

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

February 4, 2020
10:00 a.m.

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place
21st Floor, Conference Rooms 2 and 3
Boston, Massachusetts

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 in the 21st Floor Conference Room at the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education at One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Ann Christensen

Veronica Conforme

Alex Cortez

Patty Eppinger

Paul Mattera

J.D. La Rock

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education, Ex-Officio

Judy Pagliuca

Paul Toner

Abby Velozo, Student Member, Community College segment

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

Anna Grady, non-voting student advisor, State University segment

Kush Patel, non-voting student advisor, UMASS segment

The follow Board members were absent:

Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair

Michael O'Brien

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair Gabrieli reported that there were three requests to address the BHE during the public participation period and he has asked that remarks be kept to three minutes.

Merrie Najimy, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) spoke first. She stated that the MTA represents more than 10,000 Massachusetts educators and her remarks today are about the critical need for funding in higher education. The MTA believes public education is a public good that does not end at grade 12; it is an issue of racial and economic justice and the state for decades has pulled back their responsibility to fund. The Fund Our Future Campaign successfully increased the foundation budget for K-12 education by \$1.5 billion. After decades, students graduate 12th grade with a fully funded education but they then go off the cliff because there is nothing for a debt free education and it is now time to turn our attention to fully fund public education at all three segments.

Max Page, Vice President of the MTA, spoke next. Mr. Page remarked that after the successful Fund our Future campaign, the MTA has signed on to the CHERISH Act, and we are inviting the BHE to join in on this effort. He continued that the MTA applauds the Equity Agenda, which is alignment with the MTA's goals. However, equity is not cheap, and the Governor's budget does not address equity. The CHERISH Act has a very specific goal of \$120 million that will support operating budgets on the campuses, eliminates capital debt, addresses the crushing debt placed on our students, and achieves adjunct justice. We have come to exploit adjunct faculty to teach the majority of our students with low wages and no benefits or security. He concluded by stating that these goals are in alignment with what the BHE believes, and the MTA invites the BHE to our press conference and to our advocacy day.

Maria Hegbloom from the Massachusetts State College Association spoke next. Ms. Hegbloom is a faculty member at Bridgewater State University and she remarked that the story of the funding crisis can be told numerically. Allocations to public higher education in Massachusetts have decreased by 31% since 2001; Massachusetts is ranked 45th in country for public higher education support and 2nd in the country for student loan debt. Ms. Hegbloom continued that our public campuses have crumbling buildings that are not ADA compliant. Our adjunct faculty do not get paid to hold office hours and not have space to hold them, but they are the first point of contact with the campuses for many of our students. These faculty do not have benefits, health insurance, retirement, stable employment, which are all difficult stresses. She added that public higher education provides access to opportunity and for the equity agenda to be more than just words, it must be accompanied by funding to make these dreams real.

Board members Toner and Velozo arrived at 10:20 a.m.

II. WELCOME

Chair Gabrieli stated that he would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the three outgoing BHE members: Nancy Hoffman, Tom Hopcroft, and Fernando Reimers. He thanked Board member Reimers and read a resolution highlighting his many contributions to the BHE. He then thanked Board member Hoffman and read a resolution highlighting her contributions as well. Board member Hoffman thanked the BHE and said it has been an honor. Chair Gabrieli additionally acknowledged outgoing Board member Hopcroft who was unable to attend.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chair Gabrieli brought forth a motion to accept the minutes from the January 10, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all Board members present.

IV. REMARKS AND REPORTS

A. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chair Gabrieli noted that there are two items on the agenda today in line with the Equity Agenda and evidenced-based practices. He also stated that he is been in conversation with the Commissioner regarding the Board committee structure, and he would like to discuss options during the spring BHE retreat. He added that, meanwhile, that anyone is welcome to attend any of the committee meetings.

B. COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS

Commissioner Santiago began his remarks by acknowledging the Presidents in attendance: Cape Cod Community College President John Cox, Mount Wachusett Community College President Jim Vander Hooven, North Shore Community College President Patricia Gentile, Fitchburg State President Richard Lapidus, MassArt President David Nelson, Worcester State President Barry Maloney, Salem State President John Keenan. He additionally acknowledged Tom Sannicandro and Vincent Pedone from the segmental Executive Offices. He then congratulated the two presidents who are participants in the inaugural Aspen Fellows Program for Community College Presidents: President Luis Pedraja from Quinsigamond Community College and President Christina Royal from Holyoke Community College.

The Commissioner began with a recap of the purpose and direction of the Equity Agenda initiative which he noted was for the benefit, primarily, of the new BHE members. He remarked that later in today's agenda, he will highlight Equity Goals that are being discussed with the Lumina Foundation, but for this section of his meeting, he will focus on two main elements of our Equity Agenda. The first is our theory of change and the second our departmental principles or understandings, at least to this point. He noted that the BHE did not have their customary retreat last summer, as we were aware that new Board members would be joining

and he wanted to delay these discussions until they came on board. Now that that has occurred, he hopes to schedule a BHE retreat on this topic in late spring of this academic year.

He continued by referencing the guiding vision statement that the BHE has already approved. He remarked that to operationalize this vision, however, requires considerable thought, discussion, and engagement. He then briefly described the steps we have taken to launch this process to date, which can be described as follows: *Convene, Train, Promote, Act, and Sustain*. Convenings have occurred throughout 2019. Multiple engagements have taken place in various geographic locations and with many stakeholder groups. The Advisory Committee was brought together at Mass Art and included representatives from across our institutions whose function is to be the conduit of information between the campuses and the Department of Higher Education. Meetings have included local boards of trustees, broad constituent groups, faculty, staff and students and we have engaged members of the legislature, chambers of commerce, and non-profits as well.

He continued that training has also been an important element in this process. The evidence – based research of our IR group has shown that the largest opportunity gaps we face in Massachusetts are those by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status – in that order. Funded by an initial grant from the Lumina Foundation, all departmental staff have met for four full-day workshops led by the University of Southern California’s Race and Equity Institute. The focus of the workshop has been to educate staff about marginalized communities and the role of higher education in both creating and eliminating obstacles to the academic success of students of color. Staff completed four modules of training and staff are working diligently on six projects. Following this the Department will embark on a review of all our policies from an equity perspective.

He continued that the success of the Equity Agenda will be predicated on the effectiveness of the policies and programs that are developed. Thus, promoting effective data-driven policies are essential to a successful agenda. Several policies have already been launched which can conceivably support the agenda including early college programs, 100 Males to College, remediation reform, and the like. Directives to local boards will also include language which references equity promoting policies in the evaluation of the presidents. The BHE has also indicated its tangible support in the development of its budget at the January meeting that has led to action and, that is, a discussion of the budget that supports initiatives aligned with the goals of the Equity Agenda. The proposed budget reflects Board priorities and is a call to the department to move initiatives forward. At the end of this long process, we will need to create a document that serves as the strategic framework for the system of public higher education and that includes specific goals, initiatives, and necessary funding for the Equity Agenda.

The final step entails sustaining the work to date and mapping the work into the future. It is important to note that the progress that has been made has drawn the attention of outside observers. In particular, the Lumina Foundation encouraged Massachusetts to apply for a

Talent, Innovation, and Equity (TIE) Grant that highlights the Commonwealth's commitment to this effort, provides some funding for the next few years to support it. Lumina has expressed considerable support for the manner in which Massachusetts is developing this framework. He said that we will present some of the goals that are under discussion with the Lumina foundation later in today's agenda.

He concluded his remarks by noting that while there is considerable work to do, the efforts that have been made to move this important agenda forward, particularly in only one year's time, has been noteworthy. He looks forward to continued conversations with the board and, in the retreat and elsewhere, greater engagement as we move forward.

C. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION'S REMARKS

The Secretary began his remarks with an update on the Governor's FY21 House 2 budget. The direct funding to the campuses across all three sectors incorporates an increase of \$42 million that covers collective bargaining and benefits. The budget also included increases for three specific programs related to access and affordability. First, a \$2.5 million increase for dual enrollment which includes the expansion of Early College, will fund cost of college courses in Early College programs. Second, there was an additional \$1 million for the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship program, and finally, there is a new \$5 million increase to the financial aid line items designed to mirror the MASSGrant Plus program, which is a last dollar scholarship for low income students who are participating in an evidenced based support program; this addresses not only access and affordability but also attainment gaps. The increases in dual enrollment, the High Demand scholarship program, and the new MASSGrant Plus-like program accounts for the largest increase in financial aid in the last 25 years and eclipses the last \$7 million boost a couple of years ago.

D. REPORTS FROM PRESIDENTS

Community College Presidents' Report – North Shore Community College President Patricia Gentile

President Gentile thanked the BHE and began her remarks by stating that as a sector, community colleges serve nearly 150,000 students annually, which is more than the state universities and UMASS systems combined. She referenced the Equity Agenda and noted that the community college student population is the most diverse and serves a growing proportion of minority students. Further, because community colleges are the most affordable option in the state, community colleges also outperform all public and private institutions in serving low income students. They also serve more adult learners. She continued that this describes the new normal at community colleges: a student population that is poorer, more diverse, more likely to attend part-time, be in the labor force and have responsibilities at home but committed to a better future. Despite this, the community college sector receives

the least amount of public support per student per year than any other public institution from K-12 and upward.

The community colleges believe the Commonwealth should invest in a SUCCESS fund to expand student support services at the community colleges to improve student outcomes, particularly as a tool to advance the Equity Agenda. She referenced the CUNY ASAP model and their success rates in terms of closing achievement gaps, increasing retention and improving graduation rates. Although it cost more to implement, the cost per graduate was actually lower than the status quo prior.

President Gentile referenced her remarks to the BHE during the October 2019 meeting; she had suggested that better outcomes here in Massachusetts could be accomplished with an additional \$1,561 per student per year, which was a figure derived from an analysis by Northern Essex Community College President Lane Glenn. She stated that we simply cannot produce better outcomes for our students without significant investment like New York or Ohio to provide intense wraparound support services. The evidence demonstrates that we already know how to turn funding into increased outcomes, and we just increased funding to do so and the COP is requesting that the Legislature fund a SUCCESS line item to provide these supports so our Massachusetts students can benefit from the same type of investment.

President Gentile continued to the next topic: increased philanthropic funding. She noted that the BHE will be reviewing recommendations for the Endowment matching Fund that has received \$10 million in state appropriations. The community colleges are thrilled to have this opportunity to raise philanthropic funds, but object to the insertion of new language into the former BHE criteria that these gifts must either come from new donors or be at a higher level than the average of an existing donor's three year average of giving. The community colleges recognize that the intent is to inspire new and greater donations, but stipulating that a matching gift for endowment purposes must come from a new donor will greatly limit the range of potential gifts to match this "new donor" criteria. Further, larger gifts than the past three-year average is another new condition. Fortunately, draft BHE policy language has already been amended to allowed pledges signed rather than received to be matching, however, if a college is fortunate to have a major giver who has already given several million dollars in the recent past, we should encourage future major giving at any level. President Gentile encouraged the BHE to eliminate the language that names new donors and places a larger than three-year average gift in the criteria for matching the newly appropriated endowment fund and recommending using prior criteria that was successfully implemented the last time a similar state appropriation was made.

She remarked that the community colleges believe the Equity Agenda is the ideal goal for moving the Commonwealth forward. She concluded her remarks by expressing her appreciation for the Commissioner, his staff, and the members of the BHE for their focus on

this priority and their generous spirit in supporting all the public higher education institutions and students of Massachusetts.

State University Presidents' Report – Fitchburg State University President Richard Lapidus

President Lapidus began his remarks by thanking the BHE for their FY21 budget recommendations. He referenced the Governor's House 2 budget increase of \$5 million to begin extending the MASSGrant Plus program to the state universities and noted the state universities' appreciation and support for the DHE and BHE for their work to make equity, affordability, and financial aid their focus. He quoted the FY21 budget narrative on addressing affordability through an equity lens, and he noted that the state universities agree and support those efforts, and intend to advocate for an increase in the financial aid item that fully covers the cost of attendance for the most needy students. He added that according to DHE data, state universities have 11,000 students with an EFC of \$0 and an unmet need gap of \$18.2 million, and affordability continues to be a barrier to students. He invited the BHE to join the state universities in lobbying for a significant increase in financial aid.

