



COMMISSION ON
HIGHER EDUCATION
& EMPLOYABILITY

Regional Compacts



NEBHE's Mission

NEBHE promotes greater education opportunities and services for the residents of New England and its more than 270 colleges and universities.

It works across the six New England states to:

- Help leaders assess, develop and implement sound education practices and policies of regional significance;
- Promote regional cooperation and programs that encourage the efficient use and sharing of educational resources;
- Strengthen the relationship between higher education and the economic well-being and quality of life in New England.

Examples of NEBHE Over the Years...

Special Regional Commissions

- Higher education & the economy
- Technology & distance learning
- Higher education & employability

Surveys, Studies and Publications

- Admissions vacancies survey
- Leader opinions and emerging policy issues
- Regional competitiveness
- *The New England Journal of Higher Education*
- *Guide to New England Colleges & Universities*

Policy and Research Reports

- Equity and pluralism
- Online learning
- Multi-tribal college feasibility

Institutional/Partner Networks

- Library Information Network
- Compact for Faculty Diversity
- College Ready New England
- Higher Education Innovation Challenge

Resource Sharing & Cost Savings

- Regional Student Program/Tuition Break
- Master Property Insurance Program

Talent and Labor Supply Studies

- K-12 teachers
- Biotech industry
- Legal education
- Nursing & health sciences

Capacity-Building Programs

- Photon/Problem-based Learning
- Developmental math reform (Khan Academy)
- State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
- State financial aid redesign projects
- Conferences & professional development events

Internship Programs

- Environmental Education Program
- Aquaculture

NEBHE's Unique Leadership Roles

Policy Leadership and Dialogue

- Engaging policymakers at the highest levels

Raising Awareness

- Drawing attention to key issues, catalyzing awareness, analysis, discussion and policy change

Leadership Convener and Bridge Builder

- Convening top leaders for critical cross-sector conversations (K-12, higher education, industry, government)

Regional Collaboration Platform

- Developing and executing collaborative, multistate projects and programs to maximize cost savings, resource efficiency, innovation, policy adoption and cross-state alignment and integration

Capacity Builder

- Professional development for key leaders in education, government and business
- Innovation-oriented projects providing best practices, cutting-edge tools and expertise

Innovation Accelerator

- Launching innovation-oriented experiments and pilots to accelerate adoption and implementation

Consultant and Advisor

- Research, analysis, technical assistance and advising on state and institutional issues, programs, policies and proposals

Program Developer and Manager

- Creating and managing multi-party collaborative projects/programs (proposal development, project management, implementation and evaluation)

NEBHE's Commission Team

Michael K. Thomas, President & CEO

Candace Williams, Associate Director of Policy & Research

Stafford Peat, Senior Consultant

Richard Kazis, Commission Consultant

Susan C. Lane, Senior Director of Policy & Research

John O. Harney, Executive Editor of NEJHE

Charles F. Desmond, Senior Fellow

Marla Phippen, Executive Assistant to the President

Critical Time to Address Employability

National Trends

- Public fears about the rising cost of college
- Employer dissatisfaction with student preparedness for work
- Growing evidence that the economic value of credentials varies greatly, both within and across institutions
- The recognition by firms and students that high growth, high wage jobs require more preparation and strong social and analytic skills

Regional Trends

- A projected 14% decline of high school graduates by 2032
- Out-migration from some New England areas exacerbate workforce pipeline gaps
- A shortage of “high and middle skill” workers

Key Data

- More than 30% of young adults do not receive information about jobs and careers in college.

(Source: Federal Reserve Board Survey)

- After graduation 50% of students are:
 - **Unemployed**
 - **Under-employed**
 - **Or would have selected a different postsecondary program if they could do it over again**

(Source: USA Funds)

