



Substitute House Bill No. 5363

Public Act No. 24-125

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

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

Section 1. Section 10a-11b of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There is established a Planning Commission for Higher Education to develop and ensure the implementation of a higher education strategic master plan in Connecticut.

(1) The commission shall consist of the following voting members: (A) The president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the president of The University of Connecticut, or their designees from the Board of Regents for Higher Education and Board of Trustees; (B) the provost of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and the provost of The University of Connecticut; (C) the [chair] chairperson of the Board of Regents for [the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities] Higher Education, and the Board of Trustees for The University of Connecticut, or the chairs' designees; (D) the president, provost or chair of the board of a large independent institution of higher education in the state, to be selected by the president pro tempore of the

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Senate; (E) the president, provost or chair of the board of a small independent institution of higher education in the state, to be selected by the speaker of the House of Representatives; (F) a representative from a private career school, to be selected by the executive director of the Office of Higher Education; (G) a teaching faculty representative from the Connecticut State [Universities] University System, to be selected by the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; (H) a teaching faculty representative from the regional community-technical colleges, to be selected by the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; (I) a teaching faculty representative from The University of Connecticut, to be selected by the president of The University of Connecticut; (J) a teaching faculty representative from a private career school in the state, to be selected by the executive director of the Office of Higher Education; (K) one member appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be a representative of a large manufacturing employer in the state; (L) one member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of a large financial or insurance services employer in the state; (M) one member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be a representative of an information technology or digital media employer in the state; (N) one member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be a representative of a small business employer in the state; (O) one member appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of a health care employer in the state; [and] (P) one member appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of a small business employer in the state; and (Q) the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement. The commission membership shall, where feasible, reflect the state's geographic, racial and ethnic diversity.

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(2) The following persons shall serve as ex-officio nonvoting members on the commission: (A) The Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the Labor Commissioner, or their designees; (B) a representative of an association of the state's independent institutions of higher education, appointed by the Governor; (C) a member of the State Board of Education, as designated by the chairperson of the state board; (D) the superintendent of the technical high school system, or the superintendent's designee; (E) the chief executive officer of Connecticut Innovations, Incorporated, or the chief executive officer's designee; (F) the executive director of the Office of Higher Education; (G) the [chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement;(H) the] Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee; and [(I)] (H) the Chief Workforce Officer.

(3) All initial appointments to the commission shall be made not later than June 1, 2024. The Governor, president pro tempore of the Senate and speaker of the House of Representatives shall each appoint [the] a chairperson from among the commission's voting members. [The commission shall elect a vice-chairperson at its first meeting.] Such chairpersons shall jointly schedule the first meeting of the commission, which shall be held not later than July 1, 2024. Any vacancies shall be filled by the appointing authority. The term of each appointed member of the commission shall be three years from the date of appointment, except a member shall continue to serve until such member's successor is appointed. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The commission members shall serve without compensation.

(4) The commission may (A) seek the advice and participation of any person, organization or state or federal agency it deems necessary to

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carry out the provisions of this section, [. The commission may,] (B) within available appropriations, retain consultants to assist in carrying out its duties, [. The commission may] and (C) receive funds from any public or private sources to carry out its activities.

(5) The [commission shall be within the Office of Higher Education and shall be responsible for implementing any policies developed by the commission] administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement shall serve as the administrative staff of the commission.

(b) The commission shall revise and update the higher education strategic master plan adopted in 2015. Such revised strategic master plan shall:

(1) Examine the impact of demographic, workforce and education trends on higher education in the state;

(2) (A) Assess progress toward the numerical goals established for the years 2020 and 2025 under the strategic master plan adopted in 2015 and revise or establish numerical goals for the years [2025] 2026 and 2030 to (i) increase the number of people earning a bachelor's degree, associate degree or certificate, (ii) increase the number of people successfully completing coursework at the community college level and the number of people entering the state's workforce, and (iii) eliminate the postsecondary achievement gap between minority students and the general student population, and (B) include specific strategies for meeting such goals, as well as strategies for meeting the goals pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10a-6 and section 10a-11c;

(3) Examine and recommend changes to funding policies, practices and accountability in order to (A) align policies and practices with the goals set forth in subsection (b) of section 10a-6 and section 10a-11c; (B)

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determine how the constituent units shall annually report to the General Assembly and the public in a transparent and thorough manner regarding each constituent unit's expenditures, staffing and state support, including the state appropriation, personnel expenses, personnel fringe benefits, capital improvement bonds and financial aid to students; and (C) improve coordination of appropriation, tuition and financial aid and seek ways to maximize funding through federal and private grants to accomplish state goals; and

(4) Recommend ways in which each constituent unit of the state system of higher education and independent institution of higher education in the state can, in a manner consistent with such institution's mission, expand such institution's role in advancing the state's economic growth.