President Lapidus referenced a recent report from Framingham State CFO Dale Hamel whose analysis showed that for every additional \$1,000 in financial aid provided to a first-year student, their likelihood of retention increased by 10%. Financial aid does not just limit student debt, but it appears to increase persistence rates as well. He noted a recent editorial in the *Sentinel and Enterprise* newspaper that highlights the work at Fitchburg State being done to ensure the social mobility of their graduates, which an emphasis on disadvantaged students. He noted that while the need to close funding gaps for the most needy students has never been greater, the state's share of funding for higher education has been falling for nearly two decades. It is important to continue to work in this area and do better to provide high quality and affordable degree pathways for our students.

He concluded his remarks by requesting that the BHE consider adjusting their budget recommendation process to better align with the development of the Governor's fiscal year spending plan. If the BHE were to bring the budget process during the annual summer retreat with a goal to have the budget approved by the September meeting, as opposed to what has traditionally been November or December, there would be more time available to share the rationale of the budget with legislators prior to the spending plan deadline in January.

E. REPORT FROM STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Board member Velozo stated that she would save her remarks for the upcoming luncheon, but that they would be discussing OER and the resolution on statewide campus safety and security. Additionally, Cape Cod Community College is leading the effort to change the student trustee credit requirement because they believe it is too high in comparison with the average community college student enrollment.

V. MOTIONS

List of documents used:

AAC 20-10

FAAP 20-11 through FAAP 20-17

BHE 20-04 through BHE 20-05

A. Academic Affairs

Chair Gabrieli reported that at last week's meeting, the AAC discussed the Advanced Placement (AP) national and state landscape. As next steps, the AAC asked DHE staff to develop design principles for an AP policy and look forward to learning more about efforts related to prior learning assessment. The AAC also considered a motion to adopt transfer principles for the state universities and UMASS campuses.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for AAC 20-10: Adoption of State University and University of Massachusetts Transfer Policies. Board member Cortez remarked that he wanted to applaud that the BHE is taking this step; the transfer principles are rigorous and encompassing. He cited a statistic that showed many credits do not end up being transferred and challenged Massachusetts to have better data on this and a means to measure our success. The Commissioner responded by thanking Board member Cortez for his comments and he remarked that DHE staff have spent about five years working on transfer policies with our institutions. We now have a system for 41 different majors developed with representatives from the three segments working together. Massachusetts has been a leader in that transfer work and while there is always nuance to this work, the transfer principles are a move in the right direction. Board member Cortez responded that as we implement these principles, we need to consider what success would look like if we could increase the transfer rate by a defined amount.

Secretary Peyser stated that we need to consider alternative sources of credit, such as AP or credit for prior learning and a system that is transparent for students utilizing these alternative sources of credit so they are not surprised to find out that their credits won't transfer. He added that there is some more work to be done here on the data collection and tracking these alternative sources of credit. Board member Toner stated that this is also about keeping our schools competitive; we have to be nimble as we address this issue in connection with declining enrollment as students and families are looking for more efficient pathways to earn degrees. Chair Gabrieli stated that we have some reasonable quantitative measures to track this, and that the state is committed to this balanced model where the BHE and the campuses have some authority here. He referenced the AP presentation to the AAC and stated that the data is the only way to understand the impact.

There being no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a vote on AAC 20-10. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 20-10 was unanimously approved by all members in attendance.

AAC 20-10 **ADOPTION~~TOPN~~ OF STATE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS TRANSFER PRINCIPLES**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) hereby adopts the attached statewide State University and University of Massachusetts Transfer Principles and calls upon the Commissioner and the State University Presidents and University of Massachusetts Chancellors to work together to implement the Transfer Principles by January 2021.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, § 9 (u) and (v)

Contact: Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner for Academic Policy and Student Success

B. Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy

Chair Gabrieli reported that the FAAP Committee took up three agenda items at last week's meeting: endowment incentive guidelines, MSCBA rent certificate and MSCBA building motions.

