

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education  
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**

The May 30, 2017 meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was held in the 14th Floor Conference Room, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

- SPC Members Present:** Committee Chair Fernando Reimers  
Paul Toner  
  
Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner
- Other BHE Members Present:** Paul Mattera, Tom Hopcroft, Secretary of Education's designee Tom Moreau
- Department Staff Present:** Robert Brun, David Cedrone, Kate Flanagan, Winifred Hagan, Jonathan Keller, Pat Marshall, Clantha McCurdy, Dena Papanikolaou, Elena Quiroz-Livanis
- Campus Guests:** *Bridgewater State U:* President Fredrick Clark, Deniz Zeynep Leuenberger, Karim Ismaili;  
*Framingham State U.* President Javier Cevallos, Rita Colluci, Judy Horton, Linda Vaden-Goad;  
*MCLA* President James Birge, Monica Joslin, Gina Puc

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Fernando Reimers called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**II. MINUTES**

Chair Reimers brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the November 29, 2016 SPC meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all SPC members present.

**III. REMARKS AND REPORTS**

**A. Committee Chair's Remarks**

Chair Reimers offered brief opening remarks, reflecting on the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of John F. Kennedy, which was May 29, 2017. He referenced a speech President Kennedy made at Boston College commemorating the University's centennial celebration. In this speech, the President offered reflections on the importance of the role of a university in a democracy, asking students to think critically and independently, but to challenge themselves. He remarked that we are here today to do the same: to help each other set attainable yet challenging goals. Chair

Reimers then invited the three campuses to each provide an overview of the draft strategic plan previously submitted for review, beginning with Bridgewater State University (BSU) and invited BSU President Fred Clark to make comments.

#### **IV. Touch Point II Campus Discussion**

##### **A. Bridgewater State University**

President Clark thanked Chair Reimers, and remarked that he is in agreement that goals should be measurable, yet attainable. He continued that this plan is ambitious for BSU, which includes the institutional strategic plan, as well as divisional and departmental plans, which will all fit together for a 10 year vision with 3 year reviews. Further, they are interested in a strategic plan, but more so in strategic planning as a process. Going forward, the plan will inform budgets and capital planning. He concluded his remarks by commenting that all of the plan's objectives are measurable, including some that are qualitative. He then introduced Dr. Deniz Zeynep Leunenberger, Chief of Staff and Interim Vice President for External Affairs at BSU, who provided an overview of the plan.

Dr. Leunenberger began the presentation by describing BSU's nested or layered model of institutional planning, as well as the implementation plan. She continued that they additionally have operational plans that are departmental and divisional, and that every layer of the plan has a ten year vision outlook, as many projects will require ten years to plan, raise resources for and then implement. Additionally, they also have an annual review period in addition to the three year review and ten year outlook.

She continued that following BHE's guidance, all Vision Project outcomes are explicitly included in the strategic plan. She then provided an overview of the key themes of the plan, not necessarily listed in order of importance: student success, academic excellence, employee success, regional and global outreach, social justice, diversity, affordability, safety, asset management, post-traditional learners, communication and transparency.

Dr. Leunenberger then outlined the inclusion of data informing the plan and the process, which included President Clark conducting listening tours across campus, student success micro surveys which asked the students themselves to define student success, a qualitative e-survey to staff, and a campus climate survey. She concluded the presentation by providing a brief overview of the draft mission statement, vision statement, draft goals of the plan, as well as details and examples of the dashboard items supporting the assessment of their goals. President Clark added that in terms of assessment, each metric will have a one year, three year, five year and ten target going forward.

##### **B. Framingham State University**

Chair Reimers invited Framingham State University (FSU) President Javier Cevallos make remarks. He began his remarks by thanking the committee. He remarked that he believes there is much to be proud of at FSU: they have a diverse student body, accomplished faculty,

and a strategic location in Metro West. However, he pointed out that they also have challenges, including demographics and impending population decline, and gaps in student persistence and success. He continued that FSU wants to leverage their location in Metro West with access to so many corporations and business that will allow them to make connections and align goals with the workforce. He cited the *World of Work*<sup>1</sup> workforce preparation program which is launching this fall, which works directly with key industry partners to prepare students for the workforce by teaching them how to be good workers and develop soft skills.

President Cevallos highlighted the Vision Supported Overarching Goals of the plan and the strategies planned to facilitate these goals and how they align to the Vision Project. The goals include: academic distinction and success, inclusive excellence and organizational effectiveness, and reputation, relationships and resources over the next five years. He referenced FSU's Core Values which include academic excellence, ethical citizenship, personal and professional growth, global stewardship, public purpose and commitment, and an inclusive and collaborate community.

