

Board of Governors for Higher Education



At a Glance

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Michael P. Meotti, Commissioner

Established – 1983

Statutory authority – CGS Section 10a-6

***Central office - 61 Woodland Street,
Hartford, 06105-2326***

Average number of full-time employees - 46

Recurring operating expenses (General Fund) – 2010-2011--Total System: \$745.4 million;

Board of Governors: \$69.6 million

Organizational structure - Office of the Commissioner; Offices for Academic Affairs; Research, Policy & Financial Analysis; and Programs & Services

The Board of Governors for Higher Education has served as the state coordinating and planning agency for Connecticut's 46 colleges and universities since 1983. In June 2011, the legislature passed Public Act 11-48 reorganizing the structure of the public system and eliminating the Board of Governors and its administrative arm, the Department of Higher Education. A new Board of Regents for Higher Education will replace the Board of Governors, parts of the former Department of Higher Education as well as the Boards of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System, the Community-Technical Colleges and the Board for State Academic Awards. A new Office for Financial and Academic Affairs for Higher Education will assume many of the student services and consumer protection functions of the former Department of Higher Education, including the program and institutional licensure and accreditation of private colleges and universities, and administration of the popular Alternate Route to Certification.

Against this backdrop of impending change, the Board of Governors continued its responsibilities during 2010-11 for policy-making, primarily for the state's public higher education system consisting of the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut State University System, the 12 community colleges and Charter Oak State College. As in the past, the board considered the state's 28 independent colleges and universities in policy development. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy, located in New London, operates under federal authority.

The board has 11 members, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor and four who are named by the highest-ranked members of the General Assembly who are not members of the Governor's political party. As of June 2011, members were Frank W. Ridley, Meriden, chair; Brian J. Flaherty, Watertown, vice-chair; William A. Aniskovich, Branford; Dorothea E. Brennan, Fairfield; Patricia J. Christiana, Manchester; Jean M. LaVecchia, Killingworth; Jean E. Reynolds, Danbury; Robert Robins, Stamford; Albert B. Vertefeuille, Lebanon; Margaret J. Villani, Monroe; and Michael J. Werle, West Hartford. The board met monthly, except for July and August, and worked with its advisory committee of 22 college representatives as well as with Commissioner of Higher Education, Michael P. Meotti, and staff of the Department of Higher Education.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Higher Education has been to increase lifelong access to and success in higher education for Connecticut citizens. The Department carried out this mission by creating a strategic framework for Connecticut's policy leaders, increasing public awareness of the value of higher education to individuals and the state as a whole, and helping the higher education system better serve student and state interests.

The statutory mission assigned to the Board of Governors and shared by the Department of Higher Education, has been to: maintain standards of quality, ensuring a position of national leadership for Connecticut higher education institutions; assure the fullest possible use of available resources in public and independent colleges and universities; foster flexibility in the policies and institutions of higher education, enabling the system to respond to changes in the economy, society, technology and student interests; apply the resources of higher education to the problems of society; provide learning and training opportunities related to the state's economic, cultural and educational development; protect academic freedom; and ensure educational opportunity for all qualified persons, regardless of age, sex, ethnic background or social, physical or economic conditions.

Statutory Responsibility

The Board of Governors' statutory duties included licensure and accreditation of academic programs and institutions (public and independent), coordination of programs and services throughout the system, establishment of systemwide policies and guidelines, review and approval of institutional missions and evaluation of institutional effectiveness, and review of public college operating and capital budget requests and expenditures.

Under the direction of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Department of Higher Education conducted policy-making and research, coordinated planning across the system, and administered state and federal programs. Among its operational responsibilities, the department

reviewed proposals for licensure and accreditation of academic programs and institutions; prepared systemwide operating and capital budget requests; administered student financial assistance, alternate teacher certification and minority advancement programs; maintained statewide data bases for budgeting and policy studies; prepared legislative proposals; reported on accountability measures and student attendance and graduation trends; and oversaw Connecticut's 65 private occupational schools.

Federal responsibilities included serving as the State Approval Agency for programs enrolling veterans, and as the state's lead agency for Americorps, the national service program. The department also administered federal GEAR UP funds used to prepare Bridgeport and New Haven youth for success in college, and the higher education portion of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program which supports professional development for in-service teachers.

