

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

February 01, 2022

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, February 01, 2022 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Ann Christensen

Veronica Conforme

Alex Cortez

Cameron Costa

Patty Eppinger

Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair

Paul Mattera

Judy Pagliuca

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education

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:

Mike O'Brien

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and announced that this meeting is being held remotely and in accordance with relevant amendments to the Open Meeting Law. Chair Gabrieli announced that the meeting is 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).

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Board did not receive requests for public comment.

III. MOTION- Framingham Presidential Appointment

List of Documents Used

[BHE 22-35](#)

A. Board of Higher Education

Chair Gabrieli stated that the first item on that the agenda today involves a motion to approve the Framingham State University (FSU) Presidential Appointment. He noted that Commissioner Santiago would set the context and introduce FSU's Board Chair and the recommended Presidential appointee.

Commissioner Santiago shared his delight in bringing forth a candidate for presidential appointment at Framingham State University. He introduced FSU Chair Kevin Foley and stated that he would highlight the role of the Department in the process after Chair Foley explains the initial search and selection process at the campus level. Afterwards, the Board would have an opportunity to hear from the candidate, Dr. Nancy Niemi, and interview her.

Chair Foley provided an overview of the presidential selection process, stating that when current FSU President Javier Cevallos announced his retirement in March 2021, the FSU Board of Trustees (BoT) retained the search firm WittKeiffer in April. The search committee was formed in May and included members from various constituencies, such as the faculty, administration, students, and the BoT itself. The Committee reviewed applications between September and October and narrowed it down to twelve semifinalists by November. After the semifinalist pool was approved by Commissioner Santiago and interviews were conducted, the Search Committee identified a group of three finalists.

Chair Foley stated that the three finalists met with faculty, staff and administrators, the trustees, and students in early December. The BoT convened for a special session on December 15 to discuss the positive attributes of each candidate and how they aligned with the presidential profile. The BoT unanimous vote determined that the BoT would recommend Dr. Niemi's candidacy to the Board of Higher Education. He concluded by noting that Dr. Niemi's in-depth research of the campus, concrete strategies to promote retention, campus culture, and a strategic viewpoint of her strong commitment to social equity in higher education distinguished her as the most qualified candidate.

Commissioner Santiago then highlighted the Commissioner and BHE's role in the presidential search process. He stated that under the BHE search and selection guidelines one of the Commissioner's responsibilities is to review the semifinalist pool and ensure the list is of high quality with significant diversity among the candidates. He confirmed that the FSU semifinalist list met these requirements. Under the BHE search and selection guidelines, the BHE has an opportunity to interview finalists before a local BoT votes. Commissioner Santiago stated that he and Secretary Peyser interviewed the three finalists by asking a consistent set of questions to each one. They reconvened to compare their observations of each candidate, and provided feedback to Chair Foley. The Commissioner added that Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis was appointed as the BHE representative on the FSU search

committee. He then turned to Dr. Niemi to share remarks and provide an opening statement.

Dr. Niemi thanked the Commissioner Santiago and members of the BHE. She stated that what intrigued her about FSU was its status as the country's oldest public university founded for the education of teachers and what it can do now as an instrument of equality and economic and cultural vibrancy through education. She said that the country needs educational institutions to support, uphold, and deepen its democracy and help citizens find new ways to work together. She offered her perspective on the state's Equity Agenda and the role FSU can play in support of the institution, speaking of the institution's status as an emerging Hispanic serving Institution. Dr. Niemi noted that Framingham is poised to develop and significantly impact the region. She concluded by stating how proud she was at the prospect of leading Framingham, together with its internal and external communities, as it capitalizes on the spot at the nexus of becoming a driver of education, community, and business opportunity in the city and the Metro West region in the Commonwealth.

Chair Gabrieli thanked the Commissioner and the FSU representatives and opened the floor for questions. Board Member Sheila Harrity asked how Dr. Niemi plans to connect business and industry as relates to STEM pathways for high school students and college graduates. Dr. Niemi responded that the beginning of that strategy is to identify the opportunities and then connect with the business and community members regarding STEM. She stated that the opportunities for meeting with business leaders and community leaders are to broaden how STEM work is done, including more than just digital work, and help students develop the skills to work in other settings.

Secretary Peyser congratulated Dr. Niemi and asked what would inform her decision-making in the midst of a challenging situation. Dr. Niemi responded that the most challenging part is that people have differing opinions. She noted that the key is to be as transparent and inclusive as possible. We should first include voices and listen to their opinions when working with the board, faculty and students, and external community members. The next step would be to take information and make decisions as we see it. We can't please everybody, but we acknowledge stakeholder input when we have to make decisions.

