

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

December 14, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education ("BHE" or "the Board") was held virtually on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Ann Christensen¹

Alex Cortez

Cameron Costa²

Patty Eppinger

Paul Mattera

Secretary James Peyser

Judy Pagliuca

Paul Toner

Bill Walczak

Jorgo Gushi, non-voting Student Advisor, Community College segment

Cindy Mack, non-voting Student Advisor, State University segment

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The following Board Members were absent:

Veronica Conforme

Mike O'Brien

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and announced that the meeting was being held remotely and in accordance with relevant amendments to the Open Meeting Law. Chair Gabrieli announced that the meeting was being livestreamed via Zoom and recorded, and members of the public who signed up for public comment would be allowed to join the Zoom meeting to provide comment. Department of Higher Education (DHE or Department) Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis, then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

¹ Arrived at 10:29 a.m.

² Arrived at 10:06 a.m.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Board received one request for public comment from Dr. Maria Hegbloom at Bridgewater State University. He noted that three minutes would be allocated for Dr. Hegbloom comments and then invited her to speak.

Dr. Maria Hegbloom thanked the Board and provided an overview of the enrollment crisis in public higher education. Dr. Hegbloom stated that the state was witnessing a 20-year low for enrollment across the public higher education system. She remarked that the crisis could be described as one of equity, and as with so many other things with the pandemic it has been particularly devastating for Black and Brown students. She continued that given the role of public higher education as the primary instrument for upward mobility, this crisis was much bigger than the institutions alone. It was a crisis that could be felt throughout the Commonwealth for years to come as we seek to close the wealth gap and create an equitable society beyond enrollment and retention. Dr. Hegbloom commented that the crisis could be one of resources. The cuts to public support over the past 20 years has created a model where students take on years of debt, and colleges and universities desperately try to scrape together enough to provide as much support as possible. Dr. Hegbloom concluded by asking the Board to stand with faculty, librarians, staff, students, and families across the state to demand that we substantially increase state funding to our institutions to ensure that Massachusetts residents can benefit from higher education.

III. WELCOME

Chair Gabrieli welcomed everyone to the last, full Board meeting of the calendar year.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion to accept the October 19, 2021 Board meeting minutes. The motion was duly moved and seconded. With no further discussion the motion proceeded to a roll call vote and passed unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christenson – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary James Peyer – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

V. REMARKS & REPORTS

A. Chairman's Remarks

Chair Gabrieli opened by thanking the Board and remarked on his level of excitement about several long-term strategic issues that were discussed during the Advisory Council Meetings. The Equity Agenda has gained significant momentum through different investment initiatives to benefit students and he commented on the progress made to date. Chair Gabrieli thanked Commissioner Carlos Santiago for his leadership, the Executive Committee, Governor Baker, Secretary Peyser, and the legislature for supplying their time and providing the necessary resources to support the work. He then turned to Commissioner Santiago to offer remarks.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago read the following statement into the record:

I want to preface my remarks with a few observations regarding higher education's current state of affairs in our nation-- or perhaps my concern should be the state of affairs of the nation in light of higher education. I was once asked, "What is it that colleges and universities do?" The most straightforward answer is that they create and disseminate knowledge. We know that it's a much more complicated process than that, but fundamentally, that's what we do.

I could, but I won't, expand upon that statement, although there is much to say about the state of higher education today and its broader implications for what is transpiring in this nation. In meeting our mission to create and disseminate knowledge, we find our biggest adversary has always been ignorance. When you ask employers what an essential characteristic of the people they hire is and where they want higher education to be intimately involved, it is in the development of critical thinking among our students. Critical thinking requires a careful analysis of quantitative and qualitative information, a sense of reasoning and logic, and historical evidence that can be brought to bear on the issue in question. There is much today that education must counter, as the proliferation of social media often provides classic examples of noncritical thinking. Denial of climate change potentially results, long term, in tragic events such as we have seen over the last week. Rejection of scientifically-based public health recommendations in the wake of a pandemic has led to over 800,000 deaths in this country alone, and we look with horror at the prospect of reaching a million fatalities over the next year. Denial of established democratic practices and policies has led to a lack of confidence in our established institutions and the democratic ideal. Denial of historical circumstances and reality, systemic racism, and Holocaust denial have served to delay racial reconciliation and social justice. To say this nation is in crisis is an understatement.

