

House Republican Press Release

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Back-to-School - The Legislature's Higher Education Committee at Work



By State Representative Marilyn Giuliano

The legislature's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee approved two new bills during this past session of the General Assembly that are designed to assist college students returning to Connecticut's campuses. These two new bills – the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, and the Articulation and Transfers agreement – were signed into law recently. Both were crafted to improve the quality of educational experience at our community colleges and state universities; and to better prepare our graduates to enter Connecticut's workforce.

The Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education was developed in response to educational, demographic, and workforce trends that predict that over the next ten years Connecticut will experience one of the largest declines in working-age populations of the New England states. Presently, Connecticut is losing college educated 18-34-year-olds faster than any state in the nation. Connecticut has never had difficulty attracting students to enroll in its system of higher education. As a state, we have some of the oldest, best and most prestigious colleges and universities in the nation. Our difficulty has been hanging on to this group as they emerge from our institutions of higher education and seek to enter the workforce. Without young, educated workers, Connecticut cannot maintain and grow a robust and diverse economy.

The master plan will target increasing rates of graduation, and address tuition affordability and student debt. It will examine workforce trends, and look to increase financial incentives in workforce shortage areas such as information technology and nursing. It calls for the development of business/higher education partnerships, and campus-to-workplace bridge programs where industry and institutions of higher education collaborate to direct graduates into key areas of the labor force. By working to increase educational access and attainment, our colleges and universities can generate a reliable stream of talented young workers whose participation in Connecticut's workforce is pivotal to sustaining our state's economy.

The newly signed Articulation and Transfers agreement creates a set of uniform standards for courses, course numbering and degree requirements for each of Connecticut's twelve

community colleges and its four regional state universities. Similar courses taken at one college or university will be credited toward degree requirements throughout the state's higher education system. This new system of standardization will remedy what has been a chronic source of frustration to college students who seek to transfer courses and credits only to find roadblocks and an absence of equivalencies within our state university system. With many students transferring among the state colleges, this legislation will ensure that students receive full credit for course work completed. The intent is to make the college transfer process seamless, sensible and reliable for our students.

State Representative Marilyn Giuliano, Republican leader on the legislature's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, represents the 23rd Assembly District of Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and coastal Westbrook in the General Assembly.