

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 21, 2022

10:00 a.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) was held virtually on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Mary Burns

Ann Christensen

Veronica Conforme¹

Cameron Costa

Patty Eppinger

Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair²

Paul Mattera

Judy Pagliuca³

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education

Paul Toner

Bill Walczak

Jorgo Gushi, non-voting Student Advisor, Community College segment

Cindy Mack, non-voting Student Advisor, State University segment

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The following Board Members were absent:

Alex Cortez

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.⁴ 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

¹ Arrived at 11:10 a.m. after attendance roll call due to technical difficulties

² Present but stepped away during roll call

³ Arrived at 11:04 a.m. after attendance roll call due technical difficulties

⁴ Although the meeting was scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., the Zoom platform experienced widespread technical difficulties the morning of June 21, 2022 and was not accessible until approximately 11:00. The meeting commenced when access to Zoom was restored.

members of the public who signed up for public comment would be allowed to join the Zoom meeting to provide comment. Department of Higher Education (DHE or Department) Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis, then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Board did not receive any requests for public comment.

III. WELCOME

Chair Gabrieli welcomed everyone to the last, regularly scheduled Board meeting for the academic year. He acknowledged that a decision was made to reverse the agenda items to ensure that all items requiring a vote would be addressed earlier during the meeting and, if needed, the meeting time may extend past 1:00 p.m. Chair Gabrieli thanked Vice-Chair Sheila Harrity and Segmental Advisor Jorgo Gushi for their service before turning to Commissioner Carlos Santiago to introduce the first agenda item.

IV. MOTION- Greenfield Community College Presidential Appointment

List of Documents Used

[BHE 22-65](#)

Commissioner Carlos Santiago provided an overview of the Board of Higher Education's (BHE) role in the Greenfield Community College (GCC) presidential selection process. He noted that his responsibility included a review of the semi-finalist list to ensure a quality and diverse pool of candidates. Dr. Mario Delci served as the DHE's appointed, voting member on the search committee and representative in the search process. Commissioner Santiago stated that the process concluded with finalist interviews that he conducted with Secretary Peyser to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. They then conveyed their comments to GCC Board Chair Hector Toledo. Commissioner Santiago then turned the meeting over to GCC Board Chair Toledo to discuss his experience in the search process.

Chair Toledo provided an overview of the timeline for the Greenfield Community College search. He stated that the process began on October 21, 2021. The GCC board selected the firm Academic Search on December 16, 2021, and a 13-member presidential search committee was convened on February 2, 2022. Chair Toledo noted that after conducting a community pre-search study, Academic Search created a presidential profile to begin advertising for GCC's next president. On April 8, 2022, the search committee identified 11 semi-finalist candidates, of which five were recommended as finalists. One candidate withdrew her candidacy on May 4, 2022, leaving four candidates remaining. Chair Toledo stated that of the four finalists interviewed, the GCC board unanimously voted for Dr. Michelle Schutt as their next president. He thanked the Board in advance for their consideration before turning the meeting back over to Commissioner Santiago.

Commissioner Santiago asked Dr. Michelle Schutt to discuss her interest in the position. Dr. Schutt provided a brief background of her current role as the College of Southern Idaho's Vice President and stated that her interest in Greenfield Community College stems from the alignment she feels to their core values of inclusion, transparency, creativity, integrity, innovation and sustainability. Dr. Schutt turned the meeting back over to Commissioner Santiago to open the floor for questions. Chair Gabrieli and Member Mary Burns welcomed Dr. Schutt to Massachusetts without further comments from the BHE.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-65 Greenfield Community College Presidential Appointment. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-65 GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

VOTED The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the May 26, 2022 recommendation of the Greenfield Community College Board of Trustees recommending Dr. Michelle K. Schutt as President of Greenfield Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about July 18, 2022, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

Chair Gabrieli acknowledged outgoing presidents, Dr. Javier Cevallos and Dr. Valerie Roberson and the BHEs appreciation for their service to the Commonwealth. Due to time, he noted the need to hold off on more an extensive thank you until a later date.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chair Gabrieli then asked for a motion to accept two sets of Board meeting minutes. One from the last Board meeting held on May 5, 2022 and another from the Board meeting held on March 22, 2022. He proposed combining the two sets of minutes for approval. The motion to approve both set of minutes was duly moved and seconded. With no further discussion, the motion proceeded to a roll call vote and passed unanimously by all members present, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