Students at virtually all public institutions in Massachusetts have been subjected to hate speech and the ignorance that spawns this. Salem State University is just one recent example where professional provocateurs make their rounds and let their ignorance be shown quite

openly. Our institutions' attempts to balance free speech with those whose only objective is to vilify someone based upon their religion, skin color, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, and the like is often difficult. But we must call it out in the strongest terms--these hateful pronouncements are a product of ignorance, something our institutions have been created to counter, reverse, and overturn. We are not and should not be neutral in this respect--ignorance is ignorance--we know it when we hear it. We need to call it out in the strongest terms and join with students supporting freedom of speech and rational discourse. Only an educated and civic-minded citizenry will create a society that can live up to democracy's ideals.

Let me turn to another subject (quite removed from the one I just highlighted)—and recognize the many efforts made by those who serve as public stewards of our higher ed institutions--boards of trustees. I began thinking about this when I was informed last Friday of the passing of Dick Logan, a veteran board chair of Framingham State University. Dick introduced me to the presidential selection process when I joined the DHE in 2013 and chaired my first presidential selection committee experience. It led to the hiring of Dr. Javier Cevallos, an exceptional choice and leader who we will surely miss upon his departure this next year. I found Dick to be a true exemplar in his openness to informed dialogue, his gentle spirit, and his warm welcome to someone new to the Commonwealth. While my own remembrances of Dick are special to me, I thought it useful to hear what his colleagues at Framingham State thought of him. This is what they told me:

Richard "Dick" Logan epitomized the commitment and connection to the University, which he served as a member of the Board of Trustees. Dick was a 1970 graduate of Framingham State University. Though years had passed since his time as a student at Framingham, his spirit and enthusiasm for FSU were as bright and strong as they imagine they were in his youth. He was a student-athlete and took pride in regaling his teammate's successes on the basketball court. Having been raised in Marlborough, Dick's connection to the MetroWest area was similarly strong, and it informed his work as a trustee.

Having served as Chair of the Board during his initial appointment, Dick currently served as the Alumni trustee. While Dick's commitment and business acumen supported his work as a trustee, his personality, quick wit, and wry smile endeared him to anyone who met him. His approach to this vital work will never be forgotten by those in the Framingham and public higher education communities in the Commonwealth. As one of Dick's fellow trustees wrote in an email last week upon receiving the news of Dick's passing, "the lights in the Dwight gym dimmed a bit last week," but Dick's impact on Framingham State University will forever burn bright for everyone in the university community whose lives his work touched permanently and positively.

I know that there are many other examples of a Dick Logan among our trustees. You have shown by your dedication and commitment how much you care about the success of our students and for that, I salute Dick Logan and all trustees.

At the conclusion of Commissioner Santiago's remarks, Chair Gabrieli thanked the Commissioner and turned to Secretary Peyser for the next agenda item.

C. Secretary of Education's Remarks

Secretary of Education James Peyser opened by thanking the Commissioner for his remarks in memory of Dick Logan. He began his presentation by highlighting the Governor's ARPA Bill, which totaled \$4 billion. He noted that the largest line item was \$75 million for fiscal relief and facilities maintenance projects for higher education. There was additional funding for the endowment match program, community college workforce training programs, student mental health services, and the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative. Lastly, he noted available funds to support telehealth services for behavioral and mental health on our college campuses. It included a matching grant program available until the end of the calendar year and the opportunity to sign onto the statewide contract will remain open indefinitely for both private and public campuses.

Secretary Peyser closed by stating this is a significant investment and there are new resources available to get help where it was needed.