Board Member Cameron Costa asked how Dr. Niemi would work towards creating a more anti-racist campus, and root out issues of racism on the campus. Dr. Niemi responded that racial equity is at the forefront of who she is and her work. She remarked that she would listen, identify the various systemic issues, would look to understand the issues from everybody's context of what has transpired, and then begin to ask how we make sure it does not happen again. She stated that the issues could not be addressed just by "flipping a switch," as this needs to be a constant priority.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Board members for their questions and Dr. Niemi for her answers. He then asked for a motion for approval for BHE 22-35. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, by roll call vote, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes

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

BHE 22-35 FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the December 15, 2021 recommendation of the Framingham State University Board of Trustees recommending Dr. Nancy Niemi President of Framingham State University. Such appointment is effective on or about July 1, 2022, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check and is subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment

Authority Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

IV. WELCOME

Chair Gabrieli welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting of the calendar year. He described the agenda, which consisted of two consent agendas: one for the approval of letters of intent; and the other for multiple Massachusetts State College Building Authority (MSCBA) projects. In addition, the BHE will be voting on the FY2023 MSCBA rent certificate, the FY22 funding formula allocations for Community Colleges and State Universities, and a vote to accept the New Undergraduate Experience report which would be coupled with a presentation on the report and an update on the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. The agenda also includes a vote to create an Advisory Council to assist with the search for the next Commissioner.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the last Board meeting, which was held on December 14, 2021. The motion was duly moved and seconded. With no further discussion, the motion proceeded to a roll call vote and passed unanimously by all members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes

- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

VI. REMARKS & REPORTS

A. Chair's Remarks

Chair Gabrieli opened his remarks by acknowledging Commissioner Santiago's announcement to step down from the role at the end of the fiscal year. Chair Gabrieli expressed his gratitude for the Commissioner's leadership and said the students and the Commonwealth are better off because of the Commissioner's service. Chair Gabrieli then spoke to the Commissioner Search and the desire to continue to advance the BHE and the DHE's top strategic priorities, especially given the great urgency around this work in the United States. He concluded by stating there is no time to slow down or change direction, and that it will be necessary for the Board members to be strong ambassadors for this work during the search in their communities and with their stakeholders. Chair Gabrieli then turned to Commissioner Santiago for his remarks.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago thanked the Board for their support and responses to his recent announcement of professional transition and stated that he looked forward to the critical work ahead and the commonality in purpose shared among them.

Commissioner Santiago stated that last week, Secretaries Peyser and Sudders sent a letter to the higher education community with a call to prepare for a move from a pandemic to an endemic environment. Accepting this new reality, or "new normal" as they call it, has significant implications for the students and institutions. It requires that the system utilizes everything it has learned over the last two years to ensure the continued safety of students, faculty, and staff while promoting face-to-face gatherings and the personal interactions that are so necessary for the overall health and well-being of our campus communities. The letter ends with a call to focus on mental health considerations and necessary related interventions. There is considerable optimism and hope in these statements, and everyone needs to do their part to make this vision a reality.

Commissioner Santiago stated that he wanted to take a moment to step back to before COVID ever came on the horizon. He reflected upon the first time he had addressed this body at a Board of Higher Education meeting in his role as Commissioner on October 27, 2015, at Bristol

Community College (BCC). Much has changed since then. Only three members of today's BHE were present: Chair Gabrieli, Vice Chair Harrity, and Member Toner. The meeting at BCC occurred after the BHE's annual retreat. The minutes show that Chair Gabrieli mentioned that this gathering was the first step in developing a strategic plan for Massachusetts public higher education. Board members also identified campus sexual assault as a priority. The Chair also shared national interests in work involving developmental math and transfer, some at the local level and others as a system.

Commissioner Santiago stated that his initial remarks to the BHE in 2015 referenced the development of a blueprint for public higher education in Massachusetts and several ongoing initiatives, such as transfer, fiscal updates, and college readiness. During that meeting, he also spoke of campus violence from a historical perspective (active shooters on campus were a concern at the time). Respectively, President Glenn and President Maloney relayed the Community College and State University president's messages. He stated that much has changed since then, including two of the things that have come to pass since 2015, (as predicted as early as 2013): population growth in the Northeast declined, and the percentage of students of color increased dramatically. DHE forecasts showed then that the population decline would impact higher education in Massachusetts until at least 2032. These projections have been realized for the most part, and institutions have had to adjust to this new reality. COVID has exacerbated these declining enrollment trends and their impact on institutional finances. Commissioner Santiago continued, stating that in light of this reality, the Board and the Executive Office of Education commissioned EY-Parthenon to study the financial health of public higher education institutions. The results show that the institutions, by and large, were financially healthy, bolstered as they were by infusions of state and federal financial support at the time.

