

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 17-03

BOARD DATE: December 6, 2016

**APPROVAL OF PLAN TO REVIEW AND ENHANCE OUR COMPREHENSIVE
SYSTEM OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FOR MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

MOVED: For the reasons set forth in the background document, the Board of Higher Education (BHE) hereby charges the Department of Higher Education to initiate a System-Wide Performance Measurement Taskforce and to work closely with the campuses to examine the relevance and accuracy of our Performance Measurement System. Included in the review will be the relevant legislation as well as performance metrics, benchmarks, institutional and segmental goals, peer comparisons, and options for reporting and sharing analyses.

The Performance Measurement Taskforce will include representatives from the college and university campuses, the state university and community college executive offices, as well as representation from the Board of Higher Education and the Executive Office of Education. The Taskforce will be charged to convene multiple meetings throughout 2017, with the goal of presenting a proposal for an improved Performance Measurement System at the December 2017 Board meeting.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15A, Section 7A

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Background

Rationale for the Review

In order to achieve the highest possible levels of self-assessment and continuous improvement, our system for measuring institutional performance must undergo a dynamic and iterative process of review. By engaging in such a process, we can ensure that our strategic goals are clearly defined and remain relevant to current public higher education missions and objectives. It also gives us the opportunity to reassess the quality of our existing data and analyses and to examine the possible introduction of newly developed metrics that may provide greater accuracy.

The DHE's Division of Research and Planning team has initiated a preliminary re-assessment of the existing Vision metrics to determine accuracy, relevance and quality of existing data. They have also been investigating new updates to national metrics and standards. Additionally they have been looking into better ways of benchmarking the performance of our public institutions. The work of the Research and Planning team will serve to help inform the efforts of the Performance Measurement Taskforce in their goal to establish an updated and enhanced Performance Measurement system.

Legislative Mandate

Chapter 15A Section 7(A) states that:

"The board of higher education, *in this section called the board*, in consultation with the institutions and the secretary, shall develop [a performance measurement] system, including specific performance measures, with which to evaluate the institutions and with which to compare them with peer institutions with similar missions in other states".

The above legislation specifies certain key performance indicators as well as specific approaches to goal-setting or benchmarking. It also addresses the issue of how performance metrics will be reported. The Taskforce will review the legislation and determine how effectively we are addressing the requirements stated therein.

History of Performance Measurement Reporting for Massachusetts Public Higher Education

Over the past decade, the Department of Higher Education has produced two main public higher education documents; The Performance Measurement Report (2005 to 2009) and the Vision Report (2011 to 2015). Although these reports differed in format and content, they provided many of the same performance metrics and analyses. Over the years, DHE had received significant positive feedback about these reports with regard to their benefit for continuous self-improvement. However, it is important for us to be attentive to ongoing concerns about possible deficiencies in the precision and usefulness of the performance analyses.

The earlier Performance Measurement Report and the current Vision Report differ in regard to their alignment with legislation. The purpose of the Performance Measurement Report was to fulfill the legislative mandate (as expressed Chapter 15A Section 7A). The process for establishing the Performance Measurement Report was in full accordance with this legislation. In contrast, the Vision Report was established with a different mission and is not as directly linked to the specific obligations of the legislation. Moving forward, the Taskforce will need to determine the role that legislation will play in the development of System-wide accountability reporting.

Many of the metrics and methodologies in these reports have not been reviewed or updated in five or more years. The Taskforce will engage in a targeted review process that will focus on areas of specific concern and potential for improvement. This review will also be used to help refine the guidelines for Campus Strategic Plans.

Process, Timeline and Deliverable

The Commissioner will send a request to the Campus Presidents for nomination of members to the Taskforce. Based on the scope of performance areas to be included in the review, The Taskforce will include Campus Presidents, CAOs, CFOs, IR Directors and others. The Taskforce will meet throughout 2017, as a whole and in subcommittees, to generate the final proposal that will be submitted to the Board in December of that year. The final proposal will include an outline for the new system-wide performance report with specific metrics and well-defined benchmarks and goals.