

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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May 1, 2018  
10:00 a.m.

Middlesex Community College – Bedford Campus  
Campus Center, Café East  
591 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730

**Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 in the Campus Center, Café East at Middlesex Community College at 519 Springs Road, Bedford, Massachusetts.

**The following Board Members were present:**

Chris Gabrieli, Chair  
Alex Cortez  
Danielle Dupuis, Student Member, Bridgewater State University  
Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair  
J.D. La Rock  
Paul Mattera  
Ashley McHugh, Non-Voting Student Segmental Representative, Mount Wachusett Community College  
James Peyser, Secretary of Education, Ex-Officio  
Fernando Reimers  
Paul Toner

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

**The follow Board members were absent:**

Nancy Hoffman  
Henry Thomas

<b>I.</b>	<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>  Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) to order at 10:08 a.m. He began by introducing and welcoming Alex Cortez, a newly appointed BHE member. He then invited the rest of the BHE to make introductions. Board member Cortez thanked the BHE and briefly gave an overview of his background.
<b>II.</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>  Chair Gabrieli stated that he received two requests for public participation, and invited Ms. Marlene Kim to come forward to address the Board.  Ms. Kim thanked the BHE, and introduced herself as a faculty member at University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston and President of the faculty and staff union. She remarked that UMass Boston staff has been skeptical of the Mount Ida acquisition and its use for internships, and then cited a recent <i>Boston Globe</i> article that reported the new campus will

also host new academic programs in certain fields like nursing and business. She noted that these programs already exist at UMass Boston, and the campus already offers numerous graduate certificates in marketing, health care management, analytics, and computer science. She remarked that what is alarming in this situation is the process; the purchase of Mount Ida by UMass Amherst was done in secrecy in executive session in the trustee meeting behind closed doors with no opportunity for public comment. The information that was provided last week that UMass Amherst has more ambitious plans for the property went to the Legislature in a memo that is not yet public. She noted that former DHE Commissioner Richard Freeland stated last week at the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) meeting that this purchase will “cannibalize” UMass Boston because UMass Amherst gets far more resources than UMass Boston from the state. She asked the BHE to do their due diligence to examine and evaluate what this property will be used for, and consider if it makes sense to open another UMass property with state funds that will destroy another campus. UMass Boston serves underserved populations including English language learners and first generation students and is a minority-majority campus, and remarked that these students will be the ones who are harmed. She remarked that they already struggle at UMass Boston to serve these students with the limited resources they have.

She continued that she knows the BHE insists that this is not in their purview, but she believes it is, and the Board has broad authority to look at this matter and it is their duty to ensure that students have the opportunities they deserve. She asked that the BHE look into these issues, allow for public comment, allow for transparency, and make any information known on the deal public. She concluded her remarks by stating UMass Boston wants to continue to serve all the students in the Commonwealth and give them the education they deserve.

Chair Gabrieli then invited Ms. Margaret Wong to speak.

Ms. Wong began her remarks by introducing herself as the President-elect of the Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC) and acknowledged Rosemarie Freeland, Vice President elect of the MCCC. She stated that it is her 30<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and cares about what she is doing. She added that very much like the students she teaches at Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), she is a first generation student and her parents are immigrants from China who did not speak English. She has earned degrees and worked at both public and private schools, but working at QCC is her passion.

Ms. Freeland then introduced herself as Women’s Resource Center Director at Greenfield Community College (GCC), where she is also an alumna. She remarked that she attended the meeting because of her community college education, and has held her position since 1999.

Ms. Wong stated that the MCCC has issued a failing progress report with regard to the bargaining process for a contract for part-time faculty, as progress has stalled. She noted this progress report was a visual aid to help the BHE understand the situation. Adjunct faculty teach the vast majority of classes at community colleges and there needs to be respect for the dignity of this work, and for the passion of what they do. She continued that adjunct faculty open themselves for exploitation very easily because they care about what they do and would give anything for the success of their students. They are asking for fair compensation and fair support because it is what students deserve, what faculty deserve, and what colleges deserve.

