Update: New England Board of Higher Education’s Regional Student Program

The Regional Student Program (RSP) saved participating New England residents nearly $56.5 million on their 2014-15 tuition bills (up 1% over last year). A full-time student saved an average of $7,450. Meanwhile, the RSP brought more than $66 million in tuition revenue (also up 1% from last year).

RSP enrollment decreased slightly in 2014-15
According to the 2014-15 RSP Annual Report, overall RSP enrollment decreased 3% from last year; community college enrollment decreased 4%, state colleges and universities 1% and graduate enrollment 8%. Nearly half (49%) of participating colleges and universities saw decreases in their RSP enrollment over last year. One third (33%) saw increases and 17% saw no change.

Popular RSP programs this year include: Associate programs in advanced manufacturing, criminal justice, health studies; Bachelor’s programs in biomedical engineering, marine science, pharmaceutical science, physiology, recreation management and zoology; and Graduate programs in wildlife ecology and library and information studies.

2014 RSP review yielded 27 additional new programs
More than 750 undergraduate and graduate degree programs are approved for eligibility under the RSP. The 2014 annual review resulted in the approval of 27 additional degree programs – including four concentrations (see * next to program name). Concentrations that are comparable to majors in their content have been eligible for RSP approval since an RSP policy revision in 2012.

State | Benefit to Residents | Benefit to Public Colleges & Universities |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuition Savings</td>
<td># Enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>$10,826,211</td>
<td>1,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>$2,407,752</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>$18,488,552</td>
<td>2,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>$15,168,092</td>
<td>2,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>$6,484,734</td>
<td>1,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>$3,106,081</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>$56,481,422</td>
<td>9,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Tuition Savings # Enrolled Tuition Revenue Fee Revenue # Students
Connecticut $10,826,211 1,620 $16,675,784 $3,667,771 1,109
Maine $2,407,752 440 $9,791,931 $1,614,836 914
Massachusetts $18,488,552 2,649 $8,308,117 $33,375,280 4,467
New Hampshire $15,168,092 2,834 $8,427,571 $856,241 724
Rhode Island $6,484,734 1,120 $13,638,124 $1,104,299 1,388
Vermont $3,106,081 579 $9,583,884 $665,430 640
New England $56,481,422 9,242 $66,425,411 $41,283,857 9,242

Benefit to Residents Benefit to Public Colleges & Universities
State Tuition Savings # Enrolled Tuition Revenue Fee Revenue # Students
Connecticut $10,826,211 1,620 $16,675,784 $3,667,771 1,109
Maine $2,407,752 440 $9,791,931 $1,614,836 914
Massachusetts $18,488,552 2,649 $8,308,117 $33,375,280 4,467
New Hampshire $15,168,092 2,834 $8,427,571 $856,241 724
Rhode Island $6,484,734 1,120 $13,638,124 $1,104,299 1,388
Vermont $3,106,081 579 $9,583,884 $665,430 640
New England $56,481,422 9,242 $66,425,411 $41,283,857 9,242

2014 RSP review yielded 27 additional new programs
More than 750 undergraduate and graduate degree programs are approved for eligibility under the RSP. The 2014 annual review resulted in the approval of 27 additional degree programs – including four concentrations (see * next to program name). Concentrations that are comparable to majors in their content have been eligible for RSP approval since an RSP policy revision in 2012.

- **Associate degree programs (2):** Energy Utility Technology, STEM Studies
- **Bachelor’s degree programs (14):** Actuarial Science, Community Development, Community Health and Wellness*, Diagnostic Medical Sonography*, Food Safety*, German, Green Building Design, Interactive Media, Landscape Design and Sustainable Horticulture, Linguistics: Speech and Language Science*, Renewable Energy, Robotics and Mechatronics, Sustainable Food and Farming, Sustainable Land Use
- **Graduate programs (11):** Elementary Math Specialist (MEd), Digital Media & Design MA, MFA, Human Resource Management, Bioinformatics (prof. MS), Engineering and Business prof. (MS),
Forestry (prof. MF), International Education (EdS), School Counselor Education (EdS), Social Justice Education (EdS), Nursing: Direct Entry (D), Nursing: Direct Entry Family Psychiatric (MS)
Publications

- 2015-16 brochures highlighting bachelor’s programs by state were distributed in Sept. 2014 throughout New England, including to all high schools and public libraries, and directly to students and families at college fairs. Other materials distributed included bookmarks and magnets.

