partnerships with public higher education. These partnerships will help ensure the educational pathways being offered, do in fact open doors to current in demand employment. Maintaining workforce relevancy of our public higher education curriculum requires active engagement by all these partners, not only at the state level but within each region of the state.

I continue to be proud of the work done by the University System of New Hampshire and the Community College System of New Hampshire. The work done by this Task Force, albeit over a relatively brief period, was intense and focused. I thank each member for their time, effort, and commitment to this task. The recommendations contained in this report provide a blueprint for the Legislature, the respective Boards of Trustees at these institutions, and future governors to make sure New Hampshire's public higher education system continues to be accessible and affordable for our students and families; provides opportunities for educational attainment for all our citizens; and prepares our students for the jobs of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu  
Governor