

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs

NO.: AAC 17-24

COMMITTEE DATE: June 13, 2017

BOARD DATE: June 20, 2017

**RENEWAL OF MIDDLESEX 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 **Middlesex Community College** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program** for six years, effective June 20, 2017.

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

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

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

June 2017

Middlesex Community College Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

BACKGROUND

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

REVIEW PROCESS

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

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

REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On February 28, 2017, the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) Review Committee conducted a day-long assessment of the Honor's program at Middlesex Community College (MCC). The Committee consisted of Professor Susan McPherson, Honors Program Coordinator at Quinsigamond Community College; Professor Lori Lavigne, Honors Program Assistant Director at Framingham State University; and Dean James Canning, Honors College at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The visit was hosted by Honors Program Director, David Kalivas, and included meetings with his immediate supervisor, Provost Phil Sisson, Donna Colella, CHP Administrative Assistant, students, alumni, faculty and Honors Advisory Committee members.

The Review Team recommends the re-approval of the CHP status for MCC's Honors Program. The Team was impressed with the level of investment and knowledge of faculty, students and

administrators, particularly David Kalivas, whose energy and enthusiasm has helped drive the enormous growth of the program.

Recommendations from the visiting committee included the following:

1. Continue to offer nine credits each semester of reassigned time to the Honors Director, as well as a stipend, to continue the remarkable work the Honors Program has produced;
2. Allow membership in the Honors Program to begin at entrance into ENG 101, rather than after completion of the course;
3. Offer a STEM-related honors course;
4. Reduce the number of students in the writing intensive honors dedicated courses;
5. Award scholarships to not only graduating MCC/CHP students, but also to entering and/or returning students;
6. Provide more consistent dedicated classroom space on the Lowell campus.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

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

1. The College will continue to support the Honors Director but made no mention of the suggested stipend;
2. Professor Kalivas will submit a proposal to allow membership in the Honors Program to begin upon entrance into ENG 101;
3. The Honors Program is in the planning stages of developing a STEM honors track.
4. The College will take the recommendation to reduce the number of students in writing intensive honors courses under advisement with its Honors Advisory Committee.
5. MCC already provides scholarships to both returning and graduating students, but they will give consideration to expanding scholarship opportunities for incoming honors students based on availability of funds.
6. Current honors seminars will continue to use the Courtroom in the Lowell Federal Building, which the College says works well and is the optimal solution at the present time.

RECOMMENDATION

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