[BHE 22-53](#)

[BHE 22-54](#)

[BHE 22-55](#)

[BHE 22-56](#)

[BHE 22-57](#)

[BHE 22-58](#)

[BHE 22-59](#)

[BHE 22-60](#)

[BHE 22-61](#)

[BHE 22-62](#)

[BHE 22-63](#)

[BHE 22-64](#)

[BHE 22-65](#)

Chair Gabrieli provided a brief overview of the Executive Committee reports before the Board. He reminded them that BHE Motion 22-56 is a consent agenda and contains BHE Motions 22-53 through 22-55 as a bundle. Chair Gabrieli asked Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz Livanis to describe the motions, which she noted as four letters of intent (LOI) from Framingham State University, Fitchburg State University, Massasoit Community College and Westfield State University, respectively.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-56, Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions 22-53 through 22-55 on a Consent Agenda. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-56 CONSENT AGENDA

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

BHE 22-53 Approval of Letter of Intent of Framingham State University to Award the Bachelor of Science in Fashion Merchandising and Authorization for Fast Track Review

BHE 22-54 Approval of Letter of Intent of Massasoit Community College to Award the Associate of Arts in Black Studies and Authorization for Fast Track Review

BHE 22-55 Approval of Letter of Intent of Westfield State University to Award the Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Authority Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as Revised by the Board of Higher Education in March 2022; G.L. c. 15A, § 9.

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

Chair Gabrieli next asked for a motion for approval of BHE 22-60, Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions 22-57 through 22-59 on a Consent Agenda. BHE 22-60 bundles the Commonwealth Honors Program approvals for Cape Cod Community College, Holyoke Community College, and Mount Wachusett Community College. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-60 CONSENT AGENDA

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

BHE 22-58 Renewal of Cape Cod Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program

BHE 22-59 Renewal of Holyoke Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program

BHE 22-60 Renewal of Mount Wachusett Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program

Authority Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as Revised by the Board of Higher Education in March 2022; G.L. c. 15A, § 9

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success
Keith Connors, Program Director for Academic Affairs and Student Success

Chair Gabrieli next asked for a motion for approval of BHE 22-62, Approval of Middlesex Community College’s Strategic Plan. He noted that the Strategic Planning Advisory Council would soon make recommended changes to the guidelines, and that the Middlesex Community College Strategic Plan was completed under the existing guidelines. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-62 was approved, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes

- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Abstain
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-62 APPROVAL OF MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves With Equity at its Core: Middlesex Community College 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, and authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education for final approval pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(l) and 22(l).

Authority Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

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

Chair Gabrieli provided an overview of BHE motion 22-63, Authorization for Commissioner to Solicit Public Comment on Proposed Regulatory Amendments to 610 CMR 13.00; Financial Review and Risk Monitoring of Institution of Higher Education. He noted the importance of the motion’s alignment with recent legislative changes and added measures to aid in the monitoring process. Chair Gabrieli then asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-63.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-63 AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMISSIONER TO SOLICIT PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED REGULATORY AMENDMENTS TO 610 CMR 13.00: FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RISK MONITORING OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby authorizes the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 3, and solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to regulation 610 CMR 13.00: Financial Review and Risk Monitoring of Institutions of Higher Education, subject to the completion of the Executive Office of Administrative and Finance internal review process.

Authority M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 16, 30A, and 31A; 610 CMR 13; M.G.L. c. 30A, § 3; 950 CMR 20.00

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Chair Gabrieli summarized BHE 22-64, Approval of Revised Campus Strategic Planning Guidelines. He acknowledged the efforts of Strategic Planning Advisory Council Co-Chairs Francesca Purcell and Bill Walczak to engage with campuses and to develop the recommended changes to the existing Strategic Advisory Council process. Chair Gabrieli then asked for a motion for approval of BHE 22-64. He noted that the recommendations seek to create a more comprehensive, integrated view of public higher education in Massachusetts, which would include the University of Massachusetts in the campus strategic planning review process. Member Walczak added that the UMass system, along with the Community College and State University segments, would provide a better understanding of how to move forward as a Commonwealth. He also thanked staff team members, co-chair Francesca Purcell, Associate Commissioner Winnie Hagan, and Board member Paul Mattera for their work. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE motion 22-64 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

