



General Assembly

January Session, 2007

**Raised Bill No. 7272**

LCO No. 4781

\*04781\_\_\_\_\_HED\*

Referred to Committee on Higher Education and Employment  
Advancement

Introduced by:  
(HED)

**AN ACT CONCERNING A STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER  
EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General  
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2007) (a) There is established a  
2 Blue Ribbon Commission to develop and implement a strategic master  
3 plan for higher education in Connecticut.

4 (1) The commission shall consist of the following members: (A) Two  
5 members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives  
6 who shall have experience as former faculty members or  
7 administrators in independent institutions of higher education in this  
8 state; (B) two members appointed by the president pro tempore of the  
9 Senate, one of whom shall be a former faculty member or  
10 administrator of a regional community-technical college and one of  
11 whom shall be a former faculty member or administrator of The  
12 University of Connecticut or a state university in the Connecticut State  
13 University system; (C) one member appointed by the majority leader  
14 of the House of Representatives who shall have experience in the field  
15 of education from prekindergarten to grade twelve, inclusive; (D) one

16 member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate who shall have  
17 experience in the field of arts and culture; (E) one member appointed  
18 by the minority leader of the House of Representatives who shall have  
19 knowledge and expertise in science and technology; (F) one member  
20 appointed by the minority leader of the Senate who shall represent a  
21 state-wide business organization; and (G) one member appointed by  
22 the Governor who shall represent a nonprofit education foundation.

23 (2) The following persons shall serve as ex-officio nonvoting  
24 members on the commission: (A) The Commissioners of Higher  
25 Education, Education, Economic and Community Development, and  
26 the Labor Commissioner, or their designees; (B) the chairpersons of the  
27 boards of trustees and the chief executive officers of each constituent  
28 unit of the state system of higher education, or their designees; (C) the  
29 director of the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, or the director's  
30 designee; and (D) the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint  
31 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
32 matters relating to higher education and employment advancement.  
33 The commission shall elect a chairperson at its first meeting. Any  
34 vacancies shall be filled by the appointing authority. The commission  
35 members shall serve without compensation except for expenses  
36 incurred. The committee may seek the advice and participation of any  
37 person, organization or state or federal agency it deems necessary to  
38 carry out the provisions of this section. The commission may, within  
39 available appropriations, retain consultants to assist in carrying out its  
40 duties.

41 (b) The overall goals of the commission shall be to address the role  
42 of higher education in (A) ensuring equal access and opportunity to  
43 post-secondary education for all state residents, (B) promoting student  
44 success, including student performance, retention and graduation, (C)  
45 promoting economic competitiveness in the state, and (D) improving  
46 access to higher education for minorities and nontraditional students,  
47 including, but not limited to, part-time students, incumbent workers,  
48 older students and immigrants.

49 (c) The commission shall:

50 (1) Examine education, demographics and workforce trends in  
51 Connecticut;

52 (2) Address the problems identified in demographic forecasts,  
53 including, but not limited to, the decrease in the number of young  
54 people in the state earning a bachelor's degree, the decrease in the  
55 number of young people entering the state's workforce and the  
56 increasingly widening achievement gap among minority students;

57 (3) Develop a strategic master plan for higher education that  
58 identifies specific short-term and long-term goals for the state and  
59 includes benchmarks for achieving those goals by 2010, 2015 and 2020;

60 (4) Examine funding policies for higher education including  
61 coordination of tuition, financial aid and appropriations and seek ways  
62 to maximize funding through federal and private grants; and

63 (5) Submit a biennium report prepared by the Department of Higher  
64 Education to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress  
65 made toward achieving the benchmarks established in the strategic  
66 plan.

67 (d) In developing the strategic master plan, the commission shall  
68 review the plans pursuant to sections 10a-6 and 10a-11 of the general  
69 statutes and the report titled "New England 2020: A Forecast of  
70 Educational Attainment and its Implications for the Workforce of New  
71 England States" prepared by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. In  
72 addition, the commission may consider the following: (1) Establishing  
73 incentives for institutional performance and productivity; (2)  
74 increasing financial aid incentive programs, especially in workforce  
75 shortage areas and for minority students; (3) implementing mandatory  
76 college preparatory curricula in high schools; (4) seeking partnerships  
77 with the business community and public institutions of higher  
78 education to serve the needs of workforce retraining that may include

79 bridge programs in which businesses work directly with higher  
80 education institutions to move students into identified workforce  
81 shortage areas; (5) establishing collaborative partnerships between  
82 public high schools and institutions of higher education; (6)  
83 implementing programs in high school to assist high school students  
84 seeking a college track or alternative pathways for post-secondary  
85 educations, such as vocational and technical opportunities; (7)  
86 developing policies to promote and measure retention and graduation  
87 rates of students; and (8) addressing the educational needs of minority  
88 students and nontraditional students, including, but not limited to,  
89 part-time students, incumbent workers, adult learners and immigrants,  
90 in order to increase enrollment and retention in institutions of higher  
91 education.

92 (e) Not later than January 1, 2008, the commission shall submit the  
93 strategic master plan, including specific goals and benchmarks for the  
94 years ending 2010, 2015 and 2020, together with any recommendations  
95 for appropriate legislation and funding to the Governor and the joint  
96 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
97 matters relating to higher education and employment advancement,  
98 education, commerce, labor and appropriations, in accordance with  
99 section 11-4a of the general statutes.

100 (f) On or before January 1, 2009, and biennially thereafter, until  
101 January 1, 2021, the commission shall submit a report, prepared by the  
102 Department of Higher Education, to the Governor and the joint  
103 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
104 matters relating to higher education and employment advancement,  
105 education, commerce, labor and appropriations, in accordance with  
106 section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the implementation of the plan  
107 and progress made toward achieving the goals specified in the plan.

108 (g) The commission shall terminate on January 1, 2021.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
---	--	--

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	New section
-----------	---------------------	-------------

***Statement of Purpose:***

To develop a strategic plan for higher education to address forecasted changes in the state's population and future workforce needs.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*