

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

December 06, 2021

2:30 p.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) Executive Committee was held virtually on Monday, December 06, 2021 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Executive Committee members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Veronica Conforme

Patty Eppinger

Sheila Harrity

Bill Walczak

Board of Higher Education members present:

Cameron Costa¹

Cindy Mack²

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 2:37 p.m. and announced that this meeting is 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 and recorded, and members of the public who signed up for public comment would be allowed to join the Zoom meeting to provide comment. Chair Gabrieli then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

II. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

BHE Motions 22-16 through 22-21

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Board had several motions to discuss. A series of letter of intent motions, a motion on a building acquisition, and the FY23 budget recommendations. He noted the group would also have a discussion on the advisory council membership and recent

¹ Cameron Costa is a voting Student Member, UMASS Segment for the MA Board of Higher Education

² Cindy Mack is a non-voting Student Advisor, State University Segment for the MA Board of Higher Education

nominations.

A. BHE 22-16: Approval of Letter of Intent of Bridgewater State University to Award the Master of Science in Mathematics and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Chair Gabrieli introduced a letter of intent from Bridgewater State University for a Master of Science in Mathematics. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis, welcomed Bridgewater State University Provost Dr. Karim Ismaili to share details about the new degree. Dr. Ismaili stated that BSU's goal through the program is to meet the needs of students in the region. He introduced his colleagues, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, Lisa Krissoff Boehm; Dean of the Department of Communications Studies, Kristen Porter-Utley; Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Arnaa Alcon.

Chair Gabrieli asked if Bridgewater State University's Mathematic Department considered offering their master's degree program centered on analytics rather than pure math alone. Provost Ismaili commented that the program would provide a shorter pathway to a master's degree and prepare students for doctoral education and other industries where mathematics is valuable. He turned to Dr. Porter-Utley who stated that the master's degree program would also help advance the careers of teachers who use the program as their advanced credential. Dr. Ismaili stated that the program provides faculty with opportunities to develop their programming in other areas. Dr. Boehm added that the decision to focus on pure mathematics was based on the strength of their faculty, market analysis, and the interest of existing students. Chair Gabrieli asked when the master's degree program would begin. Dr. Ismaili stated that if granted fast track approval, the program would start in the Fall of 2023.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of recommendation for approval of BHE 22-16. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-16 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without further discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes³
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-16 APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of Bridgewater State University to award the **Master of Science in**

³ Cameron Costa is a voting Student Member of the MA Board of Higher Education, not the Executive Committee

Mathematics and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree-granting authority pursuant to the Fast Track Review protocol.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

Chair Gabrieli congratulated the Bridgewater State University representatives on their approval before turning to the next item on the agenda.

B. BHE- 22-17 Approval of Letter of Intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Chair Gabrieli introduced BHE Motion 22-17, a letter of intent to award the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts has also submitted a letter of intent to award the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, BHE Motion 22-16. Chair Gabrieli stated he would review one at a time. He opened the floor for discussion. Chief of Staff, Elena Quiroz-Livanis, invited Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), Chair of Education Nick Stroud to introduce himself and his colleague, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Richard Glejzer. Member Bill Walczak asked to hear commentary on the program. Mr. Stroud stated that the program is an initial teacher licensure program that MCLA has offered for several years. The purpose is to make the program a distinct major rather than a concentration within a larger education major. He continued that the work built into the early college program is one they've had years of experience with, and they work closely to secure their programs align with the needs of their partners in the field. Chair Gabrieli asked for details on transfer students and MCLA's community college partners. Mr. Stroud highlighted MCLA's partnership with Berkshire Community College. He stated that MCLA works closely to ensure their programs align well with courses taken at Community Colleges under the A2B Pathways. Member Veronica Conforme asked what MCLA's goals were due to the program change. Mr. Stroud commented that MCLA's expects a slight increase in enrollment.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of recommendation for approval of BHE 22-17. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-17 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without further discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-17 APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to award the **Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree-granting authority pursuant to the Fast Track Review protocol.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

Before proceeding to the next motion, Chair Gabrieli reminded the Executive Committee that fast-track authorizations are not brought before the Board again once approved at this stage and the Commissioner has final approval once an institution completes the remaining steps to the satisfaction of the Department.

