

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 16, 2021

10:00 a.m. virtually through ZOOM

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present	BHE Chair, Chris Gabrieli; AAC Co-Chair Patty Eppinger; AAC Co-Chair, Sheila Harrity; Secretary James Peyser; Paul Toner; and Commissioner Carlos Santiago (ex-officio, non-voting member)
Other BHE Members Present	Community College Segmental Advisor, Jorgo Gushi (non-voting)
Committee Members Absent	Judy Pagliuca
Department Staff Present	Cynthia Brown, Keith Connors, Winifred Hagan, Patricia Marshall, Constantia Papanikolaou, Elena Quiroz-Livanis

I. CALL TO ORDER

AAC Committee Co-Chair Sheila Harrity called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes from the January 26, 2021 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously approved through a roll call vote.

III. REMARKS

A. Committee Chair's Remarks

Committee Co-Chair Sheila Harrity said she now co-chairs the AAC meetings with member Patty Eppinger and that they would alternate chairing meetings with Sheila chairing this one. She stated that in addition to the full agenda presented to the members, they would also spend some meeting time hearing an update on Becker College.

B. Commissioner Remarks

▪ Becker College Discussion

Commissioner Santiago started by noting that he would need to turn the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall shortly, after brief remarks, because he was about to give testimony to the Ways and Means Committee at the State House. The Commissioner gave his initial thoughts on Becker College, stating that a review of the roll out of the new regulatory fiscal assessment process is ongoing, and that an after action report is anticipated for the full Board in June. He expressed satisfaction with the process and the strict adherence to

confidentiality. Acknowledging the important role of confidentiality, the Commissioner said he could not share individual conversations as part of the deliberative process but that he could share information that is already publicly available. The Commissioner called out the commendable work of staff members Cynthia Brown, Patricia Marshall and Dena Papanikolaou. He emphasized that Becker College has not formally announced that it will close. The focus of the Department of Higher Education (DHE or Department) is currently on contingency closure planning, which is meant to ensure that, in the event of closure, students can continue their studies at other institutions and that they have multiple transfer options. The Commissioner made it clear that DHE staff would work with any institution willing to create potential pathways for Becker students and he assured Committee members that the DHE is working diligently to ensure a successful outcome for any student affected by the potential closure of Becker College. He then turned the discussion over to Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall spoke about Contingency Closure planning, which is activated when an institution is identified as struggling financially. Before launching into details, she acknowledged the important role that both Associate Commissioner for Regulatory & Veterans Affairs, Cynthia Brown and Assistant Director for Academic & Veterans Affairs, Kristen Stone, play in the contingency closure process.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that Contingency Closure planning is a timely topic due to the financial impact of COVID 19 on our colleges and universities, and she highlighted the fact that the DHE recently completed its first year under the new Financial Assessment and Risk Monitoring (FARM) process. She made the point that when facts are brought forward about the financial stability of an institution or an institution comes forward as part of the FARM screening process through NECHE, we engage said institutions in Contingency Closure planning. This process produces a plan that can be quickly activated in the event that an institution needs to close. Deputy Commissioner Marshall said it was important to note that when an institution engages in the Contingency Closure process, it does not necessarily mean that the institution will close.

The first step in the Contingency Closure process is requesting a list of all academic programs offered by the institution and their corresponding CIP codes. "CIP" stands for "Classification of Instructional Programs", which is a national taxonomic standard of academic program titles developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Essentially, every academic program offered at a college or university has a unique CIP code. In addition to the CIP codes, the DHE requests enrollment numbers by class year for the purpose of understanding the number of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors in each program at the institution. Once the DHE receives the CIP codes and enrollment numbers from the institution, Internal Research at the DHE reviews the information for the purpose of generating a list of all programs with matching CIP's within a 100-mile radius. Deputy Commissioner Marshall said the DHE provides this information back to the institution engaged in Contingency Closure planning. The institution is asked to pay particular attention to niche programs, or programs that require licensure, like Nursing and other allied health professions. The DHE then asks the institution to identify 2-3 institutions for each program and to create a matrix with programs, CIP codes, enrollment numbers, and possible partner institutions so that students have multiple transfer options