	<p>Ms. Freeland remarked that the majority of classes are taught by adjunct faculty, and that it is known that students taught by our full time faculty do better, which is no comment on the quality of instruction. She remarked that we need to recognize that equal pay for equal work is not just a philosophical statement but an economic one as well, noting the funding community colleges receive from the state. She remarked that adjunct faculty are exploited because they have the moral imperative to do this important work, and that each time student fees rise, their ability to access quality education is impeded. She concluded her remarks by stating that they do not want students to receive that same treatment, and thanked the BHE for their time and consideration.</p>
<p><b>III.</b></p>	<p><b>WELCOME</b></p> <p>President Mabry welcomed Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, the BHE and everyone in attendance to MCC. He remarked that MCC has a spirit of entrepreneurship, and recently received a \$250,000 grant that supports student businesses coming out of the entrepreneurship program, which received support from donors after a national search. He remarked that MCC is looking forward to this partnership. He continued that in December, MCC received the largest gift in the college's history from the Donohue family which will support an academic building. He added that they will be presenting the Board with a proposal to name the building after the Donohue family at a later date. President Mabry stated that MCC continues to work on their private fundraising capacity. He then introduced Ms. Sierra DeWalt, a student trustee who is a dual enrollment student and will be graduating from high school later this month.</p> <p>Ms. DeWalt thanked the BHE, and remarked on her experience at MCC. She said she realized MCC was a special place after an experience in one of her classes when she recognized how diverse the class was in terms of viewpoints, perspectives, and ages; this diversity enriched the conversation and is the main reason the campus is so successful. She commented on the multiple responsibilities her classmates juggle, including parenthood, multiple jobs and this enriches the community and provides respectful place to broaden your perspectives and horizons.</p> <p>Chair Gabrieli thanked President Mabry and Ms. DeWalt for their comments.</p>
<p><b>IV.</b></p>	<p><b>ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES</b></p> <p>Chair Gabrieli remarked at the last meeting, the BHE did not have a quorum of Board members voting on the minutes, and as a result the Board would be voting on the January minutes again. He noted that on the advice of counsel, a member's absence from the meeting does not prevent the member from participating in their approval or offering corrections.</p> <p>Chairman Gabrieli then brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the joint BESE/BHE January 24, 2018 BHE meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all Board members present.</p> <p>Chairman Gabrieli brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the January 24, 2018 BHE meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all Board members present attendance.</p> <p>Chairman Gabrieli brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the March 6, 2018 BHE meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all Board members present.</p>

<b>V.</b>	<b>REMARKS AND REPORTS</b>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS</b></p> <p>Chairman Gabrieli began his remarks by stating that he is optimistic about opportunities for the future. The Early College Joint Committee approved designations for the first five early college high school programs, and additional applications are close to being approved. He expressed his excitement about this project, as early college programs serve thousands of students from a variety of backgrounds, and this demonstrated an impressive level of collaboration across the state.</p> <p>He then referenced the Commission of Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning, chaired by BHE member J.D. La Rock, which is charged with identifying ways we can create more opportunities for online education to open opportunities for learners of all ages.</p> <p>Chair Gabrieli continued by stating that there has been a lot of dialogue over the past few weeks around how to help the students at Mount Ida as their campus is in the process of closing. He then turned to Secretary Peyser to offer his thoughts on the Mount Ida closure.</p> <p>Secretary Peyser stated one of the challenges in responding to the Mount Ida situation may be connected to a lack of clarity in the BHE's authority, statutory or otherwise, that would enable the Board to take action. He stated that Commissioner Santiago and he will undertake a joint project over the next thirty days to review the BHE's authority and propose potential policy, regulatory or legislative changes intended to help ensure that the Board has sufficient authority to protect students attending private colleges and universities in the Commonwealth that are at risk of imminent closure or service interruption. He stated they will engage the BHE and other stakeholders throughout the process. Chair Gabrieli added that he wants to ensure the Board and Department staff have a greater capacity to be more proactive, noting the initial importance of identifying the barriers in their authority in that regard.</p> <p>Chair Gabrieli then referenced the previous week's AAC meeting that was extended and repurposed to give those affected by the Mount Ida closure an opportunity for public comment. He noted that while, it was painful and difficult to hear, he, the Commissioner and other Board members were left with a sense of urgency and were moved to take action to support these students and protect other students from imminent, disruptive closures. He acknowledged the uncertainty students and families are facing as they go into the new school year, and that there was a need to respond swiftly either through authority the BHE already has or through legislation. To that end, Chair Gabrieli announced that he and the Commissioner will create a Working Group of stakeholders that will build off of the legislative and policy review conducted by the Secretary and the Commissioner, and will look at potential methods to assess and monitor the fiscal health of institutions of higher education, as well as ways to proactively mitigate the risks associated with institutional closures. The Working Group will be convened within thirty days and is expected to issue some preliminary findings in September, with a final report by the end of the calendar year.</p>
<b>B.</b>	<p><b>COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS</b></p> <p>Commissioner Santiago welcomed everyone and thanked President Mabry, Ms. DeWalt and Middlesex Community College for hosting today's meeting. He began his remarks by acknowledging the Presidents in attendance: President Ellen Kennedy of Berkshire Community College, President Fred Clark of Bridgewater State University, President Ramon Torrecilha of Westfield State University, and President Barry Maloney of Worcester State University. He also acknowledged Vince Pedone and Gretchen Manning of the segmental</p>

