

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

March 6, 2018

10:00 a.m.

One Ashburton Place, 21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Conference Rooms 1 and 2  
Boston, MA

### **Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 in Conference Rooms 1 and 2 on the 21<sup>st</sup> Floor of One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts.

#### **The following Board Members were present:**

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Sheila Harrity, Vice-Chair

Nancy Hoffman

Tom Hopcroft

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education, Ex-Officio

Fernando Reimers

Henry Thomas

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

#### **The follow Board members were absent:**

Paul Mattera (Participated remotely for the purpose of listening in)

Paul Toner

Danielle Dupuis, Student Member, Bridgewater State University

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) to order at 10:09 a.m.

### **II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

### **III. WELCOME**

Chair Gabrieli remarked that in the interest of time, the meeting would be moving ahead to the next item on the agenda and reserve welcoming comments to the remarks and reports section. He additionally noted that Board member Paul Mattera would be joining the meeting via conference call, and explained that while Board members are able to participate remotely, Board member Mattera would not be able to vote on any matters before the BHE today.

#### **IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Chair Gabrieli brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2018 joint Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and BHE meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved by all Board members present with the exception of Chair Gabrieli and Vice Chair Sheila Harrity who abstained as they were not in attendance. With five votes in favor, the motion did not pass and therefore will be taken up again at the next meeting.

Chair Gabrieli brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2018 BHE meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved by all Board members present with the exception of Chair Gabrieli and Vice Chair Harrity who abstained as they were not in attendance. With five votes in favor, the motion did not pass and therefore will be taken up again at the next meeting.

#### **V. REMARKS AND REPORTS**

##### **A CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Chair Gabrieli offered brief remarks, first noting the Redesigning Massachusetts State Financial Aid report, which he described as an excellent conversation about financial aid. He additionally remarked about the FY19 budget, commenting on the addition of financial aid funds to improve affordability for community college students, as well as the addition of funds for the early college initiative, noting its importance towards completion, success and affordability efforts. He added that these intended investments are important statements in support of the Board's values and these extra funds support the work of the Department.

##### **B. COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS**

Commissioner Santiago began his remarks by acknowledging the Presidents in attendance, including Bridgewater State University President Fred Clark, Framingham State University President Javier Cevallos, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts' President Jaime Birge, Roxbury Community College President Valerie Roberson, Westfield State University President Ramon Torrecilha, and Worcester State President Barry Maloney. He additionally acknowledged Gretchen Manning from the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office and Vincent Pedone from the State University Council of Presidents.

The Commissioner highlighted a recent conference for members of the boards of trustees hosted by the DHE, which was attended by approximately 150 trustees and campus leaders representing all of the 15 community colleges and 9 state universities, and University of Massachusetts (UMass) campuses. He then acknowledged the work of Matt Noyes, Director of Trustee and Government Relations, who organized his first trustee conference, as well as several other DHE staff who made it a success, particularly Events and Executive Meetings Manager Stacy Bougie. He remarked that attendance and engagement throughout the day was high, and the vast majority of attendees stayed through the end of the closing session, making it quite apparent that the trustees take their role seriously and want to take advantage of professional development opportunities that allow them to do their job well. He noted that Lt. Governor Karen Polito and Secretary Peyser were able to attend the conference and give remarks, as well as BHE segmental representatives J.D. La Rock and Paul Mattera. The morning session provided an orientation for new trustees, led by DHE General Counsel Dena Papanikolaou who was joined by representatives of the State Ethics Commission, Office of the Attorney General, and Office of the Inspector General. This was followed by a plenary session in which he and Chair Gabrieli led a discussion of the changing landscape and challenges faced by public higher education today. He remarked that the discussion led to a sense that now is the

moment for public higher education to speak with one voice and to pursue innovations such as Early College Design and bring them to scale. The last part of the presentation spoke to the importance of functioning as a system, and the need to optimize the decentralized system in which we operate, or in other words, using the strength of our decentralized system to bring about substantive change to fundamentally benefit the state and its citizens. The Commissioner remarked that the Conference then offered important breakout sessions that focused on the state's budget process, the role of boards in increasing diversity in leadership positions, conducting presidential evaluations and enrollment trends. The closing panel brought all participants back together to discuss campus climate, free speech, inclusion and civility and included representatives from Salem State University, Framingham State University and Bunker Hill Community College to discuss their experiences in this area. He concluded his remarks by stating the DHE will continue to develop ways to give trustees the tools they need to serve their institutions in the best possible way.