D. Report from Presidents

State University Segmental Report

For a copy of President Birge's full remarks, please see:

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2021-05-04%20Report%20from%20SU%20Presidents.pdf>

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts College President James Birge spoke on behalf of the State University segment. He reported that universities have COVID vaccine requirements that include booster shots for all employees and are also encouraging students to get booster shots, if they are qualified, before returning to campus for the next semester. He also reported that all four campus bargaining units agreed on three-year labor contracts for their unit members.

President Birge shared that the State University Council of Presidents supports and endorses the Department's efforts to expand MassGrant Plus to include the State Universities. Further, the State Universities are fully supportive and ready to collaborate with the Commissioner and the Board to educate the next generation of students in the Commonwealth and execute the Department's leading work with the Equity Agenda. The State Universities also support the agency's efforts to ensure that all students have equal access to high-quality and affordable pathways to a college education.

President Birge also described a successful coaching model implemented at MCLA and the alignment with the New Undergraduate Experience (NUE). He stated that MCLA will continue to adopt recommendations from the NUE working group that illustrated that students want to support at moments of transition, to see their identities reflected and valued in our curriculum and throughout campus, and to have a voice in decisions that reflect them.

President Birge concluded by thanking the Board, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Santiago for the continued support of critical initiatives, especially as we come out of the pandemic, to serve our students at such a pivotal time

Community College Segmental Report

For a copy of President Podell's full remarks, please see:

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2021-05-04%20Report%20from%20CC%20Presidents.pdf>

Massachusetts Bay Community College (MassBay) President David Podell opened by acknowledging departing Roxbury Community College President Valerie Roberson as an extraordinary leader and noted her colleagues and peers will deeply miss her.

President Podell reported that the Community Colleges have been working to ensure smooth implementation of a vaccine mandate that would go into effect in January. He remarked that many of the colleges continue to offer vaccination clinics on their campuses and have also agreed to host booster clinics. He thanked Governor Baker and the Legislature for the recently signed American Recovery Plan Act legislation that makes investments in our Community Colleges.

President Podell concluded his report by offering support for the FY23 budget recommendations on behalf of the 15 Community Colleges. He stated they are pleased to see level funding for several important initiatives, including the STEM Starter Academy and the Community College Workforce Development Grants, and additional support for key programs like Early College. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to offer support for the FY23 budget recommendations.

Chair Gabrieli thanked the presidents for their segmental reports and asked if there were questions or comments from the Board. With no further questions, Chair Gabrieli proceeded to the Student Advisory Council.

E. Report from Student Advisory Council

Student Voting Member Cameron Costa opened by greeting Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Santiago and members of the Board. He commented that his concerns are like that of most students across the Commonwealth, in which they feel that they will be impacted the most by the current budget recommendations. Member Costa remarked that as students hope to advocate for more support, the Board should consider current legislative issues that increase funding for higher education, such as the Fair Share Amendment, Debt Free Future Act, and the CHERISH Act. He stated that these three legislative priorities work to increase funding for higher education to help students.

Member Costa concluded that he believes the FY23 Budget Recommendation address some unmet need issues through the MassGrant and MassGrant Plus funding. Still, it leaves out the thousands of students whose expected family contribution was too high because their single parent works two jobs and has two kids in college makes too much to qualify. He remarked that the story was his own and that as a student, he knows all too well how underfunding leads to

lack of support for working-class families. Board member Costa turned to Segmental Advisor Jorgo Gushi to offer additional remarks.

Segmental Advisor Gushi thanked Board member Mr. Costa for leading the discussion and provided an overview of the Student Advisory Council's (SAC) projects and goals. Mr. Gushi acknowledged being pleased by the FY23 Budget Recommendation increase funding for the SUCCESS line and he called on legislators to listen to students on how issues addressed in the budget should be fixed. He commended the 15 Community Colleges for their work on getting students, faculty, and staff vaccinated. He highlighted the SAC's Campus Community Building Day on April 6, 2022, which responded to the hate-based incidents at our institutions. He raised student safety as a concern and suggested three steps to help uproot them.

