



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RACIAL EQUITY

2023 – 2033



Letter from the Commissioner

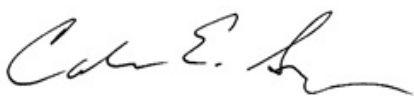
I am delighted to present the Massachusetts Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, 2023-2033. The work that culminated in this plan began in 2018 when the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education determined that its top statewide policy and performance priority was to significantly raise the enrollment, attainment, and long-term success outcomes among underrepresented student populations. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity highlights strategies to assess and change the policies, initiatives, programs, and processes that underlie this overarching goal. Our research suggests that race and ethnicity stand out as the critical area of focus relative to other student identifiers such as income, geography, language acquisition, and the like.

Massachusetts is proud of its educational accomplishments—from early education to primary and secondary education to higher education. But Massachusetts leaves too many Students of Color behind. As educators and policymakers, we need to do a better job. The ambitious goal of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is to eliminate racial disparities in the Massachusetts public higher education system. In order to do this, we must dismantle the many subtle and overt educational structures that inhibit the success of Students of Color. It requires more than simply leveling the playing field; it requires a rewriting of the rules in recognition that the game was never designed to be fair to begin with. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity represents a collective vision on what the new higher education playbook should look like for Students of Color.

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity has benefited from several related and integrated efforts. The first is a document titled the *New Undergraduate Experience: A Vision for Dismantling Barriers, Recognizing Students' Cultural Wealth, and Achieving Racial Equity in Public Higher Education in Massachusetts* (NUE). A statewide committee of diverse stakeholders was charged with re-examining the 1989 version of the report and designing a new experience by centering Students of Color. Additionally, the Support Services for Student Success Framework highlights the refrain that 'Affordability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for student success.' It represents the 'best practices' component of student supports which complements the development of the capacity to provide services and the professional development of those involved in delivering these services.

NUE and the Support Services for Student Success Framework are foundational for implementing the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, and they have benefited from the significant participation of many stakeholders. A vital characteristic of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity has been the widespread participation of leadership, faculty, staff, students, and others in its development – 145 in total. I cannot sufficiently thank those that gave their time and best thinking to develop a robust end product. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity truly reflects the aspirations and desires of the Massachusetts higher education community, and I am proud of the serious, deliberative, democratic, and equity-minded processes that underlie it.

The need to provide educational opportunities to students from racially minoritized populations seems straightforward in light of the Massachusetts knowledge-based economy and its declining population base. But it becomes even more significant in the context of a democracy that still has much to achieve to reach its potential. A more complete democracy requires racial reconciliation and by providing true educational opportunities to students historically denied them, we will be closer to that goal. Only an educated, civically engaged, and equity-minded citizenry will create a society that can live up to democracy's ideals. That is precisely what this document aspires to do.



Carlos E. Santiago, Ph.D.
Commissioner

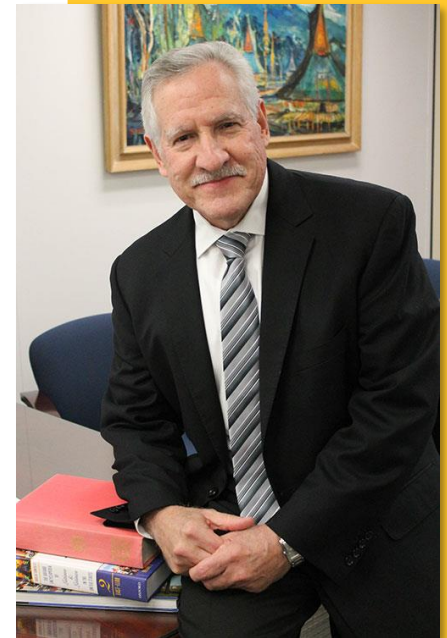


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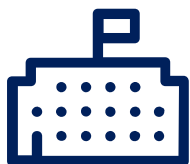
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Introduction

Background



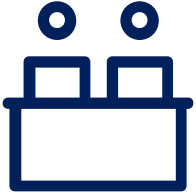
In late 2018, the Board of Higher Education (BHE) set forth the Equity Agenda, which outlines how the BHE and Department of Higher Education (DHE), in partnership with the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions, intend to address its top statewide policy and performance priorities of significantly raising the enrollment, attainment, and long-term success outcomes among Students of Color. The Equity Agenda outlines an action plan that covers five key areas: Policy Audit; Student Experience; Data and Evidence; Community of Practice; and Sustained Transformation. Under the "Sustained Transformation" key area, the Board committed to developing a 10-year Statewide Strategic Plan focused on advancing racial equity.

The following is the realization of that action plan. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity ("the Plan") was created in partnership with representatives from key stakeholder groups throughout the Commonwealth all of whom recognize the importance and urgency of this work. The moral impetus to transform the Commonwealth's public higher education system to focus on racial equity is clear: data show that for generations the system has failed its Students of Color (see Appendix A). The system has produced large disparities over time in admission, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates when comparing averages for Students of Color with the averages of all students. And too many Students of Color report difficulty engaging with a curriculum in which their histories, cultures, and identities are not represented nor valued. The system must make swift reforms now to eliminate these disparities and transform campus cultures to be places where Students of Color feel a sense of belonging and have equitable opportunities for success, both during and after their time in higher education. Racial equity must be the guiding paradigm for policies, practices, and culture transformation in all of Massachusetts' public institutions of higher education. A commitment to racial equity will allow the Commonwealth to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and to dismantle systemic racial inequities to remedy and repair harm endured by Students of Color.

Additionally, the Commonwealth recognizes that it will not maintain its position as the most educated state in the country unless it addresses the systemic racial inequities that exist within our public higher education system. When all Students of Color are accessing – and excelling in – racially-just higher education, they, their families, and their communities all benefit. The work of grounding policies, pedagogies, practices, and services in racial equity should be thought of as an investment, not an expense. Through this work, Massachusetts will remain a global competitor in industries such as biotechnology, healthcare, education, and professional services, but more importantly, it will fulfill the promise of economic and social mobility that students, especially Students of Color, seek when accessing postsecondary education.

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is focused on eliminating racial disparities in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System. To do so, the details of the Plan are race conscious, not race neutral, and are meant to eradicate historic and systemic inequities within the system. Institutions vary in their progress to date in addressing racial equity issues; the Plan is meant to support all of them as they continue the work that they are doing to achieve racial equity. Regardless of where each Institution is with this work, all must aim to have policies, practices, pedagogies, and services that are rooted in racial equity to build campus environments where Students of Color thrive and are regarded in the totality of their human dignity.

Strategic Planning Process



The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity was developed through a broad and continuous stakeholder engagement process. To lay the foundation for the plan, the DHE conducted an “Environmental Scan” of system-wide and Institution-level data. It also conducted a system-wide survey to gain Institution-level qualitative feedback. Additionally, it conducted more than 15 stakeholder interviews and six focus groups with BHE members, DHE staff, administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is also influenced by the *New Undergraduate Experience (NUE)* Report. The NUE Report brought together a group of more than 60 diverse higher education practitioners and leaders from across the Commonwealth to clearly express Massachusetts education leaders’ and students’ collective vision for the cultural, curricular, pedagogical, and structural changes for the public higher education transformation needed to better serve Students of Color. Additionally, during the strategic planning process for the development of this Plan, the DHE was working on another signature project – the Support Services for Student Success Framework. The Framework offers innovative strategies for achieving student success for Students of Color and serves as a companion tool for the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. It provides a lens through which institutions can examine their own policies and practices and how they add to or detract from racial equity and student success.

During the strategic planning process, the DHE hosted three strategy workshops with 25 Strategic Plan Steering Committee members representing higher education and industry leaders (see Appendix B for the list of members) where Steering Committee Members created content for the Plan and provided feedback to ensure the Plan’s success. Then the DHE hosted review sessions to garner feedback on draft versions of the Plan with the Steering Committee Members, the BHE, and 145 Institution presidents, administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity includes all input gathered during these review sessions.



The Plan's Unwavering Commitment



The work leading up to the strategic planning process, including the NUE Report, the Environmental Scan, and the broader Equity Agenda, all provided important ideas and inputs that influenced the content of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity includes those ideas as inputs and builds on them to detail the goals, strategies, priorities, actions, metrics, and accountability mechanisms that will move these ideas and others into action to achieve racial equity in the Commonwealth's public higher education system in the next decade. The Plan is intentionally focused on Students of Color – Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students as well as those students who identify as being Two or more Races – with consideration for their intersecting identities, particularly those related to enrollment, transfer, and age. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity will be successful when racial disparities in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System are eliminated.



Plan Implementation and Accountability



Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity relies on the commitment and constant focus of the BHE, DHE, individual institutions, and other external partners. Each entity has a specific role to play, and collaboration between the entities will be critical. Institutions will be asked to incorporate this Plan's strategies and priorities into the next iteration of their strategic plans to begin the process of addressing the Plan's goals.

Many institutions across the system have led the way on racial equity and are working tirelessly to implement reforms and new programs and initiatives to achieve racial equity on their campuses. Programs like TRiO/SSS, Early College, and the wraparound support and services implemented through the SUCCESS Fund have shown tremendous impact on Students of Color. The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity intends to uplift those efforts and build upon them.

Several of the strategies and priorities outlined herein can be embedded into ongoing efforts at institutions to further focus those efforts on supporting Students of Color. The BHE and DHE will help facilitate the appropriate support required to activate this Plan and will put into practice the Racial Equity principles outlined below to guide their decision- and policymaking. External stakeholders from industry and community-based organizations will be invited to join in this important work as strategic partners.

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity will be implemented during a time in which public higher education institutions across the country are in a more precarious financial situation than at any other time in recent history. National data show that most states have not recovered from recessionary cuts in state funding and now face declines in other revenue sources.¹ The public institutions in the Commonwealth serve the largest share of Students of Color in the state and within the public institutions, most Students of Color attend community colleges. While financial aid in Massachusetts is improving, additional funds are needed to adequately resource the Commonwealth's students and the public institutions they attend. The state is in its second year of a strategic review of public higher education and finance and working to developing guiding principles that will shape how the system is funded moving forward. These efforts are critical in order to address the tiered system of funding for public higher education seen throughout the country.²

Given these challenges, the strategies and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity must be prioritized within existing system and institution-level budgets and supported through additional financing which will be advocated for by the BHE and DHE in collaboration with institutions. Additionally, through the implementation of the strategies, the system will demonstrate progress toward achieving racial equity, making the case for the importance of the work and the need for additional funding even more apparent.

To support accountability for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, the BHE and DHE will measure and track progress on all of the Plan's goals and strategies through the Performance Management Reporting System, incorporate racial equity performance measures into presidential evaluations, use performance-based funding for further incentives, and work with unions to identify accountability mechanisms that can be incorporated into collective bargaining agreements. Institutions are also asked to establish their own accountability mechanisms so that the entire system can work cohesively towards the elimination of racial disparities.

¹ State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) Report. State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2020. <https://shef.sheeo.org/report/>

² Center on Education and the Workforce. Georgetown University, 2020. https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/SAUStates_FR.pdf

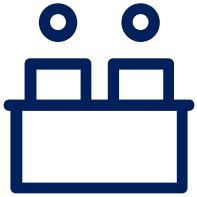
Maintenance of the Plan



The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is emergent and iterative. Though the full timeline is 10 years, it will be reviewed and updated every two years based on progress against the outlined goals and metrics and to ensure relevance to the evolving needs of the system's Students of Color.



How to Read this Plan



As detailed below, the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity has one Overarching Goal. In addition to the Overarching Goal, there are nine Detailed Goals. The Goals are achieved through the implementation of five Strategies. Each Strategy includes two to three Priorities and associated actions, owners, timelines, and milestones and metrics for tracking progress. The following graphic provides an overview for how these elements fit together.



Goals



Strategies



Priorities

Key focus areas for each strategy.



Actions

Activities that align to each priority that the BHE, DHE, and Institutions commit to implementing in 10 years.



Timelines and Key Milestones and Metrics

Each priority has associated timelines and milestones and metrics to track success over time.

Our Principles

Vision and Mission



Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Vision Statement

A system of student-ready, race-conscious public colleges and universities that are equitable and racially just, embrace the critical assets of Students of Color, and prepare Students of Color for success.



Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Mission Statement

We will continue to transform our programs, policies, pedagogies, and practices to be rooted in racial equity and responsive to the goals and needs of Students of Color.



Our Principles

DHE Values



Equity

Understanding and confronting oppression in all of its forms.



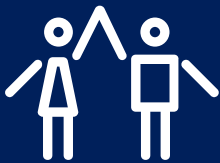
Accountability

Answering for the outcomes of decision and actions.



Community

Showing care and respect toward others.



Empowerment

Facilitating others' opportunities for growth and contribution, within teams and across DHE.



Intentionality

Acting with purpose and clarity.



Teamwork

Embracing the power of unity, collaboration, and collective insight.

The Department aspires to practice these values, and their associated behaviors, and commit to embody them through continued learning and personal growth.

Our Principles

DHE Racial Equity Principles

In addition to the inputs noted above, this Plan aligns to the racial equity principles developed by DHE to guide the advancement of the Equity Agenda. The principles are intended to assist in the cultural transformation of the Department, as well as ground the Equity Agenda and Strategic Plan in racial equity-minded policy change.

