



March 12, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I write with a brief update on matters related to the proposed creation of a single board for CCSNH and USNH.

Today, House Finance Division II held another session with representatives from both systems, focusing on efforts within each system to strengthen financial sustainability. CCSNH covered five broad areas of focus: academics and curriculum; student support programs; budgeting practices; information technology; and affordability. We also described the foundation of our fiscal sustainability efforts in our statutory charge (to operate as *"a well-coordinated system of public community college education offering, as a primary mission, technical programs to prepare students for technical careers as well as general, professional, and transfer programs, and certificate and short term training programs which serve the needs of the state and the nation"*), our shared services model, and our system-level planning and governance. You can see the materials presented [here](#) (scroll down to 3/12/21) and hear the entirety of the 2+ hour conversation.

Next week, Division II will continue to discuss the proposal in work sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. In addition, a subcommittee of the House Education committee has asked for input as to the policy considerations of the proposal, so I will be back to present to this group on Wednesday. I have been asked to suggest what academic and administrative considerations a proposed merger of the systems would involve.

Important themes that have emerged center on the question of "what happens next" – as in two or three steps down the line from unifying the systems under a single board; on the timeline of future changes; on the demographic and financial concerns driving this conversation at the outset; and on whether this is the best way to address those demographic and financial concerns. The group also talked about what resources would be needed – or are available – to support the work of this board. The USNH board chairman, Joe Morone, appears to be highly influenced by the book "Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education" by Nathan Grawe, which analyzes the dynamics of demographic shifts and considers how schools might prepare for a significant decrease in the number of high school graduates over the next several years. While I certainly acknowledge this concern, I also see our mission as including a considerable focus on adult learners.

My goal in all of these conversations with legislators is to make sure the community college voice is heard, and that I appropriately reflect the feedback I am hearing from within CCSNH and from other stakeholders. Many of you participated in a survey on the [CCSNH website](#). We have taken



this feedback and asked an external entity to summarize it in a report that preserves the anonymity of the opinions expressed and objectively captures the themes running through the comments. We have taken the survey down for a short time but will be replacing it with one in a format that allows for more streamlined reporting.

I look forward to continuing to hear from you.

Best regards,

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

Susan D. Huard  
Interim Chancellor  
Community College System of NH

