



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

***Raised Bill No. 5363***

LCO No. 2366



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:  
(HED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR HIGHER  
EDUCATION.***

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

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2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  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

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

7 (1) The commission shall consist of the following voting members:  
8 (A) The president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the  
9 president of The University of Connecticut, or their designees from the  
10 Board of Regents for Higher Education and Board of Trustees; (B) the  
11 provost of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and the  
12 provost of The University of Connecticut; (C) the [chair] chairperson of  
13 the Board of Regents for [the Connecticut State Colleges and  
14 Universities] Higher Education, and the Board of Trustees for The

15 University of Connecticut, or the chairs' designees; (D) the president,  
16 provost or chair of the board of a large independent institution of higher  
17 education in the state, to be selected by the president pro tempore of the  
18 Senate; (E) the president, provost or chair of the board of a small  
19 independent institution of higher education in the state, to be selected  
20 by the speaker of the House of Representatives; (F) a representative from  
21 a private career school, to be selected by the executive director of the  
22 Office of Higher Education; (G) a teaching faculty representative from  
23 the Connecticut State [Universities] University System, to be selected by  
24 the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; (H) a  
25 teaching faculty representative from the regional community-technical  
26 colleges, to be selected by the president of the Connecticut State Colleges  
27 and Universities; (I) a teaching faculty representative from The  
28 University of Connecticut, to be selected by the president of The  
29 University of Connecticut; (J) a teaching faculty representative from a  
30 private career school in the state, to be selected by the executive director  
31 of the Office of Higher Education; (K) one member appointed by the  
32 president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be a representative of a  
33 large manufacturing employer in the state; (L) one member appointed  
34 by the speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be a  
35 representative of a large financial or insurance services employer in the  
36 state; (M) one member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate,  
37 who shall be a representative of an information technology or digital  
38 media employer in the state; (N) one member appointed by the minority  
39 leader of the Senate, who shall be a representative of a small business  
40 employer in the state; (O) one member appointed by the majority leader  
41 of the House of Representatives, who shall be a representative of a  
42 health care employer in the state; and (P) one member appointed by the  
43 minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a  
44 representative of a small business employer in the state. The  
45 commission membership shall, where feasible, reflect the state's  
46 geographic, racial and ethnic diversity.

47 (2) The following persons shall serve as ex-officio nonvoting  
48 members on the commission: (A) The Commissioner of Education, the

49 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the  
50 Labor Commissioner, or their designees; (B) a representative of an  
51 association of the state's independent institutions of higher education,  
52 appointed by the Governor; (C) a member of the State Board of  
53 Education, as designated by the chairperson of the state board; (D) the  
54 superintendent of the technical high school system, or the  
55 superintendent's designee; (E) the chief executive officer of Connecticut  
56 Innovations, Incorporated, or the chief executive officer's designee; (F)  
57 the executive director of the Office of Higher Education; (G) the  
58 chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committee of  
59 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher  
60 education and employment advancement; (H) the Secretary of the  
61 Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee; and (I) the  
62 Chief Workforce Officer.

63 (3) All initial appointments to the commission shall be made not later  
64 than June 1, 2024. The Governor shall appoint the chairperson from  
65 among the commission's voting members. If an appointment under  
66 subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection is not made by said date, the  
67 chairperson may designate an individual with the required qualification  
68 stated for the applicable appointment to serve on the commission. Such  
69 chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the commission, which  
70 shall be held not later than July 1, 2024. The commission shall elect a  
71 vice-chairperson at its first meeting. Any vacancies shall be filled by the  
72 appointing authority. The term of each appointed member of the  
73 commission shall be three years from the date of appointment, except a  
74 member shall continue to serve until such member's successor is  
75 appointed. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum for  
76 the transaction of business. The commission members shall serve  
77 without compensation.

78 (4) The commission may (A) seek the advice and participation of any  
79 person, organization or state or federal agency it deems necessary to  
80 carry out the provisions of this section, [ The commission may,] (B)  
81 within available appropriations, retain consultants to assist in carrying  
82 out its duties, [ The commission may] and (C) receive funds from any

83 public or private sources to carry out its activities.