1. Define and understand the problem. Invest resources in educating the community about the short- and long-term effects these incidents have on students' mental and physical health—partner with the local student leaders to amplify your voice.
2. Defend and empower victims. Colleges and universities must support affected minorities at various levels. A stepped-care model must be adapted, ensuring that various student needs are supported. Minority groups should benefit from various opportunities to enhance their academic and professional growth within the college community.
3. Develop institutional accountability. Colleges and universities must be held accountable for hate-based incidents and hold those responsible accountable. Further, administrators must commit more strongly to diversity at higher echelons of the institutions. An equity/diversity barometer was needed in each campus to track progress and setbacks, and institutional mechanisms should be in place to augment improvement progress and conduct periodical reviews.

Lastly, Mr. Gushi remarked on SAC's goals for 2022. He shared that the SAC was committed to the following: changing the state statute which limits the number of student seats on the Board of Higher Education; continue organizing community check-ins with students and implement diversity audits; and continue our support and advocacy on behalf of Open Educational Resources to help its wider implementation.

VI. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS

A. Academic Affairs and Student Success (AA&SS)

AA&SS Advisory Council Co-Chair Patty Eppinger opened by congratulating the Department for being recognized as the 2021 Exceptional Agency of the Year by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). She then provided an update from the AA&SS Advisory Council. She reported that the meeting's agenda focused on the Minimum Admission Standards and the SAT Optional Pilot. She noted that all public universities institutions currently participate in the SAT Optional Pilot and that the AA&SS will continue to discuss progress on the transition from pilot to policy. Initial findings suggest that high school GPA is a better predictor of academic success

compared to SAT scores. Co-Chair Eppinger remarked that the pandemic disrupted access to the SAT and concluded by cautioning that as the SAT Optional Pilot is evaluated, the AA&SS Advisory Council may need to examine the Admission Standards' sliding scale.

B. Strategic Planning

List of Documents Used

- [BHE 22-22](#)

Chair Gabrieli asked Co-Chair Bill Walczak to provide an update on the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC). Co-Chair Walczak said SPAC was charged with reviewing the campus strategic planning and making recommendations to the Board on ways to enhance the process. Realizing a definition of "unified" did not exist, the group turned to best practices on collaborative approaches to strategic planning between institutions. President Podell and Framingham State University President Javier Cevallos provided insight on how they have worked together to support their strategic planning processes. SPAC will continue the conversations with presidents and will discuss next how collaborative approaches can enhance strategic planning on campuses to achieve the Equity Agenda.

Co-Chair Bill Walczak concluded by asking that the Board to approve the SPAC Advisory Council's recommendation to appoint Board member Paul Mattera as a member of the Strategic Planning Advisory Council. Chair Gabrieli stated that in working with Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou on drafting the new By-Laws, they agreed that all candidates for membership on the Advisory Councils needed to be ratified by the Board. Chair Gabrieli reminded the Board that all members could join any discussion, even if not formally part of the Advisory Councils. Member Walczak stated that the SPAC thought Board member Mattera's roles as the state university segmental representative on the BHE and as a Salem State University trustee made him an ideal member for the SPAC Advisory Council.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-22, Approval of Amendment to Strategic Planning Advisory Council Membership. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary James Peyser – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-22 APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) approves the Board Chair’s recommended appointment of BHE Member Paul Mattera as member of the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC).

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 4; BHE By-Laws Article I, Section 3 (d) and Article III, Section 2(a) (as amended, June 22, 2021).

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Chief Counsel Papanikolaou stated the subject of Advisory Council membership was unfinished business from the BHE's last annual meeting. The SPAC membership only had one Board member, Bill Walczak, appointed as an official member. Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, and Commissioner Santiago are ex-officio members of all ACs. She thanked Member Walczak for recommending a colleague to join the SPAC. Chief Counsel Papanikolaou remarked that it was always the intention under the new bylaws that the Board would review and approve each Advisory Council's membership at its annual meeting, which would be the goal moving forward. Chair Gabrieli added that there would also be a review mid-year checkpoint around implementation of the bylaws. He then moved to the next item on the agenda and provided an update on the Finance and Administrative Policy (FAAP) Advisory Council in Co-Chair Veronica Conforme’s absence.

