



State of Connecticut

The Connecticut General Assembly

The Planning Commission for Higher Education

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Judith K. Resnick, Chairperson

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2013

3:00 p.m. Room 2C

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. by Judy Resnick.

The following Commission members/designees/guests were present:

Vagos Hadjimichael, David Walsh, Jason Jakubowski, Lois Schneider, Judy Resnick, John Shemo, Judy Goldfarb, Chris Bruhl, Braden Hosch, Sally Reis, Judy Greiman, Roberta Willis, Beth Bye, Tim LeGeyt, Kerry Kelley, Meg Green, and Marisa Morello.

Judy Resnick introduced Aims McGuinness who was joining the meeting via Skype.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Members introduced themselves.

Judy Resnick introduced Dennis Jones, President National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS.)

Dennis Jones, President of NCHEMS gave a presentation on The Context for Education Policymaking in Connecticut.

He shared with the Commission that the strategic plan starts with the unit of analysis being the State of Connecticut, its businesses and its citizens. It's not about institutions. Institutions are means to important state ends. The question will be, "What does the future of Connecticut need to look like, and what does higher education have to do to help the State get to that desired end. The CSUS and UCONN will do their own strategic plans and we will try not to step on those plans. This strategic plan will be an overlay on those. We have learned that adding up institutional and system plans does not make a state plan.

He continued that through data analysis NCHEMS will paint a picture of the State of Connecticut. NCHEMS will put Connecticut in a national and international context, and then ask if you look at this picture 10 years from now what are the most important things that you would like to see changed.

Dennis Jones charged the Commission members with homework due by the December meeting: What should be the 4-5 big picture priorities for the State to change in the profile that NCHEMS will paint for the Commission. These would be items that will take several years to address, not items that can be addressed in 1 year or 1 legislative session, or 1 Governor's term.

NCHEMS will also do a policy audit to look at how policies in place align with the goals to be pursued. In most cases new policies are not required, but many old policies need to be done away with.

Tim LeGeyt asked if the PowerPoint slide with the population by census tract has trended one way or the other over the last 10 years, is it pretty stable.

Dennis Jones replied that he doesn't know, and that he can find out when the federal government shut down ends because all the data bases are also shut down. He shared that the numbers change, but the patterns don't change much.

Tim LeGeyt followed up: can we assume that the layout grid is driven by the placement of higher educational institutions?

Dennis Jones replied no, there might be some in the more rural parts of the state, in the rest of the state it is driven by the job market, who lives there and what kind of occupation they have, are they commuting to New York City. He continued that this is based on the population who lives here, not necessarily that works here.

Lois Schneider asked if it is the same pattern for the gap in higher education for different ethnicities in all of the states.

Dennis Jones replied that it's twice as big in Connecticut as it is in Florida, which has a very diverse population. He continued that this is the workforce Connecticut will have; it is an issue for the State. The less education someone has, the less mobile they are, so they are the people who will state in Connecticut.

Chris Bruhl shared that in Fairfield County they have a bimodal distribution. Very high education and very low education, and all of them have a role in the economy.

Dennis Jones told the Commission members to think about this information and that at the next meeting NCHEMS will provide more data. Dennis Jones reviewed the model that NCHEMS built to show the yield by degrees for several variables. It will show where certain actions will provide the biggest bang.

Judy Goldfarb asked if NCHEMS will address strategies for dealing with the Hispanic population, which is growing 12 times faster than the general population, and the language piece.

Dennis Jones replied that we have to address that population.

Lois Schneider asked how workforce and the types of jobs affect this kind of model.

Dennis Jones responded that economy makes an enormous difference. You start with what you think will be the growth industries in the next few years, then you ask what the occupational mix is within those industries, then ask what the education attainment requirement of those occupations and how is that changing.

Vagos Hadjimichael asked Dennis to speak about the model NCHEMS used to link educational attainment and state revenue, state economic welfare.

Dennis Jones answered that these are all state specific data, they are not national. They are based on income tax and other payments made by people with different educational levels.