The Commissioner continued his reflections, noting that the system also embarked on an ambitious plan to vigorously address the widening disparities in access, retention, and student success. The data reflected the largest of which were by race and ethnicity. Thus, the Equity Agenda was formally launched. The Equity Agenda is critical work as it will define the public higher education system for years to come. Many of the institutions already understood this new reality and fully supported the efforts and approach. At the time, however, the Commissioner noted he never quite realized how important this would be as the society increasingly moved away from racial reconciliation and towards outright polarization. Increasingly, this polarization is expressed in violent acts directed at particular groups in society or even in the banning of books. Commissioner Santiago said the work was more important than ever and now has national implications and has received national recognition. This will be the ongoing challenge for years to come. From a policy perspective, he firmly believes that Massachusetts public higher education and its institutional leadership is in good hands and well-positioned to bring in new leadership to take these gains to the next level.

The Commissioner concluded his remarks and stated that later in the meeting he would introduce the New Undergraduate Experience (NUE) report and talk about its importance to the Equity Agenda.

C. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education's (EOE) Remarks

Secretary Peyser thanked Chair Gabrieli and opened his remarks by commenting on the importance of the timing and the process to ensure continuity in the Equity Agenda and applauding Commissioner's leadership. He stated that this process should involve the Commissioner to send a signal to the field and the Commonwealth around the urgency of the Equity Agenda, the efforts undertaken to get the system to this point, and the need to keep moving the work forward after a transition to the next Commissioner.

Secretary Peyser reported that the Governor introduced a new FY23 budget proposal, and he summarized elements of the budget proposal relevant to public higher education. He said he looked forward to working with each of the campuses to ensure the commitment to affordable education is fully met for all eligible Massachusetts students through a combination of federal, state, and institutional aid. He said the Baker administration also increased the share of state dollars that flow through the performance-based funding formula.

Secretary Peyser concluded his remarks by stating that the Governor also introduced a general government bond bill, including \$750,000,000 in new authorization to finance capital improvements in higher education from FY24 to FY28. In that bond bill includes another \$100 million for the Skills Capital Grant, which supports investments to upgrade equipment and vocational programs both at the K-12 level and higher education.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Secretary Peyser for his budget updated and particularly for the opportunity to expand Early College programs, noting his fondness for the initiative. Chair Gabrieli then introduced President James Birge from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and President David Podell from Massachusetts Bay (MassBay) Community College to proceed with their reports.

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>

President James Birge began by acknowledging Commissioner Santiago's leadership at the Department of Higher Education. He remarked that Dr. Santiago has been an extraordinary advocate for colleges and universities across the Commonwealth and has led higher education to new heights in Massachusetts. He continued, stating that in many ways Commissioner Santiago has positioned Massachusetts higher education as the standard bearer for what American higher education can attain. President Birge noted a list of Commissioner Santiago's contributions, including his work to address racial inequities in public higher education that has been recognized nationally; expanding early college opportunities; increasing financial aid through the new MassGrant Plus program; and the development of a statewide, seamless system of transfer. All the while Dr. Santiago has been accessible to the Presidents of the Commonwealth's institutions, often visiting campuses to share his

insights with colleagues and the trustees. President Birge shared his gratitude for Dr. Santiago's advocacy on their behalf, for his leadership, and for his collegiality. He remarked that finding a successor who is equal to Commissioner Santiago will be no small feat. He concluded by stating that he and his colleagues at the State Universities look forward to learning more about the search process, and he offered their support and expertise on selecting executive higher education leadership.

President Birge then provided a brief COVID update on the spring term reopening for State University campuses. He reported that the campuses are successfully working towards a return to pre-pandemic operations and campus life, while safely onboarding students. Most campuses began the first week of classes with remote instruction to ensure adequate time to test returning students. President Birge reported that the campuses performed thousands of COVID tests on returning students and employees as part of the onboarding process. He stated the campuses looked forward to returning to open gatherings and fewer restrictions but would be mindful of the concerns for students and colleagues who have more risks associated with exposure.

President Birge next shared remarks on the Governor's FY23 budget and funding recommendations for State Universities. He reported that the State Universities reached an agreement with their three employee bargaining unions on a three-year labor contract. President Birge thanked the Department for their work with the campuses and with the administration to calculate their collective bargaining costs, noting the increase will go a long way toward making public colleges and universities more affordable for low-income students. He remarked that the State Universities' Internship Incentive Program was not included in the Governor's budget and asked the Board to join their advocacy efforts to ensure that the legislature prioritizes public higher education. President Birge acknowledged the retirement of Framingham State President, Dr. Javier Cevallos and his valued wisdom. He then welcomed Dr. Nancy Niemi as FSU's next President.

Community College Segmental Report

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

https://www.mass.edu/bhe/documents/BHE_Community%20College%20Report_2.1.22.pdf

MassBay Community College President David Podell acknowledged Commissioner Santiago's leadership as a universally sympathetic individual who personally has helped each one of us at the community colleges. He commented on the Commissioner's contributions to the Equity Agenda, which has changed the face of public higher education in Massachusetts. President Birge also welcomed Dr. Niemi to FSU, and Jackie Jenkins Scott, who's been named interim President of Roxbury Community College. He shared his gratitude for President Roberson's many years of commitment to Roxbury and wished her well.