Racial equity

- Will be achieved when race no longer determines one's outcomes in the Massachusetts public higher education system
- Is the top policy and performance priority for the DHE
- Must be embedded system-wide and permeate the Department's structure, culture, and policies
- Requires the use of asset-based language to minimize the threat of harm, deficit, and stereotype reinforcement
- "Asset-based language" defines people by their aspirations and contributions, rather than the systemic barriers and challenges they face
- Requires acknowledgement, remedy, and repair of policies and practices which have excluded or created barriers



We must

- Recognize that clarity in language, goals, and measures is vital to racially equitable practices
- Promote culturally sustainable campus climates in which all students can thrive and are regarded in the totality of their human dignity
- Create and cultivate an inclusive environment to encourage the support and participation of relevant stakeholders
- Acknowledge the experience and knowledge of People of Color, and seek to engage People of Color in the pursuit of racial equity in meaningful ways
- Incentivize the development and support the implementation of equity-minded, evidence-based solutions

Our Principles

Student Bill of Rights

The idea for a Student Bill of Rights emerged from a series of focus group discussions conducted with student members of the NUE committees and with student representatives on the BHE's Student Advisory Council. The Student Bill of Rights below works in tandem with the Vision, Mission, and Racial Equity Principles above to lay the foundation for the Strategic Plan. Students have the right to:

Clear, accessible, and understandable financial information, as well as affordable and predictable education costs



Inclusive, anti-racist, and culturally responsive curricula and pedagogies



Equitable access to experiential learning opportunities, in and out of the classroom



Diverse and supportive faculty and staff who are equity-minded higher education practitioners



Welcoming, inclusive, and safe campus environments



Timely and relevant pathways to graduation and employment



A voice in the decisions that affect their undergraduate experience



Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Goals

Overarching Goal



The Overarching Goal of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is the elimination of racial disparities in the Massachusetts public higher education system.



Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Goals

Detailed Goals

The following pages outline the Detailed Goals of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. The Detailed Goals are important independently but also work in concert to achieve the Overarching Goal of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. The goals are designated at the system or state-level with the majority also disaggregated by the three segments of the Commonwealth's public higher education system: Community Colleges, State Universities, and UMass institutions. The Detailed Goals focus on the following for Students of Color:



Institutions will be asked to develop institution-level goals as they incorporate this Strategic Plan for Racial Equity into their own institutional strategic plans.

Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Goals

Detailed Goals

Each Detailed Goal outlined below includes a system-level, and in some cases a segment-level, target (see Appendix C for segment-level targets) to be reached or surpassed by 2033. The targets will be established in collaboration with all postsecondary segments and the Board of Higher Education by fall 2022. The target setting process will involve an intensive review of the trends and predicted outcomes for each metric and a determination of an aspirational target in conjunction with the DHE Data Council. The targets will be grounded in forecasting using historical data from 2010-2021. The methodology and proposed targets will be vetted through the DHE Data Governance Steering Committee and the BHE’s Evidence Based Policy Making Advisory group.

The rates by racial/ethnic group also presented in Appendix C for most of the goals serve as a baseline and reflect the most recently available outcome for each goal by racial/ethnic group reflect. The gap between the baseline rate and the to-be-determined target reflects the disparate levels of effort and investment needed to achieve the desired target for each population of Students of Color.



Increase Students of Color’s *social and economic mobility* as measured against an accepted nation-wide measure of social and economic mobility (e.g., through the achievement of Carnegie Classification for Social and Economic Mobility distinctions to be released in 2023)



X%

Increase *degree/certificate completion* for all Students of Color populations to XX%*




To achieve the above Goals, the following Goals focusing on Students of Color’s journey through the public higher education system will also be tracked.


X%

Increase *enrollment* of Students of Color into the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX% of total enrollment*










Increase Students of Color’s *sense of belonging* at their institutions



(Continued on next page.)

Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Goals

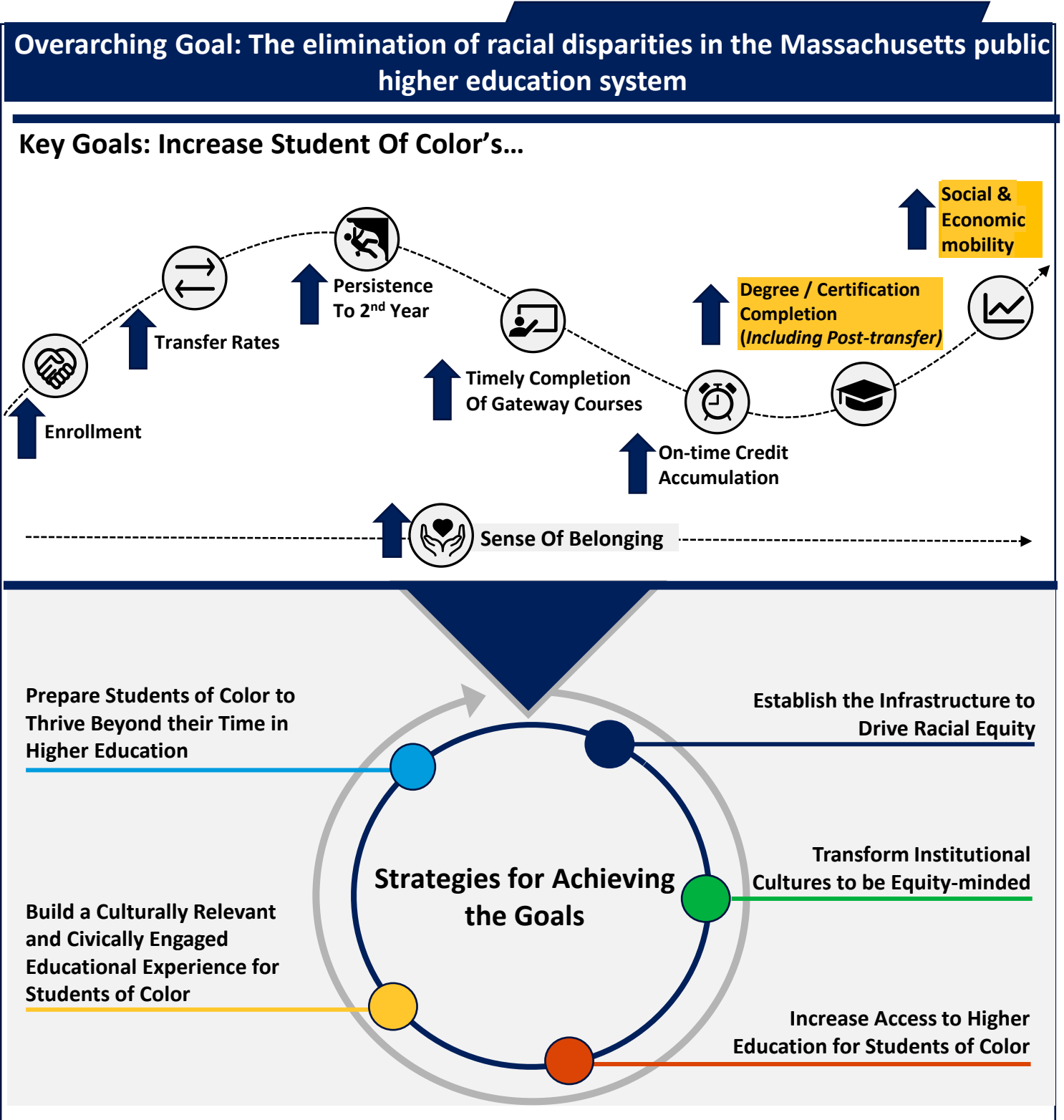
Detailed Goals (Continued)

X%	Increase <i>persistence</i> to a second year of postsecondary education for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX%*	
X%	Increase <i>timely completion</i> ³ of gateway courses for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX%*	
X%	Increase <i>on-time credit accumulation</i> ⁴ for all Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system by XX%*	
X%	Increase <i>transfer rates</i> from community colleges to universities for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system by XX%*	
X%	Increase <i>degree completion rates after transfer</i> for Students of Color from community colleges to universities by XX%*	

The following Strategic Plan for Racial Equity details the path forward for achieving the above Goals by 2033 through targeted strategies and priorities. This structure provides focus to the work and incremental checkpoints to ensure success along the 10-year journey.

Strategies for Achieving the Goals

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity includes five Strategies that work together to achieve the Plan's goals and ultimately eliminate racial disparities in the Massachusetts public higher education system.



Strategy 1: Establish the Infrastructure to Drive Racial Equity

Strategy 1 lays the foundation for racial equity by establishing the capacity needed for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. The Plan cannot be implemented without dedicated resources and funding, improved data capabilities, and the right mechanisms for holding stakeholders across the system accountable for progress. The priorities in Strategy 1 focus on these crucial areas.

PRIORITIES

1 Align the appropriate resources and funding to this work.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Build a coalition of advocates to review relevant legislation, data, and testimonials and build a case for revamping the state's funding formula to distribute state funds equitably and incentivize racially equitable outcomes.
- Develop and implement a system-wide strategic financing plan to acquire new funds to support the work of achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.
- Pursue grants that support statewide, equity-focused efforts to supplement funding and continue to evolve funding sources to support the work of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.
- Use current DHE funding streams to support racial equity work across institutions by building racial equity into all grant programs, such as the Higher Education Innovation Fund.
- Use statewide, performance-based funding to further support institutions as they implement programs and initiatives that align with the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Evaluate institution budgets and prioritize funding of consistent programs, initiatives, venues, and structures that promote the goals of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.



Ideas for Implementation:

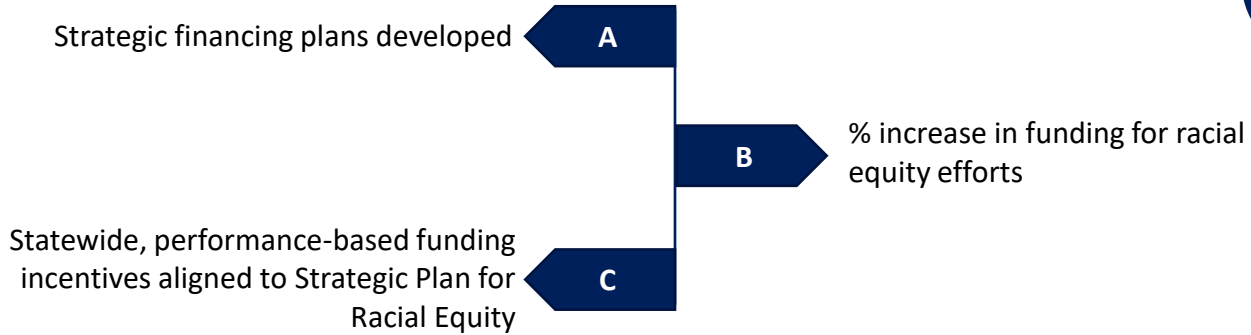
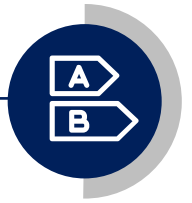
- Identify required funding for planned initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity as well as for the recommended initiatives that the institution will adopt.
 - Review institution budget to identify ways to prioritize funding towards racial equity efforts.
 - Continue to identify additional funding streams to support racial equity initiatives.
- Pursue grants collaboratively across institutions, putting the needs of Students of Color above competition, to gain additional funding to support the work of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Fall 2022 – Spring 2024 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



2 Improve data capabilities to track Plan progress and inform racial equity interventions.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Establish system-wide and institution-specific targets and baseline measures for the Goals of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Leverage the DHE Data Governance structure to enhance and expand data collection and develop and strengthen data analytic capabilities and practices with an equity lens at both the system and institution level so various analyses can be completed on Students of Color’s journey and experiences through the Commonwealth’s public higher education system.
- Continue to ensure that the Higher Education Information Resource System (HEIRS) is a meaningful, effective, and innovative system for collecting, standardizing, managing, and analyzing postsecondary data for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Create a shared understanding of HEIRS data definitions, processes, and reports among campuses.
- Implement data improvement efforts to better capture disaggregated and other data on Students of Color and their educational journey (e.g., application, admission, enrollment, persistence, transfer, attainment, sentiment, etc.). *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Connect local data sources to HEIRS data and DHE-developed Tableau dashboards to foster greater data transparency and validity. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Establish system-wide and institution-specific targets and baseline measures for the Goals of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Assess current data collection capabilities and identify gaps based on BHE/DHE guidance.
- Implement data improvement efforts to better capture disaggregated and other data on Students of Color and their educational journey (e.g., application, admission, enrollment, persistence, transfer, attainment, sentiment, etc.). *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Connect local data sources to HEIRS data and DHE-developed Tableau dashboards to foster greater data transparency and validity. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Promote data transparency and informed decision-making by sharing relevant disaggregated data analyses with all institutional stakeholders (faculty, staff, administrators, students, trustees) on a regular basis to inform decision making.



Ideas for Implementation:

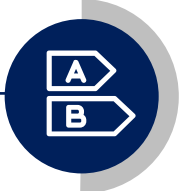
- Develop institution-specific data dashboards and reports based on goals and metrics included in this Plan.
- Determine how frequently data will be updated and shared with key stakeholders.
- Create a communications and outreach plan for regularly sharing disaggregated data on Students of Color with key stakeholders (e.g., provide faculty with student success data for their program of study disaggregated by race to analyze how they can better serve Students of Color).



