

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

NO.: BHE 23-27

BOARD DATE: February 14, 2023

REVOCATION OF THE DEGREE GRANTING AUTHORITY OF PINE MANOR COLLEGE

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby revokes the legal authority of **Pine Manor College** to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to December 31, 2022.

VOTED: Motion approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 2/6/2023; and adopted by the BHE on 2/14/2023.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.; 610 CMR 2 and 13.

Contact: Cynthia Farr Brown, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner of Regulatory and Veterans Affairs

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Pine Manor College**

Background

Pine Manor College ("PMC") was a private, non-profit college located in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. PMC was originally established in 1911 as a post-secondary division of the Dana Hall School in Wellesley. In 1930, the College received a charter as an independent junior college and in 1959 gained the right to confer the degrees of Associate in Arts and Associate in Science. Pine Manor Junior College became a separate corporation in 1962 and in 1965 moved from the Wellesley campus to Chestnut Hill. In 1977, the Massachusetts Board of Regents authorized the College to expand its mission, confer the Bachelor of Arts degree in the humanities and social sciences, and to change its name to Pine Manor College. In 1994, the charter was further expanded to include the degrees of Bachelor of Arts in Biology and the Master of Education. In 2005, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education authorized PMC to award the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

PMC made a number of efforts to mitigate its longstanding financial fragility, primarily through the diversification of its revenue streams, increasing student persistence, and maintaining low debt levels. While these efforts saw some success, existing financial challenges were exacerbated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Due to state guidance and requirements issued by public health authorities, PMC had to suspend auxiliary services such as rentals and special events, and consequently lost approximately 50% of its revenue streams.

Citing the impact of the pandemic on projected future enrollments and revenue, PMC's Board of Trustees voted on March 19, 2020 to authorize President Thomas O'Reilly to take all necessary steps to preserve the mission of the College, including, but not limited to identifying a sustainable financial model; a merger; dissolution of the college; the sale of or other disposition of any or all real estate of the college; and the creation of a foundation or some other not-for-profit entity to continue to support the college's mission, subject to Board approval of any final terms.

On May 13, 2020, PMC announced that the College had signed an integration agreement with Boston College, and the required Letter of Intent was submitted to the Commissioner on June 26, 2020. In June 2020, President O'Reilly signed the formal integration agreement with Boston College. Under the terms of the agreement, Boston College assumed responsibility for funding PMC's operations during a two-year teach out period; PMC students enrolled as of May 13, 2020 would be able to continue their Associate of Arts or Bachelor of Arts degree programs in classes taught by PMC faculty on the PMC campus through June 30, 2022; and PMC students who applied for transfer to and were accepted by the Woods College of Advancing Studies at Boston College could complete degrees there at the same net cost of attendance.

The final and complete Notice of Closure documentation was submitted to BHE staff on October 21, 2021 (with the first draft having been submitted on April 21, 2020). All submissions have

been deemed thorough and sufficient by Department staff. Although most operations of the College ceased on June 30, 2022, PMC provided support and transitional services to students as well as reverse transfer opportunities and degree conferrals until December 2022. Even after PMC's official closure on June 30, 2022, Department staff continued to work with PMC leadership to ensure continued compliance with the Board's regulations and consumer protection standards. Through its BHE-required closing plan, PMC arranged for transfer options at ten different institutions so that its students would be able to transfer and continue their educational programs. Boston College agreed to become the institution of record and received PMC's student records in June 2022. At the time of its closure, PMC offered 11 different degree programs and enrolled approximately 47 students.

Throughout the closure process, PMC worked closely with BHE staff to ensure compliance with state requirements related to the closure of the institution.

In compliance with M.G.L., c. 69, § 30A and 610 CMR 2.10, a public comment period regarding the closure of Pine Manor College opened on December 21, 2022, and closed on January 11, 2023. No comments were received.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board revoke the authority of Pine Manor College to grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to December 31, 2022.