President Birge continued by providing an update on the spring semester and campus life. He stated that the Community Colleges are committed to giving their students the flexibility to learn virtually or in-person and know that students throughout higher education face a mental health crisis exacerbated by the isolation and solitude of pandemic quarantine. Campuses play a unique role in

supporting students with wraparound services, but the sense of community and belonging has understandably faltered in the absence of in-person activity.

He then turned to the Governor's proposed FY23 budget, and President Podell cautioned that any changes to calculating the Community Colleges' base funding could negatively impact the colleges' financing. He continued that while the expansion of the Mass Grant Plus program to support additional students was great, students who were currently receiving these funds should not be negatively impacted over the new changes.

President Podell remarked that the Community Colleges are currently advocating for a change to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 15A, Section 26, to allow evening and summer courses taught at Community Colleges to be covered by state appropriations. While the state allows public higher education institutions to offer students evening and summer courses, the Community Colleges and the State Universities must operate them at no expense to the Commonwealth which creates logistical and financial challenges for the institutions. President Podell stated the current approach was not reflective of the 21st-century Community College and instead relies on the dated model where most students attended full-time and during the day.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Presidents Birge and Podell and asked if there were questions or comments from the Board. With no further questions, Chair Gabrieli proceeded to the Student Advisory Council (SAC).

E. Report from Student Advisory Council

Student Voting Member Cameron Costa opened his remarks by reminding the BHE of the successful law change led by SAC last year to allow part-time students to serve on their campus's Board of Trustees. Member Cameron commented that their joy was short-lived after learning that the law only applies to the 15 Community Colleges and nine State Universities, not the five UMass campuses. Member Costa stated that in addition to the Equity Agenda, SAC believes that the UMass Board of Trustees should consist of a student voting member from each UMass campus. He remarked that the continuation of only allowing some students to effectively represent their peers and not others is inequitable. Member Costa noted his outreach to discuss the possibility of UMass adopting the law. Member Costa called on the Board to use their voice to advocate on behalf of students. He turned to SAC colleague Jorgo Gushi to complete their report.

SAC Chair Jorgo Gushi congratulated Commissioner Santiago and thanked him on behalf of the SAC for being an extremely dedicated, passionate, hardworking, and compassionate leader. He noted that Commissioner Santiago taught everyone that it takes a kind heart, an equity-oriented and visionary mind, and determination to do the right thing and make a big impact on students' lives and the public higher education system. SAC Chair Gushi continued, stating that student engagement, advocacy, and inclusion under Commissioner Santiago's leadership were a priority in his decision-making process. Those are the same qualities they are looking for in the next Commissioner. He stated that students want and need an ally-- a commissioner willing to listen

to student voices, willing to take action on their behalf, and to put students first.

SAC Chair Gushi said the SAC will host a Campus Community Building Day on April 6, 2022. The SAC was committed to implementing the statewide Campus Community Building Day to create communities across the 29 public higher education institutions. The event aims to engage students, administrators, faculty, staff, and campus police officers to foster a statewide culture of tolerance, equity, equality, and antiracism while calling on all to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes.

SAC Chair Gushi concluded by noting the creation of an advisory committee to examine possibly restructuring the Student Advisory Council. The restructuring would include revisions to the SAC By Laws and how student representatives to the Board are selected.

Hearing no questions for the group, Chair Gabrieli turned to the Advisory Council reports, starting with the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC). Board member Conforme left the meeting due to a prior commitment.

I. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS

A. Strategic Planning

SPAC Co-Chair Bill Walczak reported that with the partnership of Co-Chair Francesca Purcell and Senior Associate Commissioner Winnie Hagan, the SPAC decided to focus on discussions with presidents to review the existing guidelines and determine what works, what does not work, and what could be reformed. Co-Chair Walczak stated that at the last SPAC meeting, Dr. Christina Royal from Holyoke Community College and Dr. Birge from MCLA both spoke to their strategic planning efforts and the interactions with DHE and BHE. Both presidents also offered suggestions on ways to streamline the process. One recommendation was that a five-year plan might be too long.

Co-Chair Walczak stated that having access to real-life examples from various Community Colleges and State Universities, especially with regard to how their current strategic plans served them during the pandemic, could help shape future conversations on strategic planning. Co-Chair Walczak closed his remarks by stating the SPAC plans to continue these discussions with presidents over the next few months. SPAC will then make some recommendations in June on recommended changes to the campus strategic planning guidelines.

