



**Certification and Higher Education Committee**  
Maine State Board of Education  
Minutes of the September 22, 2021 Meeting

The Certification and Higher Education Committee held a virtual meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 2021, via Zoom. The following were present: Committee Chair, Wendy Ault; Wilson Hess; Victoria Kornfield; and Fern Desjardins (Board Members). Deputy Commissioner Chuhta; Angel Loreda, Director of Office of Higher Education and Educator Support Services; Jason Libby, Higher Education Specialist; Stephanie Fyfe, Certification Coordinator; (Department of Education) and Mary Becker, State Board of Education Secretary Specialist.

Guests: Gay Anne McDonald, Executive Director, MADSEC; Vicki Wallack, Director of Communications and Government Relations, MSMA; Holly Couturier, Executive Director-Professional Division, MPA; Cynthia Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, RSU 5; and Katie Rybakova, Associate Professor of Education, Thomas College.

Chair, Wendy Ault called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

There were no draft minutes for approval.

**Public Comment:**

Holly Couturier commented on the Air Quality Forum that was held on Monday, September 20, 2021. She thought the forum was very beneficial and useful in providing support to her members.

**Introductions:**

Chair Ault welcomed all members and guests to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The focus of the September 22, 2021 meeting was stated:

- Public Comment
- Chapter 115 Update
- Certification update from Stephanie Fyfe, Certification Coordinator.
- Higher Education update from Jason Libby, Higher Education Specialist
- Guest from Thomas College, Katie Rybakova, will present on what Thomas College is doing to increase the number of young people who are considering education as a major in the State of Maine and specifically at Thomas College.
- Strategic Plan
- Continue review of Annual Reports

**Chapter 115 Update:** *(Wendy Ault)*

Committee Chair Wendy Ault presented an update to Chapter 115.

- Comment period for Rule Chapter 115 ended on September 15, 2021. Special meetings are scheduled for the Committee to continue its review of public comments and the drafted responses.

**Certification Office Update:** *(Stephanie Fyfe)*

Stephanie Fyfe presented a written certification news update and reviewed it with the Committee. (Copy of written report in file)

On behalf of the Committee, Wendy Ault thanked Stephanie for attending these meetings. It is obvious from her presentations that she has paid attention to the Committee's areas of interest.

**Higher Education Update:** *(Jason Libby)*

*Review Team upcoming schedules. All reviews will be virtual.*

- The University of New England (UNE) review is scheduled for the week of September 27, 2021 and will take place throughout the week. Wendy Ault and Cynthia Murray-Beliveau will be the Board Observers. Wendy Ault requested a meeting with Jason Libby and Cynthia Murray-Beliveau prior to the scheduled review.
- The University of Southern Maine (USM) CAEP review is scheduled for November 7 and will conclude on November 9 or 10, 2021. Wilson Hess and Victoria Kornfield will be the Board Observers.
- The University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) review is scheduled for November 15, 2021. Fern Desjardins will be the Board Observer. A new Board member may join Fern for the review if schedules allow.
- Northeastern University (Roux Institute) – On July 15, 2020, the State Board of Education approved the review team recommendation for degree-granting authority. Additionally, the Board requested an onsite visit to the Roux Institute in 2021 when operations are fully underway to confirm that plans as described in Spring 2020 are materializing effectively. There was a visit planned for October 2021 but with the COVID 19 situation, the review may be postponed until Spring of 2021.
- Annual Report Template – The Committee is invited to suggest changes to the template. It is scheduled to go out early in 2022.
- UMaine CAEP Site Review Report – the Committee will review and discuss the report at the October 27, 2021 Committee meeting.
- Colby College Interim Report – The Committee received the report and passed it on to the full Board for receipt at the August 11, 2021 State Board Meeting. The full Board needs to accept the interim report, then approve the report at a future meeting.

MOTION by Wilson Hess, seconded by Wendy Ault, and unanimously voted by those present to recommend that the State Board of Education accept the Colby College Educator Preparation Program Interim Report at the October 13, 2021 Board meeting.

Angel Loreda brought the SARA Agreement to the Committee's attention. Angel will send the draft agreement to Mary Becker to distribute to Committee members for review. Following review by the Committee, the Chair of the State Board will sign the completed agreement. For the benefit of new members, Jason Libby briefed the Committee on the NC-SARA (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements) Agreement. SARA is an agreement among member states,

districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate postsecondary distance education.

**Thomas College, Katie Rybakova:**

Katie Rybakova, Assistant Professor of Education at Thomas College spoke about initiatives Thomas is undertaking to increase the number of students who are considering education as a major. She described the Future Teachers of America Academy; Educators Rising; a pre-service teacher conference scheduled for March 2022; and professional organization work that Thomas is doing to promote the teaching profession.

**SBE Strategic Plan:**

Continued conversation about the Strategic Plan for the Certification and Higher Education Committee was postponed until the October 27, 2021 Committee meeting.

Angel Loreda shared a template for the DOE Higher Education Strategic Plan. Fern Desjardins will share the Board's Strategic Plan template with Angel and Jason Libby.

**Review of Annual Reports for Chapter 114 approved programs:**

16 Maine colleges submit this report to the Committee. The reports are due each year by April 7.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the following reports:

- University of New England
- Colby College
- Thomas College
- St. Joseph's College

**Announcement:**

Wilson Hess announced that Dr. Betsy Libby has been selected as President of Central Maine Community College (CMCC) in Auburn. Dr. Libby has been serving as interim president at CMCC since September of 2020. Dr. Libby is the wife of Jason Libby. Wilson asked Jason to congratulate her on behalf of the State Board of Education.

**Meeting Handouts:**

- 1) Agenda
- 2) Certification update from Stephanie Fyfe
- 3) Annual Reports (5 reports)

The next regular Certification Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 10:30 AM.

**Adjournment:**

The September 22, 2021 Certification and Higher Education Committee meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Johnson Becker  
Secretary Specialist,  
Maine State Board of Education