Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

January 15, 2019
10:00 a.m.

One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor
Conference Room 3
Boston, Massachusetts

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Nancy Hoffman; Vice Chair, Sheila Harrity; Fernando Reimers; Secretary of Education James Peyser; and Student Board Member Kush Patel.

Committee Members Absent: Board Chair Chris Gabrieli.

Department Staff Present: Ignacio Chaparro, Keith Connors, Patricia Marshall, Constantia Papanikolaou, Elena Quiroz-Livanis, and Ashley Wisneski.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Nancy Hoffman called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes from the December 4, 2018 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously approved.

III. REMARKS

No remarks given.

IV. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used
AAC Meeting PowerPoint, January 15, 2019
AAC Motions 19-09 through 19-10

A.   AAC 19-09   Worcester State University
Master of Public Management

Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success, Patricia Marshall, presented AAC 19-09, by providing background history of this motion. She reminded members that this program was originally considered during the December AAC meeting as part of a consolidated,

joint motion to approve a Master of Public Administration and Policy (which was approved) and a Master of Public Management. The Master of Public Management was tabled. In late December/ early January, Worcester State University provided supplemental documentation to the full proposal addressing AAC member concerns related to: 1) the differentiation between the MPA and the MPM, and 2) the inclusion of pre-requisites to ensure that degree candidates are adequately prepared for graduate-level work in the field of public management. Several revisions resulted in clarification of the pre-requisites and changes to the curriculum outline form. These changes included the following modifications: 1) a different management course (MPM 945: Financial Management for Public Organizations) to address concerns regarding program content, 2) clarifying details on advising and 4+1 plans that demonstrate how students will be prepared for quantitative content and administrative functions on the job, and 3) an undergraduate prerequisite: *Principles of Management*. These changes, which are captured primarily in Attachment A (page 13 of the Board packet), demonstrate WSU's commitment to strengthening the advising component of the program and to ensuring that undergraduates from a diverse array of academic majors are adequately prepared for graduate-level work in the field of public management.

Worcester State University has established that the proposed Master's in Public Management program is intended to directly support several strategic goals as in the current Strategic Plan. Specifically, the degree represents a growth in the university's graduate school offerings and utilizes a 4+1 approach to open opportunities to serve first-generation and minority students. The proposed program is designed to use existing infrastructure and deliver courses in a cost-effective manner promoting financial strength and sustainability for the institution. The proposed program extends from an existing Master of Science in Nonprofit Management program. The 4+1 tracks from various departments within Worcester State are intended to provide a pathway to students in disciplines such as urban studies, geography, history and fine art for careers in the management of discipline-specific institutions such as public parks, eco-centers and museums.

The external review team recommended the program and found it to provide viable, high-demand opportunities that will benefit students and employers in Massachusetts. Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Worcester State University and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed Master of Public Management programs.

Board Member Fernando Reimers stated that he found the program's emphasis on serving first-generation students to be important and asked how WSU planned to ensure that first-generation and minority students have access to their first job? He also asked how many hours of practical experience graduates will have at the time of graduation.

Dr. Thomas Conroy, Department Chair of Urban Studies at WSU, replied to the first question by emphasizing the internship component of the program. He added that it is important to remember these programs have two different types of student cohorts - one that is graduating through the 4 + 1 program, and the other through people coming back from the work place. Internships, capstone experiences and projects in the MPM are ways to connect students in both cohorts with potential employment opportunities. Dr. Conroy noted that students who are currently working benefit from picking-up additional experiences and education that provide the opportunity to get promoted or to move to other, higher-paying, positions. Both cohort types have these experiences by the end of the MPM, and this framework helps professors and program managers to consider the individual needs of students and to assist them with reaching their goals.

Dr. Shiko Gathuo, acting Chair of Urban Studies at WSU, addressed Board Member Reimers' other question on practice hours. Dr. Gathuo noted that the MPM is modeled after WSU's non-profit management program which has operated for more than 40 years. This successful program serves students from all different backgrounds. Students from English and Art History come into the program through WSU's course introduction. All students choose a non-profit to work at and WSU works with the student on a strategic plan and topic area. This process allows students to connect with the organization as a potential future employer. Some students elect to do internships and volunteer work, allowing them to better assess whether these organizations are places where they would want to work. WSU's non-profit management program has roughly a 90% placement rate for its graduates.

