

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 17-09

COMMITTEE DATE: November 29, 2016

BOARD DATE: December 6, 2016

**RECEIPT OF REPORT ISSUED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON INTERSTATE
RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS**

MOVED: The BHE receives the October 31, 2106 report issued by the Special Commission on Interstate Reciprocity Agreements (the Special Commission). The BHE expresses its appreciation to the Special Commission members for their work. The BHE takes the report under advisement and directs the Commissioner to report back to the BHE periodically as the discussions continue to unfold at the federal and state level.

Authority: Outside Section 187 of the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget, ch. 133 of the Acts of 2016; M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 30-31.

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

BACKGROUND

The Special Commission on Interstate Reciprocity Agreements (“Special Commission”) was established through legislation¹ to examine and make recommendations to the General Court regarding whether the Board of Higher Education (“the BHE”) should enter into any interstate reciprocity agreement(s). The BHE’s participation in an interstate reciprocity agreement would mean that accredited, degree-granting postsecondary institutions located in Massachusetts would be authorized to voluntarily provide distance learning² programs to students in other states in accordance with the terms of the agreement. Likewise, out-of-state degree-granting postsecondary institutions that are approved members of the reciprocity agreement would be authorized to provide distance learning programs to residents of Massachusetts.

The legislation directed the Special Commission to convene at least four times, including at a public hearing to gather testimony from interested parties. The Special Commission has completed its work and issued a report of its findings and recommendations on October 31, 2016. The Special Commission report is attached to this motion. (Attachment A).

¹ Outside Section 187 of the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget, ch. 133 of the Acts of 2016.

² Distance learning can encompass a variety of methods of educating students who are not physically present at a school, though today distance learning primarily occurs through the online delivery of education.