

# Equity Agenda: Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Update



# Racial Equity Principles

### Racial equity:

- Will be achieved when race no longer determines one's outcomes in the Massachusetts public higher education system
- Is the top policy and performance priority for the DHE
- Must be embedded system-wide and permeate the Department's structure, culture, and policies
- Requires the use of asset-based language to minimize the threat of harm, deficit, and stereotype reinforcement
  - *"Asset-based language" defines people by their aspirations and contributions, rather than the systemic barriers and challenges they face*
- Requires acknowledgement, remedy, and repair of policies and practices which have excluded or created barriers

### We must:

- Recognize that clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to racially equitable practices
- Promote culturally sustainable campus climates in which all students can thrive and are regarded in the totality of their human dignity *"Culturally sustainable" means recognizing, maintaining, and developing cultural identity and diversity, as they are assets, not weaknesses (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris 2012)*
- Create and cultivate an inclusive environment to encourage the support and participation of relevant stakeholders
- Acknowledge the experience and knowledge of people of color, and seek to engage people of color in the pursuit of racial equity in meaningful ways
- Incentivize the development and support the implementation of equity-minded, evidence-based solutions

# Equity Agenda Overview

The Equity Agenda outlines an action plan that covers five key areas:

### Policy Audit

- Complete a Department-wide policy audit to assess all policies and initiatives
- Identify and remove policies that exacerbate racial inequity
- Redesign the Department's policy scheme to build a culturally sustainable public postsecondary system where students can thrive

### Student Experience

- Reimagine the undergraduate experience in order to dismantle systemic barriers by recognizing students' cultural wealth and transforming teaching and learning (*New Undergraduate Experience*)
- Align system and institutional efforts to create student-ready campuses

### Data and Evidence

- Expand data dashboards to measure progress toward the goal of racial equity and include baseline projections and benchmarks of Massachusetts public higher education enrollment through 2030
- Value students' experiences through qualitative research
- Identify and support the implementation of equity-minded, evidence-based solutions

### Community of Practice

- Support the growth of a system-wide community of practice
- Elevate the work of equity leaders
- Create digital resources for campuses, which may include implementation toolkits and digital archives to allow sharing across campuses
- Develop a statewide professional development curriculum focused on culturally sustaining teaching practices

### Sustained Transformation

- Convene and support a broad coalition of equity partners
- **Develop a 10-year statewide strategic plan focused on advancing racial equity**



# Taking a Step Back: Equity Agenda Overview

In late 2018, the Board of Higher Education set forth the **Equity Agenda, which is different from the Five-Year Master Plan** that the Board has the authority to develop.

### Five-Year Master Plan

According to [Statute](#), the Five-Year Master Plan “shall take into account the analysis mandated in clause (c) and the five-year plans submitted by individual boards of trustees. The master plan shall include, but need not be limited to,

- enrollment projections
- utilization of existing facilities
- promotion of research
- programmatic excellence
- public service activities
- recommendations for closing of facilities or the construction or acquisition of new facilities
- program distribution and the need for program revision, including the termination of obsolete or unnecessarily duplicative programs.”

Clause (c) is “analyze the present and future goals, needs and requirements of public higher education in the commonwealth and establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated quality system of public higher education in the commonwealth. Such analysis shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of state and local labor market trends and the economic development plans of the commonwealth conducted in cooperation with the secretary of labor and workforce development, the secretary of housing and economic development, and their respective staffs.”

### Equity Agenda

Separately, the Equity Agenda outlines how the Board intends to address its top statewide policy and performance priority of significantly raising the enrollment, attainment and long-term success outcomes among under-represented student populations. The key goals captured by the Equity Agenda are:

- **GOAL 1:** Sixty percent of working-age Massachusetts residents ages 25–64 will hold an associate degree or higher and an additional 10% of the population will hold a high-quality credential by 2030.
- **GOAL 2:** Forty-three percent of African American and 32% of Latinx Massachusetts residents ages 25–64 will hold an associate degree or higher by 2024.
- **GOAL 3:** By 2030, the rate at which the Massachusetts public higher education system graduates African American and Latinx students will increase to 51% and 50% respectively, outpacing the current rate of increase by 10%.
- **GOAL 4:** DHE will also track and report on racial gaps in first-year success metrics incorporated into PMRS, including completion of college-level math and English in the first year, on-time credit accumulation, and persistence to a second year of postsecondary education.