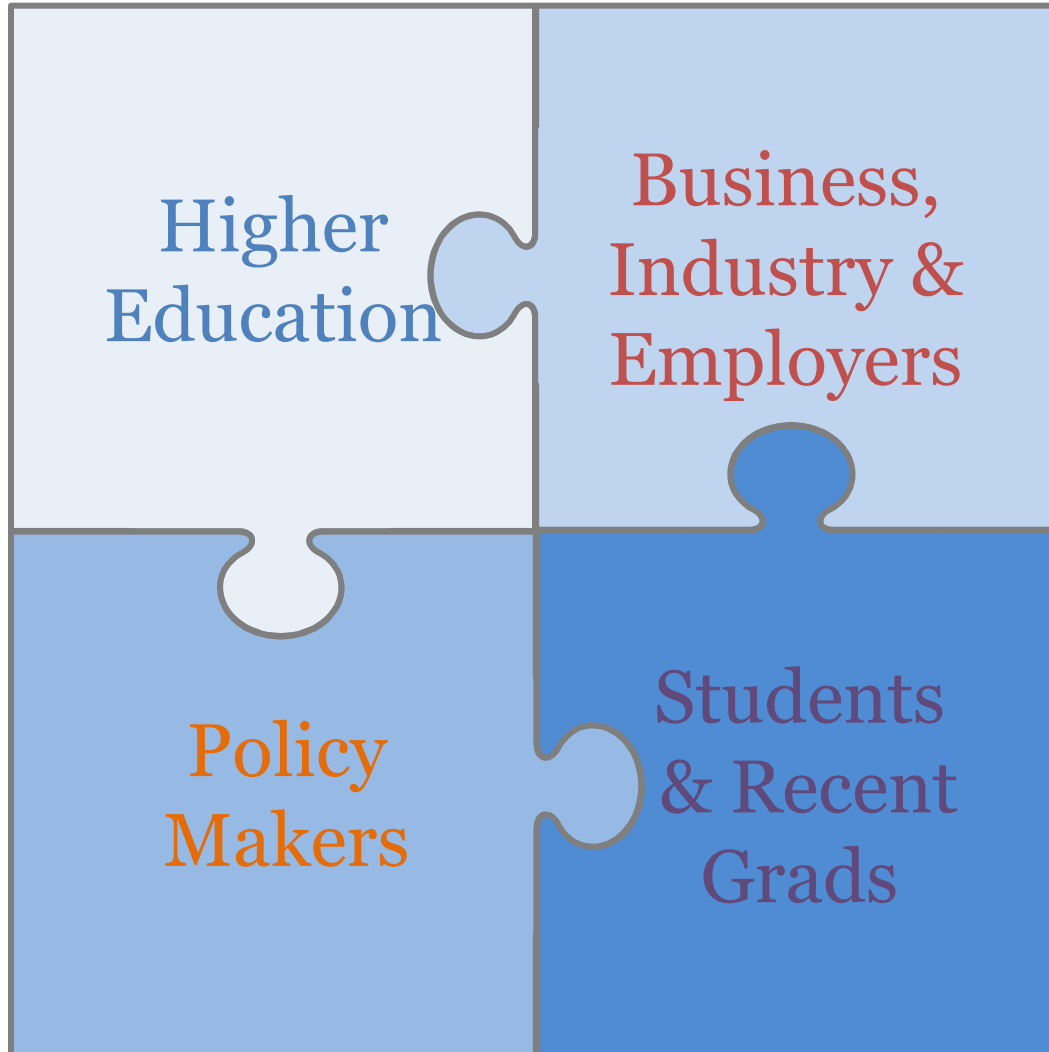
- A 2014 survey of employers and college academic officers found an extreme polarization: while 96 percent of college representatives felt confident in their institution's ability to prepare students for the workforce, only 11 percent of business leaders agree that today's college graduates have the skills and competencies that businesses need.

(Source: Gallup)

Commission Charge

- Identify, review and recommend high-impact policies and practices related to:
 - Clarifying what employability means for New England
 - Promoting the readiness and employability of postsecondary graduates
 - Supporting timely and effective transitions to the workforce
- Represent the needs of key stakeholder groups and work to develop a consensus on potential next steps
- Take a prescriptive leadership and advocacy role by charting an action agenda for participating states and their postsecondary institutions
- Recognize success and excellence, as well as inform and accelerate policy change, the adoption of best practices and innovation

