

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 18-33

COMMITTEE DATE: June 12, 2018

BOARD DATE: June 19, 2018

**RENEWAL OF MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEMBERSHIP IN THE
COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and renews the membership of **Massasoit Community College** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program** for six years, effective June 19, 2018.

Authority: Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as Revised by the Board of Higher Education in November 2006; G.L. c. 15A, § 9.

Contact: Patricia A. Marshall, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 2018

Massasoit Community College (MCC) Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

BACKGROUND

This motion concerns the continuation of Massasoit Community College's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program. According to the Commonwealth Honors Program Guidelines, once Commonwealth Honors Program approval has been obtained by an institution, the Program will be reviewed every six years by the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee. The report of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval.

REVIEW PROCESS

Massasoit Community College prepared a self-study document presenting its Honors Program structure and operation in terms of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements. The report provided evidence documenting the fulfillment of the following criteria:

1. Alignment of the mission and goals
2. Organization and administration
3. Admissions criteria
4. Transfer criteria
5. Program curriculum
6. Graduation criteria
7. Program resources
8. Curriculum Review Process

REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 2, 2018, the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) Review Committee conducted a day-long assessment of the Honor's program at Massasoit Community College (MCC). The Committee consisted of Susan McCourt, Director of the Honors Program at Bristol Community College; James Canning, Dean of the Honors College at the University of Massachusetts Lowell; and Joseph Moser Director of the Honors Program at Fitchburg State University. The visit was hosted by MCC's two Honors Program Directors, Panteha Sanati (Brockton Campus) and David LaFontaine (Canton Campus), and included meetings with honors students, the two honors program coordinators, Honors faculty, and Dr. Barbara McCarthy, Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA).

The Review Team recommends the re-approval of the CHP status for MCC's Honors Program. The Team was impressed with the collaborative leadership of the two directors and the strong support they receive from faculty.

Recommendations from the visiting committee included the following:

1. CHP Student Master List: The team recommended that a master list of all CHP students on *both* campuses needs to be compiled and updated regularly. Students who enter the program should be coded as Honors and be in a database that enables quick reports to be generated with data on these students. The visiting team noted that both Vice President McCarthy and Interim President Mitchell were open to supporting this recommendation.
2. Full-time Administrative Assistant for CHP: The team noted the need for “more logistical support” in the form of a full-time administrative assistant, a recommendation supported by the institution’s CHP students. In addition to providing clerical support to the two directors, the team suggested that this individual, who would be located at the Brockton campus, would maintain any lists, the computers and supplies of the Honors Center, as well as set up appointments for faculty, staff, and administrators.
3. Three additional credits of re-assigned time per semester to the Brockton CHP Coordinator: The team felt that additional time is needed to support and build the program, as well as to engage more with the students.
4. More Inclusive Advisory Boards for each Campus: The team recommended that faculty from disciplines other than the humanities, as well as library services and enrollment management, be included in both boards.
5. Transfer Policy: The team recommended a policy for students transferring in from another CHP, specifically, the acceptance of honors courses from another institution was recommended.
6. Addition of Workshops or Speakers for Non-seminar students: Currently, MCC’s program provides students enrolled in its honors seminars access to guest speakers. The team recommended the addition of workshops or honors speakers for students who are not enrolled in the seminars. In addition, the team felt that additional activities on both campuses would serve to build a sense of community and increase awareness of the program.
7. More communication with Honors Students: Based on a request from students, the team recommended consistent communication between both campuses. The team noted that with a full-time administrative assistant this recommendation can be easily achievable.
8. CHP Website Re-design: Based on student comments, the team recommends the re-design of the current CHP website. Students, they explained, felt the site was not easily navigable or intuitive.
9. Admissions Office Promotion of CHP: The team recommended that the two CHP coordinators and the Admissions Office collaborate to promote the program among high school students.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Massasoit Community College offered the following responses to the recommendations made by the visiting team:

1. Since the March 2018 visit, honors students are now coded upon admissions to the program in the institution's database system, Banner. A reporting structure has been built which will provide up-to-date reports that the honors coordinators can generate. Two detailed reports can now be generated: (1) a report of all honors students and the last semester they participated in the program; (2) a report of all honors students who have completed the program.
2. The institution concluded that the current workload does not necessitate a full-time administrative assistant; however, they noted that any requested support by the two coordinators has always been provided and that a second support person—the administrative assistant for Academic Affairs—is also assigned to support the program. A phone extension and email for the program has been created and will be monitored by the VPAA's administrative assistant. The contact information and location of this assistant will be posted on the program website, the Honors Center, and the college's website. This assistant will be responsible for monitoring all communication, as well as the supplies for the program on both campuses.
3. The institution explained that it currently surpasses the CHP's recommendation of a minimum of 6 credits of reassigned time per semester: each coordinator receives that re-assigned time. In addition, the Brockton coordinator receives an annual stipend of \$4,500 for work done outside the academic year. In lieu of additional reassigned time, the College offers a review of the responsibilities of each coordinator to be performed by the VPAA during the fall semester. If necessary, work will be re-distributed so that each will have equivalent responsibilities.
4. The College will act on the recommendation to include non-humanities faculty and library staff in both the Brockton and Canton advisory boards beginning with its May 2018 meetings.
5. MCC is currently reviewing the transfer policies from all CHPs and commits to drafting a policy for the institution by June 2018.
6. MCC will invite all students from both campuses to all workshops or panel presentations scheduled. In addition, both campuses will sponsor at least one social outing for all honor students during the academic year.
7. MCC has agreed to provide enhanced communications with students: an area on its portal/website for students to access all forms related to the Honors Program; a regular newsletter, available both in hardcopy and electronically; and two Facebook pages, one for current students and another for alumni.
8. MCC has committed to a review of the current website before the start of the Fall 2018 semester and to annual updates, if necessary.

9. MCC stated that it will continue to promote the Honors Program in its newsletter which is distributed to all service area high school counselors through the Admissions Office. Continued presence in college Open House events, information sessions hosted by the Advisement and Counseling staff, and local Expo events will promote the program among area high schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Department of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and recommends that the Board approve the renewal of the membership of **Massasoit Community College** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program**.