#### **C. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION'S REMARKS**

In the interest of time, the Secretary did not make formal remarks, though he did echo Chair Gabrieli in his comments about good news in the budget.

#### **D. REPORTS FROM PRESIDENTS**

##### **Community College Presidents' Report – Roxbury Community College President Valerie Roberson**

President Roberson began her remarks by thanking the DHE for the recent conference for trustees and presidents. On behalf of the community college segment, she expressed her gratitude for certain key principles emphasized during the conference, including the encouragement to focus on collaboration and innovation, the need to address the changing landscape of higher education and having a common focus on meeting the goals of the BHE and the Commonwealth.

She additionally thanked Secretary Peyser, Chair Gabrieli, and Commissioner Santiago for speaking at the Community College mid-year Chair Academy in Boston. The Chair Academy is a national professional development model focused on transformational leadership for community colleges, with the goal of giving its participants an opportunity to learn about statewide policy and organizational structures; they had 25 participants attend and all expressed genuine appreciation that the Secretary, Chair and Commissioner shared their experiences with them.

She remarked that this type of professional development is often the springboard of ideas and opportunities for statewide innovation and collaborations, and noted that all of the community colleges successfully collaborated on a recent US Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance, Community College and Career training Grant Program (TAACCCT Grant) that partially funded three projects that are just starting to flourish. First is the Advancing Adult Learner Degree Completion through Credit for Prior Learning by North Shore Community College (NSCC); NSCC is nationally recognized for its leadership in the area of credit for prior learning (CPL). This effort brought together faculty and staff to share best practices and determine a common method for any Massachusetts resident to explore CPL at any of the 15 community college campuses. A statewide website was created for students that went live this fall and has already helped adult learners, veterans and single parents looking to accelerate the time to complete their educational goals. Second, Go Open, led by staff at Northern Essex Community College (NECC) provided faculty across the state the opportunity to develop Open Educational Resources (OERs), which provides students with substantial relief from the high cost of textbooks. With an investment of \$200,000, this statewide collaborative positively

impacted more than 9,000 community college students in the first year alone with a collective savings of over \$1.3 million, which will continue to grow for years to come. President Roberson noted that both NSCC and NECC were recently selected as finalists for the 2018 Bellwether Award. The third project was for curriculum developed or enhanced in biotechnology which led to recognition from industry, and nine community colleges were recognized for their work in this area by the Massachusetts Life Science Education Consortium. Simply stated, this means Massachusetts community college students graduate with skills that employers require for success in the biotech industry.

President Roberson concluded her remarks by stating that all three of these projects demonstrate public higher education priorities: to award more degrees and certificates, to address current and future labor shortages in high demand fields, and to make higher education accessible and affordable for all residents in Massachusetts.

Chair Gabrieli thanked President Roberson, and then invited Bridgewater State University President Fred Clark to make remarks.

### **State University Presidents' Report – Bridgewater State University President Fred Clark**

#### *List of Documents Submitted by President Clark:*

*None*

President Clark began his remarks by thanking the BHE for the opportunity to speak. He then thanked President Roberson and his colleagues from the community college segment for their partnerships, and noted that all of the nine state universities would like to offer an expression of sympathy to Massachusetts Community College Executive Office representative Bill Hart on the recent loss of his father.