Commission Membership



Employability

noun | **em·ploy·a·bi·li·ty** | \im-ˌplɔɪ-ə-'bi-lə-tē\

Definition: A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

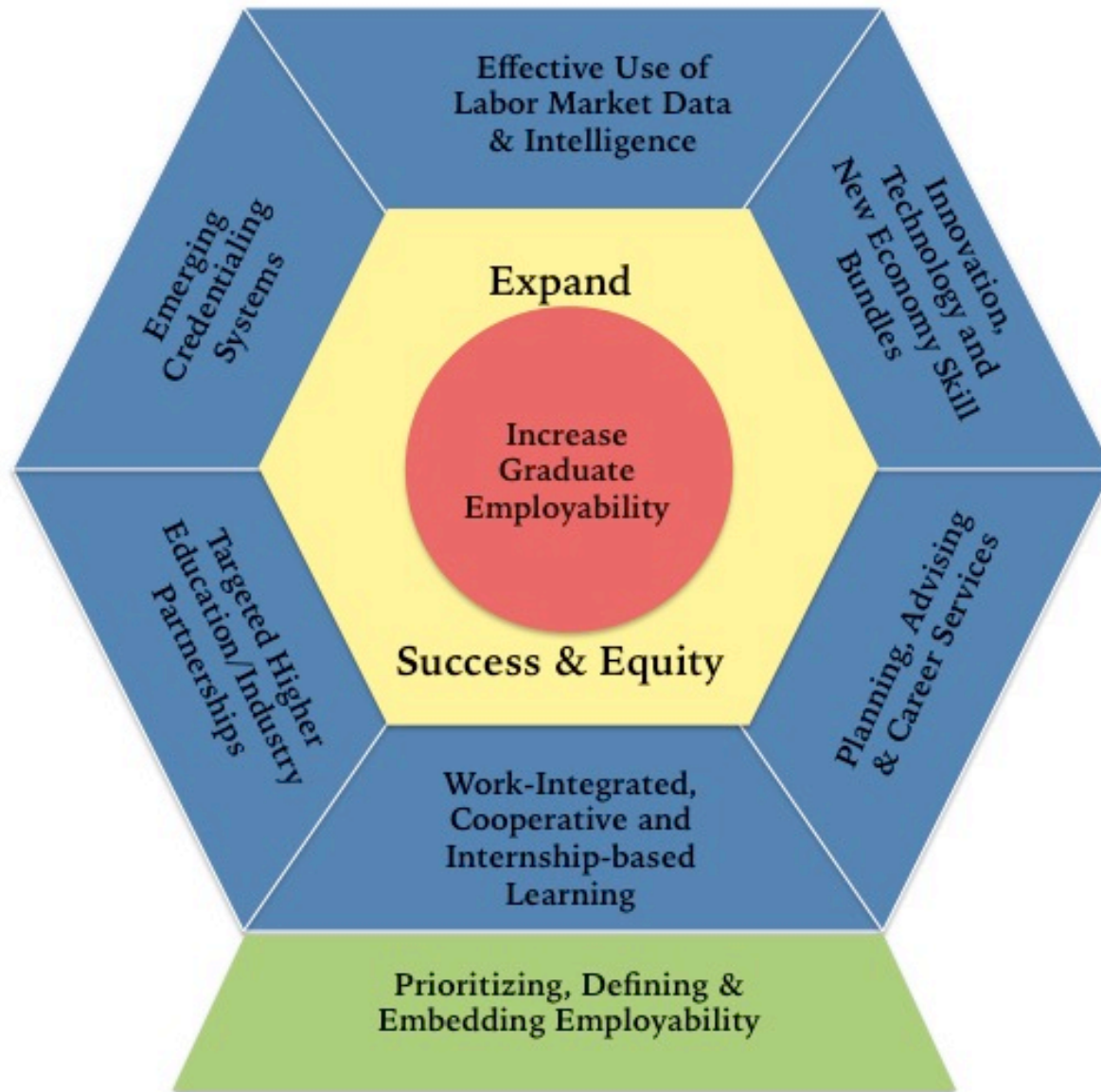
Employability is...

- Definable, measureable and improvable
- A combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attributes and attitudes enabling success in life and citizenship—not just in employment
- Relevant to all students—across institution types, degree levels, majors, or mode of study
- Aligned and consistent with the aims of liberal education
- Made explicit to students to support empowered planning, reflection, action and lifelong learning
- An institution-wide priority and responsibility
- Supported by effective policies, programs and practices at institutional, system and state level

Employability is not...

