

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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September 16, 2013

9 a.m.

### **ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT**

Harvard Graduate School of Education  
6 Appian Way  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

#### **Minutes**

A special meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held at The Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The following Board members were present:

Charles F. Desmond, Chair  
Louis Ricciardi, Vice Chair  
David Barron  
C. Bernard Fulp  
Nancy Hoffman  
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education and his designee Saeyun Lee  
Kathy Matson  
Dani Monroe  
Keith Peden  
Fernando Reimers  
Henry Thomas  
Paul Toner

The following Board member was absent:

Tina Sbrega

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Charles Desmond called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. and invited Secretary of Education Matthew Malone to offer remarks.

#### **II. OPENING THOUGHTS**

Dr. Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education

Secretary Malone explained the three strategic education goals over the remaining sixteen months of the Patrick administration: closing achievement gaps, increasing pathways to college and career, and ensuring reading proficiency by third grade. In the work towards achieving these goals, he added, the true alignment between Massachusetts' Departments of Early Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education is a national model.

Secretary Malone has made it a priority to visit Massachusetts public higher education institutions. He praised the good work he had seen during his visits at institutions such

as Worcester State University, Quinsigamond Community College, and Bridgewater State University.

### III. OVERVIEW OF THE DAY

Richard Freeland, Commissioner

Commissioner Freeland provided an overview of the discussion items for the day year. He noted that no votes are on the agenda, as the main purpose of the retreat is strategic planning.

### IV. PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Roundtable discussion

List of Documents Submitted:

*Commissioner's Recommended Priorities for Board and Department of Higher Education Work, 2013-14*

Commissioner Freeland recommended seven priorities for the 2013-2014 year, plus three additional areas of focus:

**Priority One:** Regain momentum on all aspects of Vision Project work.

**Priority Two:** Initiate next phase of Vision Project: The Role of Strategic Planning.

**Priority Three:** Advance collaboration and efficiency initiatives, especially Berry Dunn recommendations on IT Savings.

**Priority Four:** Institutionalize governance changes of 2012-13.

**Priority Five:** Resolve pending issues related to DHE's regulatory role.

**Priority Six:** Continue strengthening of DHE organization.

**Priority Seven:** Enhance DHE's advocacy role by promoting greater visibility/understanding of system achievements and system needs and strengthening communication with campuses.

#### Other Issues

On Line Learning

A Budget Formula for State Universities

Higher Education Finance Commissioner

The Board's discussion centered on five questions related to these priorities.

Fernando Reimers led discussion on a question related to Priority 2: Do we initiate a system-wide strategic planning initiative to identify measures needed to close the gap in postsecondary graduates? There was general agreement that the Board should initiate an effort to identify an appropriate target number of graduates from public higher education over the next five years together with an enrollment goal for the system and its individual campuses linked to that target. These projections would need to reflect a number of considerations, including but not limited to student demand, workforce need and campus plans. The task of setting these targets was seen as a first step in a broader discussion that would eventually need to project system-wide requirements with respect to facilities and resources while reflecting expectations with respect to completion rates and relevant policy and program initiatives at both campus and system levels. In initiating this effort the Commissioner will ask campuses to submit statements of their current projections regarding enrollments and completion rates together with programmatic plans that could influence these outcomes.

Nancy Hoffman led discussion on a question related to Priority 1: Do we undertake an initiative in Adult Education, especially credit for prior learning, as part of the Vision Project? There was an extended discussion of the appropriateness of a system-wide initiative to enroll adults who have some credit towards a college degree but have not completed a degree. In the end there was agreement that, while this is an important topic, it would be premature for the BHE to undertake a major initiative along these lines pending the outcome of the discussion of graduate and enrollment targets in connection with system level strategic planning. It was agreed, however, that in asking the campuses to submit statements regarding the current status of strategic planning, the Commissioner would ask for specific information on efforts currently under way or projected to enroll these adults. It was also suggested that some additional research on this topic might be initiated by the BHE with the assistance of external assistance and support.

