

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2016**

The October 4, 2016 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) was held on the 21st floor, Conference Room 3, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Nancy Hoffman; Board Chair Chris Gabrieli; Sheila Harrity, Fernando Reimers, and Secretary of Education Designee Tom Moreau

Committee Members Absent: J.D. LaRock; Robert Johnson; Henry Thomas, and Student Board Member Jasson Ivarado Gomez

Department Staff Present: Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success Patricia Marshall; Robert Awkward; Kate Flanagan; Winifred Hagan; Susan Lane; Nate Mackinnon; Clantha McCurdy; Constantia Papanikolaou; Elena Quiroz-Livanis; Kristen Stone; Angela 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 June 7, 2016 Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously approved.

III. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Hoffman welcomed those in attendance and stated that the Board has been discussing its role in the program approval process. She stated that UMass Lowell has a strong program ready for approval on today's agenda and that the Board would also be discussing the relationship of program approval to the strategic planning process and system goals. Strategic planning might be a better way to approach program approval, rather than through a program by program approach.

Board member Harrity congratulated Department of Higher Education (DHE) staff for a great conference on Campus Safety and Violence Protection held at the DCU Center in Worcester on September 28th. She commended General Counsel Papanikolaou for her work in organizing the conference and in developing the report with co-chairs Fernando Reimers and Dani Monroe.

IV. DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REMARKS

Chair Hoffman noted that Commissioner Santiago is attending the “Go Higher” event in Springfield and would not be in attendance today. Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall provided an update on the Commonwealth Commitment. She stated that two statewide convenings were held over the summer and that they are in the process of finalizing the implementation guidelines. Over 150 students have signed up for the program. She also gave an update on the Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership, and stated that over \$900,000 in grants were distributed to 22 campuses. She introduced Dr. Robert Awkward as the DHE’ new Director of Outcomes Assessment. She also updated the Board on information sessions offered by the DHE in collaboration with the Attorney General’s Office to approximately 500 students affected by the ITT Tech abrupt closure. Deputy Commissioner Marshall also provided an update on the second major practice in educator preparation programs and announced educator diversity grants awarded to Lasell College as well as Salem, Westfield and Worcester State Universities.

V. MOTIONS

List of documents used:

AAC Meeting PowerPoint, October 4, 2016
AAC Motions 17-01

The following motion was brought forward and seconded.

A. AAC 17-01 University of Massachusetts Lowell
 Bachelor of Arts in Education

Associate Commissioner Hagan presented the program.

Board member Reimers stated that, due to the need in the Commonwealth, he was pleased to see this program. He asked the UMass Lowell representatives to explain more about the practicum, their planned relationship with partner schools, the balance between clinical faculty and research faculty in the program, and their plan to follow through with students during their first placement.

Anita Greenwood, Dean of Graduate School of Education, responded that the practicum is integrated throughout the four year program, with an early classroom experience that links theory and practice. She stated that they are working closely with teachers and principals to determine what skills an elementary teacher needs, and they have partnerships with three schools. She also noted that there are five clinical faculty members, who are not required to perform research, and all faculty must have classroom experience.

Board member Reimers asked about the means used to hire and supervise teacher mentors. Dean Greenwood responded that in the first year mentors are trained on the type of feedback students need. There are also professional development sessions.

Board member Harrity asked how many other institutions were offering this program. Dean Greenwood responded that no one is offering the dual license in special education.

Chair Hoffman asked the representatives to explain the process of developing new programs. Provost Michael Vayda responded that they keep the needs of students and employers in mind; they evaluate the efficiency of programs and of new courses and new faculty.

Chair Hoffman asked UMass representatives to explain the decision to close a graduate program. Dean Greenwood responded that it was her proposal to the provost. There was a minor in this field and students expressed interest in a major.