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

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

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

95 (2) (A) Assess progress toward the numerical goals established for  
96 the years 2020 and 2025 under the strategic master plan adopted in 2015  
97 and revise or establish numerical goals for the years [2025] 2026 and  
98 2030 to (i) increase the number of people earning a bachelor's degree,  
99 associate degree or certificate, (ii) increase the number of people  
100 successfully completing coursework at the community college level and  
101 the number of people entering the state's workforce, and (iii) eliminate  
102 the postsecondary achievement gap between minority students and the  
103 general student population, and (B) include specific strategies for  
104 meeting such goals, as well as strategies for meeting the goals pursuant  
105 to subsection (b) of section 10a-6 and section 10a-11c;

106 (3) Examine and recommend changes to funding policies, practices  
107 and accountability in order to (A) align policies and practices with the  
108 goals set forth in subsection (b) of section 10a-6 and section 10a-11c; (B)  
109 determine how the constituent units shall annually report to the General  
110 Assembly and the public in a transparent and thorough manner  
111 regarding each constituent unit's expenditures, staffing and state  
112 support, including the state appropriation, personnel expenses,  
113 personnel fringe benefits, capital improvement bonds and financial aid  
114 to students; and (C) improve coordination of appropriation, tuition and

115 financial aid and seek ways to maximize funding through federal and  
116 private grants to accomplish state goals; and

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

122 (c) In updating the higher education strategic master plan, the  
123 commission shall review the plan developed pursuant to section 10a-6.  
124 In addition, the commission may consider the following: (1)  
125 Establishing incentives for institutional performance and productivity;  
126 (2) increasing financial aid, especially in workforce shortage areas and  
127 for minority and first-generation students; (3) expanding dual credit  
128 and career pathway opportunities in high schools and aligning such  
129 opportunities with institutions of higher education; (4) promoting  
130 partnerships with the business community and institutions of higher  
131 education to expand work-based learning opportunities for students  
132 and retraining and development opportunities for employees; (5)  
133 establishing collaborative partnerships between public high schools,  
134 community organizations and institutions of higher education to  
135 expand college access for underserved and first-generation students; (6)  
136 assessing and promoting programs in high school to assist high school  
137 students seeking a college track or alternative pathways for post-  
138 secondary education, such as vocational and technical opportunities; (7)  
139 developing policies to promote and measure retention and graduation  
140 rates of students, including graduation rates for students who have  
141 transferred among two or more constituent units or public institutions  
142 of higher education; (8) developing policies to promote Transfer and  
143 Articulation programs and the Connecticut Automatic Admissions  
144 program state wide; (9) addressing the educational needs of minority,  
145 underserved and first-generation students and nontraditional students,  
146 including, but not limited to, part-time students, incumbent workers,  
147 adult learners, former inmates and immigrants, in order to increase  
148 enrollment and retention in institutions of higher education; (10)

149 addressing the affordability of tuition at institutions of higher education  
150 and the issue of increased student indebtedness; and (11) developing  
151 policies to award credits for prior learning and experience.

152 (d) Not later than September 1, [2024] 2025, the commission shall  
153 submit a preliminary report on the development of the update of the  
154 higher education strategic master plan and, not later than December 1,  
155 [2024] 2025, the commission shall submit the higher education strategic  
156 master plan, including specific goals and benchmarks for the years  
157 ending [2025] 2026 and 2030, together with any recommendations for  
158 appropriate legislation and funding to the Governor and the joint  
159 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
160 matters relating to higher education and employment advancement,  
161 education, commerce, labor and appropriations, in accordance with the  
162 provisions of section 11-4a.

163 (e) Not later than January 1, [2026] 2027, and annually thereafter, the  
164 commission shall submit a report to the Governor and the joint standing  
165 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
166 relating to higher education and employment advancement, education,  
167 commerce, labor and appropriations, in accordance with section 11-4a,  
168 on the implementation of the plan and progress made toward achieving  
169 the goals specified in the plan. The commission may periodically  
170 suggest changes to the goals as necessary.

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

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

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

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

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

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	10a-11b

**Statement of Purpose:**

To (1) establish deadlines for appointment of commission members and for convening the first meeting, and (2) extend the deadlines by which the commission submits the preliminary report and updated strategic master plan.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*