Executive Offices and welcomed the new BHE member, Alex Cortez.

He remarked that after today's meeting, we will be one BHE meeting away (in June) from completing the FY18 agenda, and although he will leave the end of year report for the June meeting, this year has been characterized by a continuation of an ambitious agenda with noteworthy, and often unexpected, developments in between. One of those recent developments, of course, is the issue of closures, mergers, and consolidations among Massachusetts institutions of higher education, and the compelling messages we received from students, parents, faculty, and staff, including those from UMass Boston, at the recent AAC meeting cannot be simply put aside. Where we go from here is a theme that Chair Gabrieli has already raised and he applauds the Chair for his commitment to consider a number of different options that might bring about positive and lasting change.

Commissioner Santiago highlighted, the fact that institutional closures have been increasing, both nationally and in Massachusetts, largely in response to declining student enrollment that is driven by demographic change, and given the significant number of higher education institutions in Massachusetts, it is reasonable to anticipate that there will be more closures and mergers than we see on average nationally. He stated that with just a few exceptions, Mount Ida being the most significant, the policies regarding closures, mergers, and acquisitions have worked quite well. Massachusetts has experienced 15 closures or mergers over the past five years, and for the most part, these occurrences have allowed the DHE to work with the institution to accommodate the needs of students as they have transitioned to other institutions. The Department of Higher Education, in each instance, has helped create avenues for students to continue their studies. While there is talk about a failure of policy, he would argue that the policies have worked well, with one major caveat. They work well when the DHE is given the time to engage with the institutions involved; there will always be some loss in these cases but these losses can be mitigated with timely notification. He acknowledged that this is little comfort to the Mount Ida students, particularly those in specialty areas that are not common or are hard to replicate at other institutions, but staff are fully committed to helping those students continue their academic work and we are diligently working to do so.

He remarked that the question has also arisen as to whether closures, mergers, or acquisitions can be predicted, or in other words, can we identify, early on, institutions that are in impending financial difficulty? The answer is yes under a few key conditions: (1) a staff that is sufficiently large, well-versed in financial matters, and authorized to engage directly with the leadership of the nearly 100 private profit and non-profit institutions in the Commonwealth; (2) access to a wide variety of institutional data from early enrollment reports to background information that reflects federal financial ratings, and other pieces of crucial financial data; and (3) the authority to receive this data on a timely basis. He remarked that he believes that the Board Chair and Secretary's proposals this morning position us well to have these conversations and to address these issues.

The Commissioner concluded his remarks with an acknowledgment of some recent praise he has received about the MassTransfer website built in-house on transfer pathways. He remarked that he is proud of the work of the DHE staff, including the "nuts and bolts" work that is done.