President Clark remarked the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) federal deadline was on March 5 and with no resolution in sight, DACA students remain in limbo. He noted that there is a bill in the state senate sponsored by Senator Harriet Chandler which would provide in-state tuition rates to DACA students, which the state universities support. He then remarked about the BHE academic program approval process and strategic planning revisions, first noting that the state universities have been working with the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) on a revised academic program approvals process. The AAC broke from past practices to work directly with college presidents on this, and President Clark thanked Chair Gabrieli and AAC Chair Hoffman for their work on this matter. He added that vigorous debate and open discussion is a good thing from which good policy can grow, and the state universities stand with the Board to make public higher education better. Likewise, he expressed the same sentiment with the Strategic Planning Committee's work on the Guidelines, noting the recent SPC meeting convened to learn from the campuses how we can make the strategic planning process better. President Clark additionally thanked Secretary Peyser for his work on this matter.

President Clark continued by highlighting Salem State University and Worcester State University's recent letters of intent to offer clinical doctorates. He stated that these degree offerings are needed to strengthen the Massachusetts workforce, as many licensing boards have raised the requirements for entry level positions which employers have struggled to fill. He noted that many of these programs are not offered in anywhere in the public system, forcing students to go the private sector. The statute requires state universities work in cooperation with for UMass in the development of offering of doctorate programs. Cooperation requires two willing partners and that cooperation from UMass has been missing. The question be what does the state need, not what does UMass need. President Clark remarked that the state universities

stand ready and willing to offer these degrees which fit squarely within their mission. The statute that grants UMass as the doctoral degree granting institution is from the 1980s, and this distinction was understandable back then as Ph.D.'s were the primary doctoral-level degree, but as the economy and labor force have evolved, these professional practice degrees have become more necessary and prominent. State universities offering these clinical degrees is an evolution that almost every other state has adopted; professional practice doctorates are distinct from research-focused Ph.D.'s, and the state universities believe our institutions are well equipped to meet the evolving needs of the workforce.

President Clark continued his remarks by commending Secretary Peyser's comments at the recent trustee conference. He referenced the Occupational Therapy Doctorate proposal and remarked it embraces all of the Secretary's points; it will be the only public option for a doctorate in Occupational Therapy, and addresses a critical workforce need. The state universities intend to move forward vigorously.

President Clark continued by remarking that the state senate acted on the student data protection bill, and the state universities are pleased with this. The bill seeks to protect the personal information of students, which campuses are currently compelled to provide in response to public records requests; as a result, students have become inundated with solicitations. He also commented on the deferred maintenance bond bill which was passed in the senate and the house, noting that the state universities are pleased with the bill, as there are many old buildings on our campuses. He added, however, that as the funds are reconciled, the state universities hope for an equitable distribution for those funds. He noted that while some projects under \$2 million can move forward without Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), the state universities would like this threshold to be \$5 million. Finally, he noted that a collective bargaining agreement has been reached with the association of professional administrators, and they are still in negotiations with faculty.

Board member Thomas asked President Clark if there had been any attempt to deal with the void in the academic tracts the state universities want to create by working with UMass. President Clark responded yes, there was an attempt to establish a doctoral degree in social work and UMass Boston did not have a social work program. However, deep into the negotiations, UMass moved to offer a program and the talks fell apart. He is unaware of any previous successful efforts to offer a joint doctoral degree with UMass, but the state universities would love to find a way to partner with UMass, if possible.

#### **E. REPORT FROM STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Community College Segmental Advisor Ashley McHugh thanked Commissioner Santiago for speaking at the recent Advocacy Day. She stated that the Student Advisory Council continues to work on advocating for OERs and for conducting more campus climate surveys. SAC also advocates for extending in-state tuition rates for undocumented students, which they realize is an uphill climb.

Commissioner Santiago remarked it was a delightful meeting. He added that for the first time, he has included campus climate surveys in the presidential evaluation process. Board member Hoffman asked if the Parkland school shooting was discussed during the SAC meeting, and Ms. McHugh responded no, but that the issue of campus safety concerns came up more broadly.