Students, parents and taxpayers were the chief beneficiaries of the agency's work to assure affordability, quality and accountability throughout the system. Legislators, federal and state policy-makers, colleges, business and community organizations profited from the agency's unique role as a provider of objective and systemwide coordination and information.

Public Service

Building a highly-educated workforce to meet Connecticut's economic and societal needs served as the framework for all of the department's public service activities.

To address areas of teacher shortage, the department conducted its summer and weekend Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) programs which prepare career-changing adults to become teachers. The summer 2010 program prepared 94 adults for certification in English, history/social studies, mathematics, life and physical sciences, and world languages. Despite fewer numbers of teacher openings, 89 percent of this group is working in K-12 schools across the state.

ARC's 2010-11 weekend program (ARC II) prepared another 122 individuals to teach art, English, mathematics, social studies, music, life and physical sciences, technology education and world languages. Two Chinese, and two Arabic teachers participated in the ARC II world language session; ARC is the state's only program which prepares highly-sought after teachers of Chinese and Arabic.

ARC is the state's sixth largest teacher preparation program. It is Connecticut's largest producer of teachers in grade 5-12 math, physics, biology, chemistry, Spanish, French, German, Latin and other languages. Hiring rates show that ARC teachers are in high demand. Retention rates are equally high.

Across both ARC programs, 77 percent of the graduates are prepared to teach in shortage areas, 16 percent are from minority groups, and 49 percent hold graduate degrees, including 27 doctorates.

Many ARC teachers have received prestigious honors, including the national Presidential Excellence in Teaching for Mathematics and Science, Connecticut Teacher of the Year, and District of the Year. Since 2007, at least 35 of these honors have been awarded to ARC graduates. Several other graduates have completed additional training for administration certificates and are serving in various school administrative capacities.

To strengthen diversity in the state's teacher workforce, the department awarded Minority Teacher Incentive Grants to 61 minority students, and loan reimbursement stipends to 46 former grant recipients who are now teaching in Connecticut. The department awarded similar grants

from private funds to two minority students selected as Weisman Scholars who are preparing to teach math and science.

For in-service teachers, the department awarded \$895,630 in federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to five teacher professional development projects in mathematics and science. The projects aim to strengthen teacher content knowledge and instructional skills, and are operated by partnerships of schools of education, colleges of arts and sciences and high-need school districts. The 2011-12 projects will serve 155 teachers of 13,534 students in 14 districts. Previous teacher participants have rated projects highly, based on a statewide evaluation conducted jointly by the department and the University of Connecticut.

Ensuring access to college continued to be the agency's top fiscal priority. In August, the department received a \$1.5 million College Access Challenge Grant under the federal College Cost Reduction Act of 2007. This grant was used to fund four major initiatives aimed at increasing higher education opportunities for underserved students in Connecticut. In the first of these initiatives called "FAFSA First," the department worked with Co-Opportunity's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) to help underrepresented students and parents complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at six sites in the Hartford area. The second initiative, "College Ready 21," developed curricula in math and English that will address the readiness challenges of underrepresented students prior to graduating from high school. The third initiative, "ConnCAS," is a summer transition to college program, offered at the state's public universities, for students who marginally meet admission standards. The final initiative, the "Community Outreach Team," will provide training and create comprehensive education materials on the topics of access and completion, and will serve as a bridge for counselors at high schools and state colleges and universities.

To help students become more financially savvy, the department continued to offer its on-line financial literacy course for college students titled, "Who Wants to Be Financially Responsible?" The program, produced with the University of Connecticut and Connecticut Public Broadcasting, is designed for colleges to use as part of their first-year experience curriculum or as a stand-alone student reference.

Monitoring the fiscal status of the public higher education system, the department reported that total system expenses for the public higher education system in fiscal year 2011 were \$1.7 million higher than for 2010 due to contracted salary increases. Since the salary increases were considerably larger than \$1.7 million in total, actual spending was, in fact, reduced. Although operating expenses remained constant, public system reserves were reduced by \$31 million to help close the state's budget deficit. The final 2012 General Fund budget for higher education is \$722.5 million, a \$23 million reduction from 2011. The department reported reduced spending in 2011 and anticipates significant reductions for 2012. Through 2011, funds for state financial aid programs were exempt from reductions and continued to provide grants to Connecticut students at 2008 funding levels. The state's three major aid programs – the Connecticut Aid to Public College Students Grant, the Connecticut Aid to Independent College Student Grant, and the Capitol Scholarship Program - issued awards to nearly 30,000 students.