**BHE 22-64 APPROVAL OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATIONS**

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (Board) accepts and approves the Strategic Planning Advisory Council’s (the Advisory Council) June 6, 2022 recommendations, and authorizes the Commissioner to incorporate the Advisory Council’s recommended revisions I, II, and IV through VII into the Board’s Campus Strategic Planning Handbook for implementation during Academic Year 2022-2023. Provided that Recommendation III shall be taken up by the Board for consideration no later than the Board’s next Annual Meeting.

The Board further commits to conducting the reviews recommended by the Advisory Council in Recommendations VIII and IX during AY2022-2023, which shall include a preliminary discussion on logistics during the Board’s next Annual Meeting.

Authority Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

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

VII. BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

List of Documents Used

- [BHE 22-66](#)
- [BHE 22-67](#)
- [BHE 22-68](#)
- [BHE 22-69](#)

Chair Gabrieli next asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-66, Summer Delegation of Authority to the Commissioner. The motion authorizes the Commissioner to take action as deemed necessary and appropriate on BHE matters over the summer, and until the BHE’s next regularly scheduled meeting. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes

- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE-22-66 DELEGATION OF SUMMER AUTHORITY TO THE COMMISSIONER

The Board of Higher Education delegates to the Commissioner, ex officio, until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board its authority to take such action, in consultation with and upon the advice of the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board, as is deemed necessary or desirable.

Authority Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Chair Gabrieli turned to two motions that were accompanied by staff presentations, BHE 22-67, Acceptance of Support Services for Student Success and BHE 22-68, Acceptance of Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. He noted that with both initiatives, more work would be necessary to implement specific policies over time. Chair Gabrieli turned to Commissioner Santiago to provide more insight.

Commissioner Santiago began the presentation stating that the DHE's primary focus is on a framework for student success and a comprehensive plan for racial equity. The documents are grassroots, he pointed out, with some work already underway on college campuses. He recognized the BHE's work and deferred to Member Eppinger's role as Co-chair of the New Undergraduate Experience, in addition to serving on the Steering Committee with Member Bill Walczak. Commissioner Santiago emphasized that affordability is necessary but insufficient to ensure student success by providing an outline of the presentation; this is not because he doesn't think affordability is essential, but just the opposite. Commissioner Santiago said that the current administration has invested significant state dollars in financial aid and has attempted to address affordability. However, he does not think institutions will succeed solely because of affordability without the complementing work that engages in student support. Commissioner Santiago turned to Senior Deputy Commissioner Clantha McCurdy for the presentation.

Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy provided an overview of the Student Success Framework. She stated that the steps toward development included a current state analysis of student support structures and practices, which led to the creation of key components of the Framework, implementation options, recommendations, and communication materials for sharing the project's outcomes. The current state analysis was comprehensive and included an engagement of over 300 stakeholders via interviews and focus groups, an environmental scan, and over 200 campus files.

Dr. McCurdy explained that the development of key Framework components was guided by the

findings from the current state analysis and included three group sessions for feedback and insight on the proposed Framework, guiding principles, recommendations, and key metrics. With the implementation options, recommendations, and communication materials, the group convened nine sessions to socialize the proposed strategic plan, confirm and finalize Framework, and develop communication materials to share project outcomes in the future. She concluded by adding that the Framework was also informed by a five-peer state comparison that included Washington, New York, Colorado, Maryland, and New Jersey and an analysis of their student success efforts. Dr. McCurdy turned to Deloitte's Higher Education Specialist, Dr. Bob Caron, to continue the presentation.

Dr. Caron provided an overview of principles used for the Framework. The principles are an opportunity to connect the recommendations and also to think about some of the binding ties across segments within the higher education system. Even with the complexity of attempting to create a framework for both Community Colleges and State Universities, he noted that more commonalities between those segments were found than differences. The guiding principles would serve as guideposts for future changes to the Framework and as evaluation criteria for further investment. The guiding principles were noted as being: 1) racially equitable, 2) collaborative, 3) data informed, 4) flexible, 5) scalable, 6) sustainable, 7) student aligned, and 8) community integrated. Dr. Caron concluded by stating that the Framework itself is a conceptual model meant to get campuses to think more holistically and systematically about support services. He noted that from that model emerged 15 specific recommendations to ensure actionability of the Framework. The recommendations were then packaged thematically into five implementation pathways so that campuses could digest them and start to prioritize around the themes that are important to their campus.