President Cevallos continued by highlighting various goals of the plan, including engaging the community in meaningful ways, and considering different content delivery methods to students. He continued that they aim to remove barriers to student success in terms of student services, which would involve changing to a *culture of yes*<sup>2</sup>. He cited providing wrap-around student services and guided academic pathways so students do not lose valuable time or money. President Cevallos additionally cited the importance of career center services such as internships and co-ops, and remarked that mentoring is critically important, and is more than just advising, as it facilitates creating a sense of belonging for FSU students. He concluded his remarks by stating that FSU aspires to guide students to have more independence and agency in their own success.

### C. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Chair Reimers invited Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) President James Birge to make remarks. President Birge thanked everyone and introduced his colleagues from MCLA: Monica Joslin, Dean of Academic Affairs and Gina Puc, Director of Admission and Co-Chair of Strategic Planning. President Birge then provided an overview of how they came to developing their plan; the five year goal is for MCLA to become the top liberal arts public institution in the country, which he acknowledged is ambitious but not out of reach as MCLA is consistently cited in the top ten. He continued that MCLA will be known for academic programs that respond to the workforce, the use of high impact practices, and MCLA's cultural connections throughout the Berkshires. He additionally noted that a significant percentage of MCLA students come from and stay in Berkshire County after graduation.

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<sup>1</sup> To better emphasize what supports the connection of education (lessons, teachers' behavior) to the **World of Work** an additional cloud '**World of Work**' (WoW) has been added to the Inquiry Based Learning (IBL). Retrieved 6/6/2017 <http://www.fisme.science.uu.nl/en/mascil/index.php?language=0>

<sup>2</sup> Policies and an environment that encourage success. Retrieved 6/6/2017 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture%20of%20success>

President Birge continued that MCLA contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty; a third of their students come from families earning less than \$30,000 a year and 40% of their students are Pell eligible, which is the highest in Massachusetts public higher education. Yet, many students enter high wage fields upon graduating, breaking the cycle of poverty for their families. President Birge highlighted MCLA's 6-year positive trend line in graduation and retention rates that hold across various populations. MCLA is additionally adding to the population gain of the Berkshires as more students stay in the area. MCLA provides needed post-secondary access, as many students attend MCLA because of limited access to other institutions due to cost or other factors.

President Birge continued by highlighting MCLA's ability to respond to the needs and demands of the workforce, which has been driving the mission of American higher education since 1636, adding that higher education has played a role in nearly every advancement in American history. He additionally stressed MCLA's presence in the Berkshires, which has been recognized as a culturally significant area of Massachusetts and the United States. MCLA has an opportunity to build important workforce and industry partnerships because the community loves having MCLA graduates work for them. MCLA has goals of increasing internship opportunities, because students have a much greater chance of being employed by companies where they intern. Further, MCLA offers academic majors that respond to employer needs, and President Birge noted that he meets regularly with industry leaders in the area to review curricula and ensure alignment between the institution and regional employer needs.

President Birge continued by highlighting top priorities of the draft plan, including enhancing the quality of diversity, equity and inclusion; the college's LGBT community, and the fact that over 40% of MCLA's population comes from marginalized groups drives the institution to create a more diverse and responsive faculty and staff. MCLA wants to renovate and improve facilities, especially those that are unsafe and literally crumbling. MCLA wants to enhance technology, and finally, increase and improve transparency and institutional organization. President Birge stressed the importance of a continuous planning process so they always know their next step and are continually improving.

President Birge concluded the presentation by stating the importance of the state's commitment to honor collective bargaining agreements, as well as the need to help with deferred maintenance: \$20 million is required for urgent projects. They need money for student scholarships, and there are plenty of opportunities for the state to be partners with MCLA.

After the campus presentations, the meeting was turned back over to Chair Reimers to facilitate the question and answer period of the meeting. The members of the SPC and the campus representatives engaged in a discussion about various aspects of the plans and their processes. The topics covered during the question and answer period included: how to engage the faculty and staff and promote a culture of high expectations; using the plans as an opportunity to increase access to academic courses and content by having more "on-ramps and completion off-ramps;" benchmarks and metrics that will be used to assess the success of the plans, especially considering unforeseen circumstances and the nature of quickly changing technology as it relates to responding to the needs of a rapidly changing workforce;

potential for episodes of hateful rhetoric, and how institutions can respond democratically with open and transparent processes.

After the question and answer section, Commissioner Santiago offered some concluding remarks. He noted that there were commonalities across the plans, but also noted distinctions in style and approach. He underscored the importance of the new performance metrics, and establishing benchmarks with peer institutions, stating that it will reflect the success of the system, because the success of the system depends on the success of its institutions. Commissioner Santiago remarked on the Commonwealth's role in this process: there is a tension because although the overall Massachusetts economy is doing well, revenues remain soft, and reinvestment is more likely to occur based on the excellence of the campuses, rather than the poverty of the campuses. He continued that the state wants to invest in success, as do private partners and thus, we need to highlight what we are doing successfully.

#### **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **VI. ADJOURMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.