To encourage low-income, first-generation youngsters to prepare for college, the department continued to participate in the public awareness campaign, KnowHow2GoConnecticut. The department's Education & Employment Information Center (EEIC) brought the KnowHow2Go message to college and career fairs across the state. In all, the EEIC steered nearly 10,000 persons this year toward new careers and training through its toll-free hotline (800/842-0229), workshops

and publications. Log sheets documenting individual requests, correspondence from the public and workshop evaluations reveal high customer satisfaction with the EEIC.

As part of the department's academic-year Baden-Württemberg Exchange, 56 Connecticut students attended college in Germany while 51 German students came to Connecticut for study. Another 23 students from Connecticut studied in Germany in summer 2011. German and engineering continue to be the most popular majors of Connecticut students, while the German students concentrate on English, economics/business administration and engineering. Eight Connecticut students are performing internships in Germany as part of their studies. Four of these interned at Daimler (Mercedes Benz).

The department works on issues of mutual concern with other agencies such as the state Departments of Education and Labor, and the Office for Workforce Competitiveness.

In one such partnership, the agency collaborated with the Department of Public Health and the Office for Workforce Competitiveness to award \$183,000 to the Connecticut Community Colleges working with the Connecticut League of Nursing, and to Capitol Community College under the Health and Education Initiatives Program. These projects seek to increase the number of workers in nursing and allied health fields by attracting more students to health care professions and providing academic support to improve their retention.

In partnership with the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering, the agency awarded the 2011 State of Connecticut Medal of Science in May to Dr. Steven L. Suib, University of Connecticut Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor and head of UConn's Chemistry Department. Dr. Suib was recognized for his pioneering work in the fields of catalysis and materials science over the past 30 years.

Improvements/Achievements 2010-11

Much of the department's work involved building an effective education pipeline in which higher education policy and goals are aligned with those of elementary and secondary education, and labor market demand.

This year, the P-20 Council (known formerly as the P-20 Commission) continued its work to improve coordination and collaboration between school districts, higher education and the workforce. Through the work of the Council, information has been collected and analyzed regarding the postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion of all state public high school students from the Class of 2004 through 2010, as well as the remediation and developmental coursework needs of students attending Connecticut State University and community college campuses. Data show that the majority of Connecticut's high school graduates who attend public colleges in the state must take remedial or developmental courses after they enroll, revealing a significant "college readiness gap" that threatens the quality of the state's future workforce.

In addition, guided by the Council, leaders from K-12 and higher education developed a framework for education effectiveness that provides guidance on how definitions of effectiveness are to guide the development of effectiveness standards, educator preparation, professional development and evaluations. Planning is underway to convene secondary and postsecondary leaders to share the data already described, discuss what it means to be college and career ready, and develop action plans for developing stronger, more comprehensive partnerships between districts and higher education to improve student success.

In March, the department published its annual higher education accountability report which it prepared in cooperation with public colleges and universities. This year, the Department

emphasized a common core of institutional measures and added a measure to gauge the progress of transfer students from community colleges to four-year public institutions. The report indicates five-year transfer rates of 29.3 percent for the University of Connecticut and 35.2 percent for the Connecticut State University System.

The agency's Minority Advancement Program (MAP) continued its efforts to diversify the composition of students enrolling and graduating from the state's public colleges and universities. In fall 2010, the number of minority undergraduates – the number of students who self-identified as Hispanic/Latino, African American, Asian American or Native American – enrolled in Connecticut's public institutions of higher education totaled 31,654 or 31.9 percent of the total student body. During the 2009-10 academic year, these institutions awarded 2,865 undergraduate degrees to minority students or 19.8 percent of the total; further evidence that the graduation of minority students remains problematic.