Chair Gabrieli remarked that he too is proud of the work of the BHE, and he has been personally impressed by the department staff, particularly those who are assisting and supporting Mount Ida students. He thanked the staff and acknowledged the many ongoing projects, including the financial aid redesign study, the upcoming Open Educational

	Resources OER project, noting that what DHE staff have done is impressive.
<b>C.</b>	<p><b>SECRETARY OF EDUCATION’S REMARKS</b></p> <p>Secretary Peyser had no further comments.</p>
<b>D.</b>	<p><b>REPORTS FROM PRESIDENTS</b></p> <p><b>Community College Presidents’ Report</b></p> <p>President Ellen Kennedy, Berkshire Community College, thanked President Mabry and MCC for hosting the Board meeting. She acknowledged the Mount Ida closure, and reported that community colleges are working to address the needs of Mount Ida students, as many of the programs offered at the fifteen community colleges align with programs offered at Mount Ida. She referenced President Pat Gentile’s plans at North Shore Community College to develop funeral services and veterinary technology programs, as well as Cape Cod Community College’s efforts to offer a mortuary science program. She stated that a number of community college representatives have reached out to assist these students and will continue do so. Further, community colleges are also concerned for the staff at Mount Ida and encourage them to bring their talents and time to our campuses.</p> <p>She continued her report by stating that in early April, over 300 faculty and staff came together to share best practices at the annual Teaching and Learning Conference, hosted by Berkshire Community College. She then commented on the budget, noting community colleges were grateful for the support received from the House, but all campuses were struggling with the one percent increase. For Massachusetts to continue to be competitive in the knowledge economy, public campuses need the support to remain competitive. She then suggested a study on funding support, and referenced the ongoing MCCC contract negotiations. Additionally, community colleges were concerned that PIF grants were not funded in the House budget, because these grants allow public institutions to innovate, and they would like to see the funds restored in the Senate and in Conference budgets.</p> <p>President Kennedy observed how the end of the academic year was a celebratory time and there were many exciting events on the calendar, including 29 Who Shine, and a Phi Beta Kappa event in which 34 students were honored for academic accomplishments. Further, Massachusetts community colleges and its presidents are being recognized for their leadership, both nationally and locally. Bunker Hill Community College President Eddinger was elected to Chair of the Board of Directors for Achieving the Dream, North Shore Community College received the bronze-level seal from the “ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge,” and Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal is a member on the Governor’s Commission on Lifelong Learning and Digital Innovation. She then noted the upcoming inauguration of Bristol Community College President Laura Douglas, and acknowledged the retirement of Greenfield Community College President Robert Pura. She concluded her remarks by stating that she wishes Bill Hart from the Executive Offices a speedy recovery.</p> <p><b>State University Presidents’ Report</b></p> <p>President Fred Clark, Bridgewater State University (BSU) congratulated BHE student member and BSU student Danielle Dupuis, who is graduating this month and attending Boston College next year to pursue a master’s degree in higher education.</p>

He stated the state universities were in conversations with Mount Ida students who were finding their way to our public campuses every day. He then offered any assistance to the Chair, Secretary, and Commissioner in their 30 day review, and extended a preliminary suggestion noting that the state provides considerable funding to private institutions in the form of scholarships and grants and he suggested connecting access to those funds to the accountability being sought.

President Clark then reported on a recent trip to Rowan University in New Jersey with President Gentile from North Shore Community College. Rowan is a leader in innovation collaboration in New Jersey, and they have taken regional collaboration to the next level. In 2014, they entered into a partnership with Gloucester County College, and students were given discounts on tuition, application fees were waived, and students received counseling and academic support; both campuses remained independent despite their deep collaboration. He remarked that they have seen tremendous increases in enrollment growth despite similar demographics as Massachusetts, and they were deeply impressed by the level of innovation and adaptability. This partnership grew organically, and not through mandate, and they have retained more New Jersey students. Going forward, he believes that partnerships and innovation are going to be key strategies needed to adapt to demographic challenges.

President Clark then remarked on campus closures and consolidations and cited Jay Kaufman's recent *Boston Globe* op-ed suggesting that our public higher education system is too big and we should close certain campuses. He stated that the idea of consolidation is not new, as he has witnessed the conversation over the past several decades. The op-ed was spurred by the closure of a private college, and he thinks it is pretty remarkable and inaccurate to connect those dots to our public higher education system. Massachusetts public colleges and universities have strong connections with regional economies, we know how to stretch a dollar, and our students stay here in Massachusetts. The state needs to think about increasing access to public higher education, not restricting it. Because public campuses are located in every region, consolidating them will make student access more difficult, particularly those underrepresented students, who are the solution to the Massachusetts talent gap. Changes to higher education cannot be made in a vacuum, and we need to focus our energies to creating more opportunity and access to economic mobility, particularly in our gateway cities.

