

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

September 25, 2023
3:30- 5:00 p.m.
Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Advisory Council was held virtually on Wednesday, September 25, 2023, via teleconference (Zoom).

The following Advisory Council Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, BHE Chair
Alex Cortez, EBPM Chair
Ann Christensen
Noe Ortega, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

Other Board Members present:

Cindy Mack, Student Advisory Council (SAC) Chair & BHE Student Member
Andrew Whitcomb, non-voting Student Advisor, UMass segment

I. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 3:35. He noted that the meeting was being held remotely and that it would be recorded.

II. EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Documents Used:

*PowerPoint Presentation: EBPM Advisory Council Meeting,
September 25, 2023*

BHE Chair Gabrieli thanked member Cortez for agreeing to Chair the EBPM Advisory Council as said that the anticipated work of the council, namely evidence-based decision-making, is very important to the Board. EBPM Chair Cortez opened the session by welcoming new attendees and reviewed the agenda. He noted that the agenda seeks to ground the Council in the great work of the Department, parallel efforts around the education to career hub, and explore how the Council can help the Board and the Department continue to execute on the strategic plan for racial equity. He encouraged open discussion. Chair Cortez then offered three perspectives on the role of data:

- What is the information or data that we wish individuals have to best equip them to make choices about their pathways?
- What information do we want the institutions that we serve to have to help them drive continuous improvement and decisions for their future?
- What do we want to have as a Board and as Department for our role and authority and oversight?

EBPM Chair Cortez then invited Commissioner Ortega to offer remarks. Commissioner Ortega welcomed the attendees to the meeting, including two new DHE staff members-- Michael Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Dr. Richard Riccardi, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success.

Dr. Mario Delci, Associate Commissioner for Research and Planning, offered a PowerPoint presentation. Associate Commissioner Delci reviewed the four main topics for discussion:

- Work of the Research and Planning office,
- Education and career data hub
- Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, performance measurement
- Conversation in response to Chair Cortez' questions

Associate Commissioner Delci indicated that the DHE's Research and Planning team has three main focus areas: data research and analytics, research and reporting, and digital services. Associate Commissioner Delci said that Research and Planning has one mission, which is to drive organizational transformation by prioritizing the evidence over intuition with data at the center of every conversation. Driving across all three areas is protection of student privacy, prioritizing equity from data collection through research and reporting, and engaging campus partners in system-wide collaboration on data collection analysis and reporting.

Associate Commissioner Delci said that the work of the Office of Research and Planning brings the office in contact with a lot of people from inside and outside the agency, citing the critical role of Departmental staff as well as external partners, including segmental leadership, MACC and the state university council of presidents, and the UMass president's office. Work with external partners includes creating efficiencies in data collection and reporting, improving the quality and scope of the HEIRS data collection, and aligning existing accountability efforts with the strategic racial equity plan and what that means for performance measurement, evaluations and strategic planning. Associate Commissioner Delci also mentioned the Education-to-Career Hub (E2C) and said the main goal is to promote shared ownership of progress on educational goals to produce actionable research on what leads to progress on long-term outcomes.

Chair Gabrieli asked Associate Commissioner Delci about the new features of the E2C Hub. Associate Commissioner Delci highlighted the ability to research on merged data sets from the three educational agencies.

Strategic Plan for Racial Equity (SPRE)

Associate Commissioner Delci reviewed the goals and targets of the SPRE, emphasizing the role of universal targets for all racial/ethnic subgroups. He said that there were no targets developed for enrollment, sense of belonging, and social and economic mobility. Associate Commissioner Delci said that those metrics and targets are under development, and staff anticipate having those available for BHE review next fall.

Social and Economic Mobility

Associate Commissioner Delci introduced Moira Chiong, Assistant Director of Academic and Workforce Analysis to speak about the Office of Research and Planning's work on social and economic mobility. Assistant Director Chiong began the conversation by including a quote from the SPRE which outlined the BHE charge on social and economic mobility. She reviewed the research that the Office of Research and Planning has reviewed on social and economic mobility, including Raj Chetty's Mobility Rate (MR), Third Way's Economic Mobility Index (EMI), Dallas College's Economic Mobility Index 2 (EMI2), and Mathematica's Economic Mobility Indicator. Assistant Director Chiong prefaced a technical discussion of the indicators by saying that the metrics determine how higher education catalyzes changes in mobility. Assistant Director Chiong outlined the differences between the metrics including components, data sources, and differences in calculation.

Chair Gabrieli asked about the strength of factoring in price of credential into the calculation of an index. Associate Commissioner Delci responded by emphasizing that the analysis is Research and Planning's attempt to survey the national landscape to identify a measure that has been used nationally across different states that we can either incorporate into the report or somehow work to recreate using local data resources.

Assistant Director Chiong spoke of the challenges of the four indicators, including lack of access to intergenerational or longitudinal data, need to specify the metric by educational sector, and lack of race/ethnicity acknowledged in a measure. Associate Commissioner Delci then followed up by stating that it surprised the Research and Planning Office that measures were not disaggregated by student group.

Associate Commissioner Delci then outlined a timeline on the Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS) metrics. Assistant Director Chiong stated that there are two metrics in the PMRS that pertain to earnings and, by extension, social and economic mobility: pre/post enrollment earnings, and post high school graduation earnings. After stating the definition of each metric, Assistant Director Chiong showed a decision tree map for each metric outlining the student's trajectory from college to the workforce or high school to the workforce. Chair Gabrieli noted that the pre/post enrollment earnings metric only looking at non-traditional students, and indicated the importance of studying traditional

students using this metric as well. After showing both metrics, Assistant Director Chiong discussed how the "green box" in the decision tree maps or earnings can align with calculation of mobility measures.

Associate Commissioner Delci provided an update on the PMRS metrics, stating that the Office of Research and Planning is planning to proceed with developing the metrics that were designed for performance measurement using existing data through the state data system. Research and Planning staff are working with DHE partners on the data council and will bring this back to the Board for review.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation, EBPM Chair Cortez. Chair Cortez opened the floor for discussion or comments. Chair Gabrieli raised the issue of program review, citing the lack of retrospective analysis of programs. He also indicated the broad view that value and return on investment have really not been part of BHE functions-- whether it is program approval, finance, design, etc. Associate Commissioner Delci indicated that this work can be done collectively in concert with other metric work. Commissioner Ortega expressed his interest in looking at the mobility metrics by groupings, for example, by race/ethnicity or segment. Assistant Director Chiong stated that there is data available for the Chetty MR, Third Way EMI and Dallas College EMI2. Chair Gabrieli suggested that people could be brought together to analyze the data, to see what can be learned and to identify what is promising and what is problematic.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:01.