



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

Substitute Bill No. 5363



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2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof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) 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]
143 transfer and [Articulation] articulation programs and the Connecticut
144 Automatic Admissions [program] Program state wide; (9) addressing
145 the educational needs of minority, underserved and first-generation
146 students and nontraditional students, including, but not limited to, part-
147 time students, incumbent workers, adult learners, former inmates and
148 immigrants, in order to increase enrollment and retention in institutions
149 of higher education; (10) addressing the affordability of tuition at
150 institutions of higher education and the issue of increased student
151 indebtedness; and (11) developing policies to award credits for prior

152 learning and experience.

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

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

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

182 (1) One standing subcommittee shall focus on data, metrics and
183 accountability, and build upon the work of the Preschool through 20

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

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

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

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

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

In Subsec. (c)(8), "Transfer and Articulation" was changed to "[Transfer] transfer and [Articulation] articulation" and "program" was changed to "[program] Program" for statutory consistency, and, in Subsecs. (d) and (e), "and the budgets of state agencies" was inserted after "appropriations" for accuracy.

HED *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*