

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:**      Assessment and Accountability                      **NO.:**      AAC 08-19  
**COMMITTEE DATE:**      June 13, 2008  
**BOARD DATE:**      June 25, 2008

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

**MOVED:**                      The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the  
Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and renews the  
membership of Bristol Community College in the Commonwealth  
Honors Program for six years, effective June 25, 2008.

**Authority:**                      Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as  
Revised by the Board of Higher Education in November 2006.

**Contact:**                      Francesca B. Purcell, Ph.D., Director for Academic Policy

# BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 2008

Bristol Community College

## Renewal of Membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program

### **Background**

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

### **Review Process**

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

1. Alignment of the mission and goals of the Honors Program with those of Bristol Community College
2. Organization and administration
3. Admissions criteria
4. Transfer criteria
5. Program curriculum
6. Graduation criteria
7. Program resources
8. Approval procedures for new courses
9. Student enrollment for past three years
10. Approval procedures for new courses

### *Review Team Findings and Recommendations*

On April 7, 2008, a review team (Kim Hicks, Ph.D., English Department Professor and Honors Program Coordinator, Holyoke Community College; Meredith Feltus, Director of Outreach and External Programs, Commonwealth College, University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Ricki E. Kantrowitz, Ph.D., Psychology Professor and Honors Program Chair, Westfield State College) appointed by the Commonwealth Honors Council, conducted the six-year review. Prior to the on-campus visit, the team reviewed the self-evaluation prepared by the College.

On the basis of the campus visit, the review of the self-evaluation, and the materials received during the on-campus visit, the team concluded that Bristol Community College Honors Program has developed and maintained the curriculum, resources, and administrative support integral for a Commonwealth Honors Program. The team was impressed with the

administrative support given to the honors program, the enthusiasm from both faculty and students involved in the program, and the commitment on the part of the President and Chief Academic Officer to enhance this program. The review team recommended to the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee that it renew the membership of Bristol Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program.

The recommendations—largely focused on improving and growing the Honors Program— included creating assessment tools, providing more social and academic opportunities for students, and increasing faculty and administration resources. Specifically, the review team recommended the creation of a list of guidelines for what constitutes an Honors course and of an effective assessment tool that would help faculty fulfill their responsibilities and students evaluate their own experiences. The review team also recommended that on-site seminars and the development of a grant fund for students interested in attending conferences be developed.

### *Institutional Response*

In its response, Bristol Community College noted that the College had developed the Outcomes Assessment Team for Student Success (OATSS) – a College-wide committee that is working on the development of a learning outcomes assessment plan. The Commonwealth Honors Program Director is a part of OATSS and will work with this team and the CHP Advisory Board to effectively draft assessment tools that address the needs of the Commonwealth Honors Program. The Vice President for Resource Development has invited the Commonwealth Honors Program to submit a grant request to the College’s Foundation to support student research opportunities. The College also responded that there will be discussion with the CHP Advisory Board and the CHP Director on the duties relative to reassigned time and possible distribution of CHP assignments to either the Director or other faculty who can provide support to the CHP.

Bristol Community College will provide a status report on its response at the spring 2009 Commonwealth Honors Council meeting.

### **Recommendation**

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