B. Finance and Administrative Policy

Chair Gabrieli reported on the Finance and Administrative Policy (FAAP) Advisory Council meeting in FAAP Co-Chair Veronica Conforme's absence. Chair Gabrieli reported that FAAP heard updates from EY-Parthenon, who provided clear boundaries, expectations, timelines, and commitments regarding the latest project to analyze strategic financing for higher education. The discussion also addressed the need to balance between meeting institutional challenges and requirements and focusing on student outcomes. He shared that there would be another presentation from EY-Parthenon at the

FAAP meeting in February and Chair Gabrieli encouraged BHE members to attend. Chair Gabrieli said there wasn't an Academic Affairs and Student Success Advisory Council meeting, which was good, and then proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

II. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

List of Documents Used

[BHE 22-36](#)

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Executive Committee met the week prior. He introduced the next motion, reviewed by the Executive Committee, which seeks to create an Advisory Council to assist with the search for the next Commissioner. The Advisory Council would work with a search firm and identify three to five finalists. Those finalists would then be interviewed by the Board, who retains the authority to select the final appointee, and submit the recommended appointee to the Secretary for his approval. The search firm helps to stimulate interest in the position, sort through candidates, and brings forward candidates reviewed by the search committee confidentially. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis confirmed that a request for proposals for executive search firms would be released later that afternoon. Chair Gabrieli said the motion asked the Board to delegate approval of the search committee slate to the Executive Committee.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-36. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, 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
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Secretary Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-36 CREATION OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONER SEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (the Board) hereby approves the establishment of an advisory council to advise and assist the Board in the conduct of a national search for the next Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education, in accordance with the attached charge. The Board authorizes and delegates to the Executive Committee approval of Advisory Council membership, subject to the

guiding principles set forth in the attached charge.
Authority: M.G.L. c. 15A, §6; BHE By-Laws, Article III, Section 2.
Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

I. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

[BHE 22-25](#)

[BHE 22-34](#)

[BHE 22-37](#)

[BHE 22-38](#)

[PowerPoint Presentation on the New Undergraduate Experience Report, February 1, 2022](#)

A. Board of Higher Education

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion for approval for BHE 22-25, Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions BHE 22-23 through BHE 22-24 on a Consent Agenda. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

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

BHE 22-25 APPROVAL OF BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION MOTIONS BHE 22-23 THROUGH BHE 22-24 ON A CONSENT AGENDA

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

BHE 22-23 Approval of Letter of Berkshire Community College to Award the Associate in Science in Mechatronics and Authorization for Fast Track Review

BHE 22-24 Approval of Letter of Intent Bridgewater State University to Award the Master of Arts in Public Relations and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Authority Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

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

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-26, regarding the FY2023 MSCBA Rent Certificate. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

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

BHE 22-26 APPROVAL OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 RENT SCHEDULE AND OPERATING BUDGETS MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGE BUILDING AUTHORITY

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the attached Fiscal Year 2023 Schedule of Proposed Rents and Operating Budget for the Authority and State University Residence Halls, effective July 1, 2022, provided that any increase in the rent schedule shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Higher Education.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 73 App., Section 1-9 as amended and the Contract for Financial Assistance, Management and Services, dated February 1, 2003, made between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting by and through the Board of Higher Education and the Massachusetts State College Building Authority.

Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner of Administration & Finance

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-34, Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions 22-27 through 22-33 on Consent Agenda.

Member Judy Pagliuca asked why the funding mechanism was missing from the reports. Edward

Adelman, Executive Director of the Massachusetts State College Building Authority, stated that the Mass Maritime Academy Peer Improvement Project is in its early stages, with an estimated cost of \$22 to \$24 million. A new federally funded training ship, Patriot State II, is scheduled to replace the training ship, Kennedy, in FY24. Mr. Adelman commented that his request is only a project approval, and the immediate cost is in the range of a few hundred thousand dollars for this early planning work. They can only develop a cost assessment once the early planning work is complete.

On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 22-34 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, as follows:

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

BHE 22-34 APPROVAL OF BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION MOTIONS BHE 22-27 THROUGH BHE 22-33 ON A CONSENT AGENDA

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

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| BHE 22-27 | MSCBA Project – Fitchburg State University Elliot Field Renovations |
| BHE 22-28 | MSCBA Project – Fitchburg State University Main Street Theater |
| BHE 22-29 | MSCBA Project – Massachusetts College of Art & Design Food Service Improvements |
| BHE 22-30 | MSCBA Project – Massachusetts Maritime Academy Patriot II Pier Upgrades |
| BHE 22-31 | MSCBA Project – Massasoit Community College Allied Health and Science Facilities |
| BHE 22-32 | MSCBA Project – Salem State University BOLD Campus Unification and Modernization |
| BHE 22-33 | MSCBA Project – Westfield State University Tim and Jeanne’s Dining Commons Dish Machine Replacement |

Authority Article III, Section 6, By-Laws
Contact: Joe Wallerstein, Interim Deputy Commissioner of Administration & Finance

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE Motion 22-37, Approval of the State University and Community College Funding Formula Allocations for FY2022. Chair Gabrieli noted that a small amount of the total funding that goes to the campuses is allocated under the funding formulas that speak to enrollment levels and outcomes. Secretary Peyser asked if the proposed formula allocations were the same, in terms of the components of the formula, as the current year's approach. Interim Deputy Commissioner Joe Wallerstein confirmed that there have been no changes to the funding formula methodologies.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, 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
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Secretary Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-37 APPROVAL OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING FORMULA ALLOCATIONS FOR FY2022

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Community College and State University funding formula allocations for FY2022 (Attachments A and B).