C. Finance and Administrative Policy

Chair Gabrieli shared that the Finance and Administrative Policy Council’s primary focus would be on the recently launched *Strategic Review Process of Higher Education Finance*. Chair Gabrieli noted its importance and let Board colleagues know that the work might require additional Board meetings. He concluded by stating that public higher education financing was important for the institutions, students, and the state’s equity goals.

VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Gabrieli provided an overview of the Executive Committee and how it functions. The Executive Committee reviews motions and consent agendas previously moved through the Board’s Committees. He stated that the Executive Committee now meets the week in-between Advisory Council and Board meetings. Chair Gabrieli once again reminded the members that all were welcome to attend any council or committee meeting of the BHE. He then turned to the motions section of the agenda.

VIII. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

BHE Motions 22-16 through 22-21

Links to Materials:

- [BHE 22-19](#)
- [BHE 22-20](#)

- [BHE 22-21 Motion](#) and [BHE 22-21 Presentation](#)

A. Board of Higher Education

Chair Gabrieli introduced Motion BHE 22-19, Approval of Board Higher Education motions BHE 22-16 through BHE 22-18 on a Consent Agenda. He noted that the Consent Agenda captures three approvals of letters of intent for new programs on the Fast Track Review. Chair Gabrieli described the fast track review process and the roles of Department staff and the Board. He explained once these motions were approved, the programs are then subject to direct approval by the Commissioner without returning to the Board a second time. He concluded that all three programs were on track to meet those requirements.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-19. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary James Peyser – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-19 APPROVAL OF BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION MOTIONS BHE 22-16 THROUGH BHE 22-18 ON A CONSENT AGENDA

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education approves the following motions on a Consent Agenda:

- BHE 22-16** Approval of letter of intent of Bridgewater State University Award the Master of Science in Mathematics and Authorization for Fast Track Review
- BHE 22-17** Approval of letter of intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review
- BHE 22-18** Approval of letter of intent of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to Award the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Authority: Article III, Section 5, By-Laws

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Sr. Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning & Pblc Program Approval

Before proceeding to the next motion, Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou offered to give the board a refresher on the Consent Agenda process. She stated that the process was not new. Still, as codified in the By-Laws, committees can put multiple, similar motions on a Consent Agenda to facilitate a more expeditious approval at Board meetings. If a Board member objects to including an item on a Consent Agenda, then the Board Member should notify the Commissioner 24 hours before the Board Meeting. The Commissioner and Board Chair will then discuss the Board Member's objections. Chair Gabrieli thanked Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou and stated he would aim to survey Board members to ensure all feel a sense of efficiency with the structure of the meetings.

Chair Gabrieli introduced the Motion BHE 22-20, Approval of Middlesex Community College's Proposed Acquisition of the Pollard Exchange Building. He noted that the Executive Committee discussed the proposal at length during the meeting and that Secretary Peyser provided insight into the project's capital budget. Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-20. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary James Peyser – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes
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BHE 22-20 APPROVAL OF MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF THE POLLARD EXCHANGE BUILDING

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves Middlesex Community College's proposed acquisition of the Pollard Exchange Building at 44 Middle St, Lowell, MA 01852.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6, 9 and 15B
Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Chair Gabrieli introduced the next motion, the FY23 Budget Recommendation. He remarked on his excitement about the strategic theme in the motion materials, and turned the meeting over to Commissioner Carlos Santiago.

Commissioner Santiago stated that the budget recommendations fully reflect the intent and the interest of the Board in moving public higher education forward. Commissioner Santiago stated that the growth in financial aid over the last two years continues with this budget and expands MASSGrant Plus. He remarked on the transition from high school to college and the positive developments in the advancement of Early College. Commissioner Santiago stressed the need to go beyond affordability and provide support services in various areas. The Commissioner noted a three-pronged approach to support services achieved by building institutional capacity, implementing best practices, and providing professional learning opportunities. The Commissioner turned to Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Finance Joe Wallerstein.

