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Richard M. Freeland, *Commissioner*
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Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Launches Search for New Commissioner

Seeks “Creative, Collaborative, Tested Leader” for Public Higher Education System

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BOSTON – Wednesday, February 18, 2015 – The search for a new Commissioner of Higher Education to succeed Richard M. Freeland has officially begun with the posting of a detailed position profile and a call for nominations and expressions of interest. Potential candidates are asked to submit their qualifications to “strengthen the impact, accessibility, and quality of higher education in Massachusetts,” the Board of Higher Education (BHE) announced today. The profile is posted on the Commissioner Search website and may be viewed here: www.mass.edu/about/commsearchprofile.asp

“The Commissioner's overarching challenge is to carry out statutory authority, provide strategic vision, expert theoretical and practical knowledge, principled leadership and effective direction in an environment that is rapidly shifting and largely decentralized,” the profile reads, noting higher education's increasingly important role as an engine for workforce development and contributor to the economic wellbeing of the Commonwealth. The document also notes the opportunity for “innovative leadership” to achieve system-wide improvements in both performance and funding.

“Given the Board's strategic focus through the [Vision Project](#) on accountability, efficiency and quality, this search presents an opportunity for us to build on recent progress to establish a top-tier system of public higher education in Massachusetts,” said Dani Monroe, chair of the Search Committee and member of the Board of Higher Education. “We know that the Commonwealth needs our system to produce greater numbers of highly qualified graduates; we believe our next Commissioner should be fully focused on ways to help more students earn the degrees and certificates needed to secure jobs and lead fulfilling lives.”

“Massachusetts has benefitted greatly from the leadership of our current Commissioner Richard Freeland, and we seek to expand upon his legacy of achievement,” said Charles

F. Desmond, Ed.D., Chairman of the Board of Higher Education. "Going forward, we will need a leader who is both a passionate advocate of public higher education's mission and a careful steward of limited state resources."

The Commissioner leads a staff of 70 at the Department of Higher Education and oversees an annual budget of approximately \$147 million, including \$92 million for financial aid programs. He or she is appointed by the Board of Higher Education with the approval of the Massachusetts Secretary of Education and works closely with leaders of the Commonwealth's 29 public college and universities, and with leaders of the state's 88 private, non-for-profit institutions of higher learning.

Massachusetts' 15 community colleges, nine state universities and five campuses of the University of Massachusetts now educate 70 percent of the Massachusetts high school graduates who attend college in state, as well as the majority of military veterans, adults returning to finish degrees or receive job training, and students from underrepresented communities.

Freeland has served as Commissioner of Higher Education for five and a half years. He announced his intention to step down in October 2014, and plans to remain in the position until a new Commissioner is named.

A schedule of upcoming Search Committee meetings, as well as a list of Search Committee members, can be found at <http://www.mass.edu/about/commsearch.asp>. All inquiries, nominations and applications with cover letters should be submitted electronically to Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm retained by the Board of Higher Education, at <http://www.imsearch.com/searches/details/content/S5-346>.

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