- Just about employment and wages (e.g., College Scorecard)
- Quantified by any single measure
- Just skill or workforce training
- A reduction of academic rigor or standards
- Just the responsibility of Career Services
- Relegated to non-academic staff
- Confined to the period just before graduation

Framework



Guiding Questions

- What are the respective roles of higher education, business/industry and government in increasing the employability of graduates?
- What are the primary ways in which New England higher education institutions (HEIs) can improve the career readiness, employability and work transition successes of their students—and rethink the ways in which they address such issues?
- What best practices, cutting-edge policies or leading strategies can be adopted in the six New England states and in both public and independent HEIs?
- How should institutional and public policy be informed and improved to address such needs and issues?
- How can states better align public policy with institutional practices to support and increase the employability of graduates?

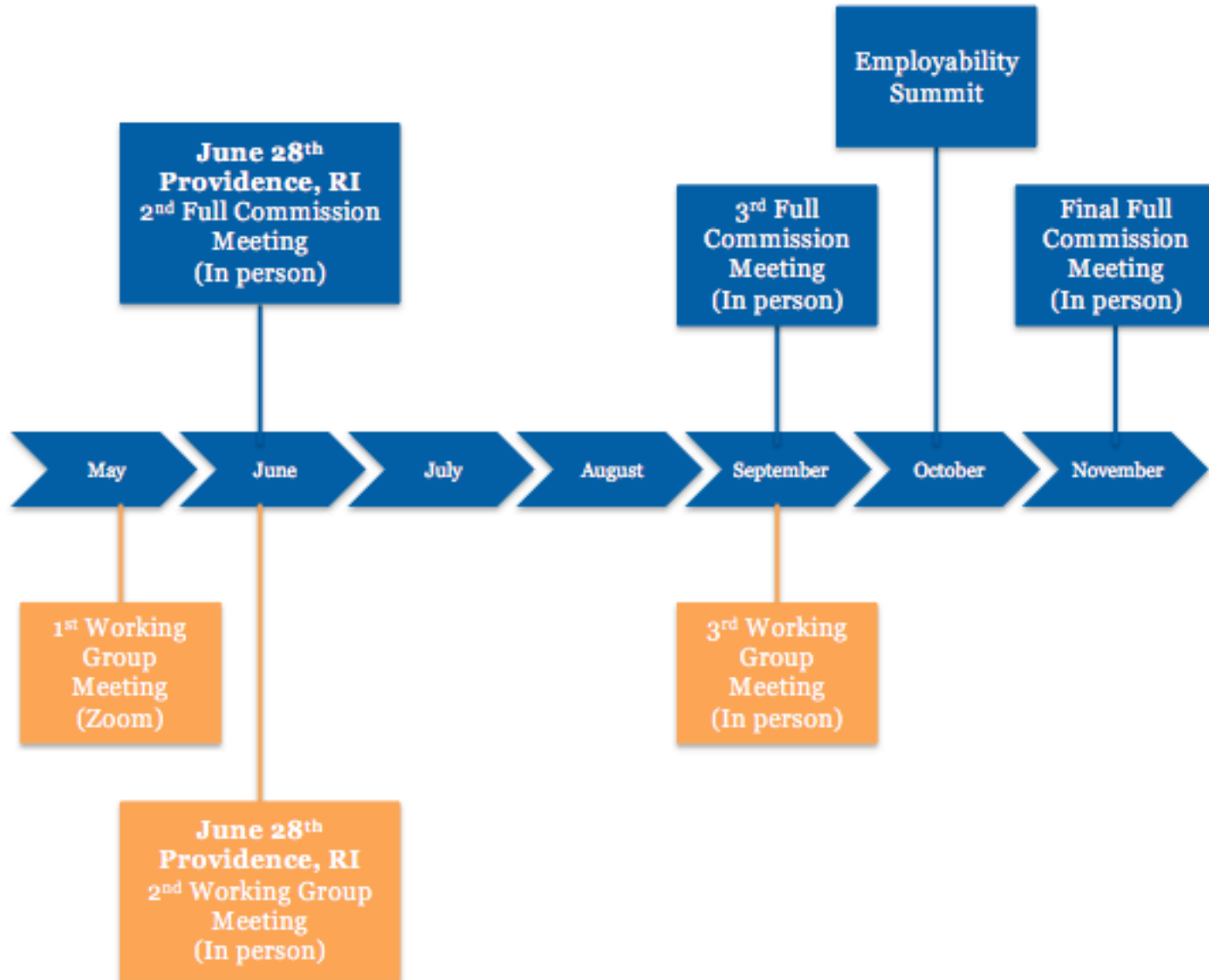
Guiding Principles

- Focus on an action agenda that engages key stakeholders
- Assume a leadership role: drive change and inform a national (and global) dialogue
- Maintain an appropriate “altitude”
- Avoid a deficit model: build on individual and collective strengths, leverage collaboration
- Respect diverse missions, roles, distinctions
- Foundational (not “soft”) skills
- Define and align employability with the aims of liberal learning—as employers value
- Embrace Purdue/Gallup Index Goal:
 - Measure the most important outcomes of higher education – great careers and lives that matter
 - Provide higher education leaders (and other stakeholders) with productive insights for meaningful performance improvements

Working Groups

- **Effective Use of Skill and Labor Market Data & Advising and Career Services**
 - What sources and forms of labor market data, including supply/demand and skill-related information, are most useful in 1) designing programs and courses, 2) informing career services and advising, and 3) developing higher education-industry partnerships to ensure that students are developing employable skills?
 - What innovations in delivery and technology should institutions consider in order to ensure that career services is adaptive to a changing student body and labor market?
- **HEI/Industry Partnerships & Work-integrated Learning**
 - What constitutes high quality work-integrated learning in postsecondary education?
 - What innovative partnership models among educators and employers can tackle nagging skills mismatches?
- **Next-Generation Tech Skills & Emerging Credential Systems**
 - What technology skills “bundle” or baseline skills should graduates acquire?
 - How can HEIs improve the ways in which they frame, assess, document and interpret the knowledge, skills and competencies their students/graduates acquire? How can they engage industry and employers in the process?

Schedule & Process



FAQs

What if I am unable to attend a meeting?

- Pertinent materials will be available on the Commission website, including meeting summaries
