



State of Connecticut

The Connecticut General Assembly

The Planning Commission for Higher Education

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Judith K. Resnick, Chairperson

Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 30, 2015

3:00 p.m. Room 1E

The meeting was called to order by Judy Resnick at 3:05 p.m.

The following commission members/designees/guests were present: Vagos Hadjimichael, Booker DeVaughn, Hedley Freake, David Walsh, Andrea Comer, Judith Resnick, Lindy Lee Gold, Estela Lopez, Sally Reis, Walter Harrison, Jen Widness, Roberta Willis, Danté Bartolomeo and Kerry Kelley.

Judy Resnick welcomed the members.

Members introduced themselves.

Minutes were approved.

Judy Resnick reviewed the agenda.

Dennis Jones, President Emeritus, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems ([NCHEMS](#)) gave their presentation: [Draft Metrics for Accountability & Monitoring Progress Toward Goals.](#)

Roberta Willis asked if with regard to the certificates, if that was for profit as well as non-profit.

Dennis Jones replied that it is everybody.

Roberta Willis asked about a bump up in 2007 and 2008 and then it dropped off in 2009 and 2010, was it economic related or was it due to the legislature putting a lot of money into financial aid in that time frame.

Dennis Jones responded that if those were financial aid years it would be 3 years later before the degrees came out.

Aims McGuinness added that this isn't degree production; it is a population based survey so either it's an anomaly or you had migration, or you had other variables involved.

Hedley Freake asked about the percentage of student successfully completing college level work after taking remedial courses – do the students who do not succeed simply disappear and don't try to take college level courses or do they pass the remedial classes and then fail to pass the college level work.

Estella Lopez responded that some do succeed. She continued that those who have difficulty with math are usually able to continue, those who have trouble with English tend not to continue.

Aims McGuinness asked if there isn't a changing view in what is an entry level course.

Estella Lopez replied that is more recent so it wouldn't be reflected in the data.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

Sally Reis had a correction to remove digital media because digital media candidates generally don't get doctorates; they get masters, not doctorates.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

A discussion took place but members did not speak into the microphone.

Booker DeVaughn asked if the Coast Guard Academy is included in the data.

Dennis Jones replied that these are not institutional data, these are state demographic data.

Aims McGuinness commented that the assumption he has made is that the engagement of an institution in a region affects the quality of life and the ability of the region to be able to attract and retain educated people, so a region that has a high level of engagement of institutions will be a region that would do better on this measure.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

Jen Widness pointed out that the data was old, and that the breakdown in the funding has shifted dramatically in the last few years.

Dennis Jones agreed and pointed out that one of the issues they always have is that the data are never current.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

Judy Resnick asked Dennis to go back to the prior chart and walk her through what the left axis is.

Dennis Jones replied that the left axis is the percent of a median family income that it would take to cover the net cost of attendance for a median family. He went on to say that it is cost of attendance minus all grant aid.

Lindy Lee Gold asked if it includes room and board.

Dennis Jones responded that it does include room and board; it is full cost of attendance, not just tuition.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

Walter Harrison asked if that is each year the people who graduate in that year.

Dennis Jones replied in the affirmative.

Walter Harrison asked if this was for four or two year institutions.

Dennis Jones said it is for everyone.

Walter Harrison asked if it include for profits.

Dennis Jones responded in the negative.

Dennis Jones continued his presentation.

Sally Reis asked if it was timed to graduation.

Dennis Jones replied that to the best of his knowledge this is not just graduates, this is students at any one year.

Jen Widness commented that Charter Oak seemed really high and asked if it included students who came in with debt.

Dennis Jones responded that he did not know the answer to that.

Aims McGuinness commented that he recently did a presentation on this for the [New England Board of Higher Education](#) and you can go in and see this by institution, and most institutions in Connecticut, with a couple of exceptions, report the average loans on graduation and the percentage of students with loans. He continued that what really stands out is that generalizations among institutions are hard to make. Aims said one thing that was counterintuitive was, if institutions tend to accept or are selective, they tend get students from generally higher income levels, but they also tend to have far more institutional student aid, so at an institution like Yale the average debt is around \$16K. Aims said what is scary is the number of independent colleges in New England with high levels of debt and percentages. He went on to say that they tend to be institutions without significant endowments and other resources. Aims said they also tend to be critically located for their area.

Dennis Jones said that one of the things that he didn't note and should have is the proportion of students who acquire debt and don't graduate. He said that he thinks they can get data on that and default rates on students who do not complete and the proportion of students who make no payment on principal; those proportions are very high for students who do not get a degree.

Roberta Willis asked if parent debt is included in student loan debt in these discussions.

Dennis Jones replied no.

David Walsh asked if NCHEMS sees keeping graduates in Connecticut as a major variable.

Dennis Jones responded that in most of this they are not tracking institutions, in the student financial aid are we talking about systems, everything else is measured in the population of the state.

David Walsh said he doesn't see how it would be possible to really understand the concept of quality if the careers of people post-graduation weren't looked at.

Jen Widness commented that they are working at that right this moment with [P20 WIN](#) and private colleges to send data over – [CCIC](#) is collecting undergraduate data from their member institutions to get labor data.

Sally Reiss said she has the data for May's graduating class if anyone is interested.