- The 2015 Guide to New England Colleges and Universities, the fifth edition produced by NEBHE in partnership with Boston magazine, is an effective vehicle for wide dissemination of RSP information with college and financial aid information throughout the region. Boston manages advertising and publication. NEBHE distributes 20,000 complimentary copies throughout New England including multiple copies to high schools, libraries, colleges, to students and families at college fairs, as well as to more than 600 students eligible for TRIO programs and NEOA (New England Educational Opportunity Association) program staff throughout the six states. Boston magazine distributed the Guide with its December issue to 80,000 subscribers to its Boston and Philadelphia editions. Repeat orders for the Guide and RSP materials more than tripled this year.

College Fairs and Events

- NEBHE participated in about 60 college fairs and events (about double last year’s number). NEBHE engaged three former high school counselors to expand outreach to students, families and counselors in Vermont, Maine and Connecticut.

Communications, Promotion and Advertising

- Email updates to 3,600 school counselors, featuring state-specific information about the RSP and highlighting the Guide to New England Colleges. Multiple copies of publications.

- Legislator updated with details regarding the benefit of the RSP to their states and districts.

- Advertisements in directories for the six states’ school counselor associations, the NH Blue Book, and newspapers’ special supplements on preparing for college and college fairs.

- Scholarship directories (online and printed) list the RSP, including the College Board’s Big Future website, Scholarships.com, Peterson’s, Wintergreen Orchard House and The City of Boston Scholarship Guide.

- State offices of higher education and/or finance authorities include RSP information and materials in their print and/or online resources and communications for high school students and families: Connecticut Office of Higher Education Information Center, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), Massachusetts Educational Finance Authority (MEFA), New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF), Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority (RIHEAAA) and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC).

- www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak. Eligibility details, program database and downloadable publications. Web traffic included average page views of 5,500 per month and 2,500 new users per month.

New Advisory Committee

NEBHE has formed a new advisory committee to consider (1) how the RSP can best respond to the challenges facing New England public colleges and universities, including competition for declining numbers of high school graduates and pressure to make college more affordable and accessible. (2) state and institutional policies regarding permanent residency affect eligibility for the RSP and whether NEBHE could establish a uniform RSP residency policy for the region.

Members include representatives from selected RSP-participating colleges and universities, higher education systems/ departments, secondary education, and NEBHE board members.

For further information, contact: Wendy Lindsay, Senior Director, Regional Student Program
wlindsay@nebhe.org • 617-533-9511
Connecticut
House Bill 6715 was introduced in the 2015 legislative session. Institutions from all sectors of education support the bill. N-SARA collected information from State Portal Agencies across the country in order to provide the CT legislature with cost data to support future SARA implementation.

Maine
Maine has draft SARA legislation in the Revisor’s office from Sen. Brian Langley, Chair of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. After meeting with members of the DOE, state Board of Education and the University of Maine System, SARA has full support in Maine. Working closely with the NEBHE Legislative Advisory Committee members in Maine, N-SARA has developed a network of support across the state. The newly appointed Higher Education Specialist will help move the initiative forward.

Massachusetts
Massachusetts’ higher education sectors have expressed great interest in joining SARA. There are ongoing discussions with the Department of Education and with all stakeholders across the state, culminating with the SARA legislative briefing held on February 23 at the State House sponsored by CSG, Presidents’ Forum, NC-SARA and N-SARA. N-SARA worked with AICUM to collect distance education data, and also presented during its annual conference. All interested stakeholders are working together and within their respective networks to move SARA forward.