Deputy Commissioner Marshall said the goal was to make sure that, in the event of closure, institutions have mapped out potential partners and that students have multiple transfer options. She added that the DHE also asks institutions to establish MOU's with partner institutions identified in the matrix. The DHE provides guidelines and redacted model MOU's. These MOU's include everything from residency requirements to waiving application fees to how academic policies—residency, general education, etc.—will be handled during the transfer process. The DHE also asks institutions to create curriculum maps with the institutions with which they have established MOU's. The curriculum maps are primarily for students and their families and they show how the program at the original institution maps to that of the receiving institution. In other words, both institutions agree to course to course equivalencies—displayed in the maps—so that students can evaluate how their courses will transfer. Curriculum mapping allows students to carefully consider their options and to have a full understanding of how their course work will be evaluated by the receiving institution. Deputy Commissioner Marshall continued by adding that as part of the contingency closure planning process, the DHE also asks the institution to identify an institution of record. The institution of record, which agrees to take all academic and student records—transcripts, catalogs, etc.—will maintain student records in perpetuity. She added that often the institution of record is the institution to which the majority of students transfer.

As Contingency Closure plans develop, Deputy Commissioner Marshall said the DHE also requests a summary of transition plans or structures that the closing institution will put in place as students transition out of a closing institution. This often includes advisors and counselors who work closely with students. The DHE requests that the institutions submit a budget that outlines how the transition plan will be supported financially. Finally, the DHE requests a communication plan that includes draft communications that will go out to all stakeholders in the event of closure. DHE staff review and approve all communications sent to the campus community.

Chair Gabrieli asked if we need to be much more specific with FARM institutions on the prework and he wondered if the DHE might modularize some of the process during the period when it is unclear whether an institution will be required to close.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall responded saying she appreciated the question because the Becker College situation has encouraged the DHE to reflect on steps involved with the Contingency Closure planning. In the fall, the DHE had requested CIP codes, program enrollments, names of programs, etc. and that the DHE will be increasing the amount of information it asks at that initial stage of the FARM process. She stated that this could potentially include the FARM institution doing outreach to other institutions around transfer pathways and student records. She agreed with Chair Gabrieli's suggestion of a modularized approach to ensure alignment between the degree of risk and contingency closure planning.

Commissioner Santiago shared that the statute does not preclude the DHE from seeking additional information. The statute is also not overly prescriptive with specific guidelines around implementation, thus allowing the DHE to modify the implementation steps as necessary. He asked if Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou agreed.

Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou affirmed Commissioner Santiago's statements and added that the process is about striking a balance with the institutions. As an example, she mentioned the challenge with transfer agreements. Transfer agreements require institutions to engage in outreach to other institutions, making other institutions aware of the financial difficulty. This can create some resistance on the part of the institution at risk. As Deputy Commissioner Marshall indicated, the DHE has taken a closer look at the Contingency Closure process and has tried to advance it to another phase where the institutions can at least identify viable transfer partners.

Committee Co-Chair Harrity asked Deputy Commissioner Marshall about the CIP codes. She wondered if there are any majors at Becker College that have not yet aligned with other area institutions. Deputy Commissioner Marshall responded that overall, she believed that Becker college programs line up well with programs at other institutions. The DHE was concerned about the Nursing and Gaming programs, but she believed Becker College has been able to identify several partners for those programs. There were a few other programs that were presenting some challenges, such as the 4-year Veterinarian Technical program. Deputy Commissioner Marshall turned to Associate Commissioner Brown asking if she missed identifying any other potential areas of concern. Associate Commissioner Brown spoke about the challenge of dual degree programs, but believes the DHE has since identified like programs at other institutions. Committee Co-Chair Harrity commented that finding partners for Becker College's Nursing Program must be challenging knowing that most Nursing Programs have very few available seats.

Committee Co-Chair Harrity asked if there were other comments about Becker College and, if not, she would have Deputy Commissioner Marshall continue her comments. Hearing none, Committee Co-Chair Harrity asked Deputy Commissioner Marshall to proceed.

