

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**NO.:** BHE 22-55

**BOARD DATE:** June 21, 2022

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**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO  
AWARD THE ASSOCIATE IN ARTS IN BLACK STUDIES AND AUTHORIZATION  
FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Massasoit Community College** to award the **Associate in Arts in Black Studies** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree granting authority pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

**VOTED:** Motion approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 6/13/2022; and adopted by the BHE on 6/21/2022.

**Authority:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

**Contact:** Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**June 21, 2022**  
**Massasoit Community College**  
**Letter of Intent**  
**Associate in Arts in Black Studies**

**DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM**

Massasoit Community College (MCC) reports that the mission of the proposed Associate in Arts in Black Studies program is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to student learning about Black experiences in American Society, and to offer students a comprehensive introduction to the cultural, historical, and sociocultural issues facing Black people both historically and currently. For the purpose of this program, the term “Black” encompasses people who are African-descended Americans, Africans, and others from the African diaspora (e.g., Haiti and other Caribbean island countries, Cape Verde). It is planned that a broad selection of courses addressing the myriad of influences that affect the lives of Black people today, will provide students with an in-depth understanding of historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, economic, and political aspects of Black America. In addition, MCC plans that the curriculum will provide students with opportunities to study of the literary, musical, and artistic heritage of Black people. MCC reports that the subject of Black Studies is interdisciplinary in nature, encompassing a range of disciplines that draw on music, visual arts, film, and contemporary social issues.

The proposed Associate in Arts in Black Studies was approved by the Massasoit Community College Board of Trustees on May 19, 2021. The LOI was circulated on March 7, 2022. No comments were received.

## **A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

### *Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals*

The proposed program addresses the BHE's Equity Agenda with a depth and breadth that has closing gaps at its center. MCC asserts that the strong tenant of Black Studies - to understand a broad range of ideas and discussions- is one that forges meaningful connections between these ideas and thereby expands knowledge of the impact and context of the Black experience. The proposed AA in Black studies is expected to offer students a comprehensive introduction to the contemporary challenges faced by Black people in the US. The proposal underscores that the #BlackLivesMatter movement and racial injustices occurring in the U,S., generates the need for a Black Studies program that is responsive to the diversity of Massasoit's student population and its larger community context. Brockton has the largest population of Black people in Massachusetts at ~45% of the total population<sup>1</sup>. The Black Studies program is planned in alignment with MCC's mission to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within the curriculum based on evidence that the use of culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy in classrooms enhances students' acquisition of cultural pride and identity, positively affecting academic achievement<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the Advising, Career and Transfer (ACT) Center at MCC helps students navigate program and course selections that will meet their educational and career goals. Starting at orientation and through graduation, advisors assist students with program of study selection or changes; course selection, sequencing, and load management each semester; transfer advising; and navigating academic challenges. It is expected that the proposed program will go beyond increasing awareness of the Black experience and support positive racial attitudes, but it is further expected to amplify the academic achievements of Black students. Notably, Massasoit has instituted a new student orientation presentation on the value of self-reporting personal demographics while assuring protection from

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<sup>1</sup> *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Brockton city, Massachusetts. Retrieved 5/12/22*

<sup>2</sup> Okoye-Johnson. (2011) *Does Multicultural Education Improve Students' Racial Attitudes? Implications for Closing the Achievement Gap* Journal of Black Studies Vol 42, Issue 8.

individual identifiers. Students are also informed of the power that comes with being counted as part of a greater whole and receive affirmation that they are not alone. Such recognition helps Massasoit to increase and retain Black student enrollment and to increase the accuracy of the college's student demographic records. Students of color currently represent 52.4% of MCC's enrollment, more than the US Department of Education's minimum requirement of 40% to be eligible for *Predominantly Black Institution*<sup>3</sup> (PBI) classification. Once Massasoit meets all of the eligibility requirements for PBI, it will be able to apply for federal funding to support the proposed program, targeted interdisciplinary program advising, and other academic programs.