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Spring 2024 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



Data from institutions can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity (including sub-populations) and analyzed with other demographic characteristics (e.g., gender identity, part-time vs full-time, age, immigration status) across all facets of the learner journey

A

B

of institutions with capacity to link local data sources to DHE dashboards

Institution data dashboards and reports developed

C

D

Regular reporting and sharing of disaggregated data established at each Institution

Data capability building opportunities established across Institutions (e.g., training, roundtable discussions)

E

3 Hold all system and institution stakeholders accountable for addressing racial equity.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Create a working group of institutional stakeholders, including students, to define racially-just success.
- Refine the guidelines for institutions' strategic planning process so that institutions incorporate elements of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity into their institution-level plans when it comes time to update them.
- Incorporate expectations regarding racial equity into presidential evaluations.
- Collaborate across the system through the Data Council to refine PMRS to reflect the goals and metrics outlined in the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Create a list of racial equity priorities based on the goals of this Plan that can be discussed during union negotiations through an ongoing and iterative process over time. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Collaborate across the system through the Data Council to refine PMRS to reflect the goals and metrics outlined in the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. *(In collaboration with BHE/DHE)*
- Create a list of racial equity priorities based on the goals of this Plan that can be discussed during union negotiations through an ongoing and iterative process over time. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Incorporate racial equity-related metrics and requirements into performance management/evaluation plans for executive leaders.
- Explore or build on other ways to incentivize executive leadership to champion this work.



Ideas for Implementation:

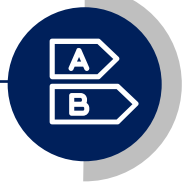
- Create a pipeline of professionals who have the skills and abilities to lead equity-related work through establishing or expanded related academic programs and fields of study.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Spring 2023 – Spring 2024 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



Racial equity commitments built into all institutions' Strategic Plans

A

B

Racial equity metrics built into President Evaluations and PMRS

Racial equity priorities identified for union negotiations

C

D

Union agreements updated to include racial equity priorities

Strategy 2: Transform Institutional Cultures to be Equity-Minded

The priorities and actions in Strategy 2 aim to transform institutional cultures. This is no small task. From the beginning of the higher education system in the Commonwealth, policies and programs have been designed with inadequate attention to the structural barriers that Students of Color face and the countless cultural and experiential assets that Students of Color bring with them to the system. Therefore, many Students of Color report that their educational experience in the Commonwealth's public higher education system is fraught with harm so much so that even after they graduate, they carry the trauma of the harm produced with them into life beyond higher education.

Institutional culture change must be thought of holistically and occur throughout the institution in support of the whole student. Students of Color's entire educational experience must be considered including academics, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities, and wraparound services and support. This Strategy addresses aspects of the culture that affect students as well as staff, faculty, and administration, and the broader institutional community. The priorities and actions focus on student wellbeing and engagement, student support services, professional development for higher education stakeholders, and the recruitment, advancement, and retention of staff, faculty, and administrators of color. To achieve success in this Strategy, institutions and staff and faculty unions must work together to identify levers to advance racial equity.

PRIORITIES

1

Provide holistic student support in order to ensure a sense of belonging for Students of Color and champion the whole student.



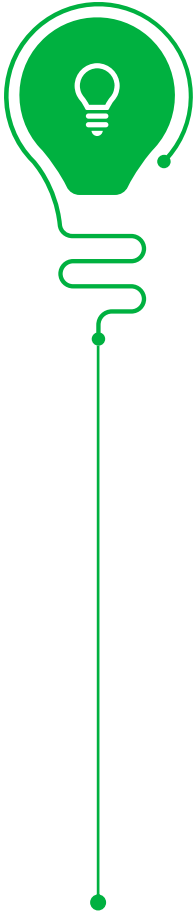
BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Create a working group of system-wide stakeholders to share best practices, collaborate, and support the rollout and expansion of holistic student support services and programs across all institutions.
- Provide guidance, resources, and support to institutions in their efforts to address the needs of Students of Color.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Establish or enhance wraparound support services that Students of Color can easily access and that are rooted in social justice, asset-based, and racial equity-informed practices.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Create or expand one-stop models of student support to create seamless service delivery with essential student-facing functions of the student experience from matriculation to graduation (e.g., Student Excellence Centers, Library Learning Commons, etc.)
 - Ground one-stop models in asset-based approaches, not deficit-minded approaches, to recognize Student of Color’s assets.⁵
 - Staff one-stop models with a racially and ethnically diverse group of staff who can offer tailored success strategies and higher education navigation support to Students of Color.
 - Expand single point of contact, case management models, and provide sustained proactive outreach to Students of Color via their primary points of contact.
 - Ensure primary contacts know Students of Color’s story and situation, and reaches out proactively, triages issues, and follows up to ensure connections to faculty and other supports were successful.
 - Improve access to and quality/efficiency of support services within and between institutions by utilizing shared services for essential functions that can be institutionally agnostic such as mental health counseling, academic tutoring for English and math, and career education.
 - Integrate faculty into the support services with early warning systems, shared data, and case management meetings.
 - Create or expand summertime programs and services to ensure year-round support for Students of Color.
- Ensure that there is a coordinated basic needs infrastructure that all college/university faculty, staff, and administrators can use to participate in every student’s community of care by supporting students as they learn of information about students’ basic need insecurities.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Create, seek out, and/or expand existing training and professional development opportunities that allow all members of a campus community, including students themselves, to become adept communicators of basic needs information
- Provide holistic basic needs and trauma-informed support to Students of Color by identifying the multiple types of basic needs insecurities that students experience and connecting them to the resources needed to achieve their academic and career goals.
- Prioritize and modernize campus communications to provide all students with real-time access to basic needs resources on campus and in the community.
- Innovate and utilize existing resources from the 2-Generation approach for students who are parents (predominantly women of color).

Institutions will lead the following actions:

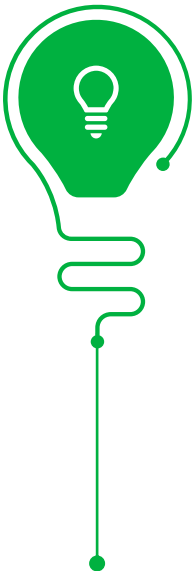


- Improve the wellbeing, mental health, and physical and psychological safety of Students of Color by ensuring that counseling services and campus policing practices are rooted in an understanding of racial trauma and social justice concepts.



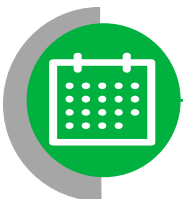
Ideas for Implementation:

- Hire and retain counselors of color at institutions so that Students of Color see themselves in the counseling services offered on campus.
 - Ensure that an understanding of racial trauma is a central part of counseling so that services are properly aligned to the realities that Students of Color face on campus.
 - Partner with community agencies and other providers to amplify mental health support designed for Students of Color.
 - Review and revise campus policing practices to address racial trauma, center wellness and mental health awareness, incorporate restorative racial justice practices, and commit to transparency and accountability.
- Create or expand mentoring and other community-oriented programs (e.g., identity-based clubs) that enable Students of Color to make personal connections with campus mentors and peers (e.g., staff, faculty, community, and alumni volunteers) that encourage their personal welfare.



Ideas for Implementation:

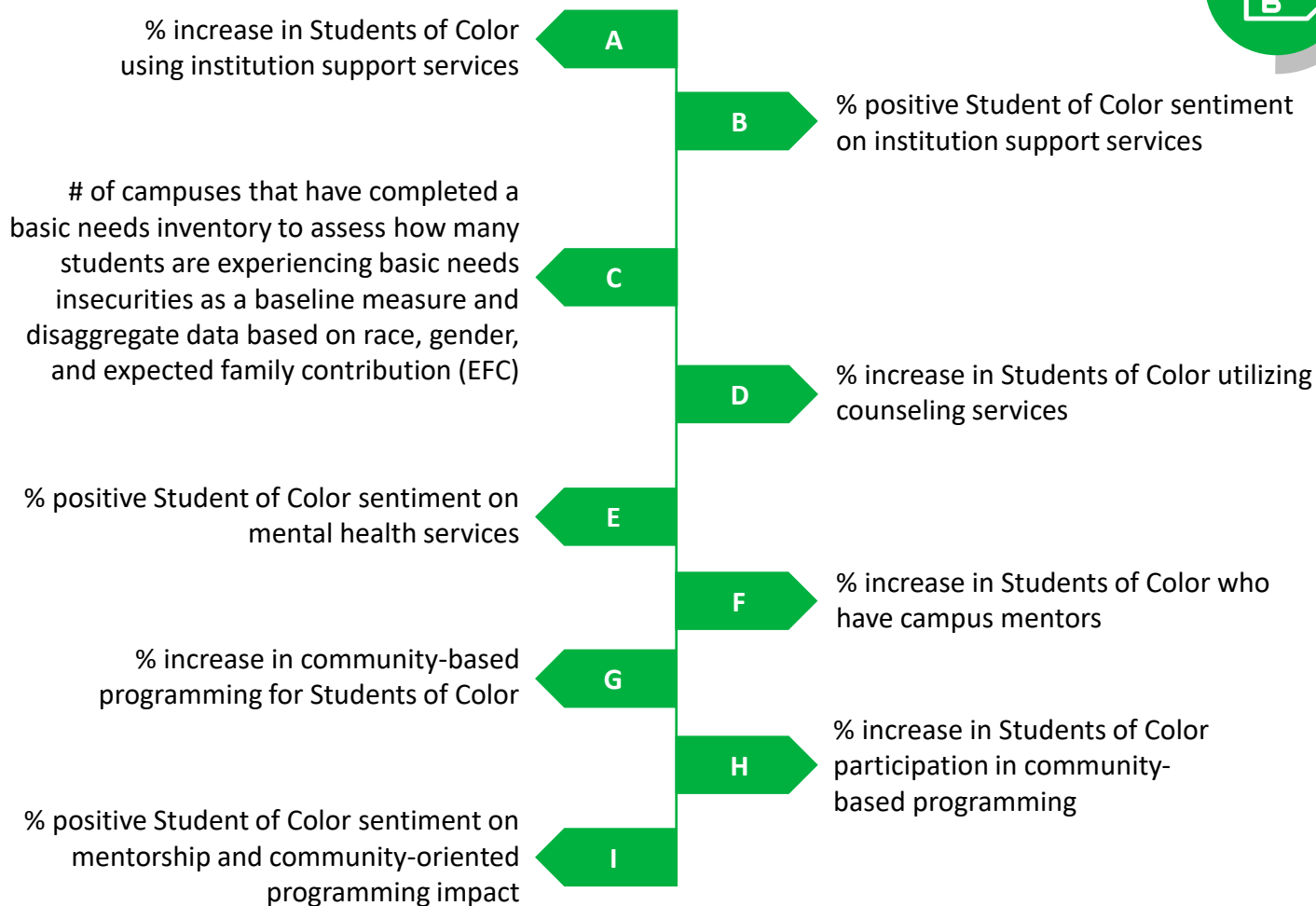
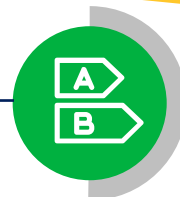
- Assess leading mentoring programs designed for Students of Color, such as Project MALES and African American Education and Empowerment Program (AME) and establish similar programs.
- Create mentoring networks of faculty, staff, alumni, and employers of color who will support Students of Color throughout their time in the public higher education system.
- Identify the structures necessary so that faculty and staff are provided with the appropriate support and resources for this work.
- Revise tenure and promotion guidelines so that faculty and staff are incentivized and recognized for this work.
- Create and fund identity-based groups, such as Student-Parent Affinity groups, at each institution that provide a sense of community for Students of Color.
- Expand peer-to-peer support systems and race-conscious cohort-based programming to foster connection to the campus community and belonging to the institution.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Fall 2023 – Summer 2025 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



2 Recruit, advance, and retain administrators, faculty, and staff of color.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Support the adoption of equitable processes and practices across the talent lifecycle (talent acquisition, retention, promotion, tenure, salary, reward, and recognition) for staff, faculty, and administrators.
- Connect leaders across institutions to share best practices for creating system-wide safe spaces for faculty, staff, and administrators of color.
- Keep track of hiring and retention rates of faculty, staff, and administrators of color over time to support Institutions in identifying what is working well and where there continues to be improvement opportunities.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Develop and implement or enhance strategic sourcing and recruiting plans for attracting faculty, administrators, and staff of color that engage the entire institutional community.
- Design and implement talent acquisition, retention, promotion, tenure, salary, reward, and recognition processes that prioritize racial equity, justice, and more diverse forms of scholarship and recognize invisible labor taken on by faculty and staff of color.
- Establish the necessary leadership roles and support services for staff, faculty, and administrators to cultivate a sense of belonging for employees of color.