Dr. Caron turned the presentation back to Dr. McCurdy who shared the action steps. She stated that critical work begins after this meeting and that campuses will initially need to engage in a prioritization and readiness assessment. The DHE would be responsible for oversight of implementation and deploying a system-level change for management strategy, while also advocating for support of services identified within this framework. Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy also noted that the motion requires that the Commissioner make specific system-wide policy recommendations to the BHE, recommend statewide or system-wide sector specific goals and targets, and provide periodic updates to the Board. The meeting was then opened for discussion.

Secretary James Peyser commented that we need to think about how financial aid and support services fit together. He stated that we should look at students we are trying to support through MASSGrant and MASSGrant Plus and proactively reach out to them to ensure they can access the services needed. We should also ensure that we are doing everything we can to make sure they can afford to attend a public postsecondary institution and support them so that attendance leads to successful completion.

Member Judy Pagliuca asked whether we would incorporate the Framework into the campus strategic planning process and Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy responded that it is essential to integrate this Framework with other DHE initiatives. Member Pagliuca asked if it is possible to rate each institution on how well they fit within the strategic planning guidelines. Commissioner Santiago responded that campuses are at different levels of preparedness and asked Dr. Caron to provide

more insight. Dr. Caron agreed that campuses are at different maturity levels and displayed an internal maturity scale to buttress his point – one for each implementation pathway. The rankings provide several elements of maturity along that implementation pathway and a descriptor to determine where a campus might be at various intervals. As a final question, member Pagliuca asked if there is contemplation that the annual budget will allocate more funds to institutions that need more help. Commissioner Santiago responded that budgetary support has been discussed and that \$15 million has been invested in Community College support services.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Gabrieli asked for vote. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-67, Acceptance of Support Services for Student Success was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Not present⁵
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-67 RECEIPT OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) receives the Strategic Framework for Support Services for Student Success (the “Framework”) from the Student Success Committee, comprised of a group of nine members including representatives primarily from the Department of Higher Education (DHE), the Executive Office of Education (EOE), and the State Universities and Community Colleges.

The Board thanks the members of the Student Success Committee, the Deloitte Consulting Group, the public community college and state university presidents and their appointed leadership teams, faculty and students, and all community stakeholders who have contributed to developing this Framework since November of 2021.

The Board endorses the goals and objectives of this Framework and directs the Commissioner to: support the institutions of public higher education in developing

⁵ Paul Mattera left the meeting at 11:45am.

their own plans and priorities for implementation; make specific systemwide policy recommendations to the BHE; and provide periodic updates to the Board on the status of this work, including an initial update no later than June 2023. Further, the Board directs the Commissioner to recommend systemwide or sector-specific goals and targets to the BHE, in partnership with the institutions of public higher education by June 2023.

Authority M.G.L. c. 15A, §§6 and 9 (b), (c), (f) and (u); BHE 19-03.

Contact: Clantha McCurdy, Ph.D., Senior Deputy Commissioner, Access and Student Financial Assistance

Chair Gabrieli moved to the next item on the agenda, BHE 22-68, Acceptance of Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. Commissioner Santiago asked Deloitte's Andrea Mazzocco to provide a brief summary of the project, which she stated began last year with its first survey with stakeholders, interviews, and focus groups across the system. The New Undergraduate Experience (NUE) report served as a basis and vision for the Strategic Plan, along with stakeholder input via strategy labs and 15 different review sessions with administrators and faculty, staff members, students, and the steering committee. She also noted the feedback leveraged from leading practices for racial equity in higher education from various research areas.