Secretary Peyser thanked Worcester State University for their responsiveness and clarification of the prior questions. He expressed lingering concerns about WSU's ability to meet student needs based on their educational track – management vs non-management – and for ensuring students have the correct pre-requisites. WSU appreciated the comments and said they will remain vigilant in this area.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was duly made, seconded and approved unanimously by all board members present.

AAC 19-09   APPLICATION FROM WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE MASTER OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

  MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Worcester State University** to award the **Master of Public Management.**

             Upon graduating the first class from this program, Worcester State University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

  Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

  Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success

B.   AAC 19-10   North Shore Community College
Associate in Science in Database Management and Security

Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success, Patricia Marshall, presented the program. The North Shore Community College's proposed Associate in Science in Database Management and Security program is reflective of the College's mission of providing excellence while being responsive to the changing needs of communities. NSCC also reports that the proposed program is in alignment with workforce needs and with the College's strategic plan to develop effective, innovative and dynamic programs that meet student, community, civic, and workforce needs. The objective of the proposed program is to prepare graduates with database and computer security skills for the workforce. The importance of database technology and cybersecurity impacts all areas of information technology as well as all industries. North

Shore plans that graduates of the proposed program will have a solid foundation in database knowledge and security infrastructure, along with data analysis skills. The proposed program is initially designed exclusively to serve students planning to go directly into careers. However, North Shore reports that a transfer pathway for the program is under discussion for future implementation.

The reviewers found that the proposed program met the standards, fit within the mission of the college, and would provide strong preparation to its graduates. Strengths of the proposal included its thoroughness, the balance between the breadth of what the program is offering and depth of preparation.

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by North Shore Community College and the external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed Associate of Science in Database Management and Security program.

Board Member Fernando Reimers asked if NSCC had any plans to connect with high schools in the area to make students aware of this new associate degree. Dr. Karen Hynick, Vice President of Academic Affairs at North Shore Community College, replied that the college has a very strong program partnership with Lynn and Essex Technical high schools as well as other area schools and that these schools have computer science/IT pathways embedded in their programs. Additionally, NSCC conducts community outreach to raise student awareness about the program and offers an introductory course contextualized to IT pathways.

Committee Chair Hoffman noted data base management and security courses, while a very worthwhile field, is rooted in math, which is challenging for many students. She asked what plans NECC had to make sure students receive the support they need to get through the courses. NSCC responded that they did a lot of work in the past several years to redefine math pathways. The four elective classes to date have been very well-populated perhaps due to NSCC's redesign of their entrance requirement using multiple measures (e.g. high school GPA, curricular alignment, etc.). NSCC also created tutor-linked courses (supplemental instruction model) to help students. Currently, Lynn and Essex Technical high schools have commitments with NSCC to identify the correct student course sequencing. NSCC reviews all courses for their relevance and necessity.

Committee Chair Hoffman asked if NSCC has forged linkages with UMass Lowell. NSCC replied that they have a strong alignment with UMass Lowell and that they are currently in talks with them about transfer pathways.

Board Member Reimers asked if NSCC has ever experimented with developing blended models for course delivery, like EdX, and to grant students credit. NSCC replied that they work with EdX and Coursera which, combined, bring 15 credits for student. NSCC programs also have guided pathways that link to prior learning options for their students.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was duly made, seconded and approved unanimously by all board members present.

AAC 19-10   APPLICATION FROM NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO AWARD THE ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN DATABASE MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of the **North Shore Community College** to award the **Associate of Science in Database Management and Security.**

Upon graduating the first class for these programs, North Shore Community College shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success.

C.   AAC 19-11   Approval of Academic Affairs Committee Motions AAC 19-09 and 19-10 on a Consent Agenda

The following motion was brought forth, seconded and unanimously approved:

C. AAC 19-11   CONSENT AGENDA

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education approves the following motions on a consent agenda:

AAC 19-09   Worcester State University
Master of Public Management

AAC 19-10   North Shore Community College
Associate of Science in Database Management and Security

Authority: Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success

V.   PRESENTATIONS

List of documents used:
AAC Meeting Power Point, January 15, 2019
Revised Academic Programs Letter of Intent Template

Letter of Intent Template for Public Program Approval Process

Deputy Commissioner Marshall began the presentation by reviewing the timeline for the development of the letter of intent (LOI) template. The presentation continued by reviewing feedback received at the December AAC meeting and showing how the DHE integrated the feedback into the revised template.