▪ **Community College Fall Reopening Plan Discussion**

Deputy Commissioner Marshall said the next item she wanted to cover in her remarks was the Community College fall reopening plans. She indicated that it was a timely topic, given its particular importance in light of the downward trends in enrollment and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on our most vulnerable students. Deputy Commissioner Marshall said her remarks would focus on the academic and student success issues related to the reopening plans as informed by her conversations with the campus Chief Academic Officers (CAO's). Commissioner Santiago welcomed the Community College presidents that had joined the meeting, saying they could best describe their reopening plans for the fall and invited Deputy Commissioner Marshall to continue her remarks.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall spoke about what we know about the Community College's operations as follows:

- We know several different engagement modalities are being offered to accommodate students' needs. These different modalities include: face-to-face, online (asynchronous), hybrid virtual (synchronous), and hybrid face to face. We also know that most courses for the Fall (55%) have a face-to-face component, with a focus on those courses that

need to meet face-to-face. During the pandemic, our Community Colleges have continued to offer labs, clinicals, etc.

- We know that our Community Colleges have been proactive—with marketing and direct outreach to students-- encouraging potential students to attend and motivating students who have left to come back.
- We also know that their message has been unequivocally “We are open for business.” However, there may be more that the Board and Department can do to help them amplify this important message.

From her conversations with the CAO’s, Deputy Commissioner Marshall also learned a bit about how decisions are being made at the campus level. First and foremost, decisions are based on feedback from students. For example, student surveys indicate that only about 30% of students want face to face classes. This percentage aligns with national trends as reported in journals such as *Inside Higher Ed* and the *Chronicle*, which indicate that there have been several benefits of remote learning which mitigates some of the challenges faced by community college students, such as travel and access. By way of example, Deputy Commissioner Marshall read a quote from an *Inside Higher Ed* article, attributed to NECC President Lane Glenn, in which he said that “students at NECC have indicated support for more synchronous classes to provide some structure, but traveling to campus and commuting is not generally what they demand.”

Deputy Commissioner Marshall also said she learned that institutions stand ready to pivot quickly. They are ready to offer either more or less face to face courses as the situation with COVID-19 evolves with CAO’s continuously evaluating enrollment numbers and patterns. CAO’s have also been looking at the different modalities and monitoring their success rates. In preliminary conversations, they indicated that student success rates with new instructional models are comparable to pre-COVID rates.

Committee Co-Chair Eppinger asked if we are reaching the students who dropped out because of the pandemic and their unique challenges, like access to online classes. And if we lost students, how do we bring them back. Deputy Commissioner Marshall acknowledged the importance of the question, citing our knowledge that the online modality does not work for all students. She also highlighted the need for a deep review of the data to understand how best to reach all students. She then invited the college presidents to discuss their reopening plans.

Chair Gabrieli spoke first to ask to what degree past student preferences and successes would govern decisions by the campuses. He said his question was steeped in concern for the number of students who did not materialize in enrollments. How do we think about the students who seek in-person classes compared to other students who seek flexibility in course delivery? Secretary Peyser also wanted to know the extent to which colleges plan to offer the same course in multiple modalities to offer students more choice. Committee Member Toner wanted to know how our public institutions of higher education stack up against those institutions, such as Southern NH University and Arizona State, with long and successful histories of offering online courses. He wondered if we were witnessing our students beginning to drift to those institutions.

President James Mabry responded first, stating that the campuses investigated the reasons why students leave or do not return to campus as that issue is one of their biggest concerns. Survey results on this question found that about 40% of students said they were not returning for economic reasons. Survey results also showed that some students left school because they did not like online learning, but those students were in the minority with roughly four to one saying they liked online learning. 30% of surveyed students responded saying they highly preferred online learning with 10% of students responding just the opposite. Throughout the pandemic the community colleges have offered different course delivery modalities both asynchronously and synchronously with the objective being to meet the needs of students. Come this fall, the community colleges are prepared to offer a wide range of course options to meet student preferences. The CAO's will monitor student choices so that the campuses can react in real time to add or subtract certain types of courses.