Ms. Mazzocco turned to Commissioner Santiago to summarize how the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity began in addition to how the project has impacted him and how he views the world and the Department's work. He stated that it started with a challenge to Massachusetts from the Lumina Foundation's President Jamie Merisotis to close the racial, ethnic, and income disparity gaps in higher education. Commissioner Santiago noted that data showed gaps between students of color and other students remained large at Massachusetts public institutions over the past ten years. Mr. Merisotis stated that if Massachusetts was serious about closing the gaps, Lumina Foundation will invest to launch a strategic effort to help conceptualize ways to help close them. The DHE accepted the challenge and was designated the fifth Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) state.

The Commissioner stated that while looking at the data, he wrote a working paper that he circulated to the Board for a retreat in 2018. The report gave rise to the Board motion in the fall of 2018. Commissioner Santiago stated that when he initially wrote that working paper, he focused on economic arguments because, since 2013, the demography has been changing in Massachusetts. Enrollment was starting to decline from its high in 2010, and 2020 showed that population growth fell in absolute terms. It was a new reality for our institutions and the BHE. However, we realized there were pockets of growth, and the pockets of growth were among students of color. They were mainly in our gateway cities, and we needed to serve these students better if we were to confront the reality that a knowledge-based economy, such as Massachusetts, needs a knowledge-based labor force.

Commissioner Santiago noted that his perspectives over time have changed due to the campus work. As he talked about what became known as the Equity Agenda, he spoke to local campus boards, public forums, and students; he realized that students were listening to what we were saying.

The Commissioner stated that his thinking evolved from the standard economic argument to the argument that this is an issue of social justice. It is an issue of bringing these students to the point where we can provide them with the support they need and the resources they need to succeed. The Commissioner continued that his thinking has continued to evolve over the last two years as Massachusetts is now the one state that is pushing a focus on racial equity at a time when many states are pulling back. The economic argument, while important, has given way to a social justice argument. From a national context, it's also about our democracy and our ability to ensure that our democratic traditions continue to evolve positively. He noted that racial reconciliation is a critically important topic, even if it results in difficult conversations.

Commissioner Santiago said that to traverse the enrollment declines successfully we're going to see for the next decade, we need to move away from college-ready students to student-ready colleges and universities. He then turned to Associate Commissioner Mario Delci to discuss the goals and strategies timeline. Associate Commissioner Delci stated that we will be measuring progress on goals between now and 2033, with a 10-year vision for equity. He noted that the report's Appendix shows where we are now, the baseline data on enrollment transfer rates, persistence, time to completion, on-time credit accumulation, and degree/certification completion. Associate Commissioner Delci closed out by stating that work is ground level with campus representatives and the DHE data council - IR directors as registrars and people who add, handle, submit and measure data on the campuses. There'll also be a vetting process across the system with all the presidents, segment representatives, and the Board.

Commissioner Santiago continued with five strategies the Plan establishes to eliminate racial disparities in public higher education: 1) Establish the infrastructure to drive racial equity; 2) Transform institutional cultures to be equity-minded; 3) Increase access to higher education for students of color; 4) Build a culturally relevant and civically engaged education experience for students of color; and 5) Prepare students of color to thrive beyond college into the labor force. He then presented PowerPoint slides highlighting a series of priorities for FY23. Commissioner Santiago noted statewide financing, providing access through initiatives such as SAT Optional and Early College, affordability through the MASSGrant and MASSGrant Plus programs, developmental education, and preparing students to thrive beyond their time in higher education as the top priorities. He closed by stating that this is a crucial start. With greater investment in public higher education, greater emphasis on students, student culture, and student outcomes, and bringing together a lot of the work already happening on our campuses, we will be able to achieve the lofty goals the strategic plan embodies. He then turned to Chair Gabrieli for questions.

Chair Gabrieli invited the segmental chairs of the Commissioner's Council of Presidents to comment on the proposed motion. President Podell stated that the Community Colleges strongly support the goals and priorities of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. He added that the Community Colleges-- of all the three segments in public higher education-- have the greatest proportion of students of color. Yet to be developed are the specific, individual metrics that will be needed to be achieved. Having ground level stakeholders at the table and developing the specific targets, including significant numbers of faculty and college level administrators, is essential to the ultimate success of the work. President Podell closed by stating we look forward to helping develop these specific metrics in

collaboration with BHE and DHE over the course of the year.