The legislature enacted a supplemental budget bill that appropriates \$10 million for the Endowment Incentive Program for FY 2020 and FY 2021. In accordance with the enabling legislation and line item language, the Board is required to establish guidelines to create the parameters for the program, including the matching ratios for funds raised as well as to define allowable uses. The Guidelines included in your Board packet reflects an amendment proposed by Board member O'Brien and accepted at last week's meeting tin include language reference CASE Management and Reporting Standards.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion for approval for FAAP 20-11: Endowment Incentive Guidelines. Board member La Rock stated that he had not planned on speaking on this motion, but as he read the budget language, he was unable to find where in the language the BHE would be permitted to put a limitation on the matching funds in this motion and asked for a clarification on the language that permits this. Secretary Peyser responded that the legislation allows the BHE to establish guidelines and he does not think it makes sense to provide matching gifts on funds that have already been received, and that this is a well-established means of private fund raising. This is to enhance a college's abilities to raise funds, and not to reward them only for past success. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou concurred, stating that the 2019 budget language is implementing the existing enabling legislation (M.G.L. c. 15A, § 15E) which

seeks to encourage fundraising, and incentivizing fundraising is in the title, consistent with the legislative intent. Board member La Rock responded that he does agree with the policy rationale but he disagrees with the legal rationale.

Chair Gabrieli remarked that he is personally supportive of the motion as proposed, but he would encourage DHE staff and the campuses to maintain a dialogue on the effectiveness of this policy, as it is intended to help with campuses get incremental gifts. Deputy Commissioner Simard remarked that there is language in the motion on when the Commissioner will update the BHE. Foundations are required to update by June, so the June meeting will be the first appropriate place to update on how this is working. Further, to address Board member La Rock's and President Gentile's very valid points, the language specifies and limits the donor base for who is counted towards the existing endowment base—and it is not all donors, which is an important distinction.

Board member La Rock thanked Deputy Commissioner Simard for that clarification, but noted that it seems unclear that legislature's intent was to limit donations. He said he comfortable with this discussion being reflected in the minutes and moving forward with a vote without recommending a change.

There being no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a vote on FAAP 20-11. On a motion duly made and seconded, FAAP 20-11 was approved by all members in attendance, with the exception of member La Rock, who abstained.

FAAP 20-11 APPROVAL OF THE FY2020-2021 ENDOWMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the Endowment Incentive Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021

Authority: M.G.L. c. 15A, Section 15E; Chapter 142 of the Acts of 2019²⁹; (7066-0115)

Contact: Thomas J. Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Chair Gabrieli thanked Ed Adelman for his presentation at last week's FAAP meeting. He asked for a motion for approval of FAAP 20-12: Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority Budget and Rent Certificate. On a motion duly made and seconded, FAAP 20-12 was approved by all members in attendance unanimously, without discussion.

FAAP 20-12 FISCAL YEAR 2021 RENT SCHEDULE AND OPERATING BUDGETS MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGE BUILDING AUTHORITY

MOVED The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the attached Fiscal Year 2021 Schedule of Proposed Rents and Operating Budget for the Authority and State University Residence Hall, effective July 1, 2020, provided that any increase in the rent schedule shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Higher Education.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 73 App, Section 1-9 as amended and the *Contract for Financial Assistance, Management and Services*, dated February 1, 2003, made between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting by and through the Board of Higher Education and the Massachusetts State College Building Authority.

Contact: Thomas J. Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Chair Gabrieli introduced the next motion, FAAP 20-17 Approval of Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy Motions FAAP 20-13 through FAAP 20-16 on a consent agenda and asked for a motion for approval.

Board member Pagliuca commented that for the Massachusetts Maritime Academy building, there was no discussion during the FAAP meeting of the location of the building being on a flood plain. Mr. Adelman responded that the sight is being raised four feet and has been planned in accordance with the building code and insurance guidelines. Board member Pagliuca responded that codes are changing all the time though, and while there are a lot of good reasons to invest in Mass Maritime, she is concerned in placing this so close to the water considering climate change; hopefully today's building code anticipates this.