Ideas for Implementation:

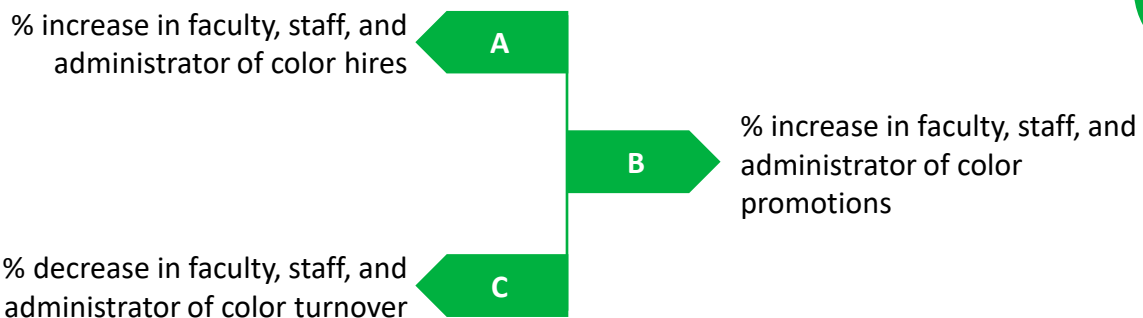
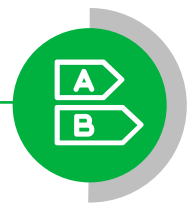
- Explore the stand-up of regional Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to connect faculty, staff, and administrators of color across institutions.
- Build diverse faculty pipelines through innovative “grow your own” programs and/or industry externships for professionals who identify as People of Color.
- Examine ways to streamline hiring practices (while keeping equity at the forefront) so that candidates of color are not lost due to lengthy processes.
- Ensure that HR personnel and hiring committees are trained on equity-minded practices for screening, interviewing, and onboarding new hires.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Summer 2024 – Summer 2026 (*some activities will be ongoing*)

Key Milestones to Track:



3 Develop administrators, faculty, staff, and trustees to further racial equity.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Expand professional development (PD) opportunities for BHE and DHE to learn more about racial equity, social justice, implicit bias, racial trauma, student success structures, and other relevant concepts and how to incorporate them into their daily work.
- Enhance and scale up DHE-supported, system-wide opportunities for collaborative and cross-training professional development and sharing effective racial equity practices across institutions.
- Establish a bi-annual Racial Equity Symposium that brings together system and external stakeholders to explore racial equity topics and applications to higher education.

Institutions will lead the following actions:

- Expand PD opportunities for faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees to learn more about racial equity, social justice, implicit bias, racial trauma, student success structures, and other relevant concepts and how to incorporate them into their daily work.

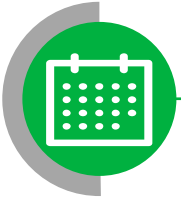


Ideas for Implementation:

- Create or expand institution-specific and/or regional Centers for Teaching and Learning that facilitate racial equity PD.
- Incorporate technology like Zoom to provide multiple opportunities/venues for engagement in PD and training.
- Focus PD on digestible, bite-sized ways for faculty and staff to embed equity into daily behaviors.
- Seek out PD that is discipline-specific so that faculty and staff can apply learnings directly to their respective disciplines.
- Consider ways to track the effectiveness of PD in order to continuously improve and implement lessons learned.



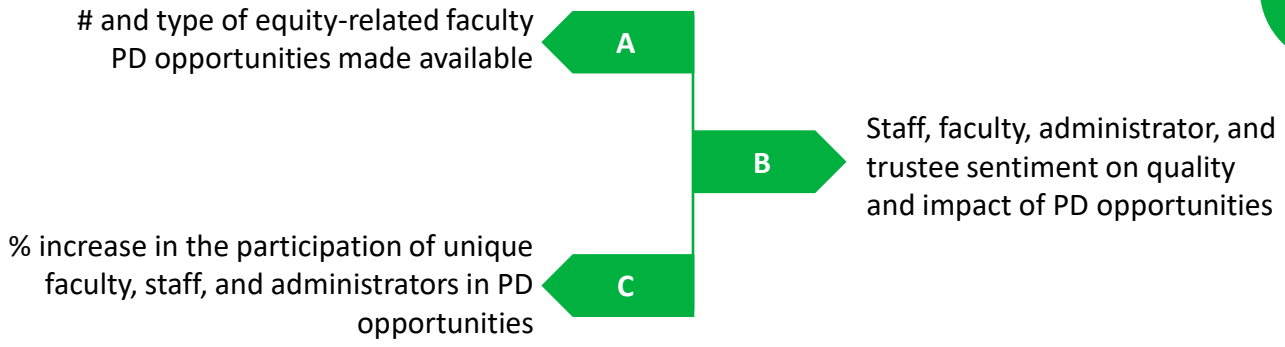
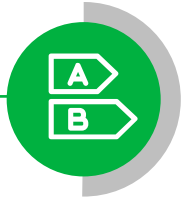
- Expand opportunities for faculty to learn about culturally relevant and equity-minded pedagogical and assessment practices, including the use and interpretation of disaggregated data and how to conduct assessments in an equitable way.
- Incorporate short-term and long-term equity-focused PD plans for faculty, administrators, and staff into institutional strategic plans.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Fall 2022 – Summer 2024 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



Strategy 3: Increase Access to Higher Education for Students of Color

Strategy 3 encompasses all activities that relate to increasing access to the Commonwealth's public higher education system for Students of Color. Through this Strategy, the system must dismantle barriers to entry and ensure that race is not a determinant in students' participation in higher education. This work is driven by the need to eradicate explicit racial disparities to accessing higher education and includes everything from improving the application, admission, and enrollment processes to establishing more recruiting pathways. This also addresses the cost of higher education, including costs of instruction like tuition, fees, books, technology, and supplies and the costs of attendance, such as housing, food, transportation, childcare, healthcare, mental health, substance abuse support, suicide prevention, and other basic needs like menstrual products.

PRIORITIES

1 Attract more Students of Color to higher education and eliminate barriers to enrollment.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Examine recruitment, admissions, and enrollment policies and practices through a racial equity lens to identify barriers to entry into higher education for Students of Color. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Support the implementation of improvement efforts to ensure that all Students of Color feel supported in the application, admissions, and enrollment processes. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Intentionally and thoughtfully expand and establish programs focused on the elimination of barriers and harm to Students of Color in the context of public K-12 education and the transition to postsecondary education (e.g., race conscious and considerately designed and accountable designated Early College programs). *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Ensure that Early College continues to focus on serving Students of Color and requiring a racial equity lens in designation criteria.
 - Ensure that racial equity is central in policy decisions as funding expands and that fiscal policy seeks to reach and intentionally support Students of Color and establish Early College funding models that are flexible and inclusive to benefit Students of Color. Ensure this racial equity-minded fiscal policy also attends to broad institutional demands and resource disparities.
 - Employ consistent critical examination of Early College policy design, implementation, and fiscal support to reflect race-conscious decision making.
 - Thoughtfully and intentionally expand and enhance Early College programming such that all the Commonwealth's secondary Students of Color can participate in Early College programs designed to holistically support Students of Color and honor students' assets.
- Keep track of application, admission, and enrollment rates of Students of Color over time to support Institutions in identifying what is working well and where there continues to be improvement opportunities.

Institutions will lead the following actions:

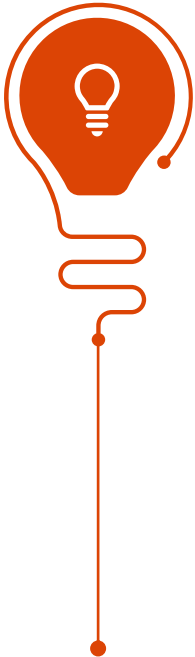


- Examine recruitment, admissions, and enrollment policies and practices through a racial equity lens to identify barriers to entry into higher education for Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*



Ideas for Implementation:

- Explore or expand holistic admissions practices and policies that broaden the focus beyond GPA and standardized test scores (e.g., essays).
- Implement improvement efforts to ensure that all Students of Color feel supported in the application, admissions, and enrollment processes. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Intentionally and thoughtfully expand and establish programs focused on the elimination of barriers and harm to Students of Color in the context of public K-12 education and the transition to postsecondary education (e.g., race conscious and considerably designed and accountable designated Early College programs). *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*



Ideas for Implementation:

- Support racial equity-minded scaling of Early College programming by building administrative capacity and using existing and proposed funding to enhance support services with proactive advising and academic support.
- Build or strengthen relationships with college access organizations in surrounding communities with populations of predominately people of color to promote higher education early on and attract and enroll more Students of Color.
- Increase connections with surrounding K-12 schools and districts to ensure a seamless transition from K-12 to local higher education institutions in expectations and readiness and to continue expanding coherent and clear pathways for students through Early College programs.
- Build or strengthen relationships with Early Childhood and K-12 agencies and organizations in surrounding communities of color to promote higher education early on and attract and enroll more Students of Color. *(In collaboration with the DHE/BHE)*
- Examine existing institution-level programs experiencing successful outcomes and identify how to customize them to the unique needs of the institution.
- Expand or establish programs to welcome and nurture adult learners⁶ in non-traditional pathways to increase Student of Color participation in higher education.



Ideas for Implementation:

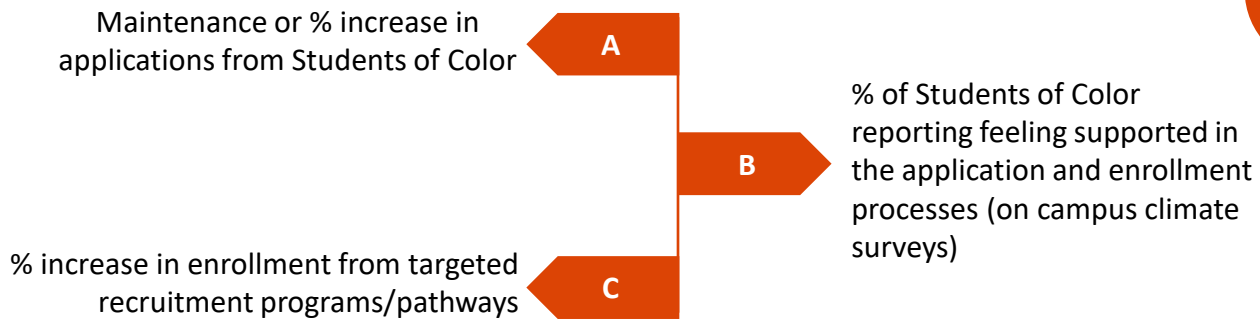
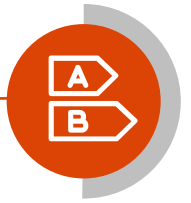
- Build or strengthen relationships with workforce development organizations in surrounding communities of color to attract and enroll adult learners.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Fall 2025 (*some activities will be ongoing*)

Key Milestones to Track:



2 Make public higher education affordable for Students of Color.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Use the results of the Policy Audit to identify and implement interventions to improve current financial aid policies and practices to address disparate impacts on Students of Color. (*In collaboration with Institutions*)
- Develop a strategic plan to integrate and fully fund direct and in-direct educational expenses (unmet need) for Students of Color. (*In collaboration with Institutions*)
- Seek legislative modifications in related statutes and BHE approval for new policy and amendments to financial aid program guidelines to facilitate implementation of interventions so that Students of Color benefit. (*In collaboration with Institutions*)
 - Expand financial aid support to provide coverage for students from low- and middle-income families of color who are struggling to afford college with the high cost of living in Massachusetts. (*In collaboration with Institutions*)
 - Expand financial aid programs to include all public two-year and four-year colleges and universities for both full- and part-time Students of Color.
 - Expand aid to include total cost of attendance (tuition, fees, books, supplies, and room and board).
 - Develop strategic funding priorities for sustaining and supporting the MASSGrant, MASSGrant Plus, and other financial aid programs that benefit Students of Color in future years.
 - Consider ways to streamline and consolidate aid programs to meet the above goals while reducing confusion and administrative burden.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Provide statewide online and asynchronous financial literacy tools and training as well as support for in-person, campus-based, financial literacy programs that educate families and students of color about financing their education; ensure tools, training, and programs are created using culturally competent, equity-minded approaches. *(In collaboration with the Institutions)*
- Explore cross-Secretariat opportunities and cross-communication strategies to help connect Students of Color to other state benefits and scholarships.
- Keep track of met versus unmet need, basic need insecurities, and other financial aid trends for Students of Color over time to support Institutions in identifying what is working well and where there continues to be improvement opportunities.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