President Keenan added that he and his colleagues at the State Universities strongly support and fully embrace the bold and forward-thinking initiative focused on eliminating racial disparities in public higher education. He noted that the strategic plan for racial equity speaks directly to our system's mission to provide high-quality, affordable, and accessible pathways to a meaningful degree for all. We know that the best opportunity for social and economic mobility, which Horace Mann called "the great equalizer" is through higher education. The State Universities agree that to ensure that the Commonwealth remains the most educated state in the nation, we must address the systemic racial inequities in our system and eliminate any opportunity gaps that stand in the way of our students' success. President Keenan stated that we all recognize that any organizational strategic plan needs to be reflected in strategic financial planning. As the Board's Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy Advisory Council prepares for its meeting next week, we encourage the Advisory Council to now consider the best way to support this initiative by prioritizing racial equity in your budget and strategic financing plan. He concluded by stating that the State Universities fully support this plan in the hope that the Board will endorse it.

After comments of support from the Presidents, Member Mary Burns commended everyone who worked on the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity and spoke about the importance of this work for communities like Lowell. Secretary James Peyser also expressed his gratitude to everyone for their leadership in moving the project forward and getting us to a point where we can take practical, concrete steps. He noted the challenge is always around implementation but credited the Commissioner's foresight in helping to coordinate initiatives that we have already undertaken to help further the Equity Agenda. Secretary Peyser stated that the challenge is also maintaining momentum, accelerating that path, and getting to a point where we're moving the needle.

Member Conforme commended Commissioner Santiago's leadership and said she is eager to hear more about campus implementation. Member Conforme asked how we should expect to see the changes we want by implementing these ideas. Commissioner Santiago responded that alignment with the institutions is critical. Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz- Livanis added that they had been communicating with Chair Gabrieli and Associate Commissioner Delci on bringing regular updates to the Board through the Evidence-Based Policy Making Advisory Council or the Strategic Planning Advisory Council. She suggested that it might be a good retreat item for Board members to engage in during the fall during the Annual Meeting.

Member Judy Pagliuca asked if the Board and Department would contemplate any public-private partnerships in the philanthropic community to fund some aspects of the agenda. She then asked if we could present pieces of the plan to certain people in philanthropy who are interested in this issue rather than relying on public dollars alone. Commissioner Santiago agreed with the need to think in that way about opportunities to seek philanthropic support and added that there are elements of this Strategic Plan that have direct links to many of the nonprofits in Massachusetts with similar objectives to the Department. The need now is to ensure that people understand the breadth of the work and find their place in how it benefits their organization. President Keenan added that Salem State University received the most significant cash gift to a State University this past year in grants and \$6

million from Kim Gasset-Schiller and her husband, Philip Schiller. He noted that these methods are something that organizations are willing to endorse, both private and public.

There being no further questions, Chair Gabrieli asked for vote. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 22-68, Acceptance of Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Not present⁶
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-68

RECEIPT OF THE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RACIAL EQUITY

VOTED:

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) receives the Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity from the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Steering Committee, which was comprised of a group of more than 25 diverse higher education practitioners, BHE members, and civic, community, and industry leaders from across Massachusetts and the United States.

The Board thanks the members of the Steering Committee, public higher education stakeholders, and Department of Higher Education (DHE) staff who worked collaboratively and intentionally to develop Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.

The Board endorses the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity and directs the Commissioner to: support the institutions of public higher education in developing their own plans and priorities for implementation; make specific systemwide policy recommendations to the BHE; and provide periodic updates to the BHE, with an initial update no later than June 2023. Further, the Board directs the Commissioner to recommend systemwide or sector-specific goals and targets to the BHE, in partnership with the institutions of public higher education, by June 2023.

Authority

M.G.L. c. 15A, §§6 and 9 (c), and (u); BHE 19-03.

⁶ Paul Mattera left the meeting at 11:45am.

Contact: Carlos E. Santiago, Ph.D., Commissioner Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner for Academic Policy & Student Success

Acknowledging the current time as 1:00 p.m., Chair Gabrieli highlighted the need to still vote on BHE 22-69, the FY2023 Meeting Schedule. He then reminded Board members of two upcoming meetings outside of the regular schedule, interviews with Commissioner finalists on August 25 and a meeting to vote on the selection of the next Commissioner on August 30. Chair Gabrieli stated that members should try to attend on both meetings, but stated that the August 25th interviews would be recorded. Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis reminded the Board that two thirds of the members needed to be present for a vote on August 30. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou clarified that BHE 22-69 only pertained to setting the schedule for the BHE’s statutorily-required six regular meetings for the academic year.