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## Development of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity

The Strategic Plan is being developed in partnership with all the Commonwealth's key stakeholders and using the inputs outlined below:



**Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity**

# Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Steering Committee

**Stephen Boyd**

Boyd Technologies/Berkshire Innovation Center

**Dr. Suzanne Buglionne**

Bristol Community College

**Dr. Cherié Butts**

Biogen | Salem State University

**President Javier Cevallos**

Framingham State University

**JD Chesloff**

Massachusetts Business Roundtable | MCLA

**President Fred Clark**

Bridgewater State University

**President Pam Eddinger**

Bunker Hill Community College

**Patty Eppinger**

Board of Higher Education

**Jorgo Gushi**

Quinsigamond Community College | BHE

**Dr. Vanessa Hill**

Springfield Technical Community College

**Artie Kopellas**

Bridgewater State University

**Dr. Stacey Luster**

Worcester State University

**Dr. Tia Brown McNair**

American Association of Colleges & Universities

**Dr. Darcy Orellana**

Middlesex Community College

**Dr. Lyssa Palu-ay**

Massachusetts College of Art & Design

**Dr. Lee Pelton**

The Boston Foundation

**Dr. Khalilah Reddie**

UMass Lowell

**President Christina Royal**

Holyoke Community College

**Dr. David Silva**

Salem State University

**Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco**

UMass Boston

**Marquis Taylor**

Coaching4Change

**Dr. Ruby Vega**

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

**Bill Walczak**

Board of Higher Education | Bunker Hill CC

**Dr. Nefertiti Walker**

UMass Amherst

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# Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Deep Dive

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity will be developed in partnership with all the Commonwealth's key stakeholders using the inputs below:



## System-Wide Survey

This survey aims to gather sentiment data from stakeholders across all 28 undergraduate institutions. Students will be asked about their experiences across their learner journey while staff, faculty, and administrators will be asked about equity-leading practices and the extent to which they feel that they have equitable experiences at their institution.

**Status:** COMPLETED FALL 2021

**Participants:** Students, Staff, Faculty, and Administrators



## Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups with the Board, DHE, and representatives across all institutions will provide more nuanced insights into racial equity challenges across the system. Discussions will also cover what success of the strategic plan should look like and implementation considerations.

**Status:** COMPLETED FALL 2021

**Participants:** Board members, DHE representatives, Trustees, and a selection of presidents, CAOs, CSAOs, CFOs, CDOs, faculty, and students



## Strategy Lab Sessions

Strategy lab sessions will include ~25 stakeholders across the public higher education system. The goals of the sessions are to begin to craft the vision, mission, goals, and initiatives that will be incorporated in the Strategic Plan using quantitative and qualitative data to drive decision-making.

**Status:** ON TARGET| Ends 2/2/22

**Participants:** Representatives from the inside and outside of higher education representing local, state, and national organizations



## Plan Review Sessions

After the development of a draft Strategic Plan, fifteen two-hour review sessions will be conducted with stakeholders from across the system including faculty, students, staff, administrators, DHE, and the full Board. Feedback from all review sessions will be incorporated into the final Strategic Plan.

**STATUS:** ON TARGET| Ends Spring 2022

**Participants:** Representatives from the Board, DHE, and all institutions

In addition, the DHE is working with Deloitte to conduct a series of data collection efforts from the institutions and data analyses to further understand racial equity-related trends across the system.

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## Next Steps

1

### **Initial Strategic Plan Review Sessions: Mid-March**

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After the development of a draft Strategic Plan, there will be two initial review sessions in mid-March. All Steering Committee members are expected to join one of the two sessions.

2

### **Strategic Plan Update: Mid-April**

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Steering Committee members will receive an updated version of the Strategic Plan to review progress made based on stakeholder feedback. Steering Committee members will have an opportunity to provide written feedback.

3

### **Final Strategic Plan Review Sessions: Mid-May**

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There will be two final Strategic Planning Review sessions in mid-May. Steering Committee members are expected to join one of the two sessions.



# Discussion