

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2017**

The May 2, 2017 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee was held on the 21st floor, Conference Room 3, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Nancy Hoffman; Sheila Harrity; Fernando Reimers; EOE Designee Tom Moreau.

Committee Members Absent: Board Chair Chris Gabrieli; Robert Johnson; Henry Thomas; Student Board Member Jasson Alvarado Gomez.

Department Staff Present: Commissioner Carlos Santiago; Chief Strategy Officer David Cedrone, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success Patricia Marshall; Robert Awkward; Keith Connors; Winifred Hagan; Allison Little; Nate Mackinnon; Constantia Papanikolaou; Brendan Peltier; Elena Quiroz-Livanis; Angela Williams; Christine Williams; Ashley Wisneski; Franny Wood.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Hoffman called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the January 17, 2017 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously accepted.

III. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Hoffman welcomed those in attendance and asked individuals at the table to introduce themselves. Chair Hoffman then reviewed the agenda and informed the committee that, if all were in agreement, there would be no consent agenda and that the two program approval motions on the agenda would be handled separately. She indicated that, following program approvals, the committee would hear updates on the Early College Initiative and on Mass Transfer Pathways. She also let everyone know that the targeted meeting end time was 11:30 am. Chair Hoffman then turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Marshall for her remarks.

IV. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS' REMARKS

Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall began her remarks by saying the work for revising the program approval process was on track. At the request of the institutions, the DHE extended the public comment period on the revised program approval process for an additional week, until May 5. When the comment period ends, Dr. Marshall will analyze the responses and report her findings at the June committee meeting. Dr. Marshall informed the committee that the 6th annual Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment conference, held April 21,

2017, was very successful with over 100 attendees. The conference, titled “Advancing the Work of Assessment: Best Practices, Tools and Resources,” featured two nationally known speakers: Susan Albertine, from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and Natasha Jankowski, Director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Dr. Marshall praised Dr. Robert Awkward from DHE in his role as Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment. Dr. Marshall invited the committee to attend an upcoming conference, “Civic Learning in Context,” on May 22, 2017 at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute and stated that Nate MacKinnon would send an invitation to the conference to all Board members. She indicated that highlights of the conference would include an opening plenary address by Ed Augustus, City Manager of Worcester, and an afternoon keynote by Tim Eatman, co-director of Imagining America, a national organization supporting civic engagement in higher education. The cutting edge work being done in Massachusetts to promote civic learning and engagement will be highlighted in a presentation given at the annual SHEEO Policy Conference in August. Dr. Marshall also highlighted the work of the Veterans Affairs team which, once again, received the highest program rating for its work. She commended the Veterans Affairs unit not only for meeting all of its contractual requirements, but also for providing support to displaced students in the Commonwealth after the abrupt closure of ITT Tech. The Veterans Affairs team will hold an Annual Certifying Official Conference on June 8, 2017. Dr. Marshall concluded her remarks by announcing that we now have three operating *100 Males to College* programs in Springfield, Framingham, and Worcester and that another will soon launch in Bridgewater.

V. MOTIONS

List of documents used:

AAC Meeting PowerPoint, May 2, 2017

AAC Motions 17-15 through 17-16 new program motions and new institution approval

A. AAC 17-15

Middlesex Community College Associate in Science in Healthcare Administration

Associate Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Student Success Winnie Hagan presented the program. The proposed Health Care Administration (HCA) program is designed to meet workforce needs and build partnerships that will stimulate innovation and collaboration with industry partners. The proposed HCA program has been designed as a pathway for students and current healthcare employees to advance into management positions within a medical practice, healthcare facility, or health insurance company. It is expected that the program will prepare graduates for healthcare administration positions such as practice supervisor, medical office coordinator, or health services manager. The degree is also designed such that students can continue their education into a Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration program or a similar, related degree.

The external review team found the proposed HCA program to be timely, robust, and responsive to the critical need for qualified administrative medical professionals both in the region as well as nationally. The team noted the market need for those who can navigate both the business and the healthcare ends of the medical field to be even higher than the field’s need for practitioners, thus anticipating the proposed HCA program will have strong learning and career outcomes. The team commended Middlesex Community College (MCC) on the more than adequate support, space and resources it utilized to implement the program. In addition the

team made suggestions for curricular changes, which were incorporated into the application prior to submission. The Staff recommended approval of this program..