President Clark turned to workforce-related issues, stating that the state universities are dedicated to enhancing our workforce and being responsive to workforce needs. He referenced several industry representatives who are looking to public higher education to solve workforce gaps, adding that the state university internship incentive program is a viable solution that the innovation economy needs.

He concluded his remarks by noting that BSU had a successful year raising money, and they awarded \$1,000,000 last week in scholarships. He referenced the endowment incentive program which incentivizes private philanthropy, noting that private dollars can be incentivized with public funds. He then thanked the BHE for their time. Board member Paul Toner requested that at a future meeting, it would be helpful to have a primer about the various streams of funding, noting his surprise to hear that UMass Amherst receives more funding than UMass Boston. He additionally requested an update on where we were with collective bargaining negotiations. Commissioner

	<p>Santiago responded that there is some basic information that we can provide. Secretary Peyser remarked that there is only one line item for UMass from the state perspective, which is the basic operating line item.</p> <p>Board member Reimers asked Presidents Kennedy and Clark if they could comment on the extent of spirit of collaboration with the University of Massachusetts. President Kennedy responded that our students are enrolling with the intention of transferring, and that UMass Amherst is the closest UMass campus. Community colleges support the Department's Commonwealth Commitment program, which includes transfer pathways; the community colleges want students to complete their associate's degrees so they have that credential before they move on. President Clark responded that we think it could be better, frankly and noted that there is substantial of back and forth; BSU receives a lot of transfer students from UMass Amherst as well sending transfers to UMass campuses. We want there to be more pathways for our students, and he thinks we are at the beginning and there is a long way to go.</p> <p>Board member Mattera asked about identifying academic programs that were comparable to those at Mount Ida, noting that Board members heard a lot last week that about programs at Mount Ida that were unique with limited transfer potential. He asked if Department staff had more notice on the closure, how would that have improved the ability to better serve these students? President Kennedy responded that 30, 60, or 90 days still would not have been enough to develop a new academic program, though we all want that review and approval process to be better. President Clark responded that it would have been better to have more notice, and while we do have an extensive list of course equivalencies, some programs just do not transfer.</p> <p>Chair Gabrieli encouraged Commissioner Santiago and Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall to come before the BHE if they need any new authorities to manage the Mount Ida situation. Commissioner Santiago stated the deadline for program approval submissions this year has been extended for institutions developing new programs in response to the Mount Ida closure. Most of these programs will be approved using the Commissioner's delegated authority, including summer delegation of authority.</p>
<p><b>E.</b></p>	<p><b>REPORT FROM STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Board member Dupuis reported that Student Advisory Council (SAC) members participated in a rally at the state house regarding addressing sexual assault on campuses, including requiring campus climate surveys, and this had a lot of support in the legislature. SAC also approved a logo that will allow for better social media reach and marketing. She continued by noting that SAC also revised their current by laws which will allow members to designate their authority to another member if they are unable to attend. At the last SAC meeting, they interviewed candidates for the next BHE student member and selected a UMass Boston student as the next BHE segmental representative, along with a community college non-voting segmental representative from QCC, and an interim SAC Chair. She commented on the upcoming Open Educational Resources (OER) presentation which is on today's agenda, noting that SAC is proposing its first resolution with today's presentation; the SAC is advocating in support of OER because they lower costs.</p>
<p><b>VI.</b></p>	<p><b>MOTIONS</b></p> <p><i>List of Documents Used:</i></p>