There being no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a vote on FAAP 20-17. On a motion duly made and seconded, FAAP 20-17 was unanimously approved by all members in attendance.

FAAP 20-17 APPROVAL OF FISCAL AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MOTIONS ON A CONSENT AGENDA

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education approves the following motions on a consent agenda:

FAAP 20-13 Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority Fitchburg State University Faculty and Student Housing

FAAP 20-14	Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority MCLA Student Activity Center Improvements
FAAP 20-15	Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority Massachusetts Maritime Academy New Cadet Housing
FAAP 20-16	Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority Massachusetts Maritime Academy Parking Improvements

Authority: Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

Contact: Thomas J. Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

C. Board of Higher Education

Chair Gabrieli stated that Governor Baker’s budget includes \$2.25 million in increased funding to support the expansion of the Early College program in Massachusetts. The BHE included this as a funding priority in its FY21 budget recommendations approved last month. This resolution signals the BHE’s commitment to early college. He referenced the Joint Committee on Early College, which Board member Toner serves on. This motion seeks to make clear that we will not have just an ad hoc approach to this, but that we are taking the recommendations of the joint committee.

He asked for a motion for approval of BHE motion 20-04: Resolution on Early College Funding. On a motion duly made a seconded, BHE 20-04 was approved unanimously by all members in attendance, without discussion.

BHE 20-04 RESOLUTION ON EARLY COLLEGE FUNDING

MOVED: In January 2017, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education adopted a joint resolution to establish the Early College Joint Committee (ECJC). The ECJC has established guiding principles to approve Early College programs that prioritize equitable access and opportunity for underserved and underrepresented students. In December 2018, the Board of Higher Education (BHE) adopted the Equity Agenda as its top strategic priority. Independent research has shown that Early College programs have a positive correlation with higher college-going rates among

historically underserved and low-income high school students. Massachusetts currently has 17 officially designated Early College programs across the Commonwealth serving approximately 2,000 students. In pursuance of the Equity Agenda, it is essential to grow Early College programs and through predictable and sustainable funding.

Therefore, the Board of Higher Education is committed to securing new and maximizing existing resources to ensure that appropriate levels of funding per course credit be provided to cover the higher education costs of Early College designated programs. The Commissioner of Higher Education is charged with developing annual cost estimates, and a plan for the BHE's approval, for sustainable funding for the costs of instruction for designated Early College programs

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, §§ 9, 15B and 39

Contact: Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner
Thomas Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

Chair Gabrieli remarked that this next item was originally scheduled as a presentation during the Joint Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education meeting which was cancelled in December. Chair Gabrieli remarked that this stems from a strategic data use project, funding by EOE aimed at addressing the question of how we leverage data to inform our discussions and act more powerfully together with partners from early education through workforce and beyond. We are likely to be forming an advisory committee on evidence-based policy making. Lastly, Professor John Papay of Brown University had been working with Associate Commissioner Jonathan Keller and DESE staff to connect data on students through a number of sources on high school, college and on income after college.

The BHE engaged in a brief discussion. Board member Toner asked how we can protect the privacy interest of parents and students and ensure that their data is secure and appropriately accessed. The Commissioner responded we are very careful about any data requests that come to us regarding FERPA, and all requests are carefully vetted by our legal staff. We provide data in the aggregate form and do not identify who the subject may be. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou noted that the last sentence in the motion regarding data security was added to ensure that all data use and exchanges are made consistent with applicable laws. Secretary Peyser remarked that there have been many conversations on interagency data sharing that have been

worked out through legal counsel, to ensure we remain in compliance with not just FERPA, but other applicable laws. The inclusion of that sentence is meant to emphasize how much we do care about confidentiality.