(c) In updating the higher education strategic master plan, the commission shall review the plan developed pursuant to section 10a-6. In addition, the commission may consider the following: (1) Establishing incentives for institutional performance and productivity; (2) increasing financial aid, especially in workforce shortage areas and for minority and first-generation students; (3) expanding dual credit and career pathway opportunities in high schools and aligning such opportunities with institutions of higher education; (4) promoting partnerships with the business community and institutions of higher education to expand work-based learning opportunities for students and retraining and development opportunities for employees; (5) establishing collaborative partnerships between public high schools, community organizations and institutions of higher education to expand college access for underserved and first-generation students; (6) assessing and promoting programs in high school to assist high school students seeking a college track or alternative pathways for post-secondary education, such as vocational and technical opportunities; (7) developing policies to promote and measure retention and graduation

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rates of students, including graduation rates for students who have transferred among two or more constituent units or public institutions of higher education; (8) developing policies to promote [Transfer] transfer and [Articulation] articulation programs and the Connecticut Automatic Admissions [program] Program state wide; (9) addressing the educational needs of minority, underserved and first-generation students and nontraditional students, including, but not limited to, part-time students, incumbent workers, adult learners, former inmates and immigrants, in order to increase enrollment and retention in institutions of higher education; (10) addressing the affordability of tuition at institutions of higher education and the issue of increased student indebtedness; and (11) developing policies to award credits for prior learning and experience.

(d) Not later than September 1, [2024] 2025, the commission shall submit a preliminary report on the development of the update of the higher education strategic master plan and, not later than December 1, [2024] 2025, the commission shall submit the higher education strategic master plan, including specific goals and benchmarks for the years ending [2025] 2026 and 2030, together with any recommendations for appropriate legislation and funding to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement, education, commerce, labor and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

(e) Not later than January 1, [2026] 2027, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher education and employment advancement, education, commerce, labor and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with section 11-4a, on the implementation of the plan and progress made toward achieving the goals specified in the plan. The

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commission may periodically suggest changes to the goals as necessary.

(f) [Not later than January 1, 2018, for] For purposes of implementing the higher education strategic master plan pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the commission [, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Management,] shall establish two standing subcommittees and may establish any working groups necessary to supplement the work of the subcommittees or work. The [chairperson and vice-chairperson] chairpersons of the commission shall jointly appoint the members of the standing subcommittees and working groups, and may appoint members to such standing subcommittees and working groups who are not members of the commission.

(1) One standing subcommittee shall focus on data, metrics and accountability, and build upon the work of the Preschool through 20 and Workforce Information Network in its measures and data. Such measures shall be used to assess the progress of each public institution of higher education toward meeting the commission's goals. The subcommittee shall collaborate with the Labor Department to (A) produce periodic reports, capable of being sorted by student age, on the employment status, job retention and earnings of students enrolled in academic and noncredit vocational courses and programs, both prior to enrollment and after completion of such courses and programs, who leave the constituent units upon graduation or otherwise, and (B) develop an annual affordability index for public higher education that is based on state-wide median family income. The subcommittee shall submit annual reports to the commission and the constituent units.

(2) One standing subcommittee shall focus on the higher education strategic master plan, analyzing the plans submitted since 2014 and making recommendations to the commission on key areas. The commission may recommend key areas of focus each year and require the standing subcommittee to report to the commission on such key areas.

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(g) The commission may appoint advisory committees with representatives from public and independent institutions of higher education to study methods and proposals for coordinating efforts of the public institutions of higher education and the independent institutions of higher education to implement the goals identified in section 10a-11c.

(h) The commission may review its goals and plans and determine how best to align its work with the work of the Higher Education Innovation and Entrepreneurship Working Group and the Higher Education Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee, established pursuant to sections 32-39s and 32-39t.