Interim Deputy Commissioner Wallerstein thanked Commissioner Santiago and offered a PowerPoint presentation which summarized the FY23 Budget Recommendations and narrative. In response to Student Member Cameron Costa's comments about additional support areas, Interim Deputy Commissioner Wallerstein hoped to address some of the issues through the presentation. He stated that the FY23 budget recommendations reflects the Board's strategic priorities. It emphasizes the Board and Department's shared commitment to racial equity as the top policy and performance priority. He continued that the recommendations seek to reduce unmet need through an increase in MASSGrant Plus, the expansion in funding for Early College, and continued support for the SUCCESS initiatives. Assistant Commissioner Wallerstein closed by reiterating the DHE's commitment to equity and the importance of the FY23 Budget to help more students. He turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall to present on strategies to support student success, before the BHE vote as Deputy Commissioner Marshall's presentation would help provide more context to the budget recommendations.

IX. PRESENTATIONS

- Advancing the Equity Agenda: Strategies to Support Student Success

List of Documents Used:

[Power Point Presentation: Advancing the Equity Agenda: Strategies to Support Student Success](#)

Deputy Commissioner Marshall offered a PowerPoint presentation, and outlined the structure and purpose of the presentation stating that the goal was to provide status updates on three student success initiatives designed to advance the Equity Agenda: 1) Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services program (SUCCESS); 2) Student Success Framework with Deloitte; and 3) Tools for postsecondary schools with MDRC. Deputy Commissioner Marshall displayed a slide to reflect the three-pronged approach. She stated that Northern Essex Community College's (NECC) President Lane Glenn would overview the SUCCESS Fund. She also noted that three students from Berkshire Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, and Holyoke Community College who have participated in programming funded by the SUCCESS Fund would share their experiences. Next, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Access & Student Financial Assistance Clantha McCurdy and Deloitte's Bob Caron would provide an overview of the Student Success Framework's scope, governance structure, timeline, and project deliverables. Finally, she concluded by stating that MDRCs, Operations Associate Elena Serna-Wallender, would provide an overview of the workshop

series "Tools for Postsecondary Schools." Deputy Commissioner Marshall turned the meeting over to NECC, President Lane Glenn.

President Glenn opened by thanking the Commissioner and the Board for the opportunity to share about the SUCCESS Fund. He noted that all 15 Community Colleges participate in the Program, with their objective being to improve student success rates at community colleges in Massachusetts. President Glenn also provided commentary on the disparity of resources for students attending public community colleges and state universities. He then displayed a slide to show the differences across all education segments based on the annual expenditures allocated per student. In efforts to change this trend, President Glenn remarked on the Pathways to Academic and Career Excellence Program (PACE) at NECC and federally funded Trio programs present at most institutions. He noted that spending an average of \$1561 per student yielded a significant improvement in student outcomes because it connected students to valuable relationships such as learning coaches and peer mentors. Based on these outcomes, he stated the question to campuses became which programs could they improve with the funding and how would success be measured moving forward.

President Glenn provided examples of the SUCCESS programs in operation at community colleges, along with students who benefit from them. President Glenn invited students, starting with Mariangel Dus from Berkshire Community College (BCC), to share their experiences. Ms. Dus noted how helpful the SUCCESS Coaching Program at BCC has been as a Costa Rican native whose first language was Spanish. Michael Mitchell, a Holyoke Community College under the ALANA Men in Motion Program, shared the emotional support he received after being racially profiled by police. Another student, Mohamud Abdifitah from Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), shared about the resources he was given under the schools' Hope Initiative Program when he needed a computer to take classes. President Glenn thanked each student for their contributions and opened the discussion for questions.

Member Bill Walczak thanked the students and commended the DHE on the \$14M FY23 Budget recommendation for the SUCCESS Program. He remarked that SUCCESS was an excellent program for dealing with Equity issues and asked for Secretary Peyser's support in keeping the allocation in the Governor's budget. Member Judy Pagliuca wondered if there was a risk of missing students' mental and emotional health needs by grouping too many services. President Glenn commented that it could be challenging, but the goal was to continue working on additional funding to assist in other areas.