Chair Hoffman asked what criteria were used to evaluate a new program. Provost Vayda responded that there is a committee that evaluates the program and related resource allocation. Dean Greenwood added that there are several reviews, including that of the faculty senate, before it gets to the provost. These reviews include the following criteria: cost, opportunities for collaboration, and how the integrity of the degree corresponds to the faculty involved.

Secretary-designee Thomas Moreau inquired about the fit between the program and the university as a whole. Provost Vayda responded that enrollment at UMass Lowell has been growing and highlighted the importance of identifying areas of need. Dean Greenwood noted a decline in enrollment at the master's level, due to low salaries in the field, and stated that it is beneficial for students to obtain a license at the bachelor's level.

Board Chair Gabrieli asked about the UTeach program. Dean Greenwood responded that it will continue, primarily as a minor. Chair Gabrieli asked if there are any plans to expand beyond special education, to which Dean Greenwood responded that creating pathways in special education and elementary education is interesting because they share the same subject matter.

Board member Reimers asked if there is a formal process for a crosswalk with the Vision Project. Dean Greenwood stated that there is no formal crosswalk, but she is required to link academic programs to UMass Lowell's strategic plan. Julie Nash, Vice Provost for Student Success, UMass Lowell, also stated that they have departmental strategic plans.

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

**AAC 17-01 APPLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL TO
AWARD THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN EDUCATION**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of the
University of Massachusetts Lowell to award the **Bachelor of Arts in
Education**

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

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

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

VI. DISCUSSION

- **Program Approval Process**

Associate Commissioner Dr. Winifred Hagan reported that during the Board's annual retreat this September, the Academic Affairs Committee break-out session included commentary on the existing program approval process. Ideas were generated by members of the board regarding an alternative to the program review process that would allow for more strategic, system-wide planning of programs across our public institutions. It was suggested that expanding the circulation of the initial letter of intent to include Board members, as well as making modifications to the sequence of activities within the process, could allow for a more strategic approach. She stated that under such an approach Board approval could take place at the beginning of the process rather than at the end, as is current practice. The Board would likely be taking a more detailed view of the contextual factors in which plans are developed in the alternate process, including the program's alignment with the campus strategic plan. Board staff would be charged with completing the existing rigorous academic review, and after Board approval is obtained, the Commissioner would determine the final approval of the academic program.

Questions emerged regarding the means of implementing an alternative process, and if it would take into consideration the real-time stages of strategic planning in which campuses are engaged, as well as the recently approved strategic plans written to be active and alive through 2020. In addition, programmatic letters of intent are circulating and program proposals are in the middle or at the end of being prepared for submission. There may be other factors to consider, but Dr. Hagan stated that the overview would hopefully help to advance the conversation that began during the retreat break-out session.

Committee Chair Hoffman said the Board would welcome written comments on the process, asking if criteria need to be set. Such criteria might include the following: regional labor markets; overlap, particularly in graduate programs; the fate of undergraduate program after approval of new graduate programs; efficiency; financial issues; the impact on retention and completion; success in closing the achievement gap; and innovation.

Chair Gabrieli added that the early letter of intent review needs to include the impact of the proposed program upon the financial health of the institution. Board member Reimers added that new programs should be aligned with the strategic plan and the Vision Project, opportunity costs need to be addressed, and that there should be collaboration across institutions for greater efficiency.

Board member Harrity said she finds it helpful and important to review the external review report before making decisions on a program. Chair Gabrieli asked about the assumptions made such that an external review was obligatory. He questioned if it were necessary and what the criteria that staff follows for review were. He expressed support for delegation of authority to staff so the Board can focus on program approval at a more strategic level. Chair Gabrieli asked what value was added by examining the proposals in detail. Chair Hoffman responded that she is not ready to give up program review by the Board and she stressed the benefit of multiple reviews.

Secretary designee Tom Moreau asked for the Department's opinion of the proposed changes. Board Member Harrity added that there needs to be an opportunity for further discussion of the big picture at the board level and that an alternative process that would lessen the time spent by the Board on program approval was needed. Chair Hoffman said there would be more conversation about this subject and invited members of the audience to submit written comments to Deputy Commissioner Marshall.