#### *Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion*

MCC report that students in the Black Studies Program will be supported through a variety of services including Massasoit's Ubuntu Scholars. This student success and mentorship program is designed to equip, engage, and empower historically underserved students that identify as male to support a healthy transition to college and ensure this support continues throughout the college experience and prepare graduates for successful transfer to four-year institutions and/or entry to a career pathway. Ubuntu Scholars are offered personalized success plan development; financial aid and student account literacy; peer and group mentoring; student success workshops; community building events and activities; and guest speaker series with open forums for reflective dialog. In addition, the *Ida Cerezo O'Donnell Unity Center* on campus, provides

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<sup>3</sup> *The purpose of the Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) Program is to strengthen eligible institutions to plan, develop, undertake and implement programs to enhance the institution's capacity to serve more low- and middle-income Black American students; to expand higher education opportunities for eligible students by encouraging college preparation and student persistence in secondary school and postsecondary education; and to strengthen the financial ability of the institution to serve the academic needs of these students.* Retrieved 5\_18\_22 <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/pbihea>

students with space to build community and to explore the intersections of their identities. The Center sponsors a wide range of events designed to build an inclusive community and provide identity-affirming resources to the student body. The Unity Center offers opportunities for mentorship, leadership development training, community service and both academic and career advising. MCC plans that additional training regarding the proposed interdisciplinary program will be provided to advisors to ensure students are informed and able to progress and complete the program in a timely and efficient way.

### *Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers*

Through partnerships with area high schools, the Office of Early College Access at MCC provides high school students access to, and preparation for, higher education. A variety of opportunities for students to take classes for college credit include the Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program, the Massasoit Dual Enrollment Program, and the Gateway to College program. All middle and secondary school partnerships are with schools that serve a majority of racially diverse students, including Brockton Public High School and New Heights Charter School, the first brick and mortar early college high school in Massachusetts, that prepares all the students to earn free, transferable college credits. MCC reports that out of the 673 students enrolled in the Early College Access Program for this Spring 2022 semester, 54.7% are Black, Haitian, or Cape Verdean. Once the proposed program is approved, these and future students will be able to participate in the Black Studies program, earn college credits and possibly earn an associate degree at the time of their high school graduation. It is planned that an Advisory Board will be established for the Black Studies program to help refine the program as it grows. The Committee will consist of higher education partnerships to encourage transferability into 4-year programs, community, and business partners (e.g., Black Owned Brockton, The Cape Verdean Association) to assist with employment and internship opportunities. Public school district partners are engaged to align early college options that can increase program enrollment. Invitations to participate on the Black Studies Advisory Board will be extended to Brockton Arts and various Black

affinity groups including The Teacher's Lounge (a professional development organization of educators of color and friends within the Greater Boston area), the Bay State Chapter of the National Council on Black American Affairs (a group which consists of Black faculty, staff, administrators and students of the 15 MA community colleges), African American Women in Higher Education of New England, and the National Society of Black Engineers Boston. It is also planned that these partners will also support and guide the program's efforts to recruit faculty and students and garner needed program resources.

### *Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints*

The proposed AA in Black Studies degree is designed to prepare students for careers relevant to the development of Black communities, and for coping with social problems arising from individual and institutional racism, bias, and class division. The major goals within the city of Brockton's blueprint include restoring land use balance, being a 'great community for the middle class', expanding stewardship and providing equity<sup>4</sup>. The proposed Black Studies program aligns to these goals because it is focused on student learning content knowledge of the Black experience and on developing analytical and critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills. MCC finds that this knowledge and skill set are directly linked to the overarching goals in the Brockton's Blueprint. MCC also reports that Black Studies can provide a broad and important foundation for advanced education, that can lead to the study of law, business, medicine, and a range of professional careers. Graduates in Black Studies enter a variety of occupational fields as well including community service, education, and government<sup>5</sup>. MCC provided examples of career domains that graduates will be prepared to pursue including, Community Developer, Historian, Journalist/Writer, Public Relations, Social Work, and Education. Massasoit promotes career information and exploration for students through the Advising, Career and Transfer Center. Academic advisors collaborate with students in their career decision-making process and may help them assess their career interests

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<sup>4</sup> Retrieved 5/12/22 [Blueprint for Brockton - City of Brockton](#). Retrieved 5/13/22 (2016). [What Can I Do with A Black Studies Major? Five Hundred Answers \(blackpast.org\)](#)

by researching specific careers and their outlook in the workforce. In addition to these services, local companies come on campus to recruit for full-time and part-time jobs.