Authority: M.G.L. c. 15A, § 9(dd); M.G.L. c. 15A, §15B; Section 2 of Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020, Line Items 7066-1400 and 7100-4000.

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

Chair Gabrieli stated that the next item on the agenda was BHE Motion 22-38, through which the BHE will formally receive the New Undergraduate Experience (NUE) report. He introduced Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success Pat Marshall who would be presenting background on and context for the motion. Before presenting BHE Motion 22-38 for the NUE Report, Deputy Commissioner Marshall invited BHE Member and NUE Steering Committee Co-Chair Patty Eppinger to offer remarks. BHE Member Eppinger briefly shared her support of the NUE recommendations, stating the report will be a step forward in making the student experience more

equitable, just, and relevant.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall thanked Co-Chair Eppinger for her leadership. She also recognized, Dr. Robert Awkward, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness, for being instrumental in bringing the NUE report to completion, working closely with Deloitte and members of the NUE Steering Committee. Deputy Marshall displayed a slide to remind the Board of what today's NUE vote entails. She stated that NUE is a vision document meant to clearly express a collective vision for the structural changes needed to transform public higher education in the Commonwealth. With an unwavering focus on racial equity, it serves as the collective blueprint for policies and practices needed for all students to reach their goals.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall emphasized that the NUE report is one of several factors that will influence the development of DHE's 10-year Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. She stated that the plan is grounded in data, and that the institutional equity gap starts early. Deputy Marshall displayed a slide as an example and pointed out that after a year of study, the retention of Black and Latinx students at our public college and universities is lower than that of the overall student population. Meanwhile, the overall student population who begin their undergraduate studies at UMass in the State Universities graduate at a higher rate than Blacks and Latinx students. Despite controlling for socioeconomic status, Black and Latinx students have inequitable access to and outcomes from public higher education in Massachusetts. The NUE report argues that the cause of these discrepancies is historic and systemic racism that has long shaped the higher education system, limiting access to education, generational wealth, and social mobility. Deputy Commissioner Marshall commented on the NUE report's assertion that a more equitable higher education system would benefit not only racially minoritized students, but also all students. She noted that approximately 60 volunteers representing all 29 of our public institutions, outside organizations such as employers, advocacy groups, schools, and AACU in the development of the NUE report.

The Steering Committee, the working groups, as well as the whole Committee met, and students were also engaged through six focus groups. From the student focus groups, a series of themes emerged, which direct the development of the Student Bill of Rights. The Student Bill of Rights align with seven categories of recommendations:

1. Admissions, Enrollment, and Transfer
2. The Curriculum
3. Equity Minded Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
4. High-Impact Practices and the Co-Curriculum
5. Hiring, Supporting, and Retaining Faculty of Color
6. Holistic Student Support
7. Student Voice

Deputy Commissioner Marshall provided a brief overview of each category, while also highlighting the NUE report's recommendations for them.

1. *Admissions, Enrollment and Transfer*

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that admissions, enrollment, and transfer recommendations concentrate on removing obstacles in the application and enrollment processes and on creating clear, seamless transfer pathways. She continued that the Massachusetts public colleges and universities do not reflect the diversity of its overall population due to a confusing college application process, college counseling in Massachusetts high schools, and a lack of support for adult college applicants in Massachusetts. The NUE recommends the development and implementation of policies and practices that increase the enrollment of racially minoritized students, establish policies to assist students with understanding and accessing financial aid, and develop admissions policies that automatically welcome and accept all high school students who live within a regional catchment area as the report's recommendation to address category one. As part of its recommendations, NUE also recommends the establishment of a state-wide dual admissions program, requiring institutions to use mass transfer course equivalency databases, and creating systems to facilitate reverse transfer.