Committee Chair Hoffman asked if the school will pursue student applicants from within industry. Representatives from MCC replied that the program is intended to serve a diverse population including those from industry. They also stated that MCC intends to work closely with the area Workforce Investment Boards and Regional Employment Boards. Committee Member Fernando Reimers asked about the potential impact of the \$500 marketing budget. Representatives from MCC acknowledged the small marketing budget and clarified that the allocation was for advertising start-up costs. Committee Member Sheila Harrity praised MCC representatives for a well thought out program.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved unanimously:

AAC 17-15 APPLICATION OF THE MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Middlesex Community College** to award an **Associate in Science in Healthcare Administration**.

Upon graduating the first class for this program, Middlesex shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winnie M. Hagan, Ed. D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success

**B. AAC 17-16 Mount Wachusett Community College
Associate in Applied Science in Veterinary Technology**

Committee Chair introduced the next motion, AAC 17-16, and Committee Member Harrity stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote. Dr. Hagan presented the program saying it is well aligned with the Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) mission. The decision to educate and train veterinary technicians is aligned with the Access, Learning and Progress goals of the MWCC strategic plan. The program is expected to develop articulations with PK-12 partners and 4-year institutions, as well as provide the region's employers with trained veterinary technicians qualified to work in animal care. Once MWCC's Veterinary Technician Program is certified by the American Veterinary Medical Association, it is expected that graduates will sit for the Veterinary Technician National Exam. Students who pass the exam will be credentialed as veterinary technicians.

The proposed program was externally reviewed and the team found substantial documentation that the program meets an area of significant public need in Massachusetts. They also found an appropriate design of the program and a balance between general and major requirements, with clear learning objectives. The reviewers advised that strengthening the relationship between the program and experiential learning sites would be important to students developing competency

in the essential skills required for accreditation. MWCC acknowledged the critical importance of professional relationships with externship sites. Proposed program leaders agreed to engage in regular communication with sites; to include personnel from the sites on the Advisory Board; and to jointly create an assessment rubric for grading student performance.

Committee Member Reimers inquired about the expectation for graduates and program overlap. Representatives from MWCC replied that the program offers a continuum of study with a focus on greater levels of degree attainment which would mitigate any program overlap. MWCC representatives also stated that external partners (veterinarians) welcome highly-skilled veterinary technicians. Committee Member Reimers then asked who the graduates would serve – would they have the skills to assist with farm animals, just small pets, etc? Representatives from MWCC answered that the technicians would be skilled to assist in all those areas and also in labs. They also stated that the need for labs is growing and that many students who live in northern and central Massachusetts are interested in working with farmers.

Chair Hoffman highlighted the special relationship that the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University has with Worcester Technical High School. This program provides an amazing experience to both high school students and Tufts students, while the Worcester community receives quality pet care for free or reduced rates. Chair Hoffman suggested that MWCC should consider creating a similar relationship with the local technical high school.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved by all committee members present, with the exception of Committee Member Harrity who abstained:

AAC 17-16 APPLICATION OF THE MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR AN ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE IN VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of **Mount Wachusett Community College** to award an **Associate in Applied Science in Veterinary Technology**

Upon graduating the first class for this program, Mount Wachusett Community College shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §9(b).

Contact: Winnie M. Hagan, Ed. D. Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Early College Initiative Update

After brief remarks from Chair Hoffman, Commissioner Carlos Santiago, Deputy Commissioner Marshall, and Christine Williams, Director of Strategic Initiatives, provided an update on the work of the Early College Joint Committee. The presentation recounted the committee's charge of "designing, developing and coordinating the administration of a Massachusetts Early College program." Ms. Williams outlined the committee's agreed-upon key design principals of 1)

equitable access, 2) guided academic pathways, 3) enhanced student supports, 4) connections to careers and 5) effective partnerships. She described the proposed designation process, which includes preliminary and final designation criteria. The initial application determines whether the applicant receives Preliminary Designation, which would qualify them to submit a Final Designation Application. Application criteria for both designation phases center around the design principles, with the Preliminary Designation focused on demonstrating alignment with criteria as part of planning and the Final Designation focused on evidence of implementation.

Committee Member Reimers asked if the initiative includes a focus on student economic outcomes and what kind of jobs the initiative will lead to for participating students. Ms. Williams replied that the education of students on career prospects tied to labor market data is a key part of the initiative. Committee Member Reimers followed up by asking if the “My Path to College” state website, designed for guidance counselors, is still an existing resource. Ms. Williams replied that it is., \

Commissioner Santiago raised concerns about the quality of instruction with dual enrollment and asked about measures being considered to ensure quality. Chair Hoffman agreed that this is an important concern for the committee to consider and acknowledged the difficulty of addressing instructional quality. She encouraged the committee to use the standard teacher assessment model.

