

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 15-28

COMMITTEE DATE: January 20, 2015

BOARD DATE: March 10, 2015

APPROVAL OF NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE REVISED MISSION STATEMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the request of **Northern Essex Community College** to revise the College's mission statement to read as follows:

At NECC, our mission is to educate and inspire our students to succeed. We provide a welcoming environment focused on teaching and learning—strongly committed to unlocking the potential within each student and empowering our diverse community of learners to meet their individual goals. We are a community college dedicated to creating vibrant and innovative opportunities that encourage excellence and enhance the cultural and economic life of our region.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(e), and 22(n)

Contact: Carlos E. Santiago, Ph.D., Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

January 2015

Northern Essex Community College Mission Statement

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has the authority and responsibility to develop mission statements for the overall system of public higher education and each of the three segments of the system, subject to the approval by the Secretary. M.G.L. c. 15A, §7. The Mission of the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education and the Mission of the Community Colleges are attached to this motion as “Attachment A.” In addition, the BHE is responsible for reviewing and approving institutional mission statements. M.G.L. c. 15A, §9(e) and §22[n].

In January 2015, Northern Essex Community College submitted a request to the Board of Higher Education to approve a new mission statement for the College. Over the past year, the NECC community engaged in a number of small and large focus group sessions, surveys, and workshops, with the goal of exploring the college’s commitments to student success, diversity, and a broad range of educational and economic development programs and services. This work culminated in the approval of the following mission statement by the NECC Board of Trustees at their December 3, 2014 meeting:

At NECC, our mission is to educate and inspire our students to succeed. We provide a welcoming environment focused on teaching and learning—strongly committed to unlocking the potential within each student and empowering our diverse community of learners to meet their individual goals. We are a community college dedicated to creating vibrant and innovative opportunities that encourage excellence and enhance the cultural and economic life of our region.

NECC’s current mission statement was adopted in 1992 and reads:

The mission of Northern Essex Community College is to serve the people of the Greater Merrimack Valley as a caring and comprehensive center of educational excellence that offers high quality, affordable adult and postsecondary education through the Associate Degree level, as well as a broad range of occupational programs and community services which enhance the social, cultural and economic life of the region.

There is no doubt that NECC is a much-changed institution since 1992. Between 1992 and 2014:

- Total fall headcount increased 24%, (from 5,597 to 6,963).
- African American headcount increased 307% (from 67 to 273).
- Latino student headcount increased 383% (from 532 to 2,570).
- Latino representation increased from 10% of total enrollment to 37% of total enrollment.
- Headcount of students ages 18-24 increased 108% from 2,000 to 4,176.
- 18-24 year old representation increased from 36% of total enrollment to 60% of total enrollment

These changes are notable. Essentially, Northern Essex is larger, younger (more traditional college age) and more diverse than it was in the early to mid-90's. (There was also about 5 percentage point increase in the share of full-time students during this time.) This is evidence of a fundamentally different institution in 1992 compared to today. It also supports the proposition that NECC's new mission statement is timely.

If one examines the 1992 Mission Statement it focuses largely on a broad, diffuse, array of academic programming focused on occupational and community needs. The newly revised Mission Statement highlights the student as recipient and beneficiary of high quality teaching and learning for "unlocking the potential within each student" and the benefit of "the cultural and economic life of the community." The proposed 2014 Mission Statement better captures the evolving nature of Northern Essex Community College.

ATTACHMENT A

Mission of the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education

Massachusetts Public Higher Education is a system with a distinguished past, increasing and measurable accomplishments, and dedicated to being recognized as having one of the nation's most outstanding array of institutions. It comprises 15 community colleges, nine state universities, and five campuses of the University of Massachusetts. The system exists to provide accessible, affordable, relevant, and rigorous programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment. The public system is committed to continuous improvement and accountability in all aspects of teaching and learning. The Board of Higher Education, together with each respective Board of Trustees, expects all students, faculty, and staff to be held to exacting standards in the performance of their roles and responsibilities.

Mission of the Community Colleges

The fifteen Massachusetts Community Colleges offer open access to high quality, affordable academic programs, including associate degree and certificate programs. They are committed to excellence in teaching and learning and provide academic preparation for transfer to four-year institutions, career preparation for entry into high demand occupational fields, developmental coursework, and lifelong learning opportunities.

Community colleges have a special responsibility for workforce development and through partnerships with business and industry, provide job training, retraining, certification, and skills improvement. In addition, they assume primary responsibility, in the public system, for offering developmental courses, programs, and other educational services for individuals who seek to develop the skills needed to pursue college-level study or enter the workforce.

Rooted in their communities, the colleges serve as community leaders, identifying opportunities and solutions to community problems and contributing to the region's intellectual, cultural, and economic development. They collaborate with elementary and secondary education and work to ensure a smooth transition from secondary to post-secondary education. Through partnerships with baccalaureate institutions, they help to promote an efficient system of public higher education.

The community colleges offer an environment where the ideas and contributions of all students are respected. Academic and personal support services are provided to ensure that all students have an opportunity to achieve academic and career success. No eligible student shall be deprived of the opportunity for a community college education in Massachusetts because of an inability to pay tuition and fees.