New Hampshire » Member
New Hampshire became the first NEBHE SARA state in December 2014. NH is currently accepting institutional applications.

Rhode Island
Representative Joe McNamara submitted HB 5578 in the 2015 legislative session. SARA also has full support from Rhode Island institutions, as N-SARA worked closely with AICURI to educate and disseminate information. In January, the Council of Postsecondary education voted unanimously to support SARA.

Vermont
Legislation was passed in the 2014 legislative session. N-SARA is working closely with the Vermont Agency of Education to develop its application and also enhance its student complaint process in Vermont.
SARA is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. SARA is a nationwide initiative of states that will make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make it easier for states to regulate and institutions to participate in interstate distance education. The initiative is administered by the country’s four regional higher education compacts the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and overseen by The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states and better resolution of student complaints.

### NOT AFFILIATED WITH REGIONAL COMPACT

### New Jersey
New Jersey's higher education sectors have expressed interest in joining SARA and have engaged in conversations with WICHE & NEBHE. N-SARA is working closely with Secretary of Education Rochelle Hendricks and President George Pruitt of Thomas Edison State College. N-SARA reviewed their current legislation, and provided sample legislation for the 2015 session.

### New York
The Board of Regents voted to move forward with this initiative. N-SARA is working with all sectors and individual institutions to develop a strategy in New York.
The New England Journal of Higher Education (NEJHE) and related publications are now completely online (with the exception of our annual directory now printed in partnership with Boston magazine). The transformation from print to web has allowed us to deliver quality NEJHE content without the production and mailing costs, but with added timeliness and expanded engagement.

NEJHE continues to offer commentary and analysis about New England higher education and its relationship to the economy and quality of life. Content for the Journal section—bylined, in-depth features from expert contributors—is refreshed weekly. Content for the Newslink section—including event announcements, comings and goings and federal and state education news—is updated as often as daily. All posts are also distributed via Twitter and Facebook and emailed to opinion leaders in our weekly NEJHE NewsBlast.

NEJHE’s New Directions for Higher Education series examines emerging issues, trends and ideas that have an impact on higher education policies, programs and practices. The series has included Q&As with UMass Boston Dean Phil DiSalvo interviewing higher ed experts, most recently Deborah Floyd, editor in chief of the Community College Journal of Research and Practice, on community colleges offering bachelor’s degrees.

Earlier installments of this series have featured interviews with: Carnegie Foundation President Anthony Bryk; Fastweb.com and FinAid.org Publisher Mark Kantrowitz; Lumina Foundation President and CEO Jamie P. Merisotis; American Council on Education (ACE) President Molly Corbett Broad; AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider; author Richard Arum; Richard D. Legon, president of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB); Matthew Sigelman, CEO of Burning Glass Technologies; Council for Higher Education Accreditation President Judith S. Eaton; American Association of State Colleges and Universities President Muriel Howard; Teagle Foundation President Judith Shapiro; University of Southern California scholar Adrianna Kezar; U.S. Department of Education Deputy Under Secretary Jamienne S. Studley; Council of Independent Colleges President Richard Ekman; Council for Adult and Experiential Learning President Pamela Tate; and George Washington University President emeritus Stephen Trachtenberg.

On a more eclectic front, we’ve posted Journal articles on: President Obama’s proposals to make community college free; environmental sustainability; regional jobs and budget reports via the New England Economic Partnership, NEBHE and others; cybersecurity; the middle-skills gap; children’s savings accounts; remedial math; and legal interpretations of issues such as sexual assault, paying college athletes and faculty organizing.
Bounce from NEJHE Content

The NEBHE website now includes a running tally of media coverage of NEBHE and reprints from The New England Journal of Higher Education. NEJHE material is frequently re-posted in blogs of the Providence Journal and by other regional and national outlets.

