

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 15-03

BOARD DATE: October 21, 2014

CREATION OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON INSTITUTION STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

MOVED: The Chairman of the Board of Higher Education is authorized to create an ad hoc committee on institution strategic plan review. The committee shall:

1) For campus strategic plan review in 2014-15: establish a timetable and process for discussion and review of at least five campus strategic plans, representing both community colleges and universities. BHE discussion of strategic plans during this pilot year will focus on two things: first, campus work to advance the goals of the Vision Project and the PACE collaborative initiative; second, how the BHE can most effectively interact with campuses in a comprehensive review of strategic plans beginning in 2015-16.

2) For campus strategic plan review in 2015-16 and beyond: create by March 2015, in consultation with campus leaders, a template or rubric for campus strategic plans; articulate by March 2015 a process and timetable for formal BHE review of campus-level strategic plans beginning in 2015-16; and articulate by June 2015 the means by which the BHE will monitor the progress of individual campuses in achieving their strategic planning goals.

The membership of the committee shall be determined by the Chairman of the Board of Higher Education.

Authority: M.G.L. c. 15A, §§9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

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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 regularly measuring and reporting progress toward these goals, as it is currently doing through the Vision Project. But articulating statewide goals has no impact 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.

The first steps toward incorporating regular review of campus-level strategic plans were taken during 2013-14 through the work of an advisory committee of campus presidents working with the DHE's Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs. The Advisory Committee's report articulated three key principles that should guide the BHE's campus strategic plan initiative:

1. The initiative should focus on goals and performance metrics, and respect the autonomy of individual campuses to determine how best to align with the Vision Project and other statewide priorities.
2. The DHE should leverage planning processes and work already underway on each campus to minimize new work.
3. Developing a new system-side strategic plan is not the thrust of this work.

The Board's goal for 2014-15 is to begin implementing these principles through a carefully designed and collaborative process that will involve working with several campuses currently involved in developing strategic plans. It is the further intention of the Board to fully implement its responsibility to review and approve campus-level plans during 2015-16.

Charge to the Ad Hoc Committee

The BHE's Ad Hoc Committee on Campus-Level Strategic Planning has been created to guide the work of the Board and the DHE with respect to reviewing campus strategic plans. The specific responsibilities of the Ad Hoc Committee include:

For strategic plan review in 2014-15:

1. Establish a timetable and process for discussion of at least five campus strategic plans, representing both community colleges and universities. BHE discussion of strategic plans during this pilot year will focus on two things: first, campus work to advance the goals of the Vision Project and the PACE collaborative initiative; second, how the BHE can most effectively interact with campuses in a comprehensive review of strategic plans beginning in 2015-16.

For strategic plan review in 2015-16 and beyond:

1. Create, in consultation with campus leaders, a template or rubric for campus strategic plans. The goal is to provide clear, advance communication to campuses about BHE strategic plan review; campuses would have the option of providing a crosswalk between their plan and the BHE template/rubric; using the template/rubric as a cover sheet for the plan they submit for BHE review, or adopting the template/rubric as part of their plan. This template or rubric should be submitted to the BHE for formal approval by March 2015.

2. Articulate a process and timetable for formal BHE review of campus-level strategic plans beginning in 2015-16. This timetable should allow for each of the community colleges and state universities to undergo a full strategic plan review at least once every five years. The timetable should be established in a timely manner so that campuses to be reviewed during 2015-16 have appropriate time to prepare.
3. Articulate the means by which the BHE will monitor the progress of individual campuses in achieving their goals during years following Board action of their strategic plans. Also articulate how the BHE will communicate with individual campuses based on information obtained through the monitoring process. This aspect of the Ad Hoc Committees work should be completed by the June 2015 BHE meeting.

DHE Staff:

Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs Anne Perkins