



Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report

Delivered by David Podell, President, MassBay Community College
Chair, Community College Council of Presidents

October 18, 2022

Good morning Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Santiago, and members of the Board.

For those who are new to the Board, I am David Podell, President at MassBay Community College. I am happy to reprise my role as Chair of the Community College Council of Presidents for this academic year.

First, I want to give a warm welcome to Dr. Michelle Schutt, President of Greenfield Community College, who joined us in July. With 20 years of higher education experience, Dr. Schutt has held leadership roles in all facets of education, including student affairs, academic services, and community learning, and most recently served as vice president of community and learner services at the College of Southern Idaho. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Schutt to Massachusetts and to our higher education system.

Additionally, on behalf of all 15 of my community college counterparts, we offer a warm welcome to our incoming Commissioner of Higher Education, Dr. Noe Ortega. We are in a time of opportunity and change, and look forward to working with you in support of our community colleges and our students.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not offer our collective thanks to Commissioner Santiago for all of his contributions to higher education in Massachusetts. Commissioner, your steadfast commitment to access and equity for our students is unmatched. Our community colleges, and our students, are better for having had you lead this work for the last seven years. We wish you the best – thank you.

Much has happened since the last Board meeting. I'm pleased to note that the FY23 budget priorities I outlined in June were adopted in the final conference committee report: \$9.5 million for formula funding;

\$14 million for our Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services (SUCCESS) line item; \$1.5 million for workforce training for the long-term underemployed; \$4.75 million for STEM Starter Academy; and \$10 million for early educator workforce development. Work is underway in many of these areas already, as well on the distribution of \$15 million in Educational Training Funds across our campuses to support workforce development in high-demand occupations. These ETF funds cover the cost of training as well as student supports like food, transportation, childcare, and stipends, and we have been working closely with the Executive Office of Education on this work – we offer a special thank you to Bob LePage, EOE’s Assistant Secretary for Career Education, who has been instrumental in planning, coordination, and distribution of these funds.

One final update on the FY23 budget is that we officially secured a change to Chapter 15A exempting the community colleges from Section 26, which prohibits the use of state dollars for evening or weekend courses. As we noted in prior remarks, this change eases a number of logistical and financial burdens for our schools. This is a long sought-after change; a 1967 report noted that “The present policy cannot be defended on logical, rational or philosophical grounds; even on fiscal or political grounds it is difficult to understand.” While this legislative change makes no immediate change to the current union contracts and does not impact the collective bargaining process, we look forward to engaging in continued work with the MTA and MCCC faculty union on this matter.

Additionally, we have secured two pieces of funding that we believe will make a significant impact on two important community college priorities.

- First, we have received a planning grant from the Lumina Foundation to explore non-credit enrollment and data collection. Most of our schools are lacking a process that allows them to do this work efficiently; we are just beginning the process of convening campus leaders to begin identifying a path forward.
- Second, we have been awarded funding to bring on a part-time, temporary Early Education and Care Liaison. This role will be centrally located and will work on exploring credential pathways for early educators as well as a consistent approach to awarding credit for prior learning. We are grateful to the Massachusetts Early Childhood Funder Collaborative who convened the donors funding this work.

Finally, I look forward to discussing the community college early enrollment outlook with you later in the agenda.

Thank you for your time today, and for your support of public higher education in Massachusetts.

