

COP Remarks on Behalf of the State University System to the Board of Higher Education

One Ashburton Place

March 6, 2018

Good morning Chairman Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Santiago, and members of the Board of Higher Education, on behalf of the Council of Presidents, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the Massachusetts State University System.

I. Program Approval Process, Strategic Planning Committee and AAC Subcommittee Meeting

As you know, your Academic Affairs Subcommittee has been working with our public college and university campuses on a revised program approval process policy for UMass, the State Universities and Community Colleges. Recognizing that this is a policy change which will affect how public college campuses develop new programs, the committee broke from past practice of having DHE staff represent the views of campus leadership and opened the discussion in order to hear directly from presidents and provosts on the issue of program approval. I want to thank the board and in particular chairman Gabrieli and AAC Subcommittee chair Nancy Hoffman for embracing this public discussion on such an important issue.

In the course of these types of meetings, concerns are raised with various of the initiatives and the exchange of ideas might be perceived by some as “vigorous”. That is what good debate is all about. The open discussion at the AAC meeting last week might fit the description of vigorous or spirited, but it will lead to good public policy. And I want you to know, the state university COP – and I think I can speak for my community college colleges when I say—truly consider this board, your commissioner and his staff, partners in building the best system of public higher education in the

nation. We stand ready to continue our good work together.

Similarly, the board's work on campus strategic planning is continuing and the committee met last week to discuss that process as well. Again, there was an excellent exchange of ideas to help inform the process. The meeting was convened in an effort to learn from the campuses how the new process is working and what revisions are necessary to make it work more effectively. My colleagues and I want to thank Secretary Peyser and Commissioner Santiago for continuing to work with us - and our Boards of Trustees - on the campus strategic planning approval process.

II. Clinical Doctorate Degree LOI and Pending Legislation:

As I reported at the last meeting, two sister institutions, Salem State and Worcester State Universities submitted to the board a Letter of Intent to develop a Clinical Doctorate Degree in Occupational Therapy. We recognize that this LOI has been met with opposition from UMass and some board members might be wondering why the state universities are requesting approval of a degree that is not explicitly authorized for our system. Please permit me a few minutes to give a brief overview of the reasons we have taken the position that this degree as well as other clinical doctorate degrees is not only proper for state universities to offer but is needed for strength of our Massachusetts workforce.

Over the past couple of decades many licensing boards have raised educational requirements for entry level positions in many fields of practice; and as a result, many employers are struggling to find qualified employees to fill those jobs. Unfortunately for our Massachusetts residents, many of these professional practice degree programs are not widely offered at our public higher education institutions, forcing students to enroll in either a private institution or find a program at one of the UMass campuses that may or may not offer the program. As you know, the general laws have designated the University of Massachusetts the "Doctoral Degree" granting segment in public higher education but do allow state universities statutory authority to offer doctoral degree programs in "cooperation" with the

University of Massachusetts. We love and admire our friends at UMass, but “in cooperation” implies two willing partners, and frankly, that cooperation is missing thus far. The question must be what does the state need in its public degree offerings and not what does UMass or the state universities need to protect our segments. In this case, UMass does not offer the degree, the state needs the degree, and we stand ready to offer it.

In short, we believe allowing our state universities the opportunity to offer these advanced degree programs fits squarely within the existing mission of our state universities and will better serve the needs of our citizenry and the state’s workforce needs.

This statute dates back to the late 1980's and was a by-product of the Saxon Report on Massachusetts Public Higher Education. When the restructuring of public higher education was being debated in the legislature, the designation of UMass as the only segment of public higher education authorized to develop and confer doctorate degrees was understandable as a doctorate degree, in practice, referred to a PhD.

At the time that law was created, there was little attention given to the difference between a PhD and a Professional Practice Doctorate (PPD). Over the past three decades, licensing boards for certain professional fields have raised the education level requirements for licensure, therefore requiring colleges and universities to offer more advanced degree programs, *in those professional practice fields*. This evolution in the professional fields requires an evolution in our offerings at the state universities. An evolution that most other states have already accomplished.

At the last BHE meeting, I said that, in our opinion, there is a clear line between a PhD and PPD. Now, not only are clinical doctorate degrees known as wholly different from PhDs across the country and the academy, they are also recognized in Carnegie Classifications as a different level of education than a PhD.

Here's some context: A **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** is an academic degree focused on data analysis, **original research, and the evaluation of theory**. It is granted to students who successfully demonstrate a grasp of the subject matter in a field of study; are able to analyze problems, coordinate and correlate data from a number of allied fields in such fashion as to serve the progress of ideas in those fields; to give evidence of the ability to work independently throughout their entire career as a graduate student; and, most importantly, show the power to make an original contribution to the knowledge of their chosen field through the dissertation. It is in short, an idea and theory intensive degree.