	AAC 18-27	
	<b>A.</b>	<p><b>Academic Affairs</b></p> <p>Chairman Gabrieli turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Sheila Harrity for a report on last week's Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). Vice Chair Harrity explained that AAC Chair Nancy Hoffman was on her way to Arizona for a Pathways Institute meeting. Before proceeding with the motions, she provided a brief summary on the recent AAC meeting, and stated noted that while it was heart wrenching to hear from the students, families and faculty, including UMass Boston faculty, impacted by the Mount Ida closure, it was very helpful and informative for Committee members and it was important to give the community an opportunity to voice their frustration and concerns. The Committee also considered a motion that would allow Saint Louis University to offer the Master of Social Work; under the proposal courses would be offered online and at Elms College, located in Chicopee. There was also a brief presentation on the revised program approval process for public institutions, as well as a presentation on the work of the Commissioner's Ad Hoc Committee on Police Education and Training.</p> <p>Vice Chair Harrity then asked for a motion for approval of AAC 18-27, approval of the application of Saint Louis University to offer the Master of Social Work. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-27 was unanimously approved by all Board members present, without discussion.</p>
	<b>AAC 18-27</b>	<b>APPLICATION OF COLLEGE OF SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY TO AWARD THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK</b>
	<b>MOVED:</b>	The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Certificates of Organization of Saint Louis University to offer the Master of Social Work
	Authority:	Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.
	Contact:	Kristen Stone, MPP Assistant Director for Academic and Veterans Affairs
<b>VII.</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	
	<p><b><u>List of Documents Used</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>PowerPoint Presentation: Redesigning Massachusetts State Financial Aid, May 1, 2018</i></li> <li>• <i>PowerPoint Presentation: Open Educational Resources, Supporting Access &amp; Affordability May 1, 2018</i></li> <li>• <i>Massachusetts Student Advisory Council Resolution #001</i></li> </ul> <p><b>A. Redesigning Massachusetts State Financial Aid: Simplifying Process &amp; Maximizing Impact, Part II</b></p> <p>Chair Gabrieli stated that at the March BHE meeting, Board members heard from Deputy Commissioner Clantha McCurdy, Dr. Bridget Terry Long, and Monnica Chan on work occurring with respect to redesigning financial aid. There will now be an opportunity to hear some specific recommendations and provide feedback. He then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Santiago.</p>	

Commissioner Santiago invited Senior Deputy Commissioner Clantha McCurdy and Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Tom Simard to provide a presentation on recommendations related to redesigning financial aid in Massachusetts. The Commissioner first provided some context from the last meeting during which Dr. Long gave a presentation on the study. He noted that we have many different programs and that funds serve a lot of students at both public and private institutions, but the reality is that we are in the middle of the pack nationally in terms of support to students. He remarked that the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) is also in the middle of a business process review (BPR) that is examining how the system interacts with students and families, and we are bringing our technology and our process into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He then turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner McCurdy.

Deputy Commissioner McCurdy thanked Commissioner Santiago and the BHE and stated that she will provide a follow up to the financial aid presentation that was presented to the BHE in March. She noted that the study grew out of a larger initiative, the *Redesigning State Aid in New England* Project, supported by the New England Board of Higher Education and funded by the Lumina Foundation. The study was led by Dr. Long and Monnica Chan from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and it produced a set of recommendations including making college more accessible and affordable for all Massachusetts residents, closing gaps in student opportunity and achievement, and improving college completion rates.

She continued by providing a brief recap of the presentation by Dr. Long and Ms. Chan to the BHE in March that offered an overview of the scope and results of their study, including a summary of the five study recommendations for improving effectiveness and efficiency of the current aid system. She noted that today's presentation will provide action steps for the five overarching recommendations.

She continued by presenting Recommendation 1: address the substantial unmet financial need facing many students and families. Action steps include the recognition of the additional \$7.1million in the Governor's and House budget General Scholarship Line item which is the largest increase in at last 24 years. The DHE has been working with college representatives to target this projected increase to address unmet need for community college students. Further steps include developing a long term financial aid strategy for *all* public college students, establishing an emergency fund for extreme hardship cases, and revising the "state-supported" requirement for all financial aid programs with a timeline of FY2019-2020.

She continued by presenting Recommendation 2: consolidate programs with similar goals. Action steps include working with stakeholders to reform MASSGrant by converting needs-based resources from other programs into a single funding source that serves the same students and maintaining the current level of support to students within public and private sectors to ensure that there is no diminishment of state support based on program consolidation. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy explained the rationale for this decision with a discussion of the overlap in students served in state need-based grant awards for both public and private institutions.