2. Curriculum

Deputy Commissioner Marshall stated the report also discusses the curriculum, which aligns with the right of students to culturally relevant, antiracist, and inclusive curricula. This section focuses on asset-based and equity-minded approaches for undergraduate students during their first semesters. She then reviewed the recommendations. She noted Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) are areas where the NUE report recommends strengthening the PLA consortium that the Innovation Grant Fund has supported, developing a transfer policy, and creating partnerships among all universities to recognize CPL and PLA awarded at community colleges as a means of ensuring racially minoritized students receive benefits from these programs. It recommends formalizing a DHE-supported working group for ELL (English Language Learner) implementation to design integrated courses and noncredit to credit pathways, collect comprehensive data on postsecondary ELLs, provide more ELL resources to community colleges through existing budget streams, and ensure that students receive college credit for the Seal of Biliteracy. Deputy Commissioner Marshall also noted the report's recommendation that financial resources should be directed towards supporting Black and Latinx students in developmental education. The college curriculum should align with high school content, and the Developmental Education Advisory Board should be tasked with eliminating non-credit bearing, stand-alone developmental education courses. Members of NUE noted that the state's general education framework and the institution's core curriculum lack racial justice education. As such, recommendations include redesigning the state's general education framework, creating a core curriculum that is outcomes-driven, integrating racial justice principles into the curriculum framework, and mapping racial justice learning outcomes onto disciplinary and institutional student learning outcomes.

3. Equity Minded Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that in the Equity Minded, Teaching, Learning, and Assessment section, recommendations are aimed at creating an environment that is more inclusive and antiracist at public colleges and universities. For equitable pedagogical practices, she highlighted the NUE report recommendations as: adopting campus specific equity minded pedagogies; prioritizing trauma training; universal design; and fostering the use of OER. Similarly, the recommendations for faculty and staff are: short-term and long-term equity focused professional development plans for faculty professional development for faculty in antiracist practices and pedagogy; support for Centers for

Teaching and Learning; and the enhancement of DHE's platform for statewide professional development.

4. High-Impact Practices and the Co-Curriculum

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted the high impact practices and co-curricular opportunities are aligned with students' right to access experiential learning. Under this category, she stated, the report focuses on mentoring racially minoritized students and equitable access to cocurricular activities, such as internships and study abroad. NUE recommends creating mentoring networks consisting of racially minoritized faculty, staff, alumni, and employers; the effective implementation of HIPs; the creation of innovative experiential learning opportunities; and the creation of antiracist civic learning opportunities. It also recommends that faculty who choose to mentor be provided with appropriate training and compensation. Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that other recommendations include instituting Capstone in learning communities at all community colleges, the development of opportunities that connect all components of the institutions, identification of opportunities to improve equitable access to existing honors programs, and the identification and elimination of institutional barriers to accessing HIPs for racially minoritized students.

5. Hiring, Supporting, and Retaining Faculty of Color

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that the recommendations for supporting and retaining faculty of color aim to create institutional cultures that acknowledge, recognize, and reward the invisible labor of faculty of color while embracing cultural diversity. The report includes the following recommendations to accomplish these objectives. Implement promotion, tenure, reward, and recognition systems that prioritize racial equity and justice in more diverse forms of scholarship, develop employee resources for faculty and staff of color and their allies in order to cultivate a support network, and recognize and reward invisible labor performed by faculty of color.

6. Holistic Student Support

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that the Holistic Student Support category addresses a student's right to a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment on campus as well as timely and appropriate pathways to graduation. This section aims to align academic and financial policies across institutions to promote equity-minded practices and outcomes. Deputy Commissioner Marshall stated that the NUE report recommends examining campus and system discipline, financial, probation and leave withdrawal and readmissions policies through an equity lens: developing and aligning equitable satisfactory academic progress standards, leave withdrawal and readmissions policies across the Commonwealth; and implementing flexible, accelerated semesters and scheduling so that 40% students who stop out have multiple onramps back into learning.

The following recommendations are also included to ensure cocurricular career advising and curricular academic advising are integrated throughout the undergraduate experience for all students, particularly racially minoritized students: creating visible networks of faculty and staff who are first generation and or people of color, such as campus wide affinity groups and multicultural centers, to reframe support centers as success and achievement centers or as centers of excellence, and to create integrated curricular and cocurricular pathways through graduation and employment; providing wraparound support services and career advising with academic support, mental health, safety and

wellness, housing and food security, digital access, and restorative justice are also included.