A **Professional Practice Doctorate (PPD)**, on the other hand, represents the highest level of education and a mastery of subject matter and techniques in a professional field. Although the work for the professional doctor's degree may extend the boundaries of knowledge in the field, it is directed primarily towards **distinguished practical performance and mastery of a professional field of practice or study**. PPD is a practice-intensive degree that primarily prepares students to use knowledge generated by their own or other existing research in their field. Students are prepared to use this knowledge to deliver services and solve clinical problems.

The PHD and the PPD are very different from one another. We believe that our institutions are well positioned to accommodate these evolving educational needs of our professional workforce to meet the requirements of the licensing boards. This is not a question of mission creep, pure and simple.

I'm thinking about the Annual Trustee Conference of last week and Secretary Peyser's comments about his view of public higher education and how the Salem and Worcester State OTD program fits perfectly into the Secretary's call to action for our public colleges and universities. Secretary Peyser said that to be successful, we must:

1. Collaborate

2. Be innovative
3. Focus on our core missions
4. Be strategic in our planning and degree production

We agree. The OTD proposal embraces all four of the Secretary's points in that Salem and Worcester intend to work together by sharing knowledge, faculty, and resources, allowing students enrolled in the program to benefit from the strong undergraduate expertise on both campuses; it is innovative in that it will be the only public option for, not only undergraduate and masters level programs in Occupational Therapy but also allow for the only public pathway for a doctorate degree in OT; it focuses on the core mission of not only the two campuses but also the system in that this program proposal addresses a critical workforce need not currently being met; and it is strategic as the licensing and accreditation requirements for an occupational therapy degree is changing and this new degree is critical for the continuation of the undergraduate programs at those institutions.

My colleagues and I are happy to continue this conversation with you at a later time, or, I am happy to stop now and answer any question you might have on our rationale for seeking authority to develop clinical doctorate degrees.

III. Legislative Initiatives:

There are a few legislative initiatives that I would ask you consider joining with us in supporting.

a. Student Data Legislation:

I am pleased to report that the Massachusetts State Senate acted on our student data protection bill and is now awaiting passage in the House of Representatives. As previously reported, public college and university campuses are constantly inundated with public records requests for the personal information of students. These requests seek information such as

student name, address, date of birth, telephone and cellphone numbers, email addresses, area of study, graduation date, parent's, and more. Our campuses are compelled to provide much of this information as it is designated as a "public record" for the purposes of complying with the state's public records laws.

I think you would agree that our campuses should not be compelled to provide personal student information to requestors simply because they choose to attend a public institution of higher education.

The bill is headed for the House and I would ask that you join us in support of this important piece of legislation.

b. Deferred Maintenance Bond Bill:

Lastly on the legislative front, we were pleased to see the State Senate join the House in the passage of a nearly \$1 billion deferred maintenance bond bill for our public colleges and universities. As the first segment of public higher education established in the Commonwealth, the state universities house some of the oldest state-owned buildings. As the House and Senate reconcile the differences between both bills, it is our hope that there is an equitable distribution of those funds between the three segments. In order to give the administration the ability to triage worthy campus projects, we are hopeful that House and Senate leaders will refrain from earmark funds for specific projects as it may dilute the limited number of dollars available within the bond.

Projects supervised by DCAMM come with greater costs to the campuses and can delay certain emergency projects. A few years back the legislature extended the authority of campuses to allow for certain projects under \$2 million from triggering the involvement of DCAMM. We have asked that legislative leaders extend that authority within this bond bill for projects up to \$5 million.

Both bills also include language that extends the life and funding of the successful 2008 bond bill which was the first major new investment in campus infrastructure in decades. While many of our campuses saw projects funded by that 08 bond bill, some campuses have not. It is important that the legislature does not lose sight of these individual campus projects, as they are essential to properly preparing the future workforce of the Commonwealth.

c. DESE Advisory on Teacher Prep:

Upon the request of the state universities, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently clarified the definition of undergraduate teacher prep programs. As you may know, many of our campuses have required students entering the field of education to have a dual or double major to meet changes made to the requirements in the early 2000s. Our education deans are pleased with the clarification provided by DESE which now opens the door for our education programs to provide greater flexibility to our teacher prep programs. In the coming weeks, DESE will be releasing a revised set of “Subject Matter Knowledge” (SMK) requirements which guide the development of coursework within education programs. Our Deans are eager to see the changes to these SMKs as they begin to review existing programs.

IV. Bargaining:

Lastly, you may be aware that we have been in contract negotiations with our three campus labor union. I am pleased to announce that we have reached a tentative agreement with our Association of Professional Administrator (APA) bargaining unit. We are finalizing some last-minute details, but we hope to have final agreement in the coming weeks. Additionally, significant progress has been made with both the MSCA and ASFCME bargaining units and we hope to resolve differences and come to an agreement soon.

I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.