She continued by presenting Recommendation 3: repackage the Massachusetts system of tuition waivers into a simple, well-publicized grant program. The action items include reviewing the current array of tuition waivers to determine the feasibility of consolidating or eliminating waivers that are duplicative, or are no longer required or outdated, and planning and executing an awareness campaign. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy added that the

timeline of FY2020 for this recommendation may be a bit aggressive.

Deputy Commissioner McCurdy continued by presenting Recommendation 4: apply lessons learned and innovations from pilot programs to existing aid programs. Action steps include establishing metrics to comprehensively evaluate financial aid funding and other factors that support “Big Three” objectives; assess and evaluate the No Interest Loan Program (NIL); align scholarship aid with workforce strategies; and explore opportunities for institutional and community partnerships and early college programs with a timeline of FY2020.

Vice Chair Harrity asked a clarifying question on the Adams Scholarship. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy responded that the Adams Scholarship is credited as a tuition waiver on a student’s financial aid package and OSFA is working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to identify eligible students.

Board member Toner asked a question about programs that address workforce shortages and Deputy Commissioner McCurdy responded that we currently have the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship which funds students in designated high demand fields.

Deputy Commissioner McCurdy continued by presenting Recommendation 5: improve communications regarding state financial aid programs for clarity and increased awareness. Action items include revamping OSFA’s website for greater clarity, transparency and navigation; implementing recommendations from the BPR; exploring opportunities for communicating with students through partnerships; and using focus groups to ensure utility and clarity of information.

She continued by identifying programs not recommended for change, which include entitlement programs that serve foster and adopted youth and statutory programs, such as the Public Service Grant and the Herter Memorial Scholarship, as these programs are statutory or legislatively mandated, target high-need students and have a demonstrated history of success. She concluded her presentation with an overview of how these recommendations support the Big Three priorities and what the next steps will be. These recommendations will be shared with the general public and key stakeholders and after collecting feedback, we will revisit with the BHE for review and endorsement at the June 2018 meeting.

After the presentation, the BHE engaged in a discussion. Vice Chair Harrity remarked that she was confused because she thought there was going to be a big push for a comprehensive data system that used the State Assigned Student Identified (SASID) number to track students. Commissioner Santiago responded that when he first arrived in 2014, this was a major point of contention, but we have made tremendous progress in this area. Board member Reimers commended Deputy Commissioner McCurdy’s team for taking an excellent study and developing actionable ideas; he added that he was impressed on how clear and evidence-based this presentation was, and how quickly the recommendations were turned into action. He encouraged the Department to keep up the momentum.

Board member Alex Cortez remarked that he did not yet have a sense of the magnitude of the potential impact, and asked if there are inefficiencies in the system or is money left on the table? He remarked that it would be helpful for those who process things more quantitatively to have a sense of the scale of this. Deputy Commissioner Simard responded that the Business Process Review revealed that there is a lack of clarity for students about financial aid and we need to do a better job explaining it. Additionally, there is a shared urgency about

this, as Governor Baker spoke about financial aid in the State of the State address. Commissioner Santiago remarked that at the end of the academic year, there are funds that are not used and we are trying to act quickly to capture them so they do not revert back into the general fund. Deputy Commissioner Simard responded that we already have some changes in place to capture those funds so we can optimize all of the funds' availability.

Board member La Rock asked a clarifying question about how much is spent on No-Interest Loan programs annually. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy responded that students can receive up to \$4,000 a year and OSFA issues about 5,000 loans for about \$6 million annually. He then asked Deputy Commissioner McCurdy if she had a specific idea about the consolidation. She responded by citing an example of typical student inquiries OSFA receives that consist of a student calling the Department and going down the list of all of our programs one-by-one, and asking about eligibility; if we did not have all of these smaller, different programs available, it would make more sense from a student perspective. She continued that ideally, there would be greater clarity upfront and a student would know that if he or she is attending to a state institution, then this amount is available from the state.

Secretary Peyser thanked Deputy Commissioners McCurdy and Simard and remarked that this is important work. He noted that as a Board and Department, we have a lot of authority to make some important decisions regarding this, and noted that financial aid support is spread around very thinly. He continued that because of the fragmentation and the lack of transparency, it does not give students access to the funds they need. He remarked that he likes the idea of simplification, and this will be more strategic in terms of its impact on completion and the workforce; it is all very encouraging.