C. BHE- 22-18 Approval of Letter of Intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of recommendation for approval of BHE 22-18. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-18 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without further discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-18 APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to award the **Bachelor of**

Science in Elementary Education and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree-granting authority pursuant to the Fast Track Review protocol.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

Chair Gabrieli congratulated the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts representatives on their approval before turning to the next item on the agenda.

D. BHE- 22-19 Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions BHE 22-16 through BHE 22-18

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval of BHE 22-19, which seeks to bundle BHE Motions 22-16 through BHE 22-18 on a consent agenda. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-19 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conformer – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-19 CONSENT AGENDA

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

BHE 22-16 Approval of Letter of Intent of Bridgewater State University Award the Master of Science in Mathematics and Authorization for Fast Track Review

BHE 22-17 Approval of Letter of Intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of science in Elementary Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review

BHE 22-18 Approval of Letter of Intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Authority: Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Sr. Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning & Public Program Approval

Chair Gabrieli introduced BHE Motion 22-20 for approval of Middlesex Community College's Proposed Acquisition of the Pollard Exchange Building. He turned to Commissioner Santiago to provide more background. Commissioner Santiago stated that Middlesex Community College's STEM-related programs currently use the property, which they anticipate will expand over time. He noted the building is also used by a Charter School, its current owner, where enrollments have softened. As their STEM programs grow, the Charter School seeks to transfer ownership to Middlesex Community College. The MA Department of Higher Education's Assistant Commissioner for Administration and Finance, Joe Wallerstein, noted that property acquisition is a responsibility the board must comment on under its enabling legislation. Member Veronica Conformer asked how the Charter School and Middlesex Community College collaborate. Mr. Wallerstein remarked that the acquisition is part of Middlesex Community College's capital project and a component of expanding their science and technology programs. He added that the location strengthens their mutual relationship. Middlesex Community College President Phil Sisson commented that collaboration between the charter school and Middlesex is long-standing, with close interaction between the faculty and Middlesex staff through dual enrollment at the location site and potentially early college as the program grows.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval of BHE 22-20. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-20 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conformer – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-20 APPROVAL OF MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF THE POLLARD EXCHANGE BUILDING

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves Middlesex Community College's proposed acquisition of the Pollard Exchange Building at 44 Middle St, Lowell, MA 01852.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(m)

Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Chair Gabrieli congratulated the Middlesex Community College President Sisson on the approval before turning to the next item on the agenda.

E. BHE 22-23 FY23 Budget Recommendation

Chair Gabrieli introduced BHE Motion 22-21, the FY23 Budget Recommendation. He noted how well the budget aligned with the Department's strategic goals before turning the meeting over to Commissioner Carlos Santiago. Commissioner Santiago reported that the budget highlights Massachusetts' need to meet the Unmet need for all three segments (Community College, State University, and UMASS). He noted that the Unmet need covers the cost of instruction, not the total cost of attendance. He shared the expansion of Early College on the budget's goal of 25% due to the program's success. The Commissioner remarked on the three-pronged approach to assist students through collaborative supports with Deloitte, community colleges, and MDRC. He noted the budget's two pilot programs as a Student Completion Initiative and Augmentation of Emergency Funds for Students. The Commissioner thanked Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Joe Wallerstein, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Access & Student Financial Assistance Clantha McCurdy, and Associate Commissioner for Research & Planning Mario Delci, for creating the budget. He then turned the meeting to Chair Chris Gabrieli.

