February 26, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

As the week comes to a close, I write with a short update on the proposal currently before the legislature to unify CCSNH and USNH under a single board.

First, I have two items to share, which are both available on the [webpage](#) we created for updates related to this proposal:

1. An article published this week in The Chronicle of Higher Ed about this proposal.
2. A report provided to CCSNH by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) looking at case studies from other states. CCSNH asked for this report help us begin to understand specific challenges, successes and outcomes that resulted from similar mergers or consolidations. This report is not comprehensive nor does it offer a roadmap specific to New Hampshire’s systems, but it does offer insight and suggests questions to be considering as we look at the Governor’s proposal.

Second, today I had the first opportunity to discuss this proposal in a formal setting with members of the House Finance Committee, along with representatives from the University System. I spent the first part of my presentation talking about our mission, how we operate, who we serve and how we serve them. I think it’s critical that legislators have a solid understanding of both CCSNH and USNH before considering changes.

My counterpart from the University System provided a similar overview of UNSH. Gov. Sununu then joined the meeting to explain his proposal and goals.

The session ended with about an hour of questions and conversation. Still missing is a look at the language in House Bill 2, which should come out any day now with the details of the plan put forth by the Governor. The committee discussed what taking the first step would mean – that is, the creation of a single board for both systems. In and of itself, this may not constitute a major change in terms of immediate operational impact. It is, however, the steps that would follow that still cause consternation, along with whether the systems would be provided with the resources needed as deeper integration plans move forward and what those plans would include.

I saw today’s conversation as the first of several we will have in the upcoming weeks. Clearly, this is a long-term view of changing the structure of public higher education in New Hampshire and is being considered as such.

I will continue to provide updates as the process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Susan D. Huard
Interim Chancellor
Community College System of NH