VII. MOTIONS

List of documents used:

AAC Meeting PowerPoint, October 4, 2016

AAC Motions 17-02 and 17-03

The following motion was brought forward and seconded.

B. AAC 17-02 Revocation of Boston Conservatory Degree-Granting Authority

Dr. Winifred Hagan stated that the Boston Conservatory was merged with and into the Berklee College of Music effective July 1, 2016. The merger between Berklee College of Music and the Boston Conservatory was approved by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges on May 18, 2016. This followed the April 8, 2016 Board of Higher Education approval of programs offered previously at the Boston Conservatory to also be within the degree-granting authority of the Berklee College of Music. The merger was legally completed on June 1, 2016. The Berklee College of Music's degree-granting authority in Massachusetts is inclusive of all the degree programs that were previously offered by the Boston Conservatory.

The primary motivations for the merger were educational and strategic, rather than financial, as both institutions were operating on a financially sustainable basis. The merger agreement anticipated a level of synergy to support investment in the new combined entity. Students from both the Conservatory and Berklee are expected to benefit from new opportunities to collaborate, create, and learn from one another. Current students saw no substantial changes in admission procedures or academic programs.

Staff recommends that the Board revoke the authority of Boston Conservatory to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to July 1, 2016.

The Board had no comments. On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved unanimously:

AAC 17-02 REVOCATION OF BOSTON CONSERVATORY DEGREE- GRANTING AUTHORITY

MOVED: The Board of hereby revokes the legal authority of Boston Conservatory to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to July 1, 2016.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 69, §30 et seq.

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

The following motion to approve was made and seconded.

C. AAC 17-03 Revocation of Sanford-Brown College, Inc. Degree-Granting Authority

Dr. Hagan stated that Sanford Brown College, Inc. completed its teach-out plan with all eligible students completing programs of study. No students were enrolled as of May 2, 2014. The Commissioner of Higher Education was notified on May 6, 2014. Board action was not taken at the time. The college satisfied all BHE requirements for closure in 2014 and has remained closed since May 2014. Staff recommends that the Board revoke the authority of Sanford-Brown College, Inc. to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to May 6, 2014.

There were no comments from the Board. On a motion duly made and seconded, the following motion was approved unanimously:

AAC 17-03 REVOCATION OF SANFORD-BROWN COLLEGE, INC. DEGREE- GRANTING AUTHORITY

MOVED: The Board hereby revokes the legal authority of Sanford-Brown College, Inc. to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to May 2, 2014.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 69, §30 et seq.

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

VIII. PRESENTATION

• **Developmental Education**

Ms. Elena Quiroz-Livanis presented an update on the Developmental Education plan on both math and English. Board member Harrity asked about the means used in assessing the percentage of students in alternative placement and inquired regarding the language in the CDEP RFP (Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership Request for Proposal) around the experimental use of Accuplacer for high school students. Chair Hoffman stated that she was concerned that the pilot studies would take too long and asked if campus involvement could be

accelerated. Chairman Gabrieli suggested regional work, and asked if the Board might act in a way that allows reconsideration for academic year 2017-2018.

- **Reverse Transfer**

Ms. Elena Quiroz-Livanis presented an update to the Board on the statewide reverse transfer agreement. She stated that the idea behind reverse transfer is to award the associate degree to students with the ability to earn the degree, after they have transferred to a four-year institution. She added that the chief academic officers at the institutions would like the Department of Higher Education to develop a statewide policy. DHE staff is currently working on implementation guidelines and the policy will go to the Board in December.

Board member Reimers asked if there is any evidence that reverse transfer incentivizes students to not complete a baccalaureate degree. Ms. Elena Quiroz-Livanis stated that it does not. Tom Moreau expressed interest in the way tuition is handled with reverse transfer and there was discussion about the 30-credit residency requirement.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Hoffman at 12:00 p.m.