Chair Gabrieli thanked the Commissioner. He noted the Executive Committee's budget review as a strategic moment representing progress. Commissioner Santiago commented that there would be an FY23 budget presentation to include more essential details on the three-pronged approach to student supports at next week's full board meeting. Member Bill Walczak asked if the Administration and Finance Secretary typically reduces requests from the Department of Higher Education. The Commissioner stated yes, the Administration and Finance Secretary had reduced the Department's proposals in the past. Chief Legal Counsel Dena Papanikolaou remarked that the Department of Administration and Finance could alter recommendations under the board statute. Likewise, the Secretary of Education can change recommendations prepared by the Secretary for the fuller budget for all three education agencies. She added that today's vote is voting to approve the comments and recommendations in the budget and authorizing the Commissioner to forward the document to the Secretary of Education. Member Walczak asked if the Department's goals and budget items are shared with the legislature. The Commissioner stated that there is communication with the legislature and the Higher Education Committee, but the budget is not prepared for their review.

Chair Gabrieli commented that relationships with campuses and stakeholders are keys to garnering more support. Member Veronica Conforme asked for more insight on MDRC. Commissioner Santiago shared that MDRC provided a grant and asked the Department of Higher Education to recommend the names of four institutions (three community colleges and one state university) to receive professional development for their student support leaders. He concluded by stating that the Department is in the process of communicating with the presidents of the four institutions to determine if they will apply. The Commissioner turned the meeting to Chair Gabrieli.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval of BHE 22-21. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-21 was approved unanimously by all Committee members present, without discussion, as follows:

- Veronica Conformer – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-21 APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached Board of Higher Education operating budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2023 and further authorizes the Commissioner to submit the Board’s budget recommendation to the Secretary of Education.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6, 9 and 15B

Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

III. DISCUSSION

Chair Gabrieli moved to the Advisory Councils as the final agenda item. He noted that more time would be allocated to discuss the Advisory Council members and nominations at January's next Executive Committee meeting. He asked Member Veronica Conformer to share her insight on the Strategic Finance Review as Co-Chair of the Finance and Administrative Policy Advisory Council.

Reports from Advisory Council Chairs

A. Finance and Administrative Policy Advisory Council

FAAP Co-Chair Conformer reported the importance of making enough time to discuss the big picture of the Department’s strategic goals to ensure the Executive Committee and the entire Board derive the appropriate decisions to successfully benefit the organization's financial future. Chair Gabrieli offered commentary on how new reports might appear. He invited Strategic Planning (SPAC) Advisory Council Co-Chair Bill Walczak to share.

B. Strategic Planning Advisory Council

SPAC Co-Chair Walczak reported on the last Strategic Planning meeting. He stated that alongside Co-Chair Francesca Purcell, they decided to bring in the presidents from Massachusetts Bay Community College and Framingham State to discuss strategic planning and understand how collaborative efforts such as this can help unify both segments throughout the system. He stated that the anticipation is that their progress will continue. Chair Gabrieli asked if Co-Chairs Bill Walczak and Veronica Conformer would be amendable to reporting on their Advisory Councils at the full Board

meeting in February. Both agreed. Co-Chair Walczak remarked that SPAC voted in Paul Mattera as a member, but he's unsure if it's the correct way to make it happen.

Chair Gabrieli commented that the Executive Committee would discuss voting in new members in January. He turned the meeting to Academic Affairs and Student Success Co-Chair Patty Eppinger.

C. Academic Affairs & Student Success Advisory Council

AA&SS Advisory Council Co-Chair Eppinger reported that their last meeting focused on the undergraduate admissions standard and the SAT optional pilot. She noted two critical issues from a racial equity agenda perspective. The first is that 80% of students took the SAT in 2019-20, while 34% of predominantly white students took it this past year. The second is the Departments sliding scale for admissions based on one's GPA falling above or below 3.00. She stated that the goal is to determine which decisions play into college admissions and how they impact students to ensure equity in our admissions process. Lastly, she commented on the group's focus on finding someone to Co-Chair Sheila Harrity.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Co-Chair Eppinger and asked her to summarize at the full Board meeting in February. She agreed.

Chair Gabrieli reiterated that the Executive Committee would discuss adding new members to advisory councils at the next Executive Committee meeting in January. The Executive Committee decided that current BHE Members could volunteer on an advisory council, but membership would require a more formalized process. Chair Gabrieli concluded by stating he would have more information to share on this change by next Tuesday. He thanked the Committee for their work and adjourned the meeting.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

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