Committee Member Harrity said her school currently pays college professors to teach the dual enrollment course in partnership with teachers from her school. This model allows teachers to become knowledgeable about the material and to later teach the courses on their own. Chair Hoffman added that NEASC publishes standards on teacher quality.

Committee Member Harrity asked about the vitality of dual enrollment in the environment of declining comprehensive school enrollments, which is not a problem at the vocational/technical high schools where there are waiting lists. She referenced the issue of the financial impact dual enrollment might create for superintendents and their budgets. Ms. Williams replied that the committee would look into the impact of dual enrollment on comprehensive school populations.

Committee Member Reimers asked about the impact of MOOC’s and extension courses and if the committee was considering enhancing the early college model with these tools. He stated that it would be interesting to have the committee assess traditional and innovative methods for course delivery. Chair Hoffman concurred and asked the committee to consider providing an overview of the different instructional delivery methods.

Committee Member Harrity asked about articulation agreements, making the point that having higher education faculty as instructors for dual enrollment increases the quality of high school faculty.

Broadly, committee members reacted positively to the progress and design of the Early College Designation process.

B. Mass Transfer Pathways Update:

Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Director of Academic Policy and Student Success, provided an update on MassTransfer. She stated that MassTransfer is a suite of programs composed of five major

elements: a course equivalency database, the general education foundation, A2B (associate to bachelor's) pathways, the Commonwealth Commitment, and Reverse Transfer.

Ms. Quiroz-Livanis stated that the Gen Ed Foundation is a set of 34 credits that is accepted at any institution of public higher education in the Commonwealth. If a student completes the Foundation, they have satisfied their general education/distribution/core requirements across institutions. She then turned the presentation over to Allison Little, Executive Director of STEM.

Ms. Little explained that the current 34-credit Gen Ed Foundation does not serve students interested in STEM well and this became apparent when faculty across the state came together to build A2B Mapped Pathways in Biology and Chemistry. DHE staff decided to convene a committee that would explore building an alternative to the Gen Ed Foundation that would allow STEM students to take more courses related to their major prior to transfer. Ms. Little presented a summary of recent work being done to create a STEM Gen Ed Foundation, and she highlighted the benefits to students:

- Completion of more courses within their major and avoidance of issues associated with being off-sequence;
- Higher percentages completed the associate degree before transfer;
- Opportunity for upper-level general education courses after transfer; and
- The experiences of transfer students will be more similar to those of students who begin their college careers at a four-year institution.

Ms. Little also outlined the timeline for implementation of the STEM Gen Ed Foundation:

- Campus surveys were conducted in March and April to inform the committee's final recommendation and implementation schedule
- Presentation to Board in June
- Campuses will work on implementation for either the Fall 2018 or Fall 2019 cohort

Committee Member Reimers asked if the initiative added more general education courses, and Ms. Quiroz-Livanis replied that it would not add additional requirements. DHE staff then continued the presentation and gave an update on the work underway to advance the MassTransfer Pathways initiative and the Commonwealth Commitment.

Committee Member Reimers asked how the Commonwealth Commitment (CC) compares to New York's new initiative. Ms. Quiroz-Livanis said there were several differences, including the fact that Massachusetts does not have any income-eligibility requirements and is primarily focused on providing students with an affordable pathway to a baccalaureate degree by starting at a community college. There was additional conversation regarding the potential impact of Early College efforts.

Ms. Quiroz-Livanis then presented on the Community College Transfer Principles and mentioned that she would like to bring them before the AAC for approval at the June meeting. She stated that the principles were intended to ease and clarify the process of transferring earned credit from one college to another, whether among the Massachusetts public higher education system or from other public or private institutions; to provide standards for the evaluation of alternative sources of credit; to reduce the time and cost of completing a college education; to increase the opportunities for graduation of their students; and to establish these Community College Transfer Principles.

Committee members thanked Ms. Little and Ms. Quiroz-Livanis for their work and urged the DHE to think of additional ways to get the word out on the Commonwealth Commitment. Committee Member Reimers asked if we could get an organization like the Red Sox to help with promotion, saying he thinks such an effort would be worthwhile. Ms. Quiroz-Livanis responded saying that the DHE's Division of External Affairs has done a lot to promote Commonwealth Commitment through other public initiatives like *Go Higher* and there had been discussions about other ways to market the program.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Hoffman at 11:45 am.