

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education recognizes the significant accomplishments of Dr. Robert L. Pura at the conclusion of seventeen and a half years as president of Greenfield Community College, the only institution of higher education in Franklin County, and after forty years in the Massachusetts public community college system; and

WHEREAS, prior to coming to Greenfield Community College in December 2000, Dr. Pura oversaw an alcoholism prevention program at the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges, served as a faculty member and dean at Massasoit Community College, and served as chief academic affairs officer at Berkshire Community College; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura, the son of a Polish immigrant who never completed high school, was the first in his family to attend college, receiving his Associate of Arts from Miami-Dade Community College, his Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Florida, his Master of Science from St. Thomas University, and his Doctor of Philosophy in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin in the Community College Leadership Program; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura has overseen a transformation of the campus, from a 10-year asbestos abatement project to a state-of-the-art expansion of the library, dining commons and other student-centered features; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura led the creation of the Greenfield Community College's Testing Center, Wellness Center, Advising Center, Vet Center, Food Pantry, Senior Symposia, and department studios; collaborated with government leaders in developing the regional creative, health care, and manufacturing economies; and established the College as a national leader in all things sustainable; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura has shown deep commitment to expanding college access, building a presence in Amherst and Northampton to make community college more broadly available in the Pioneer Valley and working with the Massachusetts courts and the Franklin County Jail and House of Correction to run educational programs for inmates; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura inspired the Greenfield Community College Foundation to establish the Robert L. Pura President's Fund for Special Initiatives, which has raised \$14 million to date to help future presidents of the College fund the development of new courses and programs, student travel, and co-curricular speakers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura has served public higher education locally, regionally and nationally, as chair of the Massachusetts Community College President's Council and a member of its Executive Committee; as a member of the Working Group on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; as a member of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' Higher Education Commission; and as a commission member for the American Association of Community Colleges; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pura has served the residents of his community in Western Massachusetts on the boards of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Baystate Health and New England Public Radio, among others; has been recognized by *The Greenfield Recorder* as its 2017 Citizen of the Year and by Smith College with an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at its 2018 commencement; and by the dedication of the Dr. Robert L. Pura Outdoor Learning Lab on the Greenfield Community College campus; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Dr. Pura has demonstrated a passionate commitment to the community college mission to change lives, strengthen families and communities, and undergird democracy, and a tireless dedication as an advocate for public higher education throughout the Commonwealth and the nation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

On behalf of the members of the Board of Higher Education, the Department staff, and the students and institutions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education honors and commends Dr. Robert L. Pura on the occasion of his retirement from the presidency at Greenfield Community College.

Chris Gabrieli, Chairman
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

June 19, 2018