The Commissioner remarked that is delighted with the Board’s commitment to using high-quality evidence in policymaking. The DHE and the campuses have a long history of collecting, integrating, analyzing and sharing data. Working with EOE, DESE as well as the Division of Unemployment Assistance, the DHE has been a national leader in merging data to broaden our understanding of the students we serve. We have made tremendous strides in the analysis, sharing and online visualization of our substantial data sets. In recent years, DHE has collaborated with and shared data with researchers at Harvard, Brown, MIT and Northeastern. At the same time, we have always been careful to safeguard private student-level data from being accessed inappropriately. He remarked that what excites him about this motion is the opportunity to build upon and strengthen the significant foundation of evidence and practices that are already in place. Staff have worked effectively within the constraints of limited human and capital resources to get us to this point, and we are also in the early stages of a substantial effort, working with EOE and the public campuses, to modernize and expand our data collections. A renewed prioritization of evidence-based policy making will help ensure that our data and analytic capacity is reinforced so that we can make greater and faster strides toward the future state that we all envision—a richer, more relevant, more accurate and more accessible source of information and evidence to inform policy-making and initiatives intended to strengthen higher education in Massachusetts.

There being no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a vote on BHE 20-05. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 20-05 was approved unanimously by all members in attendance.

BHE 20-05 COMMON VISION FOR EVIDENCED BASED POLICY MAKING

MOVED:

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) hereby resolves to make a broad-based commitment to collect, review, and act on high-quality evidence to inform ongoing and new initiatives intended to strengthen higher education in Massachusetts. The BHE, working through its Department (DHE) and with institutions of higher education, as well as other partners from early education through workforce and beyond, will collect, integrate, and analyze the data needed to understand the students and adults served by our systems, their needs, and the impact of various policies and initiatives. This commitment also includes proactively designing and testing new initiatives to continually build and refine the evidence-based set of policies supporting

postsecondary success across the Commonwealth. Finally, the BHE commitment reflects that data about learners and best practices will be securely held, readily available, and user-friendly, with an explicit emphasis on responsible and accountable data sharing with stakeholders, including end-users in our schools and institutions, research partners, and more broadly with the students, families, and communities that we serve.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A § 9; *By-Laws of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education*, Articles III, Section 4.

Contact: Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner

II. PRESENTATIONS

- **MCAS Competency Determination and its Implications for Higher Education**

List of documents used

MCAS Competency Determination and its Implications for Higher Education presentation

Chair Gabrieli introduced John Papay, Associate Professor of Education at Brown University for a presentation on MCAS Competency Determination and its Implications and remarked that this topic piques much interest and discussion.

Mr. Papay began this presentation on using integrated data to examine policy problems by first examining the critical problem of Massachusetts public school students who grow up in low-income families go on to earn much less than peers who grow up in higher-income families. The question of the study is do academic skills and/or educational attainment account for those earning gaps? He continued by highlighting the substantial and growing inequality in the family incomes of children attending Massachusetts public schools. Existing data systems have allowed us to analyze certain aspects of this questions. However, while these data sets are powerful, they are also piecemeal. Integrating them gives us a more holistic picture of student success. Mr. Papay continued that integrated, longitudinal data allows for more nuanced and detailed analysis. By age 30, there is a substantial earnings gap between students from low-income and high-income families, which allows for the reproduction of inequities.

Dr. Papay continued the presentation by highlighting findings on MCAS scores. MCAS scores reflect academic skills that pay off in the labor market, and predict educational attainments, and in fact, MCAS scores predict earnings even if we compare students with the same educational attainments and demographics. MCAS skills reflect underlying skills that go on to pay off in the labor market. We don't need to just raise

scores but raise skills. He continued the presentation, stating that there are substantial gaps in educational attainments, even among students with similar academic skills. He showed data that demonstrated the enrollment of low-income and high-income students that show a significant gap in the percentage who first enroll in a four-year college. Further, among low income students who enter a two-year college shortly after high school, almost 80% have no credential five years later. Chair Gabrieli noted the reliance on public higher education for low income students, and the role of the BHE in the greater scheme. Dr. Papay continued by highlighting data that shows striking gaps in four-year college completion by family income, even among students with similar MCAS scores; higher income students are 21 percentage points more likely to graduate from a four-year college than low income students. Chair Gabrieli remarked how striking this slide is and how the gap grows, even at the 99th percentile scores; it's not just about MCAS preparation

The Commissioner remarked that when we break the data down by race and ethnicity, low-income white students still outperform higher income African American and Latinx students. Dr. Papay responded that there are obviously many stories in this data, and asked if this is a K-12 story or a higher education story.