#### **VI. MOTIONS**

List of Documents Used:  
AAC 18-21 through 18-26

## **A. Academic Affairs**

Chair Gabrieli turned the meeting over to Academic Affairs Committee Chairperson Nancy Hoffman to provide an update on the recent AAC meeting. Board member Hoffman stated that the AAC had a lively discussion regarding the program approval process. She thanked the campus representatives for their thoughtful feedback, as well as Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall and her team for the research they provided around how different states review academic programs. She added that this committee has been thoughtful about their charge to review the quality of the proposed programs versus the match of the program to the strategic direction of the campuses. She stated that the Committee also reviewed a degree revocation motion for New England Institute of Art and two new programs at the Master and Bachelor level. The proposal from UMass Boston to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Sport Leadership was advanced to this Board without recommendation, and she noted that she would speak more about that program during that portion of the agenda. Finally, she reported that the Committee also advanced two motions regarding the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement, one which approved final regulations which will administer the program and the other which established the fee schedule.

Committee Chair Hoffman then called for a motion on AAC 18-21: New England Institute of Art Degree Revocation. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-21 was unanimously approved by all Board members present, without discussion

### **AAC 18-21 New England Institute of Art Revocation**

**MOVED:** The Board hereby revokes the legal authority of the New England Institute of Art, LLC to operate and grant degrees in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts retroactive to December 31, 2017.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69A, Section 30 et seq.

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success  
Ashley H. Wisneski, Esq., Assistant General Counsel

Committee Chair Hoffman then called for a motion on AAC 18-22: Salem State University's Master of Science in Athletic Training. She added that the AAC was pleased with the strength and rigor of the program. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-22 was unanimously approved by all Board members present, without discussion.

### **AAC 18-22 Application of Salem State University to Award the Master of Science in Athletic Training**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of Salem State University to award the Master of Science in Athletic Training.

Upon graduating the first class for this program, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

Committee Chair Hoffman stated that the next agenda item is the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston's proposed Bachelor of Arts in Sports Leadership program, which was considered by the AAC but was advanced to the full Board for consideration today without a specific recommendation. She continued that before opening the matter up for discussion, she would like to provide some context for this motion and asked Deputy Commissioner Marshall to come forward and present on the background. Committee Chair Hoffman additionally noted that there is a delegation here from UMass that can answer any remaining questions Board members might have.

To open the matter for discussion, she then called for a motion on the approval of AAC 18-23/BHE 18-06: University of Massachusetts Boston Bachelor of Arts in Sport Leadership. The motion was made and seconded.

Committee Chair Hoffman then continued to provide context, noting that during the AAC meeting last Tuesday, several Committee members expressed concerns regarding the Bachelor of Arts in Sport Leadership program requirements and whether there was evidence of sufficient rigor for career preparation. There was also some discussion on the financial challenges currently faced by UMass Boston. Rather than wait until the next set of Committee meetings to more fully explore these issues, the AAC asked UMass Boston and DHE staff to provide additional information on these three items and advanced the program to the full Board without recommendation, subject to receipt of additional information. Commissioner Santiago sent a supplemental mailing on Friday that included a revised curriculum outline form; the external program review and the institution's response; the original full proposal from UMass Boston, as well the revisions to that proposal; a response from UMass Boston regarding the financial concerns raised last Tuesday; and a draft of the AAC Committee minutes.

Committee Chair Hoffman then invited Deputy Commissioner Marshall to briefly present on the proposal and asked Board members to hold questions until the end of the presentation. She then turned the meeting over to Deputy Commissioner Marshall.

Deputy Commissioner Marshall began by providing a brief overview of the program, including the intent of the program, the curricular offerings and potential career fields. She noted that the development of the program was supported by an industry-rich advisory board and offers an interdisciplinary curriculum. The program offers pathways to graduate study, provides opportunities for underrepresented groups, and includes co-curricular elements that support student success. Dr. Marshall continued her presentation by providing additional context on the academic requirements of the program, noting that there are required management courses. She remarked that there are no other undergraduate programs like it in Boston.