Metrics

The weekly NEJHE NewsBlast now regularly garners around 1,000 "opens." We've published and emailed the NEJHE NewsBlast weekly since October 2010.

In the past year, nebhe.org has experienced about 155,000 “Visits” and 325,000 “Pageviews.” For more on analytics, see audience overview for 3/6/14 to 3/5/15.

Collaborations

NEJHE plays a major role in advancing NEBHE collaborations. Among longstanding collaborations, we continue to work with the New England Council to create our DC Shuttle column on higher education news from the U.S. capital, and with the New England Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) to post Higher Ed Joblink listing job openings in higher education. Recently, NEJHE introduced articles and tweets branded as State Capital Notes to complement the national news on DC Shuttle. Our successful collaboration with Boston magazine has NEBHE continuing to gather research for its well-respected annual directory of New England colleges and universities (renamed the Guide) while Boston magazine manages ad sales and printing of the publication.

Internally, NEJHE provides regular editorial assistance to NEBHE programs such as SARA, problem-based learning and various foundation proposals. NEJHE has worked with NEBHE’s Policy & Research director to improve Trends & Indicators with more colorful measures from more diverse sources better linked together for readers.

NEJHE also works to publicize the NEBHE excellence awards winners with media and others, oversee voiceover talent and coordinate AV for the awards dinner. We've posted our related content on an awards landing page at nebhe.org and worked significantly on the script and program book.

Perhaps most importantly, NEJHE has been heavily involved in NEBHE’s grant-funded collaboration with the Davis Educational Foundation, known as the Higher Education Innovation Challenge.
Higher Education Innovation Challenge

NEBHE and the Foundation have been collaborating with a range of academic, philanthropic and other leaders to develop an urgent action-oriented dialogue on threats facing New England’s colleges and universities. These threats stem partly from shifts in academic content and delivery, student demography and institutional finances—all set against the background of both rising expectations and eroding public perceptions of higher education.

NEBHE is now honing tools and facilitating discussions to help campuses address these challenges—in short, to determine how to sustain New England's historically vibrant and economically potent academic sector.

• We have refined an Institutional Indicators tool to help higher education institutions (HEIs) identify, assess and analyze a range of critical indicators that influence immediate and long-term institutional sustainability. This tool is designed to help campus leaders, faculty and others identify specific areas where shared engagement and focused attention can lead to improvements in efficiency and strengthened overall performance. Campuses may opt to share their results with others or may wish to keep their findings confidential to guide internal dialogue and discussions.

• We are assembling a set of articles, books, links and other analytical resources (including the Institutional Indicators tool referenced above) to help facilitate campus-wide understanding and knowledge about a range of student cost-reduction and institutional sustainability strategies. These materials are presented on an easily accessible online Toolkit page, which is featured prominently on NEBHE's homepage and emailed each week to colleagues and opinion leaders who read the NEJHE NewsBlast.

• As a next step, we are exploring the establishment of Innovation Institutes and Fellows Programs to catalyze institutional teams in undertaking productive, campus-based efforts to address cost, student affordability, financial sustainability and high-impact practices. The primary objective of the Innovation Institutes and Fellows Programs is to provide a facilitated format for campuses to engage their key leaders, including faculty, to collaborate in the production of specific action plans and innovative strategies. The Institutes will allow for interaction with other campuses committed to the same objectives while engaged in meeting their particular challenges.
Overarching Priorities

- **Smart investment in higher education policies and practices for more affordable and effective educational opportunities**
- **Innovative education policies and practices for higher rates of student success**
- **Stronger connections between higher education and the business community to foster economic development**

Projects

- **Redesigning Student Aid in New England**
  - Two-Year Lumina Foundation funded project, through Feb. 2016. The purpose of Redesigning Aid is to support New England states considering how state financial aid may be used more effectively as a policy tool for increased college access and success.
  - Three-participating states: Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island
  - State financial aid agencies received a mini-grant of $7,500 and technical assistance from NEBHE and national financial aid experts