Chair Gabrieli next asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-69, FY2023 Meeting Schedule. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

- Mary Burns – Yes
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Not present⁷
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-69 BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

VOTED: That the Board of Higher Education approve the schedule of regular board meetings for Fiscal Year 2023, as presented by the Commissioner. Specifically, for state fiscal year 2023 (academic year 2022-2023), the following BHE regular board meeting schedule is proposed:

- **Tuesday, October 18**
- **Tuesday, December 13**
- **Tuesday, February 14**
- **Tuesday, March 28**
- **Tuesday, May 9**

⁷ Paul Mattera left the meeting at 11:45am.

- **Tuesday, June 20**

Authority G.L. c. 15A, § 4(f); By-Laws of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Articles II and III.
Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Chair Gabrieli recommended that for the sake of time, anyone that needed to leave the meeting could do so, but the meeting would not adjourn as long as a quorum remains present. He stated that the next 27 minutes would be used to go through as many reports as possible. Chair Gabrieli also encouraged those unable to stay to review the recordings. Secretary James Peyser departed the meeting and noted he would not be sharing remarks. Vice Chair Sheila Harrity expressed her gratitude to the Board and wished everyone the best.

VIII. REMARKS & REPORTS

A. Chair's Remarks

Chair Gabrieli opened his remarks by stating that the Board is responsible for ensuring continuity as the DHE transitions to a new Commissioner. He also noted that materials would be well documented to aid the process. Chair Gabrieli turned to Commissioner Santiago.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago opened his remarks by recognizing Vice Chair Harrity's service. He also noted the importance of having student members visible and active on the Board and thanked Cindy Mack, Cameron Costa, and Jorgo Gushi for their service. He turned to Chair Gabrieli. There being no remarks from Secretary Peyser, Chair Gabrieli turned to Salem State University (SSU) President John Keenan for his report.

C. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education's (EOE) Remarks

No remarks.⁸

D. Report from Presidents

State University Segmental Report

President John Keenan opened his remarks on behalf of the State Universities Council of Presidents. He acknowledged Framingham State Universities Javier Cevallos' retirement after serving eight years as president. He added that collaboration with President Cevallos would be missed. President Keenan

⁸ Secretary James Peyser had to leave the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

then welcomed President Cevallos' successor, Dr. Nancy Niemi, former Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

He highlighted an initiative that the State University campuses have with their faculty called The Equity Committee, a commission on racial equity established as part of their collective bargaining agreement. They developed the joint labor-management committee to advance the philosophy of racial equity and acknowledge that a more diverse faculty will better serve our students and communities. It evaluates all aspects of faculty and librarian employment, recruitment, retention, and promotion concerning race and gender. The committee would also examine systemic issues and biases that may impede the success of faculty and librarians from historically underrepresented communities and make recommendations for resource allocation, professional development, and recruitment and retention strategies.

President Keenan turned his remarks to recognizing Commissioner Santiago's service at the Department and stated there was no one more deserving than him for his nationally recognized leadership during his 40-year tenure in higher education. He noted that the State Universities are committed to seeing the Equity Agenda work through to fruition and thanked him for his vision, advocacy on behalf of higher education, and compassionate leadership. Undoubtedly, his countless contributions will impact all our campuses, and today's vote on equity will be his legacy.

President Keenan provided an overview of the FY23 budget recommendations supported by the State University Council of Presidents in conjunction with the BHE and the DHE. He noted the \$5 million for the State Universities' Commonwealth Public Higher Education Endowment Incentive program; \$1 million in the State Universities' Intern Incentive program; \$2 million for student behavioral and mental health efforts at the State Universities; and the increase in funding for the State Universities' funding formula and the MassGrant Plus program.

President Keenan closed his remarks by acknowledging this year's in-person ceremonies across the Commonwealth and stated that our campuses are in tune with the current and future workforce needs of the regions we serve.