She then provided an overview of the external review process and findings, highlighting the external reviewers Dr. Rhema Fuller and Dr. Richard Lapchick, noting that Dr. Lapchick is the founder of the Center for Sport and Society at Northeastern. The staff recommendation is for approval.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the BHE engaged in a discussion about the program. Board member Reimers remarked that he will be voting in approval today and he appreciates the supplemental materials about the curriculum, as well as the strength of the advisory board. He remarked that he does think the proposed curriculum is thin, noting that an undergraduate curriculum does not adequately prepare a student for any sort of youth counseling. He

concluded, however, that he supports the proposal overall. Committee Chair Hoffman remarked that she had shared Board member Reimers' concerns before receiving the supplemental materials, but she intends to vote in favor of the proposal today. However, she hopes that students are strongly encouraged to complete a minor or concentration with more focus in management. Secretary Peyser remarked that he echoes both previous comments and is in favor of the proposal, citing four areas that are compelling: sports industry is a major, high growth industry; the advisory group is impressive and a broad representation of that industry; there is an expressed commitment to developing a broad pipeline of diverse leaders in this industry; and there is significant fundraising potential here. He additionally congratulated UMass on their responsiveness to this feedback to make sure the program is balanced and focused on leadership and professional skills, and thanked Dr. Marshall for the summary. Committee Chair Hoffman remarked that during the AAC meeting there was some confusion about what documents Committee members had received, but now they have a better sense of the full proposal contents as it relates to the abbreviated version typically received by Committee members she is satisfied with the proposal. Board member Harrity remarked that she appreciates the AAC having the foresight to pause and asking for more information and holding that vote. Chair Gabrieli remarked that it was clear at the meeting that there were real concerns and doubts being raised, and noted that he found the supplemental information valuable. He continued that as the AAC continues to discuss the work of the committee going forward, this process highlighted the challenges the committee faces with our current process. He remarked that this discussion of new program adoptions and the proliferation of degree programs highlight his concerns about this adding to affordability crises; it is the BHE's duty to care about this in the aggregate, separate from the individual programs. He continued that he appreciates the Provost providing the appropriate context that this is a valuable program within resources and economic plan for the campus, and he noted that he wants to reemphasize that everyone on the BHE cares about the success of all of our campuses, UMass included, and our inquiry is in the interest of that success and the BHE doing their job as a system board.

There being no further discussion, Committee Chair Hoffman called for a vote. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-23/BHE 18-06 was approved unanimously by all BHE members present.

**AAC 18-23 Application of the University of Massachusetts Boston to Award the Bachelor of Arts in Sport Leadership**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of the University of Massachusetts to award the Bachelor of Arts in Sport Leadership.

Upon graduating the first class for this program, the University shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, Faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success.

Committee Chair Hoffman called for a motion for approval on AAC 18-25: Final State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement Regulations. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-21 was unanimously approved by all Board members present, without discussion.

**AAC 18-25: Approval and Adoption of 610 CMR 12:00 Operation of Massachusetts**

**Degree-Granting Institutions Under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c.15A, § 9 and c. 69 § 31A, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the following regulations: Operation of Massachusetts Degree-Granting Institutions Under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), to be codified at 610 CMR 12:00

**Authority:** M.G.L. c. 15a, § 9, as amended by 2017 Mass Acts ch. 47, § 10;  
M.G.L. c. 69, § 31A, as amended by 2017 Mass. Acts ch.47, § 36;  
M.G.L. c. 15a, § 41,  
M.G.L. c. 30A; 950 CMR 20.00

**Contact:** Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel  
Patricia A. Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

Committee Chair Hoffman called for a motion for approval on AAC 18-26: State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement Fee Schedule. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 18-21 was unanimously approved by all Board members present, without discussion

**AAC 18-26: Fee Schedule for Massachusetts Institutions Seeking Approval to Operate Under the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education adopts the attached state annual fee schedule for Massachusetts-based institutions that apply to the Department for approval to operate under SARA.