Secretary of Education James Peyser thanked Deputy Commissioner Marshall and Committee Chair Hoffman for all their efforts to finalize the LOI template and then he offered a couple of specific comments regarding the fourth question in section 4 ("Alignment with MA Goals for Public Higher Education"). He suggested the addition of the word "statewide" in reference to labor markets, a parenthetical addition of MassHire Regional Blueprints as an example of workforce development plans, and the inclusion the URL to the MassHire Regional Blueprints.

There was no further discussion. Committee members thanks Deputy Commissioner Marshall for her work and the work of her team. Deputy Commissioner Marshall confirmed that the LOI will be implemented for use in the fall, once the final changes are made.

Next Generation Accuplacer: New Cut Scores Recommendations.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall began the presentation stating that although we are prioritizing the use of GPA in placing students in college-level math and English, the Accuplacer may still be used to place students who cannot be placed with GPA. These students include: 1) those who graduated from high school more than three years ago for math and, 2) those who graduated more than 10 years ago for English. She added that The College Board created a Next-Generation Accuplacer and the Classic Accuplacer will be phased out this month. The DHE convened stakeholders to establish new cut scores that align with our math pathways. Deputy Commissioner Marshall thanked the campus representatives for working closely with the DHE to establish new statewide cut scores and recognized Chief of Staff, Elena Quiroz-Livanis, for her amazing talents in building consensus and helping our stakeholders come to agreement on important academic issues.

Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis explained to AAC members that part of the comprehensive approach to transforming developmental education includes the use of multiple measures. At the December meeting, Board members voted to amend the 1998 Common Assessment Policy to allow campuses to use cumulative high school GPA to place students directly into credit-bearing English and mathematics courses. Like the policy itself, the Accuplacer cut scores outlined in the document had not been revised since 1998. With the discontinuation of the current Accuplacer and the recent release of the Next Generation Accuplacer, Department staff convened English and mathematics faculty and testing coordinators from across the system to identify new cut scores that were better aligned with efforts to reduce remediation. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis said the Working Group was convened over the course of the Fall semester and was charged with developing recommendations, which were shared with the campuses for external vetting. She then reviewed the different recommendations and showed how, particularly for mathematics, the new cut scores aligned with the new mathematics pathways. Of note were recommendations that students not complete an Accuplacer exam based on their high school GPA and choice of major.

Committee Chair Hoffman asked if students who meet the 2.7 high school GPA threshold can be told to take Accuplacer. She also asked how the message was being spread about the use of multiple placement measures. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis replied that the consideration of a student's GPA should come first but, ultimately, the Department could not reasonably prevent students from unnecessarily taking Accuplacer. However, staff will work with institutions of

public higher education to develop student-friendly placement guidelines. Further, the guidelines should demonstrate how institutions will ensure that the majority of their students can complete a college-level English and mathematics courses during the first year. To answer the Committee Chair's second question, Deputy Commissioner Marshall shared news of the amendment immediately following the Board vote and Department staff connected with colleagues at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to share the news with the K-12 sector.

Board Member Harrity appreciated learning the DHE had disseminated news of these changes down to the institutional level and said she fully supports the idea of each higher education institution creating their own placement guidelines to help better support and advise our students.

Board Member Reimers expressed concern with transitioning to implementation given the complex nature of the system. While he realized communication is one potential solution, he asked what plans the DHE was considering for receiving feedback to assess, early on, the success of implemented guidelines to enable us to develop the right tools.

Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis stated that the English and mathematics faculty groups would continue to meet. In fact, the Mathematics Pathways Working Group already has two meetings scheduled for this semester. This work group is comprised of faculty who inform Department staff how things are going on the ground. Both groups provide a constant feedback loop to help Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis with policy revisions. Working directly with faculty and testing coordinators provides the DHE a level of information that complements ongoing work. The new performance measurement system will also help track student success as it includes a metric that examines the percent of first time, degree-seeking students who complete a college-level English and mathematics course during the first year. Further, the motion approved by the Board in December requires the Department review the Common Assessment Policy on a regular basis. Board Member Reimers agreed feedback loops from faculty are necessary and suggested we should also set up feedback loops to hear from students. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis replied the DHE can engage the student government (SAC) to secure student input. Student Board Member Kush Petal agreed on the value of using the SAC to talk to students about the changes that are coming in order to receive feedback.

There was a brief discussion on the implications for early college and the need to better understand how high school students might access college-level coursework without completing the Accuplacer. Secretary Peyser also expressed concern with the binary nature of the displayed example placement guidelines. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis said the example was more of an ideal and developed based on research focused on improving student success in gateway English and mathematics courses.

VI.   OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

VII.   ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.