He continued the presentation with data on income-based gaps in completion that exist for students who enroll at Massachusetts public four-year universities. Among students who enroll at Massachusetts public four-year universities, students who grew up in low-income families are much less likely to graduate than their peers with the same MCAS scores who grew up in higher income families. He continued that skill and educational attainment gaps account for most of the earnings gap students with the same MCAS scores and attainments. Comparing students with the same MCAS scores and attainments, earnings gaps are quite small. He showed several data points on this. Finally, educational attainments are rising for all groups, but gaps in four-year college attainment are widening. He concluded the presentation by summarizing the data and providing an overview of the next steps.

Board member La Rock asked Dr. Papay if he was aware of any studies that look at states with different higher educational policies than MA? He asked if there are different patterns in states that have more robust financial aid programs or free college, etc.? Dr. Papay responded that there are very few states that have this sort of data available, and he was unaware of any cross-state studies, but there may be some similar longitudinal data sets in Florida and Texas. Board member Pagliuca asked about students in the trades, noting that as we are trying to achieve more economic equity and social mobility among low income students, we should consider this in our analysis. Chair Gabrieli remarked that many of our data projects are very cross sectional and buried in that data are many questions that go beyond the purview of this Board alone. Board member Cortez asked how this data is being shared broadly

and referenced a recent study that showed parents' perceptions that MCAS is not reliable. Chair Gabrieli responded that was an important point, but being mindful of the time, that question is not in Dr. Papay's purview.

- **Advancing the Equity Agenda: Setting an Equity-Minded Attainment Goal and Eliminating Disparities.**

List of documents used:

Advancing the Equity Agenda: Setting an Equity-Minded Attainment Goal and Eliminating Disparities presentation.

Chair Gabrieli turned the meeting over to Commissioner Santiago. Commissioner Santiago remarked that he will be previewing statewide goals that align with the Lumina Foundation's goals he referenced in his earlier remarks. The BHE will be voting on this in March. He noted that we have been working with Lumina for months now.

He began the presentation, noting that the BHE is the first system board in the US to elevate equity as the number one policy and performance priority. Today, in Massachusetts, 53.8% of residents hold an associate's degree or higher and our 2030 goal is 70%. He continued with the goal of eliminating disparities between white and African American and Latinx students by 25% in four years. He continued the presentation by highlighting the key structures of the Equity Agenda, and the elements of the FY21 Budget that support these equity goals. He continued the presentation by providing completion data on students by race and by financial need, which demonstrates that white students with unmet need actually have higher completion rates than African American students without unmet. Further, a student's zip code also has implications on their earnings outcomes. He concluded the presentation with an overview of the timeline. Right now, DHE staff are working on an MOU with Lumina and he hopes to come back before the BHE in March. He concluded with a new paradigm to consider: instead of a deficit model that addresses that students are not ready for college, we should switch to an asset based model to make sure our campuses are ready for students.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chair Gabrieli remarked that he appreciates the Commissioner's continuation on this with his team. He remarked that the 70% attainment figure seems credible and arbitrary, what he thinks is missing is a theory grounded in metrics and tied to the Performance Measurement System. Have we looked to see if the campuses met their goals, how far to our goal would that get us? He remarked that he is not going to feel super confident that we have a plan as

opposed to a goal. He stated that it is an ambitious goal, and he would be supportive of entertaining goals along this line, he also wants to do it in a context.

The Commissioner responded that we will be presenting these goals to the BHE in March and providing some underlying analysis on how we can get there. Timing and sequencing do not always work out the way you would like, and we will discuss this more at the spring retreat. We will then have some underlying data to make a more informed decision. Our discussion with Lumina has come to a point in which they want to accelerate the process. Board member Cortez remarked that he would like to think about how we enlist private institutions in this goal, and seeing that it is only 1.6% growth per year, we should have all-inclusive ownership of this goal rather than imposing a target.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Gabrieli adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

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