**Authority:** M.G.L. c. 15a, § 9, as amended by 2017 Mass. Acts ch. 47, § 10;  
M.G.L. c. 69, § 31A, as amended by 2017 Mass. Acts ch.47, § 36;  
M.G.L. c. 15a, § 41

**Contact:** Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel  
Patricia A. Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

**B. Strategic Planning Committee**

Chair Gabrieli stepped out at 11:07 a.m.

Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Chair Reimers remarked the SPC met last week to hold a discussion about the current Guidelines. The work of the SPC has evolved to include a more comprehensive process of strategic planning that looks for strengths and opportunities within the regions, and ensuring the campus plans are not operational plans or just marketing plans that speak to vision and direction. The plans should include strategies to respond to challenges and opportunities, as well identify institutional strengths, and speak to areas that have growth potential or to challenges in certain areas. Additionally, they should identify opportunities to establish the legacy of the institution. Chair Reimers continued that the SPC wants to see plans with more ambitious goals, citing an example of three year programs that respond to higher education costs and affordability crises. He noted it was clear from the discussion that the process of approval of the Secretary of Education is a distinct phase, and not part of the Board's process, and remarked that it was a highly productive conversation.

Chair Gabrieli returned at 11:13 a.m.

Commissioner Santiago offered brief remarks on the SPC meeting, first thanking the campuses representatives who participated. He stated that as we go forward, we are valuing each stage of the process, and for new presidents, the process of developing a strategic plan itself is important in setting a tone for the campuses. He remarked that it was a very productive discussion, and the guidelines will be tweaked as necessary.

Secretary Peyser stated that he was not able to attend the meeting, but he fully supports the direction and intent of the process, and he does not want the process to become disjointed with the different requirements. He thinks there might be a point where the Department, Board, and Executive Office of Education can provide enough guidance so the campuses know what is expected of them. He concluded that there needs to be an ongoing conversation so we can provide better context for system-wide cohesion and strategy.

## VII. PRESENTATIONS AND MOTIONS

### **Redesigning Massachusetts State Financial Aid: Simplifying Process & Maximizing Impact**

#### List of Documents Used:

*The Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Study Report*

*BHE 18-05*

*PowerPoint Presentation, Redesigning Massachusetts State Financial Aid: Simplifying Process & Maximizing Impact, March 6, 2018*

Chair Gabrieli reported that since there was no FAAP meeting last week there are no items on the agenda related to that Committee. He then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Santiago.

Commissioner Santiago stated that the vote before the BHE today is to accept the Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Study report, and that DHE staff will come back to the Board with specific recommendations at a later date. He referenced the previously discussed \$7 million increase to financial aid in the Governor's proposed budget, remarking how critical it is as a direct intent to enhance affordability. He then introduced the presenters: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Access and Financial Aid; Dr. Bridget Terry Long, the Saris Professor of Education and Economics at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; and Ms. Monnica Chan, Ph.D. Candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Deputy Commissioner McCurdy began the presentation by thanking the BHE, and stated that today's discussion of the financial aid study report is timely, as it was in the news this morning. She noted that the report was sponsored by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and acknowledged Mr. Stafford Peat and his work on this project. She continued by providing an overview of the project, noting that the study grew out of the *Redesigning State Aid in New England* initiative, sponsored by NEBHE and funded by the Lumina Foundation. The goal was to produce a set of recommendations for reforming and consolidating state-funded financial aid programs that would move the Commonwealth forward on three BHE priorities: enhancing student success, improving college access and affordability, and closing achievement gaps. She remarked that today's presentation will provide an overview of study findings, pose high-level questions that must be addressed in formulating new policy and noted that the BHE is asked to accept this report, further directing the Commissioner to develop new financial aid policy recommendations and a plan for implementation. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy then

turned the presentation over to Dr. Long.

