



COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION & EMPLOYABILITY

NEW ENGLAND BOARD
of HIGHER EDUCATION 



What is Employability?

Employability

- **noun** | em•ploy•a•bi•li•ty | **plɔɪ-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...

- A combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attributes and attitudes enabling success in life and citizenship—not just in employment
- Applicable 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 their reflection and lifelong learning
- An institution-wide priority and responsibility
- Supported by effective policies, programs and practices—institutional, system and public



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



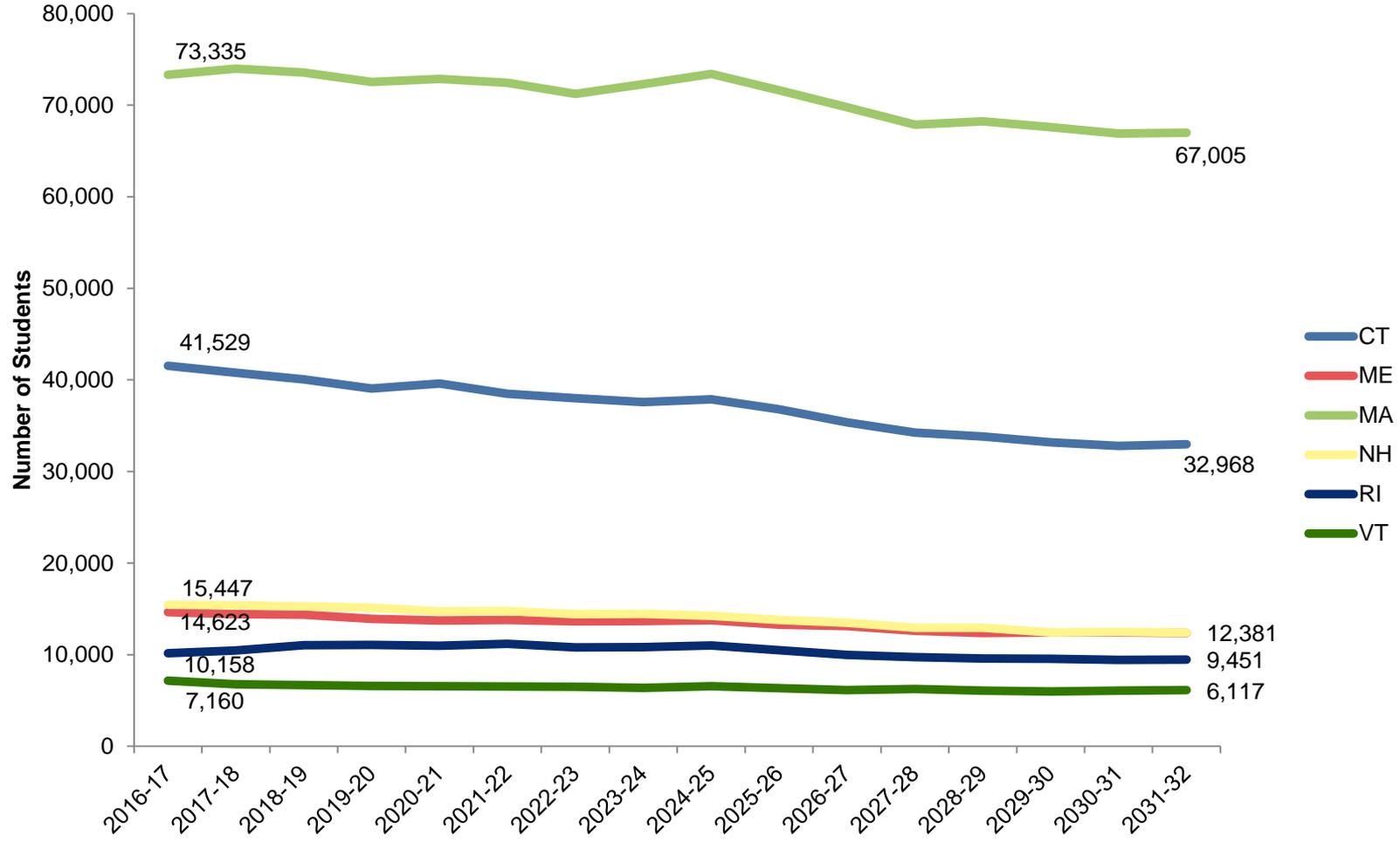
Commission Charge

- **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**



New England's Higher Education Landscape

Projected High School Graduates by State

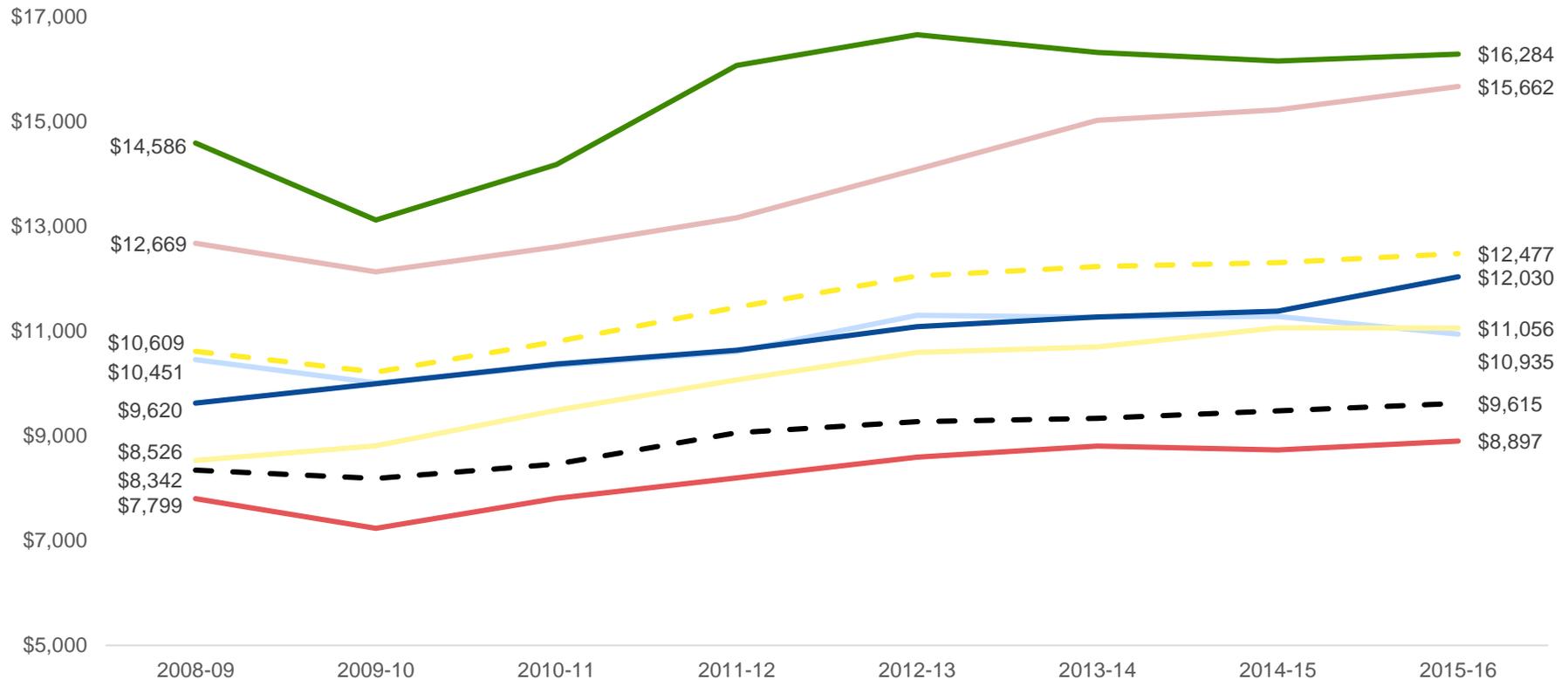


Source: NEBHE Analysis of *Knocking at the College Door* data



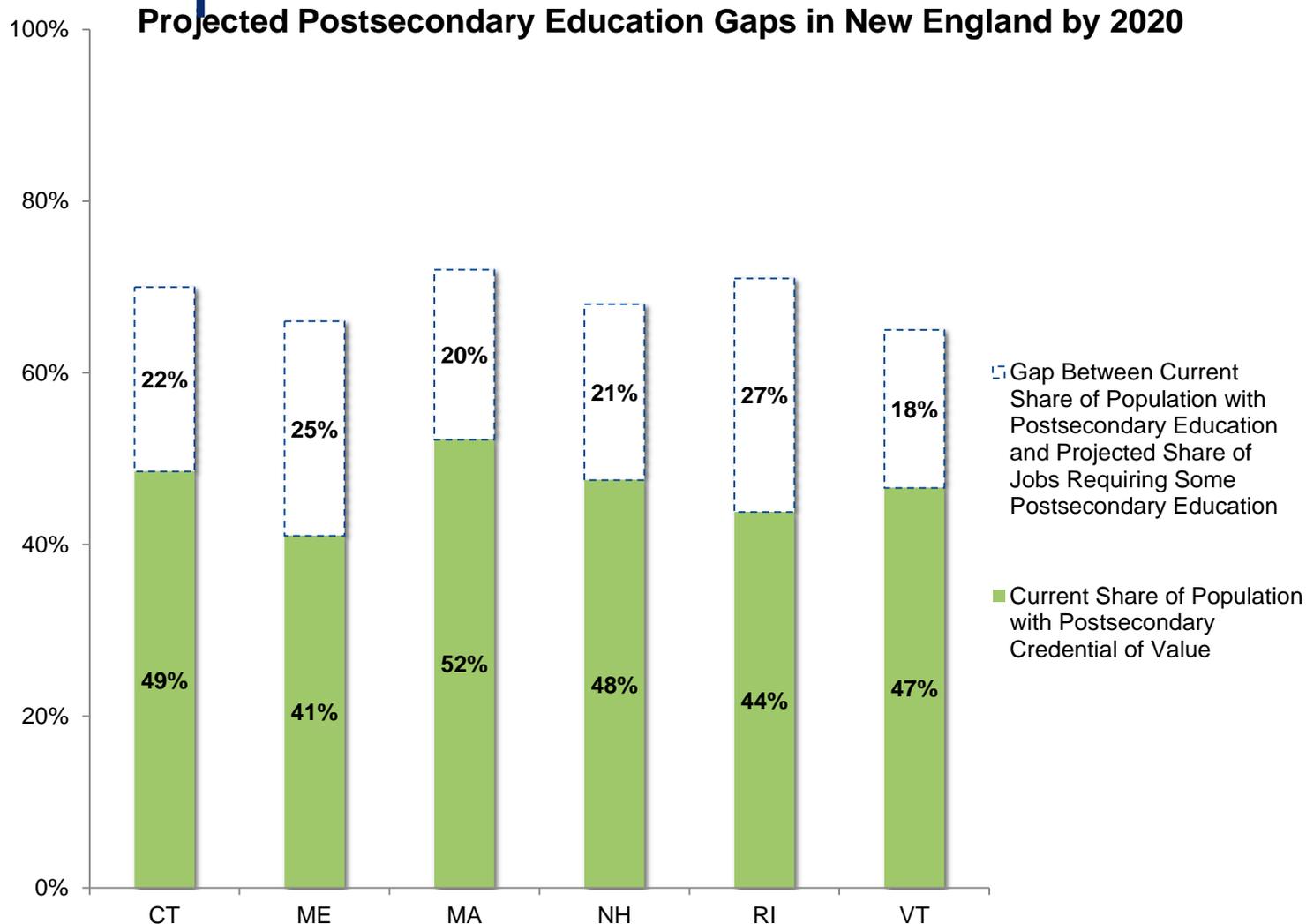
New England's Higher Education Landscape

Average net price for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who have been awarded grant or scholarship aid, By State and Region
2008-09 to 2015-16



United States New England CT ME MA NH RI VT

New England's Higher Education Landscape



Survey Findings

- While 96% of chief academic officers at higher education institutions say their institution is very or somewhat effective at preparing students for the world of work, only 11% of business leaders strongly agree that today's college graduates have the skills and competencies that their business needs.
- While 64% of students think college graduates are highly prepared to work well in teams, only 37% of employers agree; similarly, while 62% of students think that graduates have adequate oral communications skills, only 28% of employers concur.
- While 53% of students say they believe their major will lead to a good job, 47% of graduates younger than 24 years old say that if they had to do it all over again, they would change their major. Of graduates aged 24 or over, 40% would select a different major.