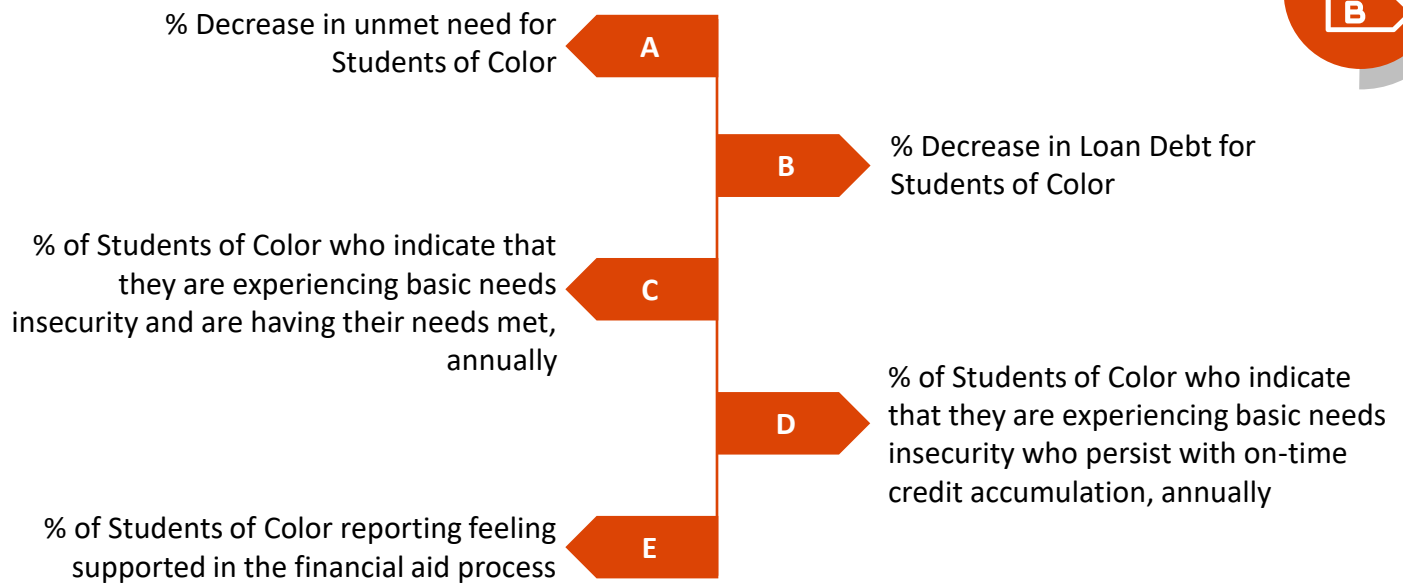
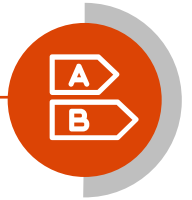
- Use the results of the Policy Audit to identify and implement interventions to improve current financial aid policies and practices to address disparate impacts on Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Develop a strategic plan to integrate and fully fund direct and in-direct educational expenses (unmet need) for Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Seek legislative modifications in related statutes and BHE approval for new policy and amendments to financial aid program guidelines to facilitate implementation of interventions so that Students of Color benefit. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Provide statewide online and asynchronous financial literacy tools and training as well as support for in-person, campus-based, financial literacy programs that educate families and students of color about financing their education; ensure tools, training, and programs are created using culturally competent, equity-minded approaches. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Establish or expand funding for Basic Needs Security to better support Students of Color.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Fall 2025 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



Strategy 4: Build a Culturally Relevant and Civically Engaged Educational Experience for Students of Color

For too long Students of Color have engaged with curriculum, co-curriculum, and pedagogy where their histories, cultures, and identities are neither represented nor valued. They have faced countless barriers and biases in and outside of the classroom. The public higher education system must redesign curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical approaches as well as academic policies so that the entirety of the educational experience for Students of Color is built to be inclusive and equitable, considering the whole student and recognizing the cultural and experiential assets that Students of Color bring with them. As such, the priorities and actions in Strategy 4 focus on the entirety of the student educational experience including pedagogy and assessment, academic policies, the curriculum, and co-curriculum, and, ensuring that Students of Color have various pathways to complete degree, credit-bearing coursework.

PRIORITIES

- 1 Recognize Students of Color's cultural and experiential assets through the adoption of equity-minded, culturally relevant, and civically engaged curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical practices.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Identify the knowledge and skills needed for full and effective participation in civic life and public problem-solving in a multi-racial democracy, in order to acknowledge and build upon the cultural wealth carried by individual Students of Color through the curriculum and co-curriculum. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Support faculty in refreshing the Core Curriculum so that it is rooted in culturally relevant and civically engaged learning and better enables students to address complex social problems while maintaining the benefits of the MassTransfer General Education Foundation. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Create a Core Curriculum framework that is outcomes-driven yet still allows for individual institutional flexibility and that includes racial justice and civic engagement education principles and learning outcomes. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Collect data that portray the benefits of using OERs, with specific emphasis on the benefits to Students of Color across institutions and report statewide findings.
- Design new programs to include recruitment and marketing strategies; enrollment and retention; learning goals and objectives; and faculty, staff, and operational resource allocation, which are deliberate and intentional in serving Students of Color. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Create a system-wide community of practice in which campuses, employers, and community leaders are engaged in developing shared language, definitions, essential elements, and learning objectives for High Impact Practices (HIPs) and the co-curriculum; leverage the community to identify ways in which institutions can collaborate through cross-campus projects. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Advocate for more resources to support the adoption of HIPs across the system.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Identify the knowledge and skills needed for full and effective participation in civic life and public problem-solving in a multi-racial democracy, in order to acknowledge and build upon the cultural wealth carried by individual Students of Color through the curriculum and co-curriculum. *(In collaboration with the DHE/BHE)*
- Support faculty in refreshing the Core Curriculum so that it is rooted in culturally relevant and civically engaged learning and better enables students to address complex social problems while maintaining the benefits of the MassTransfer General Education Foundation. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Create a Core Curriculum framework that is outcomes-driven yet still allowing for individual institutional flexibility and that includes racial justice education and civic engagement principles and learning outcomes. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Support faculty in examining current programs of study, including General Studies, to identify ways to incorporate civic engagement opportunities for students to explore how their field of study can contribute to understanding and addressing complex public problems.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Examine current obstacles to creating interdisciplinary programs to further support students' abilities to address complex societal problems.

- Design new programs to include recruitment and marketing strategies; enrollment and retention; learning goals and objectives; and faculty, staff, and operational resource allocation, which are deliberate and intentional in serving Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Support faculty in developing and adopting or expanding data-driven, racial equity-minded pedagogical and assessment approaches built on an understanding of what Students of Color need to thrive in the classroom.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Create institution-wide communities of practice in which faculty across disciplines are engaged in developing shared, racial equity-minded pedagogical approaches based on student outcome and evaluation data disaggregated by race.
 - Consider instituting a stipend for faculty to do this work.
- Develop institutional learning outcomes and assessment methodologies based on current, equity-minded learning models, such as using authentic student artifacts as the primary source of learning assessment.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Ensure the proper funding for and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) to save Students of Color significant costs of attending public higher education while still providing a quality educational experience.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Provide training to faculty on incorporating culturally responsive techniques into the adaptation and creation of OERs.
- Encourage faculty to utilize open pedagogical practices to imbue student voices in the co-creation of learning.
- Continually monitor OERs and update them regularly to main relevance and efficacy.

- Collect, analyze, and utilize data that portray the benefits of using OERs, with specific emphasis on the benefits to Students of Color and share with the Department of Higher Education.
- Provide equitable access to existing and new HIPs and other co-curricular experiences so that Students of Color participate.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Identify institutional barriers to accessing HIPs for Students of Color and identify ways to address barriers.
- Institute culturally sensitive and innovative HIPs, such as anti-racist civic engagement opportunities and experiential and work-based learning opportunities, as requirements for students across degree programs and in the Core Curriculum.

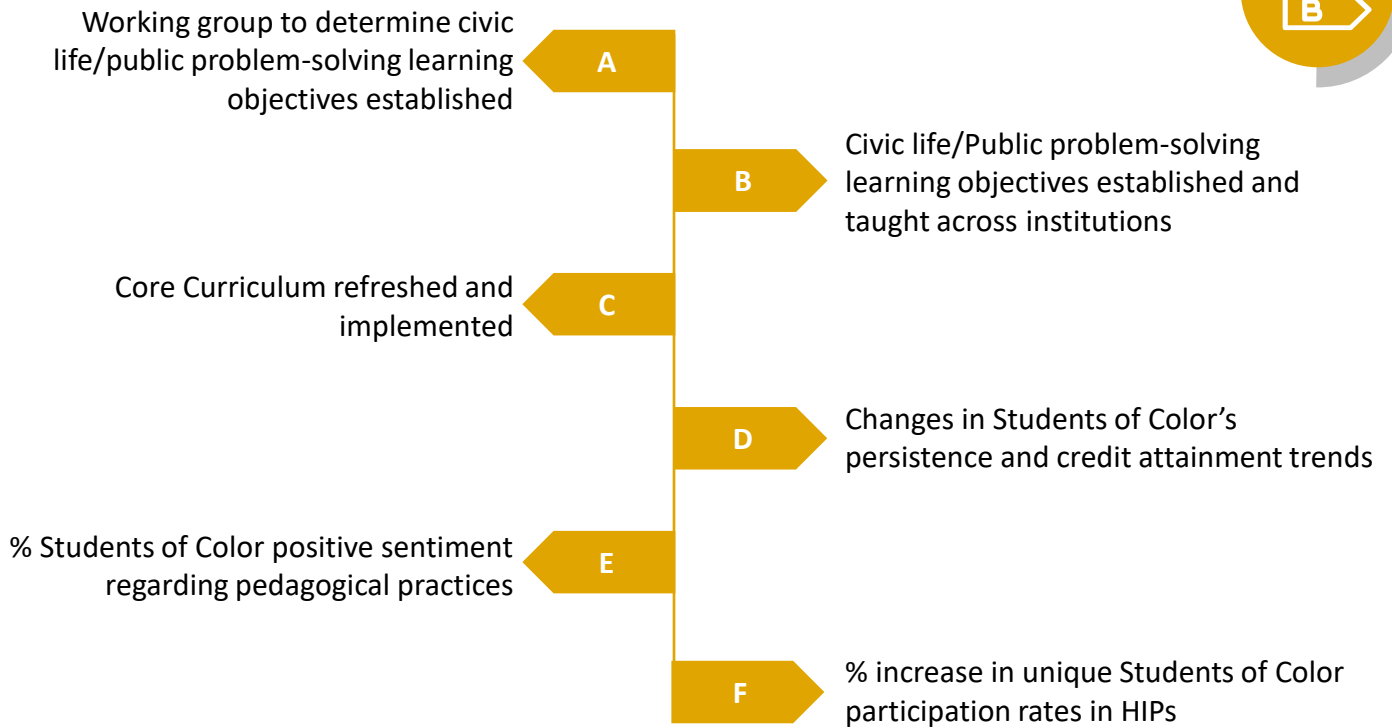
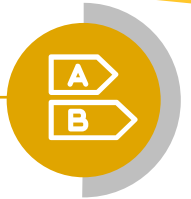
- Create a system-wide community of practice in which campuses, employers, and community leaders are engaged in developing shared language, definitions, essential elements, and learning objectives for HIPs and the co-curriculum; leverage the community to identify ways in which institutions can collaborate in cross-campus projects. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Summer 2027

Key Milestones to Track:



2 Redesign academic policies and practices through a racial equity lens.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Support institutions in evaluating and refining academic policies that better support Students of Color and share best practices system-wide.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



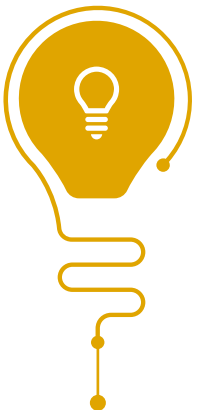
- Evaluate and ensure equitable system-wide academic and administrative policies and practices that are culturally sensitive and responsive to Students of Color's needs.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Identify and make necessary updates to campus and system discipline, financial, probation, leave (including medical leave), withdrawal, hold, and readmissions policies using racial equity principles.
- Develop and align equitable Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards, leave, withdrawal and readmissions policies across the Commonwealth, including Fresh Start policies in compliance with federal requirements.
- Perform equity-informed assessment of all conduct and discipline policies and practices in order to identify the disproportionate effects on Students of Color and implement changes based on results.
- Replace punitive measures with restorative, developmental, and educational approaches.

- Incorporate flexibility into the academic calendar to cater to all types of learners, particularly part-time and adult learners, which have a higher representation of Students of Color compared to the overall student population.