Dr. Long began her remarks by noting that this study has been a long time coming and that she worked on the 2006 Statewide Financial Aid Task Force, 12 years ago. She noted that this report analyzes the extent to which current financial aid programs are meeting students' needs, identifies opportunities to create efficiencies, identifies opportunities to simplify the aid process, and forecasts future state financial aid needs. She then thanked DHE Research and Planning staff Jonathan Keller and Mario Delci for providing data that was essential to this report. She reported that the current aid portfolio includes 31 different state financial aid programs and tuition waivers, with a great deal of variation in eligibility requirements, funding sources, and administrative oversight, and remarked that all of this adds complexity to the aid system.

She continued by reporting the median cost of attendance and grant aid by sector for FY14 for full time, full year students, noting that we know our students are diverse, and include adult and part time learners but this analysis focuses on full time, full year students.

Chair Gabrieli asked a clarifying question if the figures represented tuition and fees and living expenses. Dr. Long responded that yes, the figures include living expenses; full time students still need somewhere to live and they need to eat, and often have dependents of their own. She acknowledged that there are different ways to define costs, but generally we still have to include living expenses in an access and affordability discussion, citing an example of the state of California, which has very low tuition and fees but still has trouble getting students in because of living expenses.

She continued the presentation by providing data on median college costs, aid awards and unmet need for community colleges, state universities, UMass and private institutions. She remarked that in most states, there is a financial "safety" school that is affordable, but Massachusetts does not have this option.

Chair Gabrieli asked if all of the unmet need is being met by loans, and if so, do we have that data? Ms. Chan responded we have data on federal and state loans, but not for private loans. Chair Gabrieli recommended getting some of that data, as the loan piece as a data point is helpful to understand to give us some context. Dr. Long responded that federal loan limits are about \$5,500 annually, so if students have unmet need of \$14,000, a significant portion of unmet need being met by credit cards, or private loans, and prior to the Great Recession, it was often met by home equity loans. Further, much of the available loan data includes only the loan debt of students who graduate, and does not include the students who do not graduate but still have debt burdens.

Board member Reimers asked about the difference in unmet need at private institutions versus UMass for our poorest students, and what that means for them in terms of loan debt. Dr. Long explained that for the poorest students, private colleges can be very generous and there are some financial resources that the data cannot account for.

She continued the presentation with data on the overlap in expenditures and recipients of state need based grant aid at both public and private institutions. She then provided data on how the Massachusetts state aid portfolio ranks nationally and remarked that in Massachusetts, we consider ourselves education leaders and we have a lot to be proud of, but our state aid portfolio is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the country, and a small fraction of our portfolio is dedicated to our main program. Secretary Peyser asked a clarifying question if the figures also include tuition waivers; Dr. McCurdy responded that it includes the need-based waivers only.

Board member Reimers asked if we are making this harder because our process is more

complicated. Board member Harrity remarked that K-12 educators also find this difficult and complicated, but that their new ability to see whether or not students completed the FAFSA was a helpful tool. Board member Thomas asked if other states have less complicated systems; Dr. Long responded yes, and that some politicians have even been elected selling very simple programs that families can understand; the general move is to keep it simple.

Dr. Long continued by highlighting the study's conclusions and opportunities for improvement. She shared screenshots of the Office of Student Financial Assistance's website, asking if the same goals could be accomplished with a simpler approach. She asked if some programs could be consolidated to simplify the landscape to make it easier to communicate to middle school and high school students. She remarked that research has shown that early savings and awareness promotes stronger academic preparation with high school students.

Board member Hoffman asked if putting all the money in one pot could potentially leave it susceptible to getting cut; Dr. Long responded by referencing the Georgia Hope program which has a large amount of money in one pot, but voters reacted to any potential cuts to the program.

Dr. Long stated there were more opportunities for improvement, citing examples of eliminating smaller programs and removing programs that have not been used in years. Additionally, we could consolidate need based programs to build a singular progressive aid program, similar to other states and improve our communication to highlight and prioritize the larger program. She then noted other issues to consider, specifically that grants do not equal tuition waivers and very different things.

Board member Reimers asked if other states' state aid programs favor public institutions. Dr. Long responded that most states do have aid systems that support attending a public institution, noting that these students typically stay in our state and contribute on the long term. He then asked if Dr. Long could suggest three states that Massachusetts could look like; she responded by stating that California, Tennessee, and Washington would be good states to look at for state financial aid.