### *Duplication*

While other community colleges offer Black Studies courses and certificates, Massasoit expects it will be the first community college to offer a 2-year degree that will meet transfer requirements to Black Studies baccalaureate programs. This degree program has also been designed to meet program requirements in other fields of study (e.g., sociology, political science, and psychology) that pertain to community development and the advancement of the Black community. During the design of this program, Massasoit reached out to UMass Boston's Africana Studies department and worked with faculty on identifying courses that would articulate into their degree. As well, the proposed program is designed to meet transfer requirements into the University of Massachusetts programs with Amherst, Boston, and Dartmouth, and with the Bridgewater State University African American Studies minor. The full LOI included details of these curricula crosswalks.

### *Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning*

MCC plans that the Black Studies courses will be offered in person and online to accommodate students' needs. The proposed program is the only AA in Black Studies degree at any of the 15 community colleges in Massachusetts. Establishing an online presence will allow prospective students to participate regardless of their geographical location. Curriculum options will be available through Massasoit's learning management system. It is further expected that in partnership with the Global Learning @ Massasoit program, students will have the option to explore a study abroad experience. Additional

extracurricular opportunities will include field trips that exhibit the rich history and culture that is the Black experience. As well, HBCU college tours, Black plays, Black museums, and conferences focused on the Black experience will be provided for students to further extend and develop classroom and coursework learning.

## **B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION**

### *Priority Rationale and Support of Strategic Plan and Overall, Mission of Institution*

The proposed program is designed to fulfill Massasoit's commitment to providing quality education through a culturally responsive curriculum. MCC will do this through classroom relevancy that affirms students' race and cultural identity. Curriculum is at the heart of alignment to the strategic plan and mission of Massasoit and the program is designed to address the experiences of Black people in America. The courses will also consider the experiences of other Black people, who identify as Africans and/or from the African diaspora (e.g., Haiti and other Caribbean island countries, Cape Verde), and who are part of the majority of the student population at Massasoit. Learning and exploring the relevancy of their experiences embodies respect, understanding and acknowledgement of the Black experience to Massasoit's students, faculty, staff, and all stakeholders. It also serves to cultivate an equitable, diverse, and inclusive community, strengthening student success, retention, persistence, and graduation rates. Massasoit further expects the proposed program to assist achieving the BHE's Equity Agenda goal to increase the number of African American Massachusetts residents ages 25-64 that hold an associate degree or higher. The proposed program is planned to increase *Student Success* by providing active, experiential learning through curricular and co-



curricular activities, such as field trips and tours to mid-Atlantic area HBCUs; attendance at plays authored and/or directed by Black artists, visits to regional and mid-Atlantic area African American history museums; and participation in discipline specific or affinity group professional conferences. Culturally responsive curriculum will include carefully designed courses that reflect Black people, culture, and study abroad opportunities. *Access and Affordability* is enhanced by being an open-enrollment institution and further plans to market the program locally with special efforts to target high school students, adult learners, and other community groups are expected to influence student access to the program. A *diverse and inclusive* community of learners will be extended and developed through the addition of the proposed Black Studies program. Many Massasoit faculty of color will be teaching in the program and plans to recruit, hire, and support additional Black faculty are already underway at Massasoit. Leadership in *community and civic engagement and in regional economic development* are valued aspects of Massasoit's role in southeastern Massachusetts. These are expected to be amplified by the proposed program through continued partnerships with Workforce Boards and school systems. It is anticipated that the Black Studies program will provide a pipeline of educated students who will become leaders in their communities, through positive role models, teaching and learning experiences embedded with equity and community minded values, and knowledge of how to be action-oriented advocates for social justice.