Ideas for Implementation:

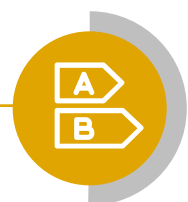
- Implement flexible, accelerated semesters and scheduling so that Students of Color who drop out have multiple "on-ramps" back into learning.
- Increase the use of shortened classes (e.g., 7 weeks) for early program requirements to support rapid credit accumulation and rapid assessment of program alignment with Students of Color's interests and capabilities.
 - Consider the added cognitive and administrative load for faculty and staff and provide the necessary support needed for shortened semesters.
- Engage faculty in the redesign and solicit ideas for updating instruction and delivery.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Summer 2026 (*some activities will be ongoing*)

Key Milestones to Track:



Academic policies updated

A

B

Students of Color participation rates for accelerated semesters

Changes in Students of Color's credit attainment trends

C



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Employ racial equity-minded practices to improve Developmental Education to ensure student-ready institutions and to support the scaling to a culturally relevant co-requisite model for college-level math and English courses. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Revive the statewide Developmental Education Advisory Board and charge it with identifying policies needed to maximize the number of Students of Color completing college-level math and English courses in alignment with the New England Commission of Higher Education accreditation standards.
 - Continue partnership with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education around Math for Equity to further align high school and college-level curricula. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Eliminate the use of standardized tests for admissions, assessment, and placement. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Create integrated, strengths-based English Language Learners (ELL) pathways across the system in acknowledgement of the linguistic capital and communication richness of Students of Color. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Formalize a DHE-supported, statewide effort to create integrated courses, share resources and best practices, standardize system and design, recommend non-credit to credit pathways, and create a rubric for awarding credit to multilingual students. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Provide more ELL resources to community colleges through existing budget streams.
- Strengthen Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and Prior Learning Assessment at and across all institutions in recognition of the vast learning Students of Color bring from outside of the classroom. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Strengthen the Prior Learning Assessment Consortium by including UMass and state universities. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Ensure equity-minded oversight of CPL, including the creation of equity-minded assessments and reviews of practices to ensure that Students of Color are benefitting from CPL. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Create a transfer policy and partnership among all universities to recognize CPL awarded by community colleges. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Develop a statewide dual admissions program between community colleges and universities to reduce the uncertainty and barriers of transfer that disproportionately affect Students of Color. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Convene a group of key stakeholders to analyze successful dual admission programs across the system and develop implementation guidelines for a statewide, dual admissions program; include guidelines and programming that include specific interventions for Students of Color. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
 - Implement the statewide program, ensuring alignment between community college and university credentials and courses. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*

Institutions will lead the following actions:



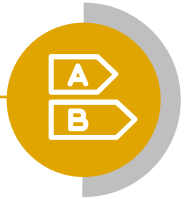
- Connect non-credit bearing, stackable courses and micro-credentials into pathways to credit-bearing coursework and use to attract adult learners into the system.
- Employ racial equity-minded practices to improve Developmental Education and support the scaling to a culturally relevant co-requisite model for college-level math and English courses. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Continue partnership with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education around Math for Equity to further align high school and college-level curricula. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Eliminate the use of standardized tests for admissions, assessment, and placement. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Create integrated, strengths-based ELL pathways across the system in acknowledgement of the linguistic capital of Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Participate in DHE-supported, statewide effort to create integrated courses, share resources and best practices, standardize system and design, recommend non-credit to credit pathways, and create a rubric for awarding credit to multilingual students.
 - Grant degree credit for the Seal of Biliteracy to multilingual students, similar to Advanced Placement scores.
- Strengthen CPL and Prior Learning Assessment at and across all institutions in recognition of the learning Students of Color bring from outside of the classroom. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Participate in the Prior Learning Assessment Consortium.
 - Ensure equity-minded oversight of CPL, including the creation of equity-minded assessments and reviews of practices to ensure that Students of Color are benefitting from CPL. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Create a transfer policy and partnership among all universities to recognize CPL awarded by community colleges. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
- Develop a statewide dual admissions program between community colleges and universities to reduce the uncertainty and barriers of transfer that disproportionately affect Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Convene a group of key stakeholders to analyze successful dual admission programs across the system and develop implementation guidelines for a statewide, dual admissions program; include guidelines and programming that include specific interventions for Students of Color. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*
 - Implement the statewide program, ensuring alignment between community college and university credentials and courses. *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Currently ongoing – Summer 2026 (*some activities will be ongoing*)

Key Milestones to Track:



Increase % of Students of Color completing college-level math and English

A

Seal of Biliteracy degree credit granted at all institutions

C

B

Increase % of transfer Students of Color who are awarded a BS/BS

D

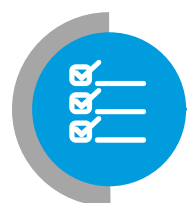
All CPL awarded by community college is recognized by all universities through the transfer process

Strategy 5: Prepare Students of Color to Thrive Beyond Their Time in Higher Education

It is imperative that Students of Color are guaranteed that their investment in higher education enables them to be successful after graduation, in whatever way they define success. Students of Color should have access to robust, well-rounded services that provide them with resources and pathways to satisfying, passion-driven careers. These careers should allow for economic and social mobility that empowers Students of Color, their families, and their communities to live free from the burden of economic restraints. The impact of higher education attainment should be clear, visible and life changing. The priorities and actions in Strategy 5 focus on creating better alignment between the classroom and career services and connecting academic and co-curricular experiences to life after higher education for Students of Color.

PRIORITIES

1 Align academic and co-curricular experiences with life after post-secondary education.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Establish actions, milestones, and metrics in alignment with social and economic mobility criteria (e.g., the Carnegie Social and Economic Mobility classification criteria, once published). *(In collaboration with Institutions)*

Institutions will lead the following actions:

- Build or enhance partnerships between career services and academic departments to create integrated curricular and co-curricular pathways through graduation and employment.



Ideas for Implementation:

- Reimagine the role of the “Career Center” to be a “Career and Advising Center” and integrate career education and related services into the curriculum and early advising.
 - Consider expanding or establishing the role of career exploration advisors who help students discover their passions and career options early on in their higher education careers.
- Establish a campus-wide community of practice that brings together leaders from career services with leaders from academic departments to determine ways to integrate curricular and co-curricular elements to create meaningful student experiences that holistically prepare Students of Color for life after higher education.
- Enhance experiential learning opportunities aimed at career and academic alignment.
- Integrate faculty into career support services using a combined faculty and professional 44 advising model.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Expand use of meta majors and Guided Pathways to ensure that once Students of Color's career aspirations and academic programs are aligned, that they have a clear curricular pathway with flexible options.



Ideas for Implementation:

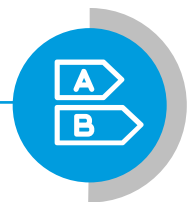
- Analyze the Guided Pathways to STEM program to identify promising practices that could be applied to other academic disciplines.
 - Provide clear mapping between associated academic programs across institutions to offer flexibility to parallel pathways as career goals are solidified in Students of Color's educational journeys.
 - Explore the use of meta majors by offering numerous exploratory courses that count for several majors to further support Students of Color in their pathways to their career aspirations.
 - Organize Students of Color into cohorts of clustered academic programs and/or learning communities that align with meta-majors to promote a stronger sense of belonging and shared academic experience among students in similar majors.
- Establish actions, milestones, and metrics in alignment with social and economic mobility criteria (e.g., the Carnegie Social and Economic Mobility classification criteria once published). *(In collaboration with DHE/BHE)*



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Fall 2023 – Summer 2028 *(some activities will be ongoing)*

Key Milestones to Track:



Career advising integrated earlier into the student experience

A

B

Students of Color sentiment on career advising's impact on academic program choice

2 Connect Students of Color to meaningful workforce opportunities.



BHE/DHE will lead the following actions:

- Establish a working group of leaders representing industry and higher education to review industry standards and curriculum across institutions to better align workforce needs to content in majors, minors, and certificate programs.
- Partner with employer communities to ensure that they are working to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments for the system's graduates of color to enter. *(In collaboration with Institutions)*
- Work with institutions and students to understand which career development tool(s) are most helpful and could be developed and customized as a shared service across Institutions.

Institutions will lead the following actions:



- Partner with employer communities to ensure that they are working to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments for the system's graduates of color to enter. *(In collaboration with BHE/DHE)*
- Establish partnerships with key industry leaders across the Commonwealth to align curriculum to the local economy's workforce needs and connect Students of Color to paid workforce opportunities where representation is disproportionately low.



Ideas for Implementation:

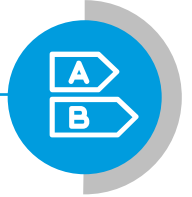
- Establish regional, program-based committees comprised of career services, academic, and industry representatives to understand trends for high demand jobs with family-sustaining wages and opportunities to better align academic credentials to meet the needs of future demand trends.
- Establish pathways to paid internships for Students of Color.
- Establish pathways to family-sustaining wage jobs for Students of Color.



Timeline for Initial Implementation:

Fall 2022 – Summer 2026

Key Milestones to Track:



Pathways to paid internships established

A

Pathways to family-sustaining wage jobs established

B

Students of Color participation rates in paid internships

C

Students of Color hiring trends post-graduation

D

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity is delivered during an unprecedented time in history when a once-in-a-generation pandemic exposed unjust societal systems and spurred urgent racial and social movements. Amidst this backdrop, the moral, economic, and democratic imperatives for transforming the Commonwealth’s public higher education system to focus on the elimination of racial disparities are clear as is the need for swift action. The implementation of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity must be a constant focus of the BHE, DHE, individual institutions, and other external partners. Each entity has a specific role to play and collaboration between the entities will be critical.

The Strategic Plan for Racial Equity embodies significant work from a wide array of stakeholders. The effort is comprehensive, strategic, and deliberate. The time is long overdue to reform the Commonwealth’s public higher education system to reflect and embrace Students of Color in the ways outlined in this Plan. Additionally, achieving the goals outlined in this Plan will ensure that the Commonwealth’s higher education system remains competitive and meets the demands of the economy, workforce, and Massachusetts democratic institutions. More broadly, a successful Strategic Plan for Racial Equity will ensure that Massachusetts can claim its title as the “education state.”

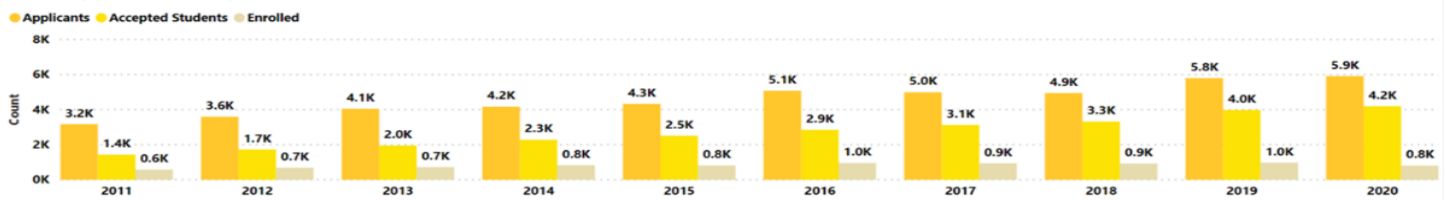


Appendix A: Commonwealth Higher Education Racial Equity Data

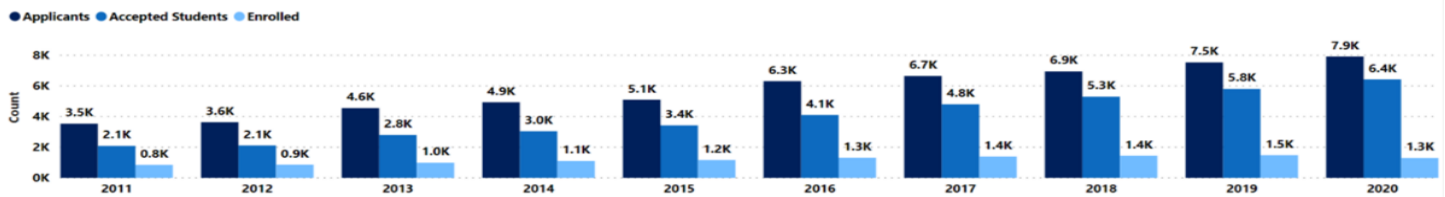
The following data are taken from the Department of Higher Education’s “Environmental Scan” of system-wide and institution-level racial equity-related data. The Environmental Scan focused on Black and Latinx students. Additional, similar studies will be completed for Asian American and Pacific Islander students and Indigenous students.

In the last 10 years, the state universities’ application rate for Black and Latinx students has increased significantly by 86 percent and 115 percent, respectively.

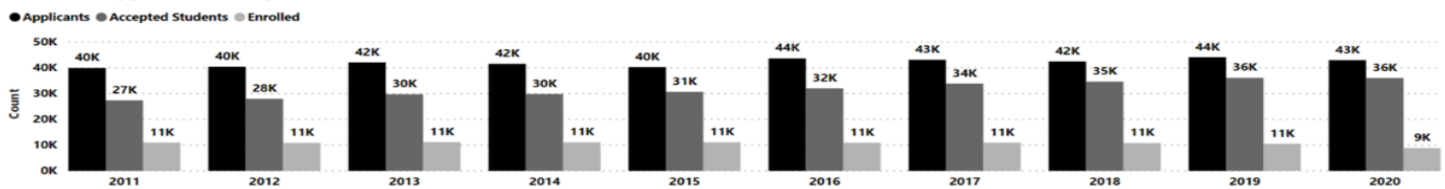
Black Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For State Universities



Latinx Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For State Universities



All Races Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For State Universities



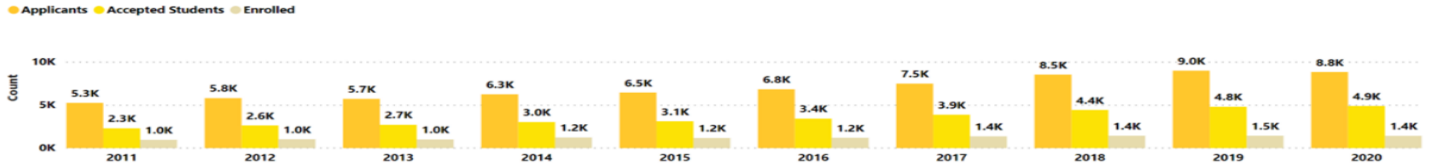
Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

*All Races = Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

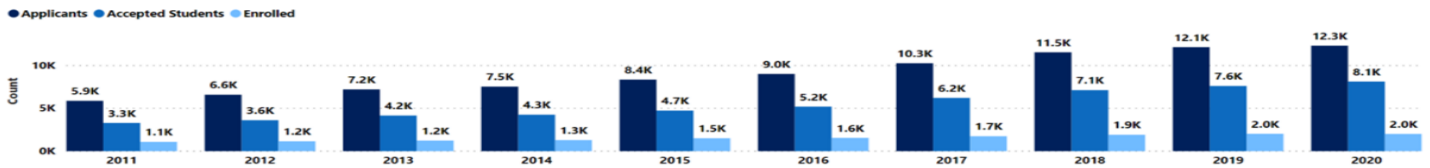
Appendix A: Commonwealth Higher Education Racial Equity Data

And in the last 10 years, the UMASS system's application rate for Black and Latinx students has increased significantly by 66 percent and 108 percent, respectively.