- **Developmental Math Demonstration Project**
  - Three-Year Lumina Foundation funded project, through Aug. 2015. The purpose of DMDP is to support New England community colleges implement Khan Academy’s free, online instructional materials in developmental and technical math courses and interventions.
  - Institutions have participated across five states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont

 Opportunities ahead:
  - Multi-state data exchange
  - Multi-state student transfer initiatives

Activities

- Legislative Advisory Committee
- Legislative testimony
- Multi-state convenings

Resources

- Trends & Indicators
- Policy publications
Advanced Manufacturing PBL

The Professional & Curriculum Development program continues to build upon previous grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the field of STEM and Problem Based Learning (PBL). The third year of the current three-year grant, *Problem Based Learning in Advanced Manufacturing: Transforming 21st Century Technician Education (AM PBL)*, began September 2014. This is the third PBL grant that NEBHE has received from NSF/ATE.

The third year the project addressed the following goals:

- Develop a series of six **authentic multimedia PBL Challenges** (case studies) in collaboration with New England industry partners focused on sustainable practices in advanced manufacturing. Five Challenges have been developed in collaboration with the following industry partners:
  - IBM in Burlington, VT - semiconductor manufacturing
  - FastCAP – Boston, MA - nanotechnology
  - Sound Manufacturing - Old Saybrook, CT - sheet metal fabrication
  - Cirtec - Longmeadow, MA - medical devices
  - Hypertherm - Hanover, NH - precision measurement

The last Challenge is currently being designed. All of the Challenges are available freely to all at [http://www.pblprojects.org](http://www.pblprojects.org).

- Provide a series of **professional development activities** for New England secondary and post-secondary in-service STEM educators, as well as teacher education.
  - A one-week professional development Institute was held the week of July 27, 2014 at Boston University (BU). The cohort included 26 New England high school STEM educators and five STEM teacher educators. A report on this activity was provided for the fall 2014 NEBHE Board meeting.
  - A capstone workshop is being planned for July 2015 to showcase the work of the project’s participants as they have implemented the AM PBL Challenges with their students. To date, the FastCAP Challenge has been field-tested in two different high schools and one university; the IBM Challenge has been field-tested in three different high schools, two different community colleges and in Romania by a high school teacher who has been field-testing PBL Challenges since the PHOTON PBL project funded by NSF between 2006 and 2009. The Hypertherm Challenge has been field-tested at one high school, one community college and one four-year college. Additional field-testing will continue during the spring semester. The Cirtec Challenge has recently gone on-line; the Sound Manufacturing Challenge will go on line this spring for field-tested during the spring semester.
• Develop new instructional materials for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) **teacher education programs** in collaboration with Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).
  
  o A graduate teacher preparation course, **STEM in Technology & Engineering Education**, was successfully adapted to include PBL and was offered in the spring 2014 semester. The course will be offered in the future.

**PBL Consulting**

• We have been receiving request to conduct PBL professional development workshops for secondary and postsecondary educators.
  
  o We have received a second consulting contract from Kennebec Community College (KVCC) in Maine to introduce PBL into an existing Sustainable Agriculture and Culinary Arts program through a TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career) grant. An initial introductory workshop was held in November 2014 and a second workshop will be held in March 2015.
  
  o We have received an eight months $52,000 consulting contract from the U.S. Department of Labor’s/Employment and Training Administration’s YouthBuild program to introduce instructors in three YouthBuild programs: one in Hartford, CT, one in Providence, RI and one in Newark, NJ to PBL. An introductory workshop was held in January 2015. Technical support and mentoring are being provided this spring and a follow up workshop will be held in June 2015.
  
  o Additional inquiries for professional development are being received and considered.

**Next Steps**

• A proposal has been submitted to the Advanced Technological Education program of the National Science Foundation for further PBL work. If funded it would begin implementation in the fall.
• Work is under way to develop a concept and future funding for a NEBHE Center for Student Centered Learning.

Spring 2015