Lou Ricciardi led discussion on a question related to Priority 2: Do we activate the BHE/DHE statutory role in campus-level strategic planning? There was general agreement that the BHE should enact its statutory role to review and approve campus-level strategic plans. The details of how the Board might do this were not discussed extensively but there was agreement that there need to be discussions between the DHE and the campuses pointed toward establishing a common understanding of strategic planning and the essential elements of a strategic plan. It was also suggested that the DHE should make professional assistance available to the campuses to support local planning efforts if funding permits. Finally it was agreed that an essential first step in determining how to move forward would be for the Commissioner to request statements from the presidents regarding the current status of strategic planning on their campuses (together with copies of current strategic plans). These submissions should also summarize the ways in which existing strategic plans reflect Vision Project goals.

Bernie Fulp led discussion on a question related to Priority 3: Should the BHE formally endorse the Berry Dunn report on greater savings through campus collaboration, and call for its implementation? The Board discussed the work of PACE (Partnership to Advance Collaboration and Efficiency), with a specific focus on the Berry Dunn report on current patterns of expenditure in the area of IT that was commissioned last year through a collaboration of PACE and the DHE. It was agreed that the BHE's Financial and Administrative Affairs Committee (FAAP) would review this report at its October meeting with a view towards bringing a recommendation to endorse the report to the full board.

Chair Desmond led discussion on a question related to Priority 4 regarding igovernance changes initiated through the FY13 budget. There was general agreement on the importance of moving forward to institutionalize the governance changes initiated within DHE as a result of legislative mandates in the FY13 budget. It was agreed that this work, including the work of the Office of Trustee Relations (OTR), was important and needed to continue. In connection with the plans of the OTR to provide campus boards with professional development activities in the area of self assessment, it was agreed that the BHE should also consider establishing an assessment program for itself.

Commissioner Freeland led discussion on a question related to one of the other priority issues identified in his *Recommended Priorities* document: Should the BHE/DHE recommend that a budget formula for the State Universities be developed as part of the

FY15 budget submission? There was general agreement that the BHE should pursue the idea of working with the State Universities to develop a funding formula analogous to the one developed last year for the Community Colleges. It was agreed that in undertaking this work we needed to avoid an approach that might so weaken struggling campuses as to put them into a kind of “death spiral.”

## **V. SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND NEXT STEPS**

Dani Monroe

Dani Monroe summarized key points of the morning’s conversation. Commissioner Freeland thanked Board Member Monroe and stated that he would follow up with a memorandum summarizing the key priorities identified by the BHE during today’s discussion.

## **VI. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES SURROUNDING ONLINE EDUCATION AND FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS**

David Barron, Colin Diver

David Barron began the discussion by summarizing the work of the BHE’s Task Force on For Profit Institution Oversight and Online Learning, noting that roughly 5,000 Massachusetts students are taking online courses from out-of-state institutions with no oversight of any kind by the Board of Higher Education, raising the fundamental question: what is the BHE’s regulatory function regarding online courses sponsored by outside institutions? A range of possible oversight alternatives exist. Jurisdictional oversight of online education is also impacted by the potential of a national reciprocity agreement with other states.

Board Member Barron raised a second question: what strategy should Massachusetts have regarding online education at its own public higher education institutions, and what role can the BHE play with respect to this strategy? Colin Diver, a consultant to the Task Force, followed with a presentation exploring this question further. He structured his discussion around three additional questions: Is there an unmet need for postsecondary education in Massachusetts that could be filled by online education? If there is such a need, to what extent should Massachusetts public higher education be involved in meeting it? If Massachusetts public higher education should be involved, to what extent should the BHE take a role in helping the public sector meet this need?

## **VII. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENTAL MATH**

Jeanne-Marie Boylan, Carlos Santiago

List of Documents Submitted:

*Draft Report from the Task Force on Transforming Developmental Math Education*

Jeanne-Marie Boylan provided the national context for Developmental Math reform, emphasizing that this issue was a national problem, not just a Massachusetts problem. She and Senior Deputy Commissioner Carlos Santiago reviewed the draft recommendations of the Task Force on Transforming Developmental Math Education, which include revising the policy that determines placement into developmental math, having students select a broad academic pathway early in their career and tying their math courses to the skills needed for that pathway, and focusing on improved approaches for students who do place into developmental math.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard M. Freeland, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of the Department and  
Secretary to the Board