7. Student Voice

Deputy Commissioner Marshall noted that the final category is a call to action and aligns with students' right to a voice in the decisions that impact their education. She stated that as recommendations are debated and policies formed, student voices, particularly those of racially minoritized students, must remain integral parts of the process to achieve racial equity. Moreover, the NUE report emphasizes that the BHE must champion the NUE's recommendations by acting on those it can control, as well as advocating for other recommendations that must be advanced by others, such as individual institutions. As a final note, the NUE report emphasizes the importance of collaboration between and among the Board, the Department, institutions, and other stakeholders to achieve racial equity and justice in public higher education in the Commonwealth.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall concluded her presentation by outlining stakeholder feedback received on the NUE report. She stated that the Department of Higher Education engaged all segments in an extensive stakeholder feedback process to gain input. As part of our process, the report was distributed in a feedback survey to all campuses. Feedback was received from 15 Community Colleges, three State Universities, two UMass campuses, and representatives from the Racial Equity and Justice Institute at Bridgewater State. Deputy Commissioner Marshall continued that the DHE carefully reviewed all feedback and determined which suggestions should be addressed in the NUE report, and which required campus follow up. The DHE then developed a list of themes that encompassed all feedback, made the necessary edits, and determined an action plan to follow up with institutions on specific feedback where needed. Deputy Commissioner Marshall stated that the DHE edits based on the feedback provided by stakeholders include a clarified purpose of the NUE report as a vision document. The resulting edits also highlight innovations currently underway on campuses, strengthen the language about the need for more funding, and eliminated accountability and implementation tables so that the strategic plan would consist of prioritized goals and initiatives, metrics for accountability, and timelines for implementation. The group also addressed the focus on Black and Latinx students. She concluded her presentation by stating that we can improve the entire system for everyone, once we identify and resolve barriers and structural challenges that keep Black and Latinx students from reaching their potential. Deputy Commissioner Marshall then turned to Commissioner Santiago for additional commentary.

Member Judy Pagliuca asked for clarification on what a vision document means in terms of execution and implementation. Deputy Commissioner Marshall responded that the document is meant to be an update to the undergraduate experience document from 1989. It is not a living document as a strategic plan would be, but a visioning document meant to create the foundation for the strategic planning. Commissioner Santiago added the importance of utilizing the document as we go back to the Board with specific policy recommendations. Chair Gabrieli asked for clarification on the NUE report as a vision document, and if it means that some policy level recommendations take longer to implement than others. Commissioner Santiago responded in the affirmative. Member Bill Walczak commented that the NUE document is comprehensive and comparable to a cultural transformation in higher education. He emphasized the focus on training the next generation to ensure it becomes part of the culture. Commissioner Santiago agreed and offered that change needs to occur from within

the organization and it needs to occur at our public institutions as well. Member Eppinger added the NUE report helps to root out the changes needed through its strategy, structure, and systems.

On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 22-38 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, through roll call vote, 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
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Secretary Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-38 RECEIPT OF THE NEW UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE: A VISION FOR DISMANTLING BARRIERS, RECOGNIZING STUDENTS’ CULTURAL WEALTH, AND ACHIEVING RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) receives The New Undergraduate Experience: A Vision for Dismantling Barriers, Recognizing Students’ Cultural Wealth, and Achieving Racial Equity in Public Higher Education in Massachusetts report (the “Report”) from the New Undergraduate Experience (NUE) Committee; a group of more than 60 diverse higher education practitioners; BHE members; and business, community, and civic leaders from across Massachusetts and nationally.

The Board thanks the members of the NUE Committee and the members of the Department of Higher Education (DHE) Staff who worked tirelessly on this vision Report over the last year.

The Board endorses the Report as a vision document intended to inform the work of the Steering Committee developing the Statewide Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.

The Board further affirms NUE as a collective blueprint for policies and practices needed for students to reach their goals in the Commonwealth’s public higher education institutions. As such, the Board directs the Commissioner to work with the institutions and other stakeholders to help advance opportunities and policy levers that are appropriate for immediate implementation, as outlined in

Appendix B of the Report. The Board further directs the Commissioner to identify policy priorities for Board action and to provide the Board with an implementation plan by December 2022.

Authority: M.G.L. c. 15A, §§6 and 9 (c), (f)and (u); BHE 19-03.

Contact: Patricia A. Marshall, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success
Robert J. Awkward, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness

VII. PRESENTATIONS

List of Documents Used

[Equity Agenda: Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Update](#)

Chair Gabrieli turned to Commissioner Santiago to provide an update on the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. Commissioner Santiago highlighted the five areas of the Equity Agenda: Policy and Program Audit, Undergraduate Experience, Data and Evidence, Community of Practice, and Sustainable Transformation. He also reminded Board members of the difference between the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity and the 5-year Master Plan required in statute.

Commissioner Santiago then displayed a slide outlining the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity's timeline. He noted completion of a system-wide survey, along with the interviews and focus groups and that the strategy labs were almost finished. He continued that the next steps entail vetting the plan to DHE stakeholders, the Board, and other constituent groups. A final draft of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity will be presented to the Board for a vote during the last Board meeting in June 2022. Commissioner Santiago concluded his presentation and turned to Chair Gabrieli to open the floor for questions and discussion.

Chair Gabrieli asked for clarification on whether the BHE will be able to see or have input during the process and timing. A brief discussion on the review process and stakeholders ensued. Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis responded that there would be 15 review sessions, several of which will serve as check-ins before finalizing the plan. The Steering Committee will meet first to review the draft, and after their feedback is incorporated, a meeting will be held with the Board to include their comments. The review sessions will occur at multiple intervals to ensure feedback is incorporated from different stakeholder groups.

Chair Gabrieli thanked the Department staff and the Board for their contributions before moving to adjourn the meeting.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

IX.ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

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