President Eddinger stated that she just came from a staff meeting where the subject was student success data for winter and fall. At the end of each semester, BHCC looks at data on student absences, who students are (demographics) and how they perform in each of their classes compared to the prior semester. The school also looks at incompletes and withdrawals. The data showed that women do much better than men. Women return to campus at much higher rates and they have higher success rates - in the mid 80's. Students who are struggling are younger LatinX and Black men. They tend to be 8 to 10% behind with similar dropout rates. When BHCC surveyed these students through phone calls and other contacts to ask why they left the institution, the answer was the same that President Mabry shared - economic need. The families need these students to drop out of school and find work to help the family survive. The primary reason female students do not return is the need for childcare. She reiterated that the issue is economic and not academic. BHCC had implemented a program called HOPE for LatinX and Black male students and found that when these students received the economic and emotional support they needed, enrollment numbers went back up.

President Eddinger continued, noting that Pre-COVID, BHCC was moving toward implementing more online and remote courses, knowing that is how 3 out of 5 BHCC students access classes. BHCC's pre-COVID plan was to move 40 to 50% of classes online to boost enrollment. These plans were hampered by faculty resistance to move more of their classes online. However, COVID provided the push needed to move the faculty to online modalities. Recent student surveys confirm BHCC is moving in the right direction with 79% of students saying they want more remote courses. The fall mix of courses provides for at least 50 to 60% of the courses being offered on campus. This mix is composed of about 25% of courses that need to be offered in person because of labs, etc. and another 25% where the courses need to be partially on campus. Most freshmen will be on campus to ensure that they are well connected to the school. Following freshmen year, more courses will move online. President Eddinger assured committee members that the administration at BHCC is following the data in their reopening plans and responding to student needs. The one worry she expressed is the fighting she sees in K-12 schools with the unions and that discontent spilling into the community colleges where, right now, there is no conflict among campus faculty. President Eddinger made the final point that even though the community colleges have student populations with different needs, all the community colleges approach the assessment and interventions similarly as a system. She

asked the committee members to help the community colleges tell the story of their institutions to help attract students back to school.

Committee Co-Chair Harity asked if there were any comments before President Kennedy spoke. Committee Member Toner responded saying he was pleased with what he was hearing on the many options for students. Community College Segmental Advisor, Jorgo Gushi, said he appreciated the community college presidents surveying student needs and looking at student data before solidifying their reopening plans to ensure those plans meet the needs of the students. Secretary Peyser asked if students can get an all campus, in-person, experience for those seeking it.

President Ellen Kennedy spoke next. She said student needs were at the center of all their planning. At Berkshire Community College about 30% of courses will be completely remote and about 70% will have some component on campus, along with a virtual connection for some part of the course. President Kennedy raised awareness of the difference in admission cycles between 4-year and 2-year institutions with more fluidity existing with the 2-year institutions. This flexibility allows for more responsiveness to student needs. President Kennedy gave an example of surveys on which students have expressed interest in more in-person classes but enrollment numbers tell a different story suggesting changing circumstances for those same students and the ability of BCC to respond. President Kennedy concluded by acknowledging the arrival of President Lane Glenn on the screen.

Committee Co-Chair Harity responded to the president's comments by reflecting on her position of being a vocational superintendent for the K-12 school system, saying students and parents are pushing for a return to school and the unions support it. Committee Co-Chair Harity said the union in her school district has been very supportive of opening at 50% capacity and that scenario is the same throughout most of Central MA. She felt these different experiences spoke to the importance of the current conversation, especially in the context of those students needing the social and emotional support inherent with in-person learning.

President Lane Glenn spoke next and said he would be brief but he did want to address Secretary Peyser's question about providing an all in-classroom experience for those students seeking it. President Glenn said he spent the morning dealing with that question for his own campus. His campus will begin registration in two weeks and his institution will be telling students that if they want an in-person experience, NECC can provide it. He said like any other semester, there will be limits on the in-person experience (i.e., when an in-person course is offered, etc.) but students seeking to take their general education courses in-person will have the option to do so. He also spoke about President Eddinger's plea for a 3-foot rule for spacing between students, agreeing that the 6-foot rule is challenging because of the generally small-sized classrooms in our institutions. NECC only has a handful of classrooms on both campuses that can accommodate the full number of students under this 6-foot rule. Every class NECC offers can only accommodate approximately eight students placing these classes at a significant loss.

