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## **Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report**

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

May 3, 2022

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

On our campuses, May is a month of celebrations. Commencements, pinnings, and convocations are well underway to celebrate the Class of 2022, and we are delighted that all fifteen of our community colleges will hold in-person commencements this year.

In addition to celebrating the Class of 2022, several of our schools are celebrating awards to their campuses that will allow for the growth and development of their programs and facilities:

- Eight of our colleges have received more than \$10 million in designated federal funding in the FY22 spending bill, including \$4 million to Roxbury, \$2 million to Bristol, and \$1.95 million to Cape Cod.
- Governor Baker recently announced \$30 million Major Capital Project Awards to Massasoit and Springfield as well as \$10 million awards under the New Critical Building Infrastructure Program to Northern Essex and Berkshire.

We are also encouraged and grateful to the Legislature for investments in the House budget that we believe represent a strong commitment to and acknowledgement of the work underway on our campuses. The inclusion of an outside section to exempt community colleges from Section 26 – which only allows schools to offer summer and evening courses if they are at no expense to the Commonwealth – is also very welcome news.

And, in collaboration with EOE, work is well underway to distribute \$15 million across our campuses to support workforce development in high-demand occupations across the state. Not only do these funds cover the cost of training, but also student supports including food, transportation, childcare, and stipends.

We are extremely pleased that you'll be taking up the Endowment Match guidelines this morning. Designed to encourage private donations at public higher education and generously funded by the Legislature, the Endowment Match program is integral to fundraising at our schools. Thank you for taking action on guidelines for this important program.

Finally, when I offered my remarks on behalf of our colleges at your February meeting, I indicated that we were pleased to see MASSGrant Plus being expanded to support additional students – with the important caveat that expansion should not come at the expense of our community college students who are already receiving these funds. We learned yesterday of changes to the allocation and distribution of these funds that would ensure our students will see

no cut to their funding, a change that we wholeheartedly support. We are grateful to EOE and DHE for their care for the community college students and we look forward to continued conversations around this important program.

While all of this is incredibly good news that our community colleges are rightfully celebrating, we are also acutely aware of the challenges we face. We are deeply grateful for these investments that will help us better serve the students in the Commonwealth with the greatest need. The community colleges in Massachusetts are engines of workforce development, opportunity, and new beginnings. As we look ahead after the last two years, we are confident that our role will be critically important to Massachusetts' post-pandemic recovery.

Thank you for the chance to speak with you this morning on behalf of our 15 community colleges and their students.

**David Podell, Ph.D.**

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