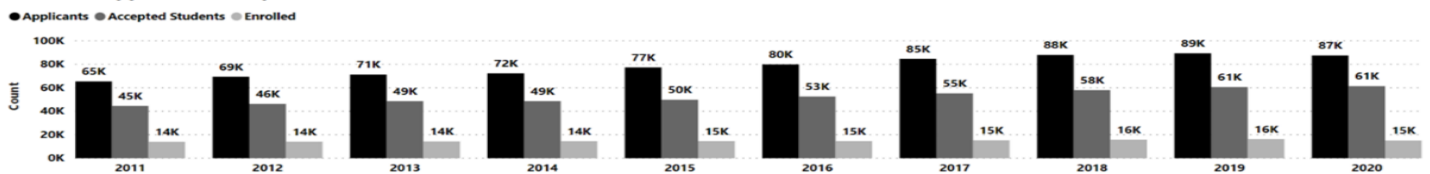
Black Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For UMASS Institutions



Latinx Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For UMASS Institutions



All Races Applicants, Accepted, and Enrolled For UMASS Institutions

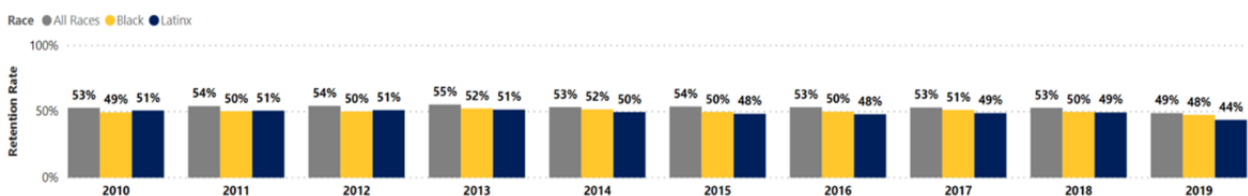


Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

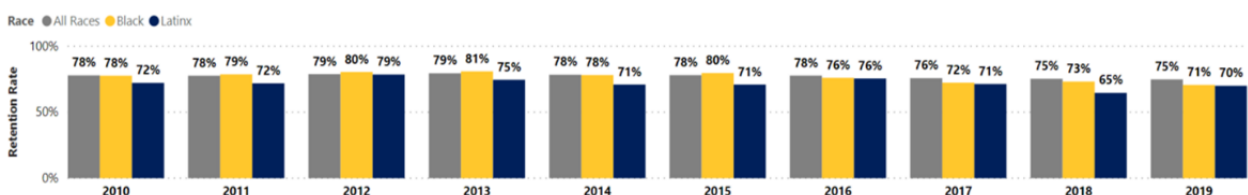
*All Races = Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

However, community colleges, state universities, and UMass retain Black and Latinx students after completing their first year of study at lower rates than the overall student population.

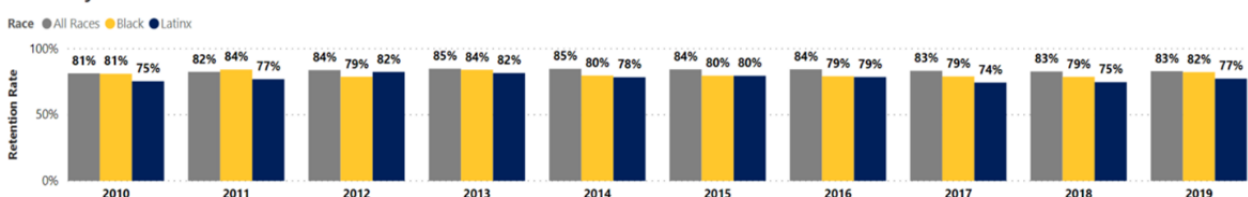
Massachusetts Community College Retention Rate After Year One



State Universities Retention Rate After Year One



University of Massachusetts Retention Rate After Year One



Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

*Includes Full-Time and Part-Time Students

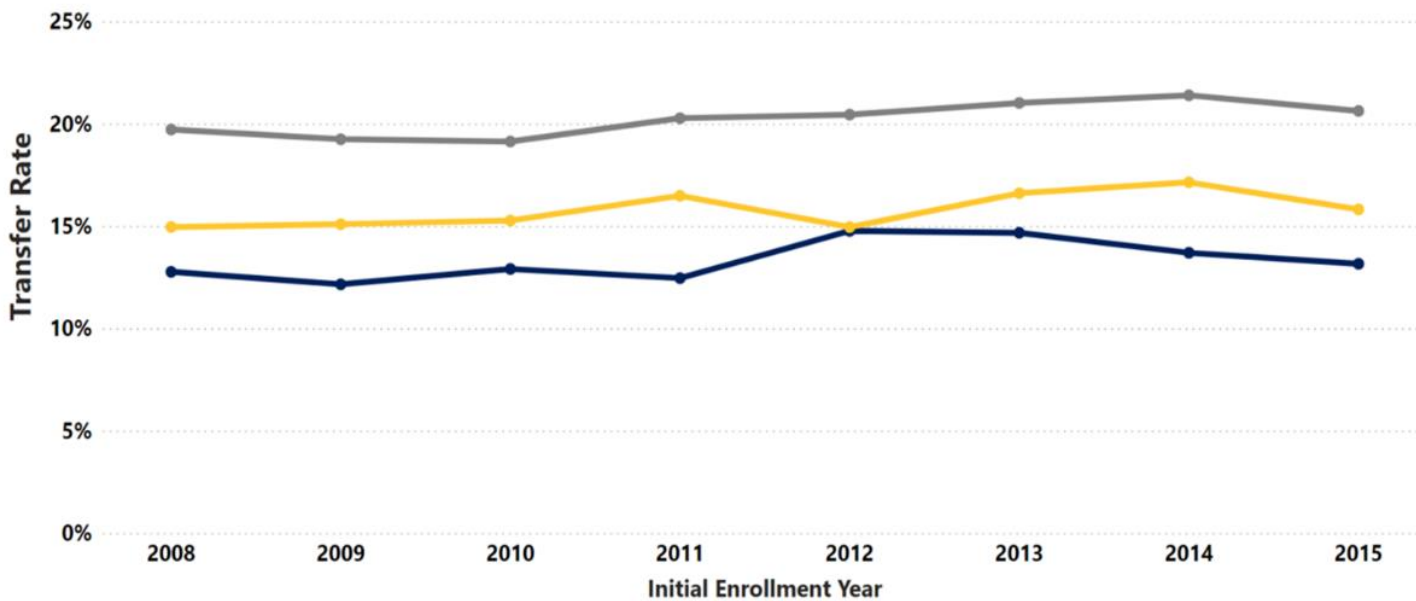
**All Races = Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

Appendix A: Commonwealth Higher Education Racial Equity Data

The system also transfers Black and Latinx students to state universities and UMASS institutions at lower rates compared to all students combined.

Massachusetts Community College Student Transfer Rates To State Universities or UMASS Institutions

Race ● Latinx ● Black ● All Races



Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

*Transfer Rate = CC Students that transfer before or after receiving associate degree / Total CC students enrolled

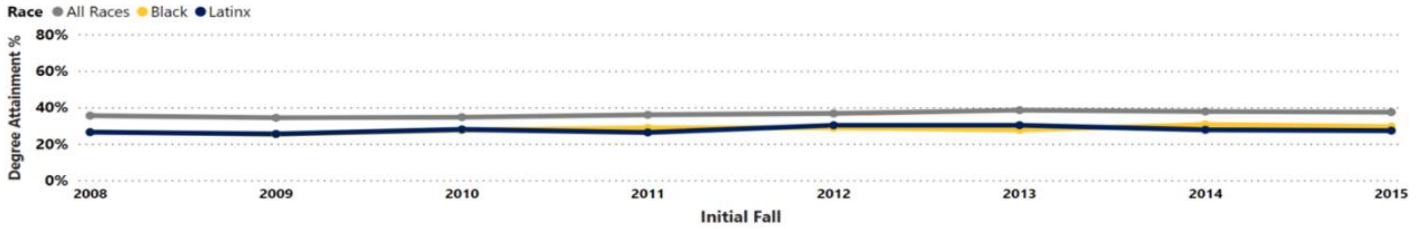
**Transfer only counted if within four years of initial entry to community college

*All Races = Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

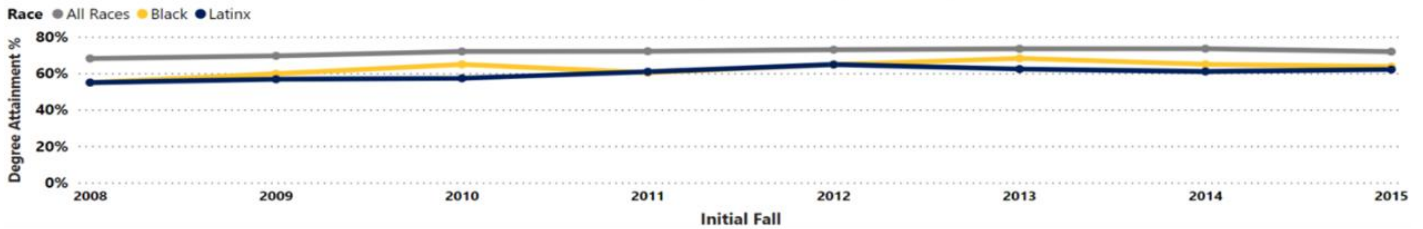
Appendix A: Commonwealth Higher Education Racial Equity Data

The system graduates Black and Latinx students who begin their undergraduate journey at Commonwealth public higher education institutions at lower rates than the overall student population.

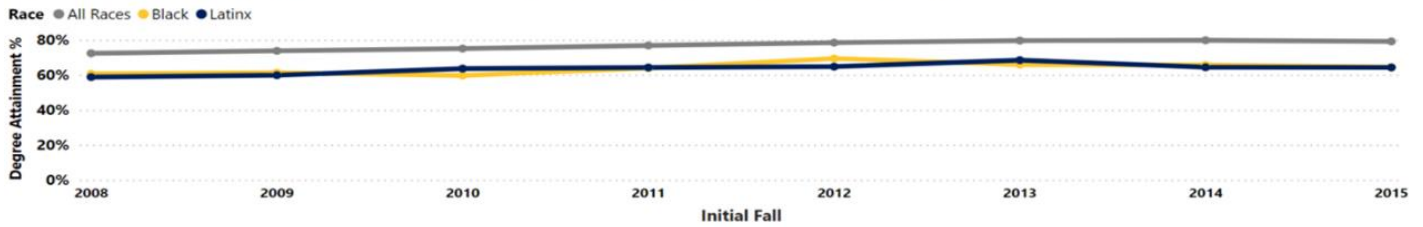
Community College Degree Attainment Rate Within Six Years For First-Time, Full-Time Degree Seeking Students



State University Degree Attainment Rate Within Six Years For First-Time, Full-Time Degree Seeking Students



UMASS Degree Attainment Rate Within Six Years For First-Time, Full-Time Degree Seeking Students



Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
 *Degree Attainment Rate refers to earning a degree anywhere within 6 years.
 Title indicates where student was initially enrolled.

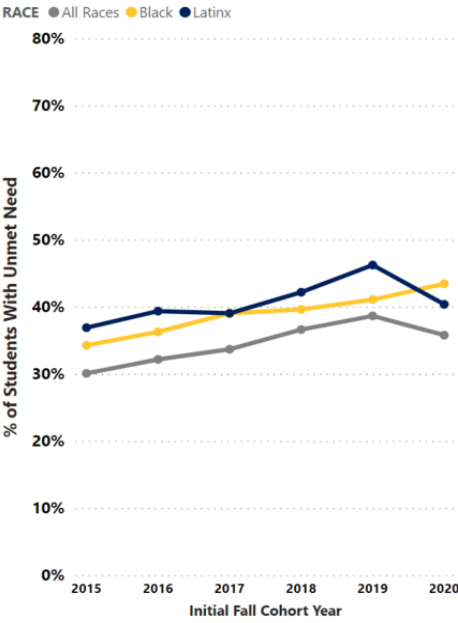
All Races: Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

Appendix A: Commonwealth Higher Education Racial Equity Data

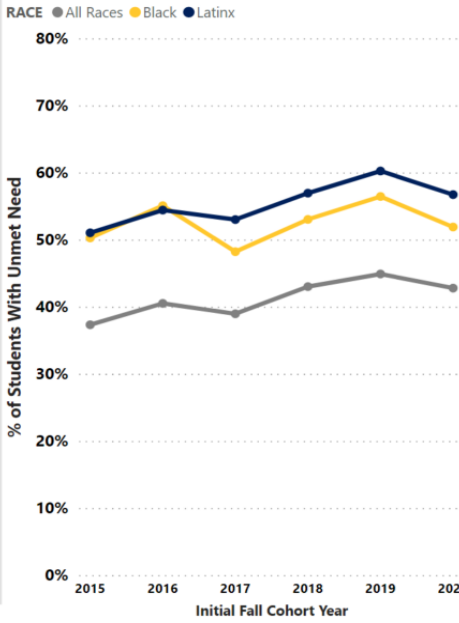
Additionally, Black and Latinx students have a higher percentage of unmet need for direct costs during their initial fall semester, impacting their persistence through their first year.

