

## BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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June 26, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

### Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) was held virtually on Monday, July 26, 2021 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

#### **The following Board Members were present:**

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Veronica Conforme

Patty Eppinger

Sheila Harrity

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being held remotely and in accordance with relevant amendments to the Open Meeting Law. Chair Gabrieli announced that the meeting is being livestreamed via Zoom. Department of Higher Education (DHE or Department) Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis, then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

### **II. DISCUSSION**

#### List of Documents Used

*Revised charges for BHE Advisory Councils\_07.26.21 Draft*

Chair Gabrieli shared that there were three items on the agenda for discussion. One item regarding the newly adopted By-Laws, related to revisions to the board structure and processes. The remaining items were intended to engage the Executive Committee in preparations for two upcoming meetings: the Special BHE meeting in August, and the BHE Annual Retreat in September.

#### **A. Review of By-Laws, Board Structure and Processes**

Chair Gabrieli described his goals as far as next steps for implementing the recently revised By-Laws that were adopted by the BHE at its June meeting. The newly established Advisory Councils (ACs) still required Charges and members. The Committee first engaged in a conversation about Advisory

Council members. Unlike the prior, standing Board Committees, the ACs allowed for non-BHE members to serve on the Councils. Like BHE members, non-BHE members would be subject to Conflict of Interest Law and would be screened for conflicts. Each AC would have two co-chairs, appointed by the Chair of the BHE. One co-chair must be a BHE member, and the other could be a non-BHE member. Together, the two co-chairs would work with the DHE team member staffing the AC to develop an agenda for meetings. In the meantime, Chair Gabrieli mentioned that he spoke with Board member Bill Walczak, who expressed an interest in serving as the BHE Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Advisory Council. He also had a conversation with former BHE member and North Shore Community College Board Chair JD LaRock about serving as the non-BHE co-chair to the Finance and Administrative Policy (FAAP) AC in partnership with Veronica Conforme as the BHE co-chair. Deputy Commissioner Tom Simard would of course continue to be the staff liaison for the FAAP AC. For the Academic Affairs and Student Success (AA&SS) AC, Chris stated that he currently did not have any non-BHE members in mind for that AC and suggested that Board members Eppinger and Harrity work together with Pat Marshall to think through the Academic Affairs AC charge and membership.

Chair Gabrieli stated that Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou has begun working on draft charges with the DHE staff liaisons for each EC. He asked Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou to share preliminary thoughts on how the Charges would be structured. Chief Legal Counsel stated that at a minimum the Charge for each AC will include the AC's stated purpose; its membership (both BHE-membership and non-BHE membership); the identified DHE staff liaison; and the anticipated meeting structure. On the latter, the anticipated meeting structure would be that each AC, with the exception of the Evidence Based Policy Making Council (EBPM) would have "standing" meetings and meet two weeks before each regularly scheduled BHE meeting. The EBPM AC would meet as needed. The general purpose of each AC would be to "consider, report and make recommendations to the BHE on *policy* and *strategic matters*" related to the work of the BHE. So, for FAAP, this would include policy and strategic recommendations related to the fiscal, operation and administrative matters such as public higher education financing; tuition and fees; capital planning; student financial aid and the like. And for the AA&SS AC this would include academic policy and matters related to student success, such as enrollment, retention, and graduation rates; program review; admissions standards; and private higher education institutional and program approvals. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou indicated that she would share the draft charges, in their current form, with the Executive Committee after today's meeting.

The Executive Committee discussed a process for accepting nominations for AC non-BHE members and agreed that it should be open and transparent. Chair Gabrieli suggested that the goal of including non-BHE members on the ACs, would be to help each build capacity. Chair Gabrieli said he looked to the BHE co-chairs of each AC and their DHE staff liaisons to identify two to three names of potential non-BHE co-chairs and/or non-BHE AC members. The Chair then stated that he envisioned the implementation of the new By-Laws to be rolled out slowly and cautioned against adding too many non-BHE members to the ACs too quickly. Commissioner Santiago agreed, noting that for every member who is added to an Advisory Council that is more work for our staff and it may be difficult to manage. The Department is under an FTE cap and adding more administrative and other capacity is not feasible at this juncture.

Before turning to the next agenda item, the Executive Committee engaged in a discussion on timeline. It was suggested that the By-Laws implementation materials, including the AC Charges and nominations, be presented at the Special BHE meeting in August in preparation for action at the Annual Retreat in September.

### **B. Preparation for BHE Special August Meeting**

Chair Gabrieli stated that his preference would be to spend the remaining time discussing the agenda for the Special BHE meeting in August since that convening was being used to inform the September Annual Retreat.

At the June BHE meetings, the Board was updated on both the New Undergraduate Experience (NUE) and the Basic Needs Security (BNS) Agenda. Additionally, the Commissioner provided an extensive end-of-year presentation that covered different areas of the agency's work. Chair Gabrieli said that the primary purpose of the Special August meeting was to dive deeper into those three important presentations given the quantity and quality of the information. Executive Committee members discussed the need for the Department to identify a series of priorities that would lead to the greatest amount of change (impact) in the shortest amount of time.

Commissioner Santiago spoke about how he saw the agency's policies and programs in relationship to where they fell on the access, retention, completion, workforce continuum. He proposed bringing a series of policy priority options on different ranges, short-, mid-, and long-term efforts, for the Board to select from at the August meeting. Based on the Board's selections, Department staff would then do additional work in preparation for the Annual Retreat in September. The Executive Committee agreed with the Commissioner's proposed approach. Chair Gabrieli also suggested that in order to have a productive meeting, every Board member had "homework" to do for the August meeting, in terms of reading the available slide decks and watching the relevant presentations offered to date.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Carlos E. Santiago  
Commissioner and Secretary to the Board*