

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
December 5, 2008

A special meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held in Conference Room 1 on the 21st floor at One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts. The following members were present:

Frederick W. Clark, Jr., Chairman
Peter Alcock, Vice Chairman
Dr. Mary-Elizabeth Beach
Dr. Mario Borunda
Jeanne-Marie Boylan
James Coyle

Dr. Charles Desmond
C. Bernard Fulp
Dr. Nancy Hoffman
Kathryn Quigley
Henry Thomas, III

Absent: Dr. Nancy Harrington

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Frederick W. Clark, Jr., Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:27 p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Clark stated that Board member, Dr. Nancy Harrington, would not be attending today's Board meeting due to an illness of a family member. He also informed the Board that former Senate President Kevin Harrington had recently passed away. He characterized Mr. Harrington as being a champion of higher education in the Commonwealth. Included among his activities was the authorship of the Willis-Harrington Report of the mid-1960s, which included 100 recommendations to reform higher education. Mr. Harrington was also credited with the growth and expansion of Salem State College and will be remembered for his many contributions to public higher education in the Commonwealth. Condolences were extended to all of his family, especially Dr. Nancy Harrington.

Chairman Clark welcomed new Board member, Dr. Nancy Hoffman, a Vice President at Jobs for the Future, where she oversees activities and efforts to broaden opportunities for students to attend college. Her background includes employment at Brown University, Temple University, Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of Massachusetts Boston. Dr. Hoffman, a long-time supporter of public higher education, told the Board that she hopes that her many years of experience will be helpful to the Board.

Chairman Clark reported that Dr. Charles Desmond was en route from Washington, D.C., and was expected to arrive at the Board meeting later.

MOTION

Chairman Clark welcomed Dr. Richard M. Freeland and thanked the Commissioner Search Committee members for their work and recommendation of Dr. Freeland as Commissioner of Higher Education.

Dr. Freeland thanked Board members for the opportunity to appear before them today. He also thanked Dr. Judith Gill, who nominated him for the position of Commissioner. He said that he was present today for the sole reason of telling the Board that he wants to be the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Over a period of 1 ½ hours, Board members asked Dr. Freeland a series of questions:

Topic 1: Interest in Job & Personal Goals.

Open Question (OQ): Take a few minutes to tell us about why you are interested in becoming the Commissioner of Higher Education?

Probe: Which personal strengths do you feel have been most valuable in your work in higher education?

Topic 2: View of Higher Education & Commissioner role.

OQ: What do you believe is the mission of (public) higher education in Massachusetts?

OQ: What are the key challenges facing higher education here and elsewhere in the next few years?

OQ: How can a Commissioner impact the success of Higher Education?

OQ: If you became Commissioner, what would be on your agenda for the first six months?

OQ: Describe your experience promoting diversity and expanding access to higher education.

Topic 3: Working with the Institutions & Leadership style.

OQ: What, in your view, is the key to fostering a successful college or university?

OQ: How would you describe your management style?

Probe: What are your most notable skills?

OQ: How would you approach working with a board?

Probe: What is the key to an effective working relationship?

OQ: What kind of relationship should a commissioner have with students at the colleges and universities?

Probe: How would you connect and communicate with students?

Topic 4: Advocacy & External Relationships.

OQ: As commissioner, how would you go about establishing better relationships with the legislature and the Governor of the Commonwealth?

OQ: How do you see the role of higher education as it relates to the state's economic development?

Probe: How might the commissioner build a closer and better relationship between higher education and the state's business community?

Topic 5: Workforce & Fiscal issues

OQ: How would you go about increasing commitment to employment diversity and affirmative action across a system?

OQ: What are the specific challenges of working in a collective bargaining environment setting?

Probe: How have you handled past challenges?

Probe: Outcomes?

OQ: Public higher education is often asked to do more with the same or less funding. How can we best handle this pressure?

OQ: Describe your experience with finance, including overseeing capital expenditures.

Probe: Can you give us an example of where you developed an external funding source?

Probe: Example of a cost-saving initiative?

Final Topic: Wrap-Up

OQ: Any final statement or comments.

OQ: What questions do you have for us?

At 2:25 p.m. Dr. Charles Desmond joined the meeting.

Before the Board convened in Executive Session, Chairman Clark recognized the following in the audience: Aundrea Kelley, Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education; Dr. Patricia Plummer, former Commissioner and Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education, and currently a Senior Advisor in the Office of the President of the University of Massachusetts; Dr. Judith Gill, former Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education, and currently a Commonwealth Professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston; Dr. Robert Antonucci, President of Fitchburg State College, and Chair of the State College Council of Presidents; Dr. Charles Wall, President of Massasoit Community College, and Chair of the Executive Committee of Community College Presidents; Dr. Patricia Meservey, President of Salem State College; and, Dr. Terrence Gomes, President of Roxbury Community College.

Chairman Clark thanked Dr. Freeland for his responses to the many questions during the interview and for his advocacy of public higher education. He explained that the Board would be voting on the recommendation of the Commissioner Search Committee. If passed, the nomination of Dr. Freeland would be sent to Secretary Paul Reville for his approval. Terms and conditions of Dr. Freeland's contract would be resolved by the Executive Committee.

In closing, Dr. Freeland reiterated his desire to serve the Commonwealth as Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education.

Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Sections 1 and 2 of the Massachusetts General Laws, a roll call vote was taken, and the Board entered into Executive Session at 2:57 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the character and reputation of Dr. Richard M. Freeland.

At 3:31 p.m., the Board reconvened in open session. Chairman Clark reported that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

The following motion was brought forth by Chairman Clark, seconded and approved unanimously.

BHE 09-01 RECOMMENDATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF DR. RICHARD M. FREELAND AS COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MOVED: That the Board of Higher Education submit to the Secretary of Education the recommendation that Dr. Richard M. Freeland be appointed Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education.

That the Board of Higher Education authorizes the Executive Committee of said Board to negotiate an agreement regarding the terms, conditions, and effective date of employment of said Commissioner subject to ratification of said terms, conditions and effective date by the Board of Higher Education at its next regular meeting or special meeting.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6
Contact: Peter H. Tsaffaras, Deputy Commissioner for Employee Relations

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.