Community College Segmental Report

For a copy of President Podell's full remarks, please see:

https://www.mass.edu/bhe/documents/BHE_Community%20College%20Report_6.21.22.pdf

President Podell started his remarks by acknowledging Dr. Michelle Schutt as the new GCC President. He also thanked Dr. Rick Hopper for serving as GCC's interim president since August 2021. President Podell highlighted the FY23 budget and the Community College's legislative advocacy to change Chapter 15A for the purpose of exempting the Community Colleges from Section 26, which prohibits using state dollars for evening or weekend courses. He continued that Section 26 creates logistical and financial challenges for the Community Colleges. He stated that the proposed change seeks to ensure that all students have the same educational opportunities, regardless of whether they attend classes during the day or in the evenings. He also stated that relieving the Community Colleges of this restriction will permit more efficient operations and ensure equitable access for all students to full-

time faculty. President Podell stated that in collaboration with the Massachusetts Teachers Association and Massachusetts Community College Council, the Community College Council of Presidents proposed the new agreed-upon language to the legislative conference committee. The language clarifies that the change will not impact the standing of the collective bargaining units or their bargaining representatives to continue representing the unit members.

President Podell then provided an overview of their conference committee priorities and the funding. He acknowledged Commissioner Santiago's leadership during his tenure at DHE and stated that he had moved the higher education system to a pivotal point in its work on equity. He continued that Commissioner Santiago changed our paradigm and his steadfast support has helped us collectively focus on how we approach equity at our institutions. President Podell noted that the Community Colleges would soon launch their Education Training Fund programming, which has \$15 million in state funding allocated to support short-term training in programs less than one year in length.

President Podell closed his remarks by stating that the Community Colleges are thankful that they will have input in finding a new Commissioner, and expressed confidence in finding the right leader who can continue the momentum in our system and help raise the profile of higher education.

E. Report from Student Advisory Council

Student Advisory Council (SAC) Chair Jorgo Gushi opened his remarks by providing an overview of this past academic year's initiatives. SAC Chair Gushi noted that he worked for three years as the Student Advisory Council's Board Chair and two years as an Advisory Member of the BHE. He stated that he hoped to have been able to effectively advocate on behalf of his student constituents and make his views known on many issues. SAC Chair Gushi highlighted one of the first initiatives that the SAC brought to the Board was a change in the membership of the BHE. The idea was initiated through the ranks of the SAC in October 2021 and since then the group has been working with multiple stakeholder groups in an effort to amend the statute.

SAC Chair Gushi highlighted Quinsigamond Community College's (QCC) Community Building Day. They organized it on April 6th, 2022, collaborating with the Executive Offices of the Community Colleges and State Universities. Seventeen campuses participated and planned individual events. Member Gushi stated that SAC had one panel with public higher education system stakeholders, including Commissioner Santiago, QCC President Luis Pedraja, and three student panelists. He noted that 40 class panel attendees and 30 SAC members helped advance the mission of community building. Chair Gushi highlighted other goals the SAC worked on, including advancing the Equity Agenda and organizing virtual community check-ins with individual campuses, as well as continuous advocacy on behalf of Open Educational Resources (OER) and collecting demographic data on student government presidents and trustees.

SAC Chair Gushi also explained changes to the group's By-Laws to merge the BHE student member position with the SAC Chair to ensure strong collaboration between the Board and the SAC. He stated that equal access to decision-making is a must in an educational system of the students, by the students, and for the students. This comment goes back to the proposed change in the composition

of the BHE to include more students, an issue that the Board and Legislature should reconsider. He continued, stating that we need to make the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity a reality and enforce it, not only on generic aspects of the system that make us look good on metrics but bring it down to the students we serve and focus on the experience. He asked the BHE to strive to identify and advocate on a state and national level long-term solutions for affordable education, including tuition-free Community Colleges, meeting basic needs security, and reforming to the student loan system.

SAC Chair Gushi closed by stating that he looks forward to serving as an Advisory Council member for the Commissioner search and working on identifying a Commissioner that will put students first, just like Commissioner Santiago. He thanked Commissioner Santiago for his exceptional service and for being a role model to all of us.

Chair Gabrieli commented on SAC Chair Gush's progression throughout his three-year tenure as chair and stated how much of a great example he set for others.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gabrieli adjourned the meeting at 1:29 p.m.

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