

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO.:** AAC 18-32

**COMMITTEE DATE:** June 12, 2018

**BOARD DATE:** June 19, 2018

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**RENEWAL OF FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY MEMBERSHIP IN THE  
COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and renews the membership of **Framingham State University** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program** for six years, effective June 19, 2018.

**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

## **BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**June 2018**

### **Framingham State University Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This motion concerns the continuation of Framingham State University's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program. According to the Commonwealth Honors Program Guidelines, once Commonwealth Honors Program approval has been obtained by an institution, the Program will be reviewed every six years by the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee. The report of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval.

#### **REVIEW PROCESS**

Framingham State University 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. Curriculum Review Process

#### **REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On February 15, 2018, the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) Review Committee conducted a day-long assessment of the Honor's program at Framingham State University (FrSU). The Committee consisted of John French, Professor of English/Honors Program Coordinator at Cape Cod Community College; Scott Nowka, Professor of English/Honors Program Area Chair, Salem State University; and James Canning, Honors College Dean, University of Massachusetts Lowell. The visit included meetings with Professor Paul Bruno, faculty director of the Honors Program; assistant faculty director, Professor Lori Lavigne; deans of the university; honors program faculty and students; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Linda Vaden-Goad, and University President Dr. F. Javier Cevallos.

The Review Team recommends the re-approval of the CHP status for FrSU's Honors Program, calling it a "stable, well-managed, and thriving" program. The team was impressed with the commitment of the students and faculty, as well as the full support of the administration.

Recommendations from the visiting committee included the following:

1. Continued Support: Honors Program Faculty Director Paul Bruno and assistant faculty director Professor Lori Lavigne should continue to be supported in leadership of the program.
2. Relationship with the Office of Institutional Advancement: The team noted the need for the Honors Program to develop a relationship with the University's Institutional Advancement Office, explaining that it may help with communicating the importance of the program across the university, with community partners, and alumni with the possible goal of increasing the number of scholarships for students entering the program after their first semester.
3. Honors Course Offerings: The team recommended that the number of honors courses increase from 5-6 per semester to 7-8 courses. The team added that more options would offer students a wider range of "intellectual opportunities."
4. Promotion of CHP Status: The team recommended that signage in the Honors House, the most visible symbol on campus of the Honors Program, be updated to reflect the program's inclusion in the CHP.

### **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

Framingham State University offered the following responses to the recommendations made by the visiting team:

1. The institution promised to continue to support faculty honors leadership and assist them in making sure the program grows and thrives.
2. The institution commits to a more aligned relationship between the Office of Institutional Advancement as recommended.
3. The institution agrees to consult with the honors students in advance of scheduling each semester to assure that course offerings meet needs and interests.
4. The institution agrees to update campus signage to reflect its participation in the Commonwealth Honors Program, especially in the Honors House.

### **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 renewal of the membership of **Framingham State University** in the **Commonwealth Honors Program**.