President Glenn then mentioned the competency-based education that Kim Burns will present later saying that this model allows the college to move students through the system more

efficiently, flexibly, at lower costs, and in a hybrid format. When he has been asked why can't more public colleges follow the competency-based education model similar to Southern New Hampshire University (SNU), he responds that SNU received a multi-million dollar grant to get them started and those millions helped SNU become the dominant player, now serving over 130 thousand students. President Glenn believes that competency-based education will attract back some of the students lost to SNU. He also said the messaging of NECC's providing hybrid and online learning is important in such a competitive environment. The hybrid model of in-person and online learning is the fastest growing modality, with 45% of the student body taking classes in this form. But NECC hears the Committee's concern of meeting the needs of students seeking an in-person experience and those students will be served too.

President Mabry mentioned that as the vaccine continues to roll out, there will be a psychological tipping point in their communities where people will really start to feel safe. He finds his community is not at that point yet, making it difficult for students to visualize the fall semester. But, as the mindset changes because of increased vaccinations, people will feel safer returning to school and taking courses. The one barrier that will persist will be the challenges associated with the economy. The key for more students returning will be a healthy economy.

Secretary Peyser addressed the spacing issue and wanted the community colleges to know they have been heard and that the Administration is working on this issue. The Administration is also interested in learning more about interest in and success with live streaming. He asked if the community colleges were differentiating incoming students in the way President Eddinger noted with the prioritization of providing incoming freshmen an on-campus experience to better connect the students socially and emotionally.

President Mabry thanked Secretary Peyser for the time the Administration has dedicated to the spacing issues. President Mabry shared that his campus presented live streaming to better understand how to have students in-person and online seamlessly. His campus is figuring out the equipment and space needs for these types of classes. The campus work in this area shows how much his college and all the community colleges have flexed to meet the new demands. He also mentioned priority registration as a critical tool his campus is using for aiding first year students.

Committee Co-Chair Harity asked President Eddinger about her comment of 8 to 10% of young black and brown student not enrolling and wondered if part of the reason is a connection issue to virtual learning with computer and internet needs at the fore and if the state should be thinking of how to best allocate expected federal assistance dollars.

President Eddinger replied that the problem is multi-layered. She spoke of black and brown male students being socially disconnected from our higher education institutions for a long time with the pandemic aggravating these historic issues. Using that context as background, President Eddinger agreed the lack of technology and internet connectivity is a barrier for these students. However, she also mentioned the programs all community colleges have that provide students with Chrome Books, laptops or WiFi. The challenges the community colleges face is reaching these student populations to inform them of these resources. Committee Co-Chair Harity expressed empathy with these challenges, saying her school district experiences similar

challenges for supporting low-income students. President Eddinger expressed her desire to see DESE require all high school students to complete the FAFSA before graduating.

Commissioner Santiago shared that DHE is working with DESE to create a more comprehensive approach to inform students about financial aid. Together the two agencies are sending correspondence to every student to inform them about filling out FAFSA forms and this effort is happening on the ground level through the schools. The message is "we are all rowing in the same direction on this important issue."

Committee Co-Chair Harranty and Chair Gabrieli thanked the presidents for taking the time to share their experiences and perspectives. Chair Gabrieli offered a couple of suggestions regarding next steps. The first was having the Board think about how to help the campuses communicate key elements of their plans. He gave the example of communicating to first-year students the many options community colleges offer to provide them with both an online and in-person experience. The second idea was thinking how the Board could help the community colleges communicate a set of principles. For example, the Commissioner, working with the community colleges, could draft a list of general principles with the overarching message that our public colleges and universities are open for business. Chair Gabrieli asked if Commissioner Santiago agreed and if he would be able to work with the presidents to present these principles to the Board. Commissioner Santiago stated that he would convene his staff and consider putting together a draft resolution for the Board to consider at the next meeting and that he would share the draft with the college presidents first for their input to make sure the DHE captured the conversation accurately.

IV. MOTIONS

List of documents used:

AAC Motions 21-03, 21-04 and 21-06

Links to Videos accessible before the meeting:

- [AAC 21-03](#)
- [AAC 21-04](#)
- [AAC 21-06](#)

Committee Co-Chair Harranty introduced the motions for member consideration. She referenced the staff video presentations that were made available prior to the Board meeting, and thanked Department staff for their preparation.

