



February 11, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

In his proposed budget that will be released today, the Governor has announced that he is including language that would create a single governing board for the community college system and the university system, in place of the two separate boards of trustees that currently exist. This new board, a mix of community college, university system and independent members, would be charged with evaluating the most effective ways to organize public higher education in New Hampshire. The Governor wants this single board to be the first step in a process that changes how public higher education operates in New Hampshire.

From what the Governor has explained thus far, his objectives in proposing a change include making the student experience more seamless, facilitating innovation, meeting demographic and other challenges facing higher education, and engaging in long-term strategic planning as a single governing body rather than two whose goals occasionally overlap and/or compete.

I have always felt that the community colleges' mission is distinct and best served through a separate governing structure. However, changes affecting higher education make it reasonable to explore whether new ways of doing things could strengthen our student service and preserve our core mission elements of access, affordability, student success, and responsiveness to the needs of our state and communities. I am entering this with an open mind and an eye towards details. There also may be other ways to achieve the same ends that are less disruptive to New Hampshire's public institutions of higher education.

I want to emphasize that this is only a proposal at this point. Over the next few months, we will have considerable discussion within CCSNH, with legislators, and with other key stakeholders to our mission. That conversation should include students, parents, fellow educators, employers and business partners, local officials, and members of the public. Next week, we will have a web portal set up on ccsnh.edu for people to share thoughts, ask questions, and contribute ideas about what has been proposed. I encourage you to make use of this mechanism for input; we want to hear from you.

Finally, I urge you to not allow this issue to distract you from the excellent and important work you do each day for students. Share your input via the portal, ask questions, and feel free to speak to your elected officials who will ultimately vote on the language in House Bill 2 as part of the overall State budget. Please know it is your day-to-day work that will have the most meaningful impact on the future of our State, through the students you teach and support.



I am grateful to be engaged with such talented colleagues in so very valuable a mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan D. Huard".

Susan D. Huard
Interim Chancellor
Community College System of NH