Beth Bye said that in Connecticut race and poverty are highly correlated. She asked if there is a way to control for poverty, or look at it by poverty.

Dennis Jones replied that NCHEMS will bring income data into the discussion next time.

Jason Jakubowski brought up that Connecticut is geographically a very small state, and that he doesn't want to miss the idea of infrastructure and how these trends that we are projecting are affecting the bricks and mortar that we use utilize here in Connecticut. Jason continued that Connecticut is a very sensitive state when it comes to higher education infrastructure.

Dennis Jones understands that Connecticut is sensitive about this issue. He continued that a large portion of future students are going to be adults who have to be served where they are and that bricks and mortar may not be nearly as important in serving that population. He continued that he thinks the answer is how do you create fiscal incentives for the institutions to work together rather than compete. How do you pay an institution to invite someone else in to serve a need that they aren't prepared to serve. We will have to have these kinds of conversations about state policy.

David Walsh said that this can be looked at as an opportunity to come up with a solid set of priorities or a real negative because of the level of political penetration is more overt and stronger than it has ever been before, is this a good time to be doing what we are doing?

Dennis Jones shared that there is no perfect time to do this. NCHEMS does not go into this thinking about governance at all. This is not an opportunity to change governance. They have a long history of only recommending governance changes if nothing else can work.

Chris Bruhl is interested in how disruptive technologies will fit in the work that NCHEMS will be doing over the next number of months, including the overall transformation of the higher education model that seems to be inevitable.

Dennis Jones responded that NCHEMS will certainly look at alternative ways of doing things. The real disruptive technology is competency based degrees; degree granting based on assessment of competencies. He continued that what will really be disruptive will be assessment organizations, that are not universities, granting degrees. The sole competitive advantage of a higher education institution is it's the degree provider and therefore certifier of something that has traction in the workforce and society. If that same level of credence is given to competency based degrees coming from a non-traditional university, then higher education as we know it has lost its last comparative advantage.

Chris Bruhl shared that Connecticut has a version of that with Charter Oak State College.

Dennis Jones continued that when the numbers and the population to be served there will have to be some part of the deliver model that is not like what we are currently seeing.

Vagos Hadjimichael shared that he is afraid it will be a difficult battle to make private institutions do what needs to be done because of their accrediting requirements.

Dennis Jones replied that the reality is all institutions have accrediting requirements, so at the end of the day the question will be can the State of Connecticut fashion a policy environment that doesn't make anybody do anything, but that says I volunteer to do that because it's in my institutional self-interest for me to do so. The only way that this kind of change works is if institutions and faculties inside those institutions see this as being part of their own self-interest. That means you set a policy environment that encourages certain kinds of behaviors doesn't reward others.

Judy Resnick brought up that Dennis wanted to charge the Commission members with some homework to do. She also shared that the next meeting will be very important, and it will start at 2:30 p.m., ½ hour earlier than usual.

Dennis Jones asked Aims McGuinness if there was anything he wanted to bring up.

Aims McGuinness shared that he found it really refreshing in the states NCHEMS has worked with to begin to focus on the goals and the substance of what you're up to because an organizational change gets totally lost in things that people say. We have to constantly say that what we are doing will make a tremendous difference for students and the future of Connecticut. If the Commission members change the nature of the discourse in Connecticut from being about who's on first base and what's organizing this about that, to discussing the goals that would make a positive difference.

Dennis Jones asked the Commission members to start thinking about what the data says to them. What are the 2 -3 things most important to change. Eventually those will be put together into a short list of goals. He went on to say that if there are questions, things you want feedback on, or things you want to say to NCHEMS you may email me. Dennis encouraged the Commission members to also send their emails to the Commission staff, Jeanie Phillips, to share with the rest of the Commission so everyone sees all of the traffic rather than a set of bilateral communications. Everyone should see the same questions and answers.

Judy Resnick reminded the Commission members that the next meeting is Tuesday, November 12th from 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m.