- NEBHE will host a brief “catch-up” video conference after each Committee meeting to update those unable to participate
- In exceptional circumstances, a representative may attend

How can I provide input to the Commission’s work and deliberations?

- Input to the Commission can occur at both full and Working Group meetings
- The Chair and NEBHE staff will work to maximize discussion and deliberation during those meetings
- Input can be shared both verbally and electronically during a meeting (using an online polling tool)
- NEBHE will also regularly contact and/or survey Commission members for verbal and electronic input

FAQs

How will the Commission receive “testimony” to inform recommendations and proposals?

- The Commission will seek to utilize varied strategies and tools for maximizing input
- Commission and Working Group meetings will seek testimony from experts and thought leaders
- Commission members may be invited to be part of virtual interviews with the same
- NEBHE staff will regularly summarize and submit “evidence” to Commission members for consideration
- Commission members are encouraged to submit evidence via NEBHE staff and to provide testimony

Where will Commission materials, evidence and documentation be available?

- All materials related to the Commission and its activities will be available at: nebhe.org/commission
- This will be a publicly available site and will allow for comments and input

What is the sequence of Commission meetings and activities?

- Please refer to the Commission schedule for an overview and specific dates

FAQs

How will Commission and Working Group Meetings function?

- Each meeting will have a formal agenda that includes goals and key issues/questions to be addressed
- Each will include the review and consideration of testimonies and evidence
- Each will include deliberation and discussion

What is the role of Working Groups and how will they function?

- Working Groups will seek greater depth on key elements and issues related to the Commission's work
- Working Groups will “set the stage” for further discussion and deliberation at full Commission meetings, including preliminary recommendations
- The first Working Group meeting will be virtual; the others will occur on the day of full Commission meetings
- Commission members will be asked to indicate which Working Group they prefer to participate in

What if I have additional process questions or suggestions?

- Please share your thoughts, advice and input directly with NEBHE staff members at policy@nebhe.org.

Discussion Questions

- What outcomes do you hope the Commission will achieve?
- What other dimensions of employability should be examined?
- What other principles should guide the Commission's work?
- What key trends should the Commission take into consideration?
- What other things should our team review and share with the Commission?
- Other data? Institutions? Experts? Policies? Practices?
- What are your reactions to the presentations?
- What supply and demand challenges impact your institution/state/sector/industry?
- What skill challenges impact your institution/state/sector/industry?
- What exemplary employer engagement and employability initiatives exist in your institution/state/sector/industry?