Percentage of Students With Unmet Need For Direct Costs During Initial Fall Semester

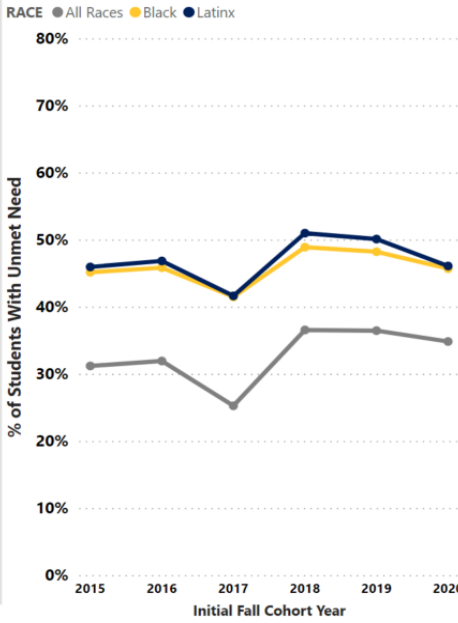
Community Colleges



State Universities



UMASS Institutions



*Only included students that completed FAFSA
 **Direct Costs = Tuition + Mandatory Fees + Books + Supplies

All Races = Asian, Black, Latinx, Native Alaskan, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Unknown, White

Appendix B: Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Steering Committee

Stephen Boyd, CEO, Boyd Technologies	Dr. Tia Brown McNair, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Student Success, American Association of Colleges and Universities
Dr. Suzanne Buglionne, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Bristol Community College	Dr. Darcy Orellana, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Middlesex Community College
Dr. Cherié Butts, Medical Director, Biogen	Dr. Lyssa Palu-ay, Dean, Office of Justice, Equity, and Transformation, Massachusetts College of Art and Design
Dr. Javier Cevallos, President, Framingham State University	Dr. Lee Pelton, President and CEO, Boston Foundation
JD Chesloff, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable	Dr. Khalilah Reddie, Professor, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Fred Clark, President, Bridgewater State University	Dr. Christina Royal, President, Holyoke Community College
Dr. Pam Eddinger, President, Bunker Hill Community College	Dr. David Silva, Provost and Academic Vice President, Salem State University
Patty Eppinger, Chair of Academic Affairs & Student Success Advisory Council, Board of Higher Education	Dr. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston
Jorgo Gushi, Student Advisory Council Chair, Quinsigamond Community College	Marquis Taylor, Founder, Coaching For Change
Dr. Vanessa Hill, Professor, Springfield Technical Community College	Dr. Ruby Vega, Professor, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Artie Kopellas, Student, Bridgewater State University	Bill Walczak, Chair of Strategic Planning Advisory Council, Board of Higher Education
Dr. Stacey Luster, General Counsel and Assistant to the President, Worcester State University	Dr. Nefertiti Walker, Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines

Each Detailed Goal outlined below includes a system-level, and in some cases a segment-level, target to be reached or surpassed by 2033. The targets will be established in collaboration with all postsecondary segments and the Board of Higher Education by fall 2022. The target setting process will involve an intensive review of the trends and predicted outcomes for each metric and a determination of an aspirational target in conjunction with the DHE Data Council. The targets will be grounded in forecasting using historical data from 2010-2021. The methodology and proposed targets will be vetted through the DHE Data Governance Steering Committee and the BHE’s Evidence Based Policy Making Advisory group.

The rates by racial/ethnic group present below for most of the goals serve as a baseline and reflect the most recently available outcome for each goal by racial/ethnic group reflect. The gap between the baseline rate and the to-be-determined target reflects the disparate levels of effort and investment needed to achieve the desired target for each population of Students of Color.

The first two goals noted below relate to focus on ultimate outcomes for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education:



Increase Students of Color’s *social and economic mobility* as measured against an accepted nation-wide measure of social and economic mobility (e.g., through the achievement of Carnegie Classification for Social and Economic Mobility distinctions to be released in 2023)



XX%

Increase *degree/certificate completion* for all Students of Color populations to XX% from:



- 62.0%

for AAPI students
- 39.2%

for Black students
- 38.2%


for Indigenous students
- 37.3%

for Latinx students
- 51.4%

for students of Two or More Races

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines

To achieve the above Goals, the below Goals focusing on Students of Color’s journey through the public higher education system will also be tracked.

XX%	Increase <i>enrollment</i> of Students of Color into the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX% of total enrollment:	
From 7.5% to X% for AAPI students		
From 12.1% to X% for Black students		
From 0.2% to X% for Indigenous students		
From 16.7% to X% for Latinx students		
From 3.5% to X% for students of Two or More Races		

The above system goal is based on the following segmental goals:

XX%	Community College Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% of total enrollment:
From 5.9% to X% for AAPI students	
From 15.1% to X% for Black students	
From 0.3% to X% for Indigenous students	
From 22.2% to X% for Latinx students	
From 3.4% to X% for students of Two or More Races	

XX%	State University Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% of total enrollment from:
From 3.4% to X% for AAPI students	
From 9.6% to X% for Black students	
From 0.2% to X% for Indigenous students	
From 13.4% to X% for Latinx students	
From 3.8% to X% for students of Two or More Races	

XX%	UMass Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% of total enrollment from:
From 12.0% to X% for AAPI students	
From 9.9% to X% for Black students	
From 0.1% to X% for Indigenous students	
From 12.2% to X% for Latinx students	
From 3.9% to X% for students of Two or More Races	

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines



Increase Students of Color's *sense of belonging* at their institutions



XX%

Increase *persistence* to a second year of postsecondary education for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX% from:



79.7%	for AAPI students
65.8%	for Black students
52.5%	for Indigenous students
62.7%	for Latinx students
70.3%	for students of Two or More Races

The above system goal is based on the following segmental goals:

XX%

Community College Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:

59.3%	for AAPI students
52.9%	for Black students
36.6%	for Indigenous students
49.3%	for Latinx students
48.8%	for students of Two or More Races

XX%

State University Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:


81.6%	for AAPI students
72.6%	for Black students
81.8%	for Indigenous students
72.1%	for Latinx students
80.3%	for students of Two or More Races

XX%

UMass Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:

88.1%	for AAPI students
79.7%	for Black students
100%	for Indigenous students*
79.6%	for Latinx students
84.5%	for students of Two or More Races

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines

XX% Increase *timely completion of gateway courses* for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system to XX% from: 

- 42.0%** for AAPI students
- 24.0%** for Black students
- 24.0%** for Indigenous students
- 23.0%** for Latinx students
- 35.0%** for students of Two or More Races

The above system goal is based on the following segmental goals:

XX% **Community College Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:**

- 37.0%** for AAPI students
- 18.0%** for Black students
- 12.0%** for Indigenous students
- 18.0%** for Latinx students
- 23.0%** for students of Two or More Races

XX% **State University Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:**

- 60.0%** for AAPI students
- 44.0%** for Black students
- 63.0%** for Indigenous students*
- 40.0%** for Latinx students
- 58.0%** for students of Two or More Races

* = Fewer than 10 students are part of this cohort

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines

XX%	Increase <i>on-time credit accumulation</i> for all Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system by XX% from:	
------------	--	---

45.7%	for AAPI students
29.0%	for Black students
40.6%	for Indigenous students
28.7%	for Latinx students
40.5%	for students of Two or More Races

The above system goal will be based on the following segmental goals:

XX%	Community College Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:
------------	---

36.6%	for AAPI students
22.1%	for Black students
22.7%	for Indigenous students
21.4%	for Latinx students
28.5%	for students of Two or More Races

XX%	State University Goal – all Students of Color populations to XX% from:
------------	--

69.4%	for AAPI students
46.7%	for Black students
80.0%	for Indigenous students
50.1%	for Latinx students
60.4%	for students of Two or More Races

Appendix C: Segment-Level Targets and Goal Baselines

XX% Increase *transfer rates* from community colleges to universities for Students of Color in the Massachusetts public higher education system by XX% from: 

30.8%	for AAPI students
20.1%	for Black students
16.1%	for Indigenous students
16.8%	for Latinx students
22.7%	for students of Two or More Races

XX% Increase *degree completion rates after transfer* for Students of Color from community colleges to universities by XX% from: 

63.0%	for AAPI students
49.2%	for Black students
54.6%	for Indigenous students
55.5%	for Latinx students
54.9%	for students of Two or More Races

Appendix D: Glossary Of Terms

Anti-Racist: Antiracism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

Assets-Based Approach: An approach grounded in recognition of the talents, strengths, and experiences that Students of Color bring with them to their college environment. Students of Color’s cultural wealth and assets can be categorized by aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital.

Civic Engagement: A High Impact Practice involving students working collaboratively with others to solve public problems or working toward the common good. Civic engagement opportunities are often embedded in courses.

Core Curriculum: A student-centered approach to curriculum that is learning outcomes-driven rather than content-driven.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): A program designed to provide college credit to students for life experience including workplace training, military service, and volunteering.

Cultural Wealth: An array of knowledges, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and used by communities of color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression.

Culturally Responsive/ Culturally Sustaining: “Culturally sustainable” or “culturally responsive” pedagogies means recognizing, maintaining, and developing cultural identity and diversity, as they are assets, not weaknesses, and employing pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning.

Deficit-Based Approach: A model which attributes failures such as lack of achievement, learning, or success to a personal lack of effort or deficiency in the individual, rather than to failures or limitations of the education and training system or to prevalent socio-economic trends.

Developmental Education: Non-credit bearing remedial courses that are designed to develop the reading, writing, or math skills of students who are deemed underprepared for college-level courses.

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, prior knowledge, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

Appendix D: Glossary Of Terms

Dual Admissions: Dual Admissions enables a community college student who plans to complete a baccalaureate degree to be simultaneously admitted to a four-year college while earning an associate degree. Admission to the four-year institution is guaranteed as long as certain requirements (e.g., time, credit, grade point average) are met.

Dual Enrollment: The Massachusetts Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership provides opportunities for Massachusetts high school students to take college-level courses for free or at a discounted price and earn credit toward high school completion and their future college degrees.

Equity: The creation of opportunities for underserved and racially minoritized populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

Experiential Learning: Engaged learning processes whereby students “learn by doing” and reflecting on the experience. Experiential learning activities can include, but are not limited to, civic engagement, internships, practicums, field exercises, study abroad, undergraduate research, and studio performances.

Gateway Courses: The first credit-bearing college-level courses in a program of study. These courses generally apply to the requirements of a degree program and may also be called introductory courses or prerequisites. Typically, every student majoring in each discipline must pass through the gateway courses.

High-Impact Practices: Teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students from many demographic groups. These practices take various forms depending on learner characteristics.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Intersectionality: The theory that discrimination based on race and gender works interdependently and can also exacerbate other forms of social oppression centered on class, disability, sexuality, and other forms of identity.

Invisible Labor: Efforts essential to the success of the students, but unrecognized by the institution.

Appendix D: Glossary Of Terms

Nontraditional Students: Students who have been out of high school for at least three years.

Open Educational Resources (OER): OERs are teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA): The PLA gives Essex and Middlesex County residents the chance to earn college credit for prior learning and work experience by credentialing skills attained outside of the traditional classroom.

Racially-Just Higher Education: In a racially-just higher education system, Students of Color and their White classmates deeply engage a wide range of racial viewpoints in the curriculum, not just Eurocentric content. They benefit educationally from the wide array of cultural perspectives each of them brings to college; they learn how to talk to each other, despite and because of their racial differences; and they are fully prepared for citizenship in a racially diverse democracy after college. Students learn how to analyze, talk about and strategically disrupt racial inequities that await them in their post-college careers. No student has just one Latinx, Pacific Islander, Black, Native American, multiracial or Asian American professor. In fact, most have so many that they easily lose count. Racial stratification is no longer an indefensible, ordinary feature of the postsecondary workplace. Large numbers of people of color work not only in food service, landscaping, custodial and secretarial roles; they also comprise significant shares of employees in positions located at the power epicenter: presidents, provosts and other vice presidents, deans, department chairs, and tenured faculty members. Any postsecondary institution that looks, functions and behaves differently than this is an outlier that is ridiculed by the rest of higher education.

Social Justice: A communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are valued and affirmed. It encompasses efforts to end systemic violence and racism and all systems that devalue the dignity and humanity of any person. It recognizes that the legacy of past injustices remains all around us, so therefore promotes efforts to empower individual and communal action in support of restorative justice and the full implementation of human and civil rights. Social justice imperatives also push us to create a civic space defined by universal education and reason and dedicated to increasing democratic participation.

Appendix D: Glossary Of Terms

Strength-Based Model: Strengths-based education is a learner-centered approach that helps students identify, articulate, and apply individual skills relevant to their learning needs. Principles of strengths-based education include helping students identify their own strengths building student's strengths through deliberate practice and engagement and provide mentorship opportunities or create cohort-based class collaboratives that provides peer support and feedback.

Student-Ready College: A college where services and activities are intentionally designed to facilitate students' advancement toward college completion and positive post-college outcomes. Student-ready colleges strategically and holistically advance student success and educates all students for civic and economic participation in a global, interconnected society. They are committed to student achievement, organizational learning, and institutional improvement.



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