*LOI Program Goals and Objectives (Form B)*

Massasoit reports that the value of pursuing Black Studies is in gaining knowledge and understanding of the past and present situation of African-descended people in the United States. This discipline prepares students to critically examine, explore, and analyze the unique experiences of African-descended people. Black Studies is directly concerned with documenting, interrogating, and improving the conditions in Black communities. Majoring in Black studies is expected to teach students to think, analyze, and communicate their ideas. Massasoit holds that there is a great need for an understanding of the history and culture of the Black experience in America especially in light of today's social unrest and racial injustice. The overall goals of the program are to prepare students for professional careers and support current workers in the fields of public service, education, healthcare, social work, law, community development, and others; and to prepare students to pursue bachelor baccalaureate degrees in Black Studies and related fields, with the potential to advance to the master's level.

### **C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION**

#### *Enrollment Projections (Form C)*

The proposed program is expected to have an impact on enrollment in the Sociology, Psychology, and Human Services programs as these are interdisciplinary in nature and relate to the scope of the Black Studies program. Students may venture toward different pathways and use the Black Studies as a basis for their academic path upon transfer. The courses involved within the Black Studies program include introductory courses to these fields, therefore the impact on enrollment in these aforementioned programs is expected to have a positive impact overall. The program's design will allow students to

apply credits earned into the Liberal Arts Studies and transfer programs at Massasoit. In addition, students will be able to use the Black Studies program as a basis for an academic path for transfer. Students may choose to continue in a baccalaureate program in Black Studies or in another related discipline.

*Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution  
(Form D, Appendices)*

Based on enrollment calculations, adjunct faculty will be hired to teach courses in the program and are expected to increase from four in the first two years, to five in the remaining years. Massasoit plans that with the expected growth of the program, one full-time faculty will be hired in year three. New resources for the library, to support the program will be purchased. Because the program will be a new addition for Massasoit, increased marketing will be needed in year one. Following an initial campaign, advertising of the program will become a regular part of Massasoit's recruiting program.

**STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Associate in Art in Black Studies** submitted by **Massasoit Community College**. Staff validate that the **LOI** includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

**Form A1 (LOI) Curriculum:**  
AS in Arts in Black Studies

<b><i>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 14)</i></b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
BLST 150	Introduction to Black Studies	3
BLST 220	The Civil Rights and Black Power Movement	3
BLST 230	Contemporary Issues in the Black Community	3
BLST 240	The Caribbean: History, People and Culture	3
FILM 201	Black Images in Film	3
MUSC 220	The Black Experience Through Music	3
ARTG 201	The Black Arts Movement	3
ENGL 215	African American Literature I	3
ENGL 216	African American Literature II	3
HIST 145	African American History I	3
HIST 146	African American History II	3
SOCI 215	Urban Sociology	3
SOCI 232	Race and Ethnicity	3
SPCH 105	Speech Communications	3
	<b><i>Sub Total Required Credits</i></b>	42
<b><i>Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 0) (attach list of choices if needed)</i></b>		
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
[Course Number]	[Course Title]	[0]
	<b><i>Sub Total Elective Credits</i></b>	[0]
<b><i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i></b>		<b><i># of Gen Ed Credits</i></b>
Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		6
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		10
Social Sciences		3
<b><i>Sub Total General Education Credits</i></b>		19

<i><b>Curriculum Summary</b></i>	
Total number of courses required for the degree	20
Total credit hours required for degree	61
<p><i><b>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</b></i></p> <p>ENGL101 – English Composition I – 3 credits</p> <p>ENGL102 – English Composition II – 3 credits</p> <p>SOCI 104 – Principles of Sociology – 3 credits</p> <p>*MATH elective – 3 credits (Math Elective: MATH125 Topics in Mathematics I or higher)</p> <p>Science elective – 3 credits</p> <p>Lab Science elective – 4 credits</p>	

**Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for Achievement</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Prepare students for professional careers and support current workers in the fields of public service, education, healthcare, social work, law, community development, etc.	Develop a community engagement plan that funnels students into internships and provides paid and unpaid community work that can translate into work opportunities following graduation.	Work with the division of Corporate and Community Education to identify community and business partners in Brockton to forge relationships that will increase internship opportunities for students.	(August 2022 - continuous)
Obtain PBI classification and grow and maintain a rigorous and scholarly interdisciplinary program that maintains its autonomy and specialized focus on the study and engagement of Black people from a Black perspective.	Develop a comprehensive curriculum that addresses Black people and key intersections of race, class, and gender by forging key partnerships with related academic departments and programs at Massasoit.	Work with the academic divisions to incorporate course work into their curriculum.	(August 2022 - continuous)
Prepare undergraduate students to pursue advanced degrees in Black Studies and related fields.	Provide transfer fairs, conference attendance and additional opportunities for undergraduate students to promote interest in the pursuit of an advanced degree.	Work with the Transfer Services Department on providing opportunities for engagement with other 4-year institutions to include HBCUs for transfer and work with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion for identifying workshops and diversity fairs where students are able to attend.	(August 2022 - continuous)

<p>Provide all students with the basic understanding of particular challenges faced by Black people historically and in the contemporary world.</p>	<p>Embed Black Studies courses in all areas of the General Education curriculum and implement at least four campus events and activities per year that engage all students and community members around this goal.</p>	<p>Work with academic departments to promote Black Studies courses as attributes for completing general education requirements within their programs and work with Student life to promote campus events as a marketing strategy to engage students in course and program promotion.</p>	<p>(August 2022 - continuous)</p>
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**Form C: LOI Program Enrollment**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
New Full-Time	15	20	22	25	30
Continuing Full-Time	0	9	12	13	15
New Part-Time	20	25	35	35	30
Continuing Part-Time	0	9	12	16	16
Totals	35	63	81	89	90



**Form D: LOI Budget**

<i>One Time Start Up Costs</i>		<b>Annual Enrollment</b>				
	<i>Cost Categories</i>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
	Full Time Faculty <i>(Salary &amp; Fringe)</i>	\$0	\$0	\$55,000.00 (1 full time salary) \$24,304.50 (fringe)	\$56,100.00 (1 full time salary) \$25,817 (fringe)	\$57,222 (1 full time salary) \$27,443.50 (fringe)
	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty <i>(Salary &amp; Fringe)</i>	\$45,000 (salary based on 6 sections) \$887 fringe	\$63,000 (salary based on 8 sections) \$1,241 (fringe)	\$13,500.00 (salary based on 12 sections) \$266 (fringe)	\$27,000.00 (salary based on 14 sections) \$532 (fringe)	\$40,500.00 (salary based on 20 sections) \$798 (fringe)
	Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	General Administrative Costs	\$5,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,000.00
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,200.00	\$6,400.00	\$6,400.00
	Facilities/Space /Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Field & Clinical Resources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Marketing	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
	Other (Specify)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$21,387	\$80,741	\$106,270.50	\$123,349	\$140,362.50

<i><b>One Time Start-Up Support</b></i>		<i><b>Annual Income/Revenue</b></i>				
	Tuition (\$24 per credit)	\$72	\$72	\$72	\$72	\$72
	Fees (\$191 per credit)	\$191	\$195	\$199	\$203	\$207
	Departmental	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Reallocated Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other (specify)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$215	\$219	\$223	\$227	\$231
	<b>Student Enrollment</b>	35	63	81	89	91
	<b>REVENUE TOTALS</b> (assumes FT = 12 credit hours per semester and assumes PT = 5 credit hours per semester)	\$116,788.00	\$198,182.27	\$249,547.82	\$283,685.36	\$312,155.81