Chair Gabrieli remarked that the presentation was very encouraging to hear, and thanked Deputy Commissioners McCurdy and Simard for the presentation.

### **B. Open Educational Resources to Support Access and Affordability for Massachusetts Students**

Chair Gabrieli turned to the next presentation on the agenda, stating that the Board would now hear from Department staff, and campus faculty and students, on Open Educational Resources (OER). He added that he would like to commend the student advisory council for taking on such an important initiative.

He turned the meeting over to Commissioner Santiago. The Commissioner briefly introduced the topic and introduced Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall, who would be leading the presentation today.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall remarked that she was excited to present today with students and colleagues from Northern Essex Community College (NECC). She introduced her co-presenters, Sue Tashjian, Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Jody Carson, Professor of Early Childhood Education and leaders of the Go Open Project. Deputy Commissioner Marshall remarked that they were finalists for the Bellweather award, and the Go Open Project saved 9,000 students more than \$1.2 million. She continued that she wanted to focus on access and affordability in the presentation, and she was very supportive of these efforts while at Worcester State, as well as last summer at the DHE, as she worked with staff to incorporate OER in PIF grants. She additionally commended the students for their leadership and advocacy in this area.

She began the presentation by providing an overview of OER, commonly defined as teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing. OER provide tremendous cost savings to students, and students can access course materials from day one. They are additionally customizable for faculty. She then provided some data on the burden that high text book costs place on students and how this is a barrier to student success and persistence. She then provided information on existing support for OER through FY18 PIF grants at five other public campuses for a total of \$319,958.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall then turned the presentation over to Ms. Tashjian and Ms. Carson to discuss the Go Open project. Ms Carson remarked that OER efforts go all the way back to 2001 and NECC started adopt open resources in 2013, which has resulted in great savings. She noted that faculty participate this voluntarily. Ms. Tashjian remarked that due to its initial success, they knew they had to take the concept of open resources statewide. They pursued and received a \$200,000 TAACT grant that turned into the Massachusetts Go Open Project. She then introduced a short video that explained the project, noting that textbook savings from the project exceed \$1.2 million.

Ms. Carson and Ms.Tashjian provided an overview of the structure of the project, the benefits to the institution, the benefits to the faculty, and the benefits to all students. They also provided an overview of the lessons learned and challenges faced, but reiterated that a small investment has yielded significant savings for students, of over \$1.2 million in the first year.

Board member Reimers remarked that this is terrific, and that in addition to the benefit of cost saving for students, there is an additional benefit of assisting students who learn differently because OER can help faculty experiment with personalized learning.

Vice Chair Harray remarked she was very impressed with this presentation and she would like to propose a motion that supports the students' efforts. However, before getting to the motion, the Board heard from Massachusetts Bay Community College student and Student Government Association President Charles Santamaria, who spoke about student engagement with OER. He remarked that the matter of saving money is of great importance to the SAC, and OER additionally speaks to the matter of access, citing an example of a student who dropped a course because he could not afford the books. Student Board members Dupuis and McHugh additionally provided some examples of how the cost burden is difficult and cited some examples of the challenges that textbooks endure. Mr. Santamaria then provided an overview of the timeline of SAC engagement on this matter this year. He then summarized the SAC's resolution on OER, which was provided in the Board materials.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall thanked the panel. Chair Gabrieli remarked that he appreciates the energy brought to this issue and shares everyone's enthusiasm.

There being no further discussion, the following floor motion was advanced by Vice Chair Harray:

The BHE recognizes and commends the Student Advisory Council's efforts to bring attention to and address the rising costs of learning materials for students; the BHE further recognizes that expanding access to Open Educational Resources is a viable option that can help increase students' access to more affordable learning materials; therefore, the BHE commits to working in conjunction with the Student Advisory Council and with all public higher education institutions to explore and help identify opportunities for implementing Open Educational Resources on a broader scale in the

	Commonwealth.  The motion was duly made, seconded and approved unanimously by all Board members present.
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>  There was no other business.
<b>IX.</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>  There being no further business, Chairman Gabrieli adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carlos E. Santiago  
Commissioner of the Department and  
Secretary to the Board