

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 22-62

BOARD DATE: June 21, 2022

APPROVAL OF MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves **With Equity at its Core: Middlesex Community College 2022-2027 Strategic Plan**, and authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education for final approval pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(l) and 22(l).

VOTED: Motion approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 6/13/2022; and adopted by the BHE on 6/21/2022.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

Background

A fundamental responsibility of the BHE is to provide overall direction to the state's system of public higher education. The Board enacts this responsibility by establishing statewide goals and by regularly measuring and reporting progress toward these goals building upon the foundation of the Vision Project and Closing Gaps. Articulating statewide goals has no impact on creating greater equity in public higher education unless these goals and performance metrics are embraced by the individual colleges and universities and incorporated into their strategic plans. Massachusetts state statute therefore charges the BHE and the Secretary of Education with reviewing and approving campus strategic plans. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

Middlesex Community College Planning Process

Middlesex Community College (MxCC) started organizing for the strategic planning (SP) process in the summer 2019. Then-President Mabry appointed and convened a steering committee and did a joint orientation with the steering committee and cabinet members. By the end of the 2019 Middlesex had Identified 3 Strategic Directions titled Equity, Guided Pathways, and The Power of Community College. They also revisited and drafted new Vision and Mission statements, which were shared with the campus board for feedback. When COVID hit it derailed the work. In the fall 2020 MxCC tried to regroup and work on the plan with a COVID impact focus. In January 2021, the work-in-progress was presented to the campus board for feedback.

Touch Point I took place in the Fall of 2020. The *Campus Planning Guidelines* were reviewed and there was discussion about the importance of including all stakeholders including students who had not yet been engaged, reflecting the character and culture of the institution in the plan, and alignment with BHE goals and priorities. Staff noted that student government leaders might be a good starting point for student engagement. MxCC staff were very receptive to feedback on the process. As President Maybry was leaving and a new President would take the helm in June 2021, it was determined that

the work should continue to develop, and that Touch Point II would take place subsequent to that appointment leaving wide berth in the draft plan for the new leadership.

Following multiple informal conversations and draft reviews by DHE staff between the spring of 2021 and 2022, **Touch Point II** took place on April 26, 2022. The Commissioner and staff found the plan to be well developed and to meet or exceed all of the BHE expectations set forth in the Guidelines for Campus Strategic Planning. Racially equity is clearly emphasized throughout the document making it central to the future of Middlesex Community College. The Center for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation modeled on indigenous practices was found to be a particularly strong and excellent feature of the plan. The process of planning was highly inclusive and participatory for all internal and external constituencies. The Strategies and the goals and objectives that follow them, are comprehensive, clear, and logically aligned. These strong features and elements of the plan are iterative and make it structurally sound with a high prognosis for fulfilling its promise. MxCC is commended for the thoughtful and considerable alignment to the *New Undergraduate Experience*¹ woven throughout the plan. As well, MxCC places itself clearly as part of the larger whole that is public higher education in MA. It expects to hold an adaptive and transformational focus on equity for the foreseeable future.

In providing formative feedback at Touch Point II, MxCC was encouraged to use as a framework, Bensimon's 12 Indicators for Equity; to add what makes the college student-ready to the baseline for what makes a student college-ready; and to consider a role for industry to contribute to the effort to create programs that meet employer demands. It was suggested that a clearer connection between objectives and outcomes and the fiscal stewardship section regarding facilities would provide for more mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationships for MxCC and employers. It was also found that the section

¹ Aspirational document developed by an all-inclusive constituency of stakeholders in public higher education. [Equity Agenda / Strategic Initiatives / Massachusetts Department of Higher Education](#) Retrieved 5/5/2022

on adult learners is excellent and may be strengthened by opportunities for a 2-Generation approach as part of this endeavor.

On April 28, 2022, the MxCC Board of Trustees approved the strategic plan and subsequently the plan was submitted to Commissioner Santiago for Touch Point III approval by the Board of Higher Education. The plan was distributed to the members of the Board of Higher Education on June 2, 2022.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Middlesex Community College at Touch Point II and Touch Point III. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **With Equity at its Core: Middlesex Community College 2022-2027 Strategic Plan**.