The Commission's Work

11 months



5 meetings

**Testimony from
13 experts**



**1 Summit,
attended by 450
people**

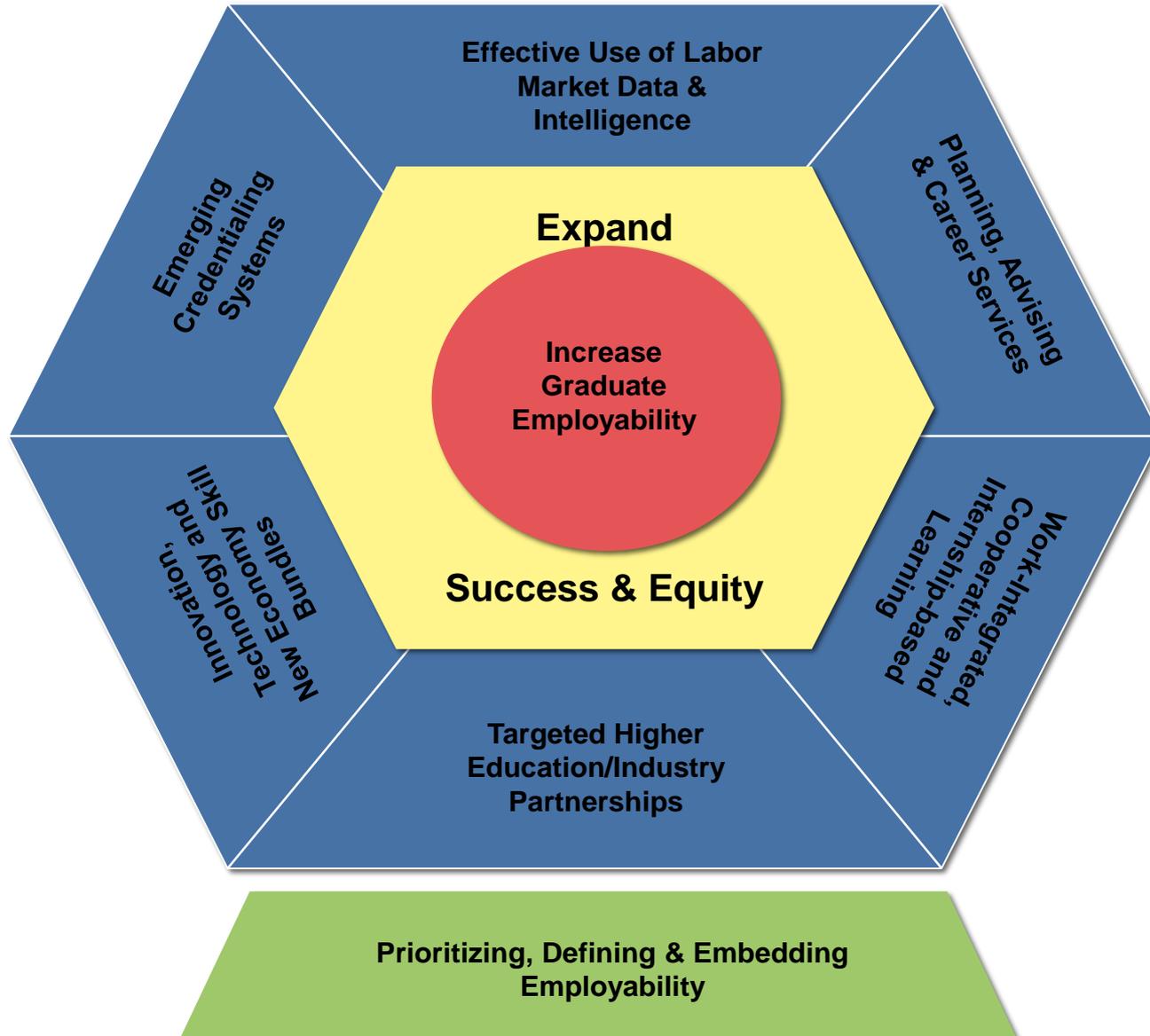
66-page report



**18 action-oriented
recommendations**



The Commission's Work



5 Critical Employability Experiences

The Commission identified critical employability experiences that all postsecondary students should have access to and complete by the time they complete:

- Foundational skills in literacy, numeracy and communication, including the ability to work in teams, communicate clearly verbally and in writing, and solve problems
- An individual career plan prepared early in their postsecondary experience
- At least one paid and/or credit-bearing work-integrated learning experiences
- Achievement of digital competencies related to their course of study, career goals and the fast-changing economy
- Attainment of an affordable credential that is employer-informed and is aligned to career pathways

Strategic Imperative to Colleges & Universities

To stave off enrollment pressures and growing competition, institutions may find differentiation and recruitment opportunities through employability strategies.

- Link employability to institutional strategic plans, performance indicators and accountability measures
- Embed employability across the institutions and all dimensions of learning and the student experience
- Ensure access to employability experiences to all students



Successful Higher Education-Industry Partnerships

Recommendations of the Commission:

- Institutions should create single points of contact or “navigators” to simplify the interface and increase the effectiveness of partnerships with employers
- Institutions should regularly assess the employer landscape to identify potential opportunities for collaboration, gain insights on labor market needs and understand the language of employers



Work-Integrated, Cooperative & Internship-based Learning

Recommendations of the Commission:

- Institutions should require the completion of one high-quality work-integrated learning experience and award credit for successful completion. Accordingly, institutions should expand their capacity to document such experiences via transcripts and portfolios.
- Employers should provide sustainable and high-quality work-integrated learning experiences that include: **pay**, mentorship, performance evaluation and clear articulation of responsibilities, skills and competencies.



Q&A!

**For more information and to view the
report, visit:**

www.nebhe.org/policy-research/grant-consulting-technical-assistance/commission

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Please be sure to fill
out the session
evaluation at:

neacrao.org/feedback/

Thank you!