Dennis Jones commented that the encouraging thing with P20 WIN is that they match 100% of the graduates against labor force data and see what proportion of them are working in Connecticut. He continued that it doesn't capture employment in federal government or self-employment.

Aims McGuinness said that almost every state they've worked in has the same question, and that he goes back to the prior discussions by the Planning Commission of what constitutes quality. He went on to say that one of the characteristics of people completing an undergraduate degree is a real interest in mobility and to be able to participate in regional and national labor market, particularly for baccalaureate graduates, one of their indications is to be employed in a regional labor market, and the real test is whether Connecticut is attracting an educated work force. Aims said Connecticut does well on in migration of baccalaureate graduates with an indication that people are leaving for an undergraduate education but they are returning to Connecticut after graduating. He went on to say that the areas that are not positive are areas where the economies are lagging and it is directly related to whether higher ed is engaged in the region and creates high value jobs.

Estella Lopez made a correction regarding the percent of remedial students successfully completing college level courses should read percent of Connecticut students who successfully completed college level courses within two years.

Booker DeVaughn asked if an institution has money for financial aid, does that come from the legislative appropriation or does that come from the tuition that the institution receives.

Dennis Jones replied the latter.

Booker DeVaughn asked at what point does the institution then award institutional financial aid versus the federal financial aid program.

Dennis Jones responded that the institutions that give financial aid will always require the federal financial aid first. Their financial aid would be on top of the federal program, not in lieu of the federal program.

Vagos Hadjimichael asked Aims to elaborate on the significance of mobility versus wages as an enticement for students to attend college.

Aims McGuinness commented that he had been expressing more of an opinion than data, but when you talk about indicators of quality of undergraduate education, which is an unfinished subject the members need to talk about, the ability to be able to compete and be mobile in a highly changing labor market is a key indication.

Dennis Jones said that he's mentioned a couple of gaffs that NCHEMS is working on, he asked the members if this feels like the right kind of data linked up with the goals they set, is this becoming a package that has value as a way of keeping track of progress or lack thereof on the goals that were established.

Walter Harrison said that he thinks it's a good snapshot and that as a general indication of how well we are meeting our goals its okay.

Dennis Jones said that one of the things he learned a long time ago is that in this world it is less useful to think about the kind of proof that an engineer would use and think much more about the preponderance of evidence that a lawyer would use.

Jen Widness said that her sector has current reported higher debt than the national average, but in a recent comment made on this the default rate is low for the non-profits, so there is a degree with high debt, but they have a job to pay for it and that needs to be captured somewhere and acknowledged.

Dennis Jones commented that was what he was talking about when he discussed defaults.

Aims McGuinness agreed that students who graduate with high debt, but get jobs and can pay off the debt so to generalize that with another institution would be a mistake. He went on to say that institutions in Connecticut with public institution cost attendance have the same level of average debt as several of the institutions with double the cost of attendance, so cost of attendance is an important variable.

Roberta Willis stated that they really touched on the issue that you can't equate student debt unless you know that the student has gotten a job and can afford to pay it off. She went on to say that she is more concerned about community college or the for profit folks who get in and end up not graduating and have high debt and high default rates. Roberta then said that the only metric she is trying to get her hands around is the measurement of quality and putting that together with student debt. She asked if the members should be measuring the increasing average income.

Jen Widness replied that she thinks colleges would feel really uncomfortable with that measure.

Estella Lopez referred to a presentation based on P20 WIN, and what it showed was regarding certificates that prepare students for the workforce, those students were making more money than students with a bachelor's degree.

Roberta Willis asked if there was any other way to look at quality.

Estella Lopez asked Roberta what she meant by quality.

Dennis Jones commented – that's why there is an asterisk by the metric.

Roberta Willis said she's almost embarrassed to say income because she would put value on someone becoming a poet.

Danté Bartolomeo questioned if it's possible to quantify quality.

Vagos Hadjimichael confirmed that Danté's Alma Marta delivers a quality education. He went on to say that there are objective criteria for quality and he's sure most members know what they are: a thinking person, a person that manages his/her time well, critical judgement and more. Vagos said that when the commission had the regional meetings area employers gave the members a good idea of what the market place considers a quality education which may be a way to start the discussion.

Andrea Comer shared that she attended an event where someone from Gallup did a presentation where quality was discussed and 67% of Americans think it's very important for getting an education beyond high school to get a good job, and that the general population thinks quality leads to employment.

Aims McGuinness commented that the difficulty is that a lot of the measures being discussed are related to institutional measures, but that is not what this is about, this is not to evaluate institutions. It is the net effect on the population. He continued that their colleague Peter Ewell began to develop a set of indirect measures that were indicators of [quality](#). Aims said that one of those indicators was the extent to which students were engaged in some form of community engagement and other services, there are others: coherence in curriculum and contact with faculty which are reflected in the surveys of [NCES](#). He continued that it may be worthwhile to know the number of institutions using those surveys to improve their undergraduate education. Aims said that the other one is how many institutions are making an effort to work on the [Carnegie Foundation classification of community engaged institutions](#).

Roberta Willis gave an update on the [Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing](#).

Judy Resnick gave an update on the [Planning Commission for Higher Education Student Financial Aid Working Group](#).

Aims McGuinness shared with the members that all the materials for the [Task Force Concerning Outcomes Based Financing](#) are on that web site and that Kerry's [presentation](#) would be useful to the members.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.