A. AAC 21-03 Approval of Letter of Intent of Bridgewater State University to award the Bachelor of Science in Childhood Studies and Authorization for Fast Track Review.

Committee Co-Chair Harranty asked if there was any discussion of this motion and mentioned there were representatives from Bridgewater State to field any questions. Seeing no questions, she moved for a motion for approval, which was made and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AAC21-03 APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW OF BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CHILDHOOD STUDIES.

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the letter of intent and authorization for fast track review of **Bachelor of Science in Childhood Studies** at **Bridgewater State University**.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success.

B. AAC 21-04 Approval of Letter of Intent of the University of Massachusetts Boston to Award the Bachelor of Arts in Urban Public Health and the Bachelor of Science in Urban Public Health and Authorization for Fast Track Review.

Committee Co-Chair Harrity asked if there was any discussion of this motion and mentioned there were representatives from UMass Boston to field any questions. Hearing no questions, she moved for a motion for approval, which was made and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AAC21-04 APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN URBAN PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE UN URBAN PUBLIC HEALTH.

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the letter of intent and authorization for fast track review of the **Bachelor of Arts in Urban Public Health** and the **Bachelor of Science in Urban Public Health** at the **University of Massachusetts Boston**.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success.

C. AAC 21-05 Approval of Academic Affairs Committee Motions AAC 21-03 and 21-04 on a Consent Agenda

The following motion was brought forth, seconded and unanimously approved:

MOVED:

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

AAC 21-03 Bridgewater State University
 Bachelor of Science in Childhood Studies

AAC 21-04 University of Massachusetts Boston
 Bachelor of Arts in Urban Public Health and the Bachelor of
 Science in Urban Public Health

Authority: Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs &
 Student Success

D. AAC 21-06 Application of Bay State College to Award the Master of Science in Business Analytics.

Committee Co-Chair Harranty asked if there was any discussion of this motion and mentioned there were representatives from Bay State College to field any questions. Hearing no questions, she moved for a motion for approval, which was made and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AAC 21-06 APPLICATION FROM BAY STATE COLLEGE TO AWARD THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Bay State College** to award the **Master of Science in Business Analytics**.

Upon graduating the first class for these programs, Bay State College shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success.

V. PRESENTATIONS

List of documents used:

AAC Meeting PowerPoint, March 16, 2021

A. Advancing the Work of Competency Based Education

Committee Co-Chair Harrity invited Deputy Commissioner Marshall to introduce the presentation. Deputy Commissioner Marshall informed the committee that they would hear from Dr. Kim Burns, Dean of Academic Innovation and Professional Development, and Jody Carson, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, both from Northern Essex Community College (NECC), to present on their work in Competency Based Education. Professor Burns and Carson then proceeded with their presentation.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall pointed out how accreditation is a real barrier to this work because NECC must receive course by course level approval from NECHE where an institution like SNU has institutional level approval. However, once NECHE determines that NECC has the capacity to put up competency programs, NECC may be eligible for institutional approval.

Chair Gabrieli said he would like to spend time at a future meeting to better understand how to help our public institutions build capacity. He also said he wondered what the current capacity is at the other institutions. Dr. Kim Burns replied saying the investment by the DHE through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) was used to provide extensive professional development to early childhood faculty to help them understand what was involved with competency-based education and provided them with technical assistance on what was required for NECHE accreditation. The non-credit piece is also being worked on because that piece does not need to go through NECHE accreditation. Where the overall competency-based education process is so daunting, Dr. Burns was not sure exactly where all the other community colleges are in their process and if they had sufficient resources to continue to advance this work.

Chair Gabrieli suggested to Deputy Commissioner Marshall that the DHE consider ways to address this issue because the real win would be multiple campuses successfully achieving institutional level approval of CBE. With those comments, Committee Co-Chair Harrity thanked the presenters and Deputy Commissioner Marshall informed the Committee that, in the interest of time, the presentation on prior learning assessment that was scheduled for today would be postponed until the next meeting.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

VII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.