Dr. Long then turned the presentation back over to Deputy Commissioner McCurdy who reported on some of the DHE's activities since last spring. She remarked that the report has been circulated widely, including at a statewide financial aid forum in December, and at the statewide financial aid advisory committee. She also has received feedback from campus leadership, as well as from students and families as part of the Business Process Review that OSFA is currently undergoing with the help of the Ripples Group. She then provided a summary of the stakeholder feedback received, which included a general consensus to revamp state financial aid programs, to continue to advocate for increased financial aid resources, to address unmet need, to not overlook students who do not qualify for entitlement aid, to ensure program flexibility, and to address the balance of state aid that benefits public and private students. She continued by highlighting key factors for policy recommendations, which include administration, college affordability, and improving college participation and completion rates, and closing achievement gaps. She then summarized the goals of the project, which include consolidating and revamping programs that are similar and/or no longer effective, having clear and defined eligibility requirements, and revamping the DHE/OSFA website for clarity. She concluded the presentation by identifying the next steps: finalize recommendations for new financial aid policy, develop an implementation plan and timeline, present details of recommendations and an implementation plan to FAAP and the BHE; and finally, provide the BHE with annual reports.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the BHE engaged in a discussion about the report. Board member Reimers remarked that most people think about financial aid at the moment that students go to college, and asked if we should think about extending it to students earlier on

because it could have a considerable impact on the behavior of our students earlier on; or should we begin to grow programs in middle school to influence the behavior? Dr Long responded that a few other states have implemented some policies, but there have been questions about how impactful they can be; it's been done more at the city level. She continued that the challenge is getting families to trust that the money will be there ten years later when they enroll. She remarked that there is little administrative burden if we stick with a simple program that is easy to explain, transparent and simple to communicate to families.

Board member Thomas asked if any changes fall within the authority of the BHE, or do changes require legislative action? Deputy Commissioner McCurdy responded that the Commissioner does have some statutory authority through the general scholarship account but there are some state laws embedded in that appropriation and in the BHE's enabling legislation, citing an example of the Christian Herter Memorial Scholarship Program. Board member Hoffman remarked that Early College programs reduce costs and should be part of the picture and then asked about early Pell grants and if there is any argument to be made for early college scholarships. Dr. Long responded that year-long Pell has been impactful, but had to be rolled back because of funding limitations. Deputy Commissioner McCurdy additionally remarked that early Pell did not extend the lifetime limits of Pell, either. Secretary Peyser asked about income contingent loans where loan repayment is based on what future income might be, noting that the best evidence of these are in other countries, England or Australia. Dr. Long responded that the lesson that they have consistently learned is that if a family cannot understand the policy, then they cannot react to it, and suggested keeping policy and communication simple.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Senior Deputy Commissioner McCurdy, Dr. Long and Ms. Chan for their presentation.

There being no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 18-05, Acceptance of the Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Study Final Report. BHE 18-05 was approved unanimously by all BHE members present.

**BHE18-05                    Acceptance of the Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Student Final Report**

**MOVED:**                    The Board of Higher Education (BHE) accepts “The Massachusetts Student Financial Aid Study” Report. The Board expresses appreciation to the authors of the study, Professor Bridget Terry Long, Ph.D., and Monnica Chan, Ph.D. candidate, Harvard University, and to the New England Board of Higher Education and the Lumina Foundation for funding the study.

The Board calls upon the Commissioner to develop policy recommendations which shall include an implementation plan for the redesign of State financial aid programs aligned with the findings of the report and established BHE priorities. Such recommendations should be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting (May 2018) for implementation by academic year 2020.

Authority:                    Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(b) and 16  
Contact:                     Clantha McCurdy, Ph.D., Senior Deputy Commissioner for Student Financial Assistance, Access and Student Success  
                                      Thomas J. Simard, Deputy Commissioner

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Gabrieli called for a motion to adjourn. On a adjourned the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

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