

Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Testimony of Angel Perez
New England Board of Higher Education

Good day Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Dr. Angel B. Perez and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed to the New England Board of Higher Education to represent the state of Connecticut by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

My sincere appreciation to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you and express my desire to serve on New England's Board of Higher Education.

I was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico and raised in New York City. I was admitted to college through an opportunity program in New York State and that access to higher education gave me (a first-generation college student) a chance to live a life I could never have imagined. The powerful impact college has had on my life led me to dedicate my entire career paying it forward. A fully funded college education led me to earn a PhD, become a Fulbright Scholar, teach at the College level, conduct research on student success issues, and travel all over the world to speak on issues of American Higher Education. I have spent my career working in higher education on both coasts of the United States and I also spent a few years working as a public high school counselor in New York City, helping students navigate the college admissions process.

I currently serve as Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success at Trinity College in Hartford. In this role, I oversee the Offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Institutional Research, Career Development and Retention. I am responsible for managing Trinity's enrollment, but I also spend a lot of time strategizing around their success when they arrive on our campus. I also think deeply about how to ensure students are prepared for not just careers and graduate school upon graduation, but how to lead meaningful, productive lives of service in Hartford and beyond. One of the areas I oversee is Career Development, where we spend a lot of time helping students engage Hartford through internships, service, and research – with the goal of not just helping students further their careers, but also imagining Connecticut as a place where they can put down roots and stay after graduation.

My professional experiences have led me to this moment and I believe I am qualified to serve the New England Board of Higher Education. I have served in leadership positions at several colleges in the United States and have served in advisory and leadership positions for Fulbright, The College Board, The Coca Cola Scholarship Foundation and schools like Skidmore College and the University of Southern California. I write about higher education in mainstream media publications like the Los Angeles Times, The Times in the U.K. and The Huffington Post. I think deeply about higher education and how it impacts the future of our state and our nation. In fact, I teach a course at Trinity called Higher Education in America. I have undergraduates study and critique higher education through a socio-political and historical lens. Listening to them each

week as they share their own stories of how decisions made by higher education administrators and politicians directly impact their lives and their College experience is very powerful. I learn more from them each week than I ever could have imagined.

It is for this reason that I have an interest in serving on the New England Board of Higher Education. I would like to represent the voices of students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders in the state of Connecticut. I want to help lead New England higher education leaders work to expand education opportunity and service in our region. Higher education is a strong driver of our region's economy – not just from a financial perspective, but also that of human and social capital. The decisions we make impact the future competitiveness of our state and region. Given the various roles I have played in higher education and secondary organizations, I believe I am well suited to serve our state in this delegate role.

My experience as an administrator, researcher, teacher, and board member of many educational organizations over the years has prepared me for this role on the New England Board of Higher Education. My passion for creating greater access to higher education and strategizing around how it contributes to our state and region's economy will lead me to serve in this role with passion and purpose.

I would like to thank each of you on the committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.