

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 16-15

COMMITTEE DATE: January 19, 2016

BOARD DATE: January 26, 2016

**APPROVAL OF AMENDED GUIDELINES REGARDING THE MASSTRANSFER
TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM**

MOVED: For reasons set forth in the background document, the Board of Higher Education (BHE) hereby adopts the attached amended Guidelines for the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver Program. These guidelines will go into effect beginning in Academic Year 2016 – 2017.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15A, Section 9 (i) and 19

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MassTransfer Tuition Waiver

Background Information

On May 29, 2009, the Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy committee revoked the Joint Admission Tuition Advantage Program Guidelines and adopted, in place thereof, the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver Program Guidelines. This motion was adopted by the Board of Higher Education (BHE) on June 4, 2009.

The MassTransfer Policy was developed by the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group in June 2008 and was made effective in Academic Year 2009 and 2010. The policy sought to remove obstacles to transfer and streamline the process of moving from a Community College to State University or University of Massachusetts campus. The MassTransfer Policy also outlined benefits that would be awarded to Community College students who completed designated Associate's degrees, including a tuition waiver. Benefits would be linked to a student's grade point average (GPA) and in order to qualify for the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver, a student would be required to have a 3.0 GPA.

In 2009, the BHE adopted the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver that would be equal to 33% of the Massachusetts resident tuition rate at a State University or University of Massachusetts campus. The CTAG also recommended that after three years after the implementation of the MassTransfer program, the BHE should examine increasing the tuition discount from 33% to 100%.

The BHE administers 21 non-need-based tuition waivers. Recipients of all but one, the MassTransfer Tuition Waiver, are entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 100% to attend any public higher education institution. Department staff recommend increasing the MassTransfer tuition discount from 33% to 100%, which will align the waiver with the other DHE-administered non-need-based tuition waivers. In addition, the waiver guidelines reflect an amendment to allow students who complete a MassTransfer Pathway 60-credit map (see AAC 16-20) to be eligible for the tuition waiver.

Moreover, the MassTransfer tuition waiver incentivizes students to complete the Associate's degree and then transfer to a baccalaureate institution, as was originally intended. This is aligned with the DHE's strategic efforts around the "Big Three" Completion Plan. The "Big Three" Completion Plan was developed by the DHE in recognition of the Massachusetts' economy's need for more college graduates. DHE has focused its efforts on three strategies that seek to increase the number of students graduating with degrees and certificates: Boost College Completion Rates, Close Achievement Gaps, Attract and Graduate More Students from Underserved Populations. By increasing the tuition waiver from 33% to 100%, the DHE seeks to increase student access, as well as affordability.

Attachment A- FAAP 16-5

SECTION E. MASSTRANSFER TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

DEFINITIONS

INSTITUTION: Any two-year or four-year institution within the system of public institutions of higher education under Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM: Any state-supported undergraduate degree program offered by an institution. Institutions are encouraged, where appropriate, to extend waiver eligibility to students enrolled in non-state-supported degree programs.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT: A student enrolled in a state college or University who has completed one of the following:

- An associate degree at a public community college approved under the *MassTransfer* program;
- *MassTransfer Pathways 60-credit map*; or
- An associate degree under an Additional Transfer Articulation Agreement program.

The student must maintain satisfactory academic progress according to institutional standards developed for academic programs with at least an annual review and meet the minimum required 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) for continued eligibility.

Students who have earned a baccalaureate or professional degree are not eligible for the waiver.

STUDENT AWARD VALUE:

Eligible students under the *MassTransfer* Tuition Waiver Program will be entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 100 percent of the resident tuition rate at a state college or University for the two (2) years of matriculation which immediately follow their community college enrollment. The tuition waiver for the second year of matriculation is contingent upon the student maintaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average for the first two semesters of enrollment at the state college or University.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

All institutions must file a State Financial Aid Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS:

- a) The Commissioner shall require each campus to furnish, annually by August 31, a report detailing the number and characteristics of *MassTransfer* Tuition Waiver recipients for the previous academic year.
- b) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all reasonable times be opened to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institutions shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42. XII. 3.