During the program year, MAP pre-college programs provided nearly 900 middle and high school students with counseling, extended learning opportunities and other college preparatory activities. MAP's summer bridge programs assisted more than 500 high school seniors make the transition to college. The agency's federally-funded GEAR UP project provided another nearly 900 high school students with college preparatory activities and distributed more than \$1.5 million in college scholarships to more than 300 of the project's high school graduates, an average award of nearly \$5,000.

In the area of academic planning and evaluation, the Board of Governors, based on the department's review, accredited one institution for the first time, and re-accredited 11 colleges and universities in the State. The Board licensed two and re-licensed five out-of-state institutions, allowing them to offer programs in the State.

The Board licensed 16 new academic programs. Of these, 14 were at the independent colleges and two were at public institutions. Among the independent institutional program licensures there were six bachelor's programs, four master's programs and three doctoral programs. The public institutions had two new associate degree programs licensed. Additionally, 12 programs from outside the state were licensed.

The Board also accredited 56 programs, enabling them to graduate students and confer degrees for the first time. Of these programs, 43 were at independent institutions, including three certificate programs, two associate degree programs, eight bachelor degree programs, 17 graduate certificates, 12 master's degree programs and one doctoral degree. Thirteen of the newly accredited programs were offered by public institutions, including six associate degree programs, four bachelor programs, two master's degree programs and one doctoral program. These programs covered a range of academic areas, including 11 in business, another 11 in the health sciences, six in education-related fields and one in engineering. The remainder were in the liberal arts.

Overseeing the state's 65 private occupational schools and 23 branches, the department approved four new schools. The agency re-approved 22 existing schools with branches, and addressed 24 formal complaints. Four occupational schools closed.

As the State Approving Agency (SAA) for veterans' education benefits, the SAA processed 124 initial, revised and updated approval functions for institutions eligible to enroll veterans; conducted 116 inspection, supervisory and training visits to schools and colleges; and provided information to active duty service members and veterans regarding their education benefits through outreach events, monthly Welcome Home mailings and the Transitional Assistance

Program (TAP). The SAA has reviewed and approved 1,461 programs for degree and non-degree granting institutions at approved facilities.

The Connecticut Commission on Community Service, supported by the department, provided intensive, community service opportunities for nearly 600 persons to meet education, environmental, health, and other pressing community challenges. The Commission sponsors AmeriCorps, a national service initiative, by awarding federal AmeriCorps dollars to nonprofit agencies to respond to local needs. In exchange for service, AmeriCorps members receive an education award of up to \$5,550 that can be used to pay for college or to pay back qualified student loans. Since 1994, more than 9,700 Connecticut residents have served more than 12 million hours and have qualified for Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$26.7 million. In April, with a record submission of 70 nominations, the Commission presented its annual Higher Education Community Service Awards to two college students, two student groups and faculty member.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The Department of Higher Education continued to provide comprehensive information on trends in student enrollment and education attainment, among other measures of system performance.

For the first time ever, enrollment at Connecticut colleges and universities topped 200,000, representing the largest one-year gain on record, and breaking previous records for the tenth straight year. The annual increase of 7,405 students (3.8 percent) brought the new total to 200,624 students.

The two major drivers fueling the increase were the soaring numbers of students attending Connecticut's 12 community colleges, and the rapid growth occurring at eight of the state's independent colleges, four of which are for-profit institutions.

The latest graduation statistics show that Connecticut colleges and universities awarded 38,912 degrees in 2009-2010, up 2.3 percent from the previous year. This is the ninth consecutive year of growth.

Half of all awards (50.9 percent) were bachelor's degrees, 22.4 percent were master's and 14.3 percent were associate's. Women earned 59.1 percent of all degrees, reversing a dip that occurred the previous year. The proportion of degrees in health and fitness outpaced growth in other areas as did those in science, technology, engineering and math. Conversely, the proportion of degrees conferred in education and business fell.

Despite greater numbers of state residents earning postsecondary credentials, Connecticut is not keeping pace with leading states and is now ranked 43th in the rate of growth of persons aged 25-34 who hold an associate's degree or higher, well behind every other New England state. Nationally, Connecticut has dropped from fourth to seventh in the percentage of adults over age 25 with postsecondary degrees, falling three places since 2000. Reported in January, the Department based these findings on an analysis of Census and American Community Survey data and called for strengthened efforts to improve college readiness, retention and graduation.