

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO.:** AAC 19-28

**COMMITTEE DATE:** June 11, 2019

**BOARD DATE:** June 18, 2019

---

**ESTABLISHMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and approves the establishment of **Massachusetts Bay Community College** membership in the **Commonwealth Honors Program** for six years, effective June 18, 2019.

**VOTED:** Motion approved by AAC 06/11/2019; Motion adopted by the BHE 06/18/2019

**Authority:** Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as Revised by the Board of Higher Education in November 2006; G.L. c. 15A, § 9.

**Contact:** Patricia A. Marshall, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success  
Ignacio J. Chaparro, MPA, Project Specialist for Academic Affairs and Student Success

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**June 2019**

### **Massachusetts Bay Community College Establishment of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This motion concerns the establish of Massachusetts Bay Community College's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP).

#### **REVIEW PROCESS**

Massachusetts Bay Community College prepared a self-study document presenting its Honors Program Structure and operation in terms of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements. The report provided evidence documenting the fulfillment of the following criteria:

1. Alignment of the mission and goals
2. Organization and administration
3. Admissions criteria
4. Transfer criteria
5. Program curriculum
6. Graduation criteria
7. Program resources
8. Approval procedures for new courses
9. Student enrollment for past three years
10. Approval procedures for new courses

#### **VISITING COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On March 25, 2019, Visiting Committee members Panteha Sanati, Professor of English/Honors Program Coordinator at Massasoit Community College; Paul Bruno, Professor of Philosophy/Honors Program Faculty Director at Framingham State University; and Rajini Srikanth, Professor of English/Dean of the Honors College at the University of Massachusetts Boston, conducted the review. Prior to the on-campus visit, the Committee reviewed the self-evaluation prepared by the College. The site visit was hosted by Professors Perry Beardsley and Jason Mazaik, who prepared a comprehensive approval report and provided all the necessary access to program participants. The Committee also met with students, Honors Program Co-Coordinators, the deans of the university, Chitra Javdekar, Susan Maggioni, and Nina Keery, Honors Program faculty, Jeanie Tietjen and Marco Mena, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Lynn Hunter, Assistant Provost, Christopher LaBarbera, and College President Dr. David Podell.

Massachusetts Bay Community College currently offers institutional based Honors programming and has now decided to apply for membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program. The Visiting Committee found that the Massachusetts Bay program satisfied the CHP criteria, and, therefore, the Visiting Committee recommends that Massachusetts Bay Community College be granted Commonwealth Honors Program status.

The Visiting Committee made several recommendations, which will strengthen the current program:

1. Continued Support: The Committee recommended continued support of Professors Beardsley and Mazaik in their leadership of the Honors Program.
2. Honors Course Offerings: The Committee recommended that the Honors Program institute the Honors Colloquium it has been trying to establish. A special-topics course can serve as a capstone for both students completing their associate's and students moving on to a four-year institution. The committee also recommended the development of a non-humanities honors course as current offerings are only in the humanities.
3. Increased Budget: The Committee noted that the current budget is modest at \$7,080 and recommended an increase be directed to both curricular (i.e. student research and travel to academic conferences), and extracurricular student activity (i.e. community building social events).
4. Promotion of program: The Committee recommended the development of a brochure and other advertising material to promote the program and inform students of its scope. Students who meet requirements on placement tests should know that they are eligible for all honors courses offered, not just honors English classes. The committee also recommended that signage be updated to reflect Mass Bay's participation in the CHP – including use of the CHP logo.
5. Develop student aid: The Committee recommended developing scholarship opportunity models like: tuition scholarships, book scholarships, and graduation scholarships (for students continuing their education at a four-year institution).
6. Expand faculty compensation: The Committee recommended compensation to faculty members for teaching honors "contract" courses at the rate of directed study compensation.
7. Transcript annotation: The Committee recommended that CHP participation be denoted on student transcripts.
8. Student access: The Committee recommended expanding student access to the Honors Office.

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

Massachusetts Bay Community College offered the following responses to the recommendations made by the Visiting Committee:

1. Continued Support: Professors Beardsley and Mazaik have been reappointed as Honors Co-Coordinator for the Academic Year 2019-2020.

2. Honors Course Offerings: The program will establish an Honors Program curriculum to include completion of the Freshman Composition Honors, two additional Honors courses (one of which may be by contract), and the Honors Colloquium course. The institution plans for the Honors Colloquium to be taught in the Spring Semester of 2020. Additionally, the prospect of developing an interdisciplinary course with the STEM division and/or Business and Professional Studies division is a focus area for the development of the Honors Colloquium.
3. Increased Budget: The program intends in future years to participate in the annual University of Massachusetts-Amherst Undergraduate Research Conference, and to fund student travel to the conference.
4. Promotion of program: The program coordinators intend to work with the College's marketing office to further develop marketing materials. The coordinators will also continue to update the web-based marketing resources. A summer communication plan will advertise upcoming courses to eligible students. The College will integrate the Commonwealth Honors Program logo in its print marketing, web marketing, and campus signage.
5. Develop student aid: In coordination with the MassBay Foundation Board, the program plans on creating four \$500 scholarships, two for each of the fall and spring semesters.
6. Expand faculty compensation: Contract courses will be compensated at the contractual directed study rate.
7. Transcript annotation: Currently, the "H: Honors Course" designation is noted on transcripts. The college will work with the Registrar's office to establish a transcript notation for students who have satisfied the Honors Program requirements.
8. Student access: The College will evaluate the space for furnishings to make the space more conducive to student activities, thus expanding student access.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Department of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and recommends that the Board approve the establishment of membership of **Massachusetts Bay Community College** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program**.