

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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May 1, 2023  
2:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

The May 1, 2023 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) was held virtually on the web-conference platform Zoom.

**Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present:	Chair Chris Gabrieli; Bill Walczak; Veronica Conforme; and Commissioner Noe Ortega (non-voting, ex officio).
Committee Members Absent:	Vice-Chair (vacant seat); Patty Eppinger.
Others BHE Members Present:	Assistant Secretary Bob LePage; Andrew Whitcomb (non-voting UMass Student Segmental Advisor).
Department Staff Present:	Constantia Papanikolaou; Elena Quiroz-Livanis; Jose Luis Santos.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. Roll call attendance was taken (see above for attendance roster).

**II. DISCUSSION**

List of Material's Used  
*BHE Motion 23-38*

Chair Gabrieli began by proposing a motion to approve minutes. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the motion to approve the Executive Committee minutes for the March 20, 2023 meeting was approved unanimously by all members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli reviewed the agenda items, noting that there was only one motion for consideration, BHE 23-38 the Approval of Salem State University's Strategic Plan. He introduced the motion and invited President Salem State University's (SSU) President, John Keenan, to offer comments. President Keenan noted that the strategic plan aligns with the Meet the Moment Campaign, and highlights many of the institution's strengths, including their focus on civic engagement. He said that the strategic plan will carry them to become the first public state university in the Commonwealth to be designated by USDOE as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), a designation. DHE Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning Winifred Hagan commended SSU on their hard work with the arduous process. Chair Gabrieli asked if SSU has a version of a strategic plan that has numbered key measures and current end goals. President Keenan replied that the implementing end goals is the next step; they are currently planning their President's Executive Council Meeting to begin implementation discussions, which will include Phase 1 implementation of the strategic plan, and goal setting for the next five years.

Chair Gabrieli asked how SSU would be meaningfully different when the strategic plan succeeds. President Keenan responded that they would close the gaps that are important in the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity when they become an HSI. He also added that they will be meeting the workforce needs for the nursing profession that is more efficient and effective for the Commonwealth. He also referenced their fundraising campaign, noting that SSU is on track to raise seventy-five million dollars. President Keenan concluded by stating that he believes that SSU will reach stability in terms of its enrollment. SSU Professor Mary-Jo Grenfell added that the strategic plan addresses the barriers to student success and that she believes SSU will become a stronger institution in terms of enrollments, closing gaps, and a community of learning. SSU Executive Director of the Center of Civic Learning, Cynthia Lynch, added that she hoped implementation of the strategic plan will engender a heightened sense of community belonging for students, faculty, and staff.

Executive Committee member Conforme asked how often they reassess and re-examine their process. President Keenan replied that they are building into their process annual reviews, for the purpose of revisiting their goals to see if they are going in the right direction. President Keenan added that their conversation with the SSU strategic planning committee involved accountability, partnership, and transparency, in collaboration with the senior executive team. Committee member Conforme asked if this is the first time that they are focusing on a sense of belonging for community members. President Keenan responded that the institution has conducted a campus climate survey in the past, but they are due for a new one; they are in the process of hiring a new Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, and one of the primary tasks for

the Vice President is to conduct a new campus climate survey. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 23-38. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli moved on to Advisory Council updates. Due to Chair Eppinger's absence, Chair Gabrieli provided a brief update on the Academic Affairs and Student Success Advisory Council, stating the meeting covered the two initiatives: Open Educational Resources (OER) and Higher Education Workforce Development. Chair Gabrieli advised that DHE Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness Robert Awkward, shared that OER is an equity approach to increase access and affordability, diversity of teaching and learning materials, engaging students and faculty in co-creation of knowledge, and improving learning outcomes for students, especially those who are marginalized. IN addition, Associate Commissioner for Research and Planning David Cedrone gave a presentation on the Higher Educational Workforce Development side, providing a long-term view of the value of credentials plus a degree in the context of the Equity Agenda, and je outlined resources available to adult learners through the Education and Training Fund. Chair Gabrieli also noted that Assistant Secretary Bob Lepage shared information about the regional blueprints and tools to help identify which specific industries are currently projected for growth, and what educational opportunities need to be addressed.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **IV. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.