Bunker Hill Community College President Pam Eddinger submitted a written comment in the chat, stating that in programs like HOPE, emotional support services are not exclusive but include mental health services, affinity, and peer support. Chair Gabrieli asked for the student to advisor ratio under the SUCCESS Program. President Glenn stated that the average ratio was a dozen students per advisor, depending on funding. Chair Gabrieli thanked President Glenn along with the students for participating.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall introduced Senior Deputy Commissioner Clantha McCurdy to discuss the next section of the presentation. Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy introduced Dr. Bob Caron, a Deloitte Consulting Group Higher Education Strategist who would accompany her in today's

presentation. Senior Deputy McCurdy provided an overview of The Student Support Services for Student Success initiative. She stated the DHE's goal was to develop a holistic student success support services framework and evaluation tool aligned with our Equity Agenda, resulting in a set of options and recommendations to improve outcomes for State University and Community College students. She noted that the scope of the project has four phases:

- Phase I: Investigate current student success support initiatives across the nine State Universities and 15 Community Colleges.
- Phase II: Review national models and best practices.
- Phase III: Investigate a framework to align with the DHE's Equity Agenda and existing services.
- Phase IV: Develop recommendations for support services aligned to the DHE goals, particularly the MASSGrant Plus Program, a financial aid resource used to eliminate financial challenges for low-income and racially minoritized students by eliminating unmet needs.

Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy reviewed the governance structure. She reviewed the 22-week timeline, stating the project was currently under the review/current state analysis stage of Phase II. She then turned the meeting over to Dr. Bob Caron to share more specifics on the project.

Dr. Caron opened by thanking Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy and the Department of Higher Education for their leadership. He proceeded to share an overview of the governance structure and Phase II of the project. Dr. Caron noted that the current state analysis was built on three pillars: Dialogue through interviews and focus groups; Data Analysis at the system and institutional level; and an Environmental Scan to get a sense of what was working and what was not. He remarked that through feedback from the DHE committee leadership and campus leadership, we would obtain a series of recommendations that will provide a framework for support services for student success across our State Universities and Community Colleges.

Dr. Caron continued, stating that the goal was to advance the DHE's current success by aligning with the Equity Agenda's goals of supporting racially minoritized students challenged with low retention and graduation rates across the system. He concluded by stating Deloitte hopes to have more data from the campuses to digest and include in the analysis by mid-January. Dr. Caron thanked Commissioner Santiago for getting presidents on Board and sending over recommendations for interviews and focus groups at the campuses. He turned the meeting back to Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy. She thanked Dr. Caron and asked if there were any questions. There being no questions, Deputy Commissioner Marshall invited MDRCs, Operations Associate Elena Serna-Wallender, to close out the presentation.

Dr. Serna-Wallender opened by providing the history of MDRC and highlighted the professional development component for this project. She stated that it was structured as a series of six 90-minute workshops scheduled to occur once a month, from February through July 2022. She displayed a slide showing the six workshop topics and the time commitment for college teams.

Dr. Serna-Wallender noted that the workshops are designed to be interactive based on the unique context of each campus. She commended the DHE's investment in the Equity Agenda and turned the meeting back over to Deputy Commissioner Marshall.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall thanked everyone and opened the floor for questions. Commissioner Santiago commented that student supports are critical to student success. He thanked Deputy Commissioner Marshall for her leadership and participation in the presentation. Chair Gabrieli thanked the Commissioner for the presentation on three budget areas. Member Judy Pagliuca asked if there was a way to monitor spending. The Commissioner cautioned that it was more about a cultural shift on campuses than measuring progress alone.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a final vote on motion BHE 22-21, the FY23 Budget. He turned to Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis for the roll call. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – No
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Secretary James Peyer – Abstain
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-21 FY23 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached Board of Higher Education operating budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2023 and further authorizes the Commissioner to submit the Board’s budget recommendation to the Secretary of Education.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9 (m)

Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gabrieli thanked the Board for their contributions before moving to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Carlos E. Santiago
Commissioner and Secretary to the Board*