



## Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

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Carlos E. Santiago  
*Commissioner*  
Chris Gabrieli  
*Board Chairman*

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Community College Chief Academic Officers  
State University Chief Academic Officers  
Katherine S. Newman, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs,  
University of Massachusetts

**FROM:** Patricia A. Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and  
Student Success

**CC:** Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner  
Winifred Hagan, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs and  
Student Success

**DATE:** May 3, 2018

**SUBJECT:** **Expedited Program Review Process for Public Institutions to Assist  
Displaced Mt. Ida Students**

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I want to take this opportunity to recognize the selflessness of our public institutions in supporting students who have been displaced by the abrupt closure of Mt. Ida College. I also want to applaud the tremendous amount of work that DHE staff members have put into assisting these students in identifying the next steps on their educational pathways. As part of these continued efforts, I am writing to provide information on the **expedited program review process for public institutions for the period lasting through this spring (AY18) and summer (AY19) only.**

As you may know, the BHE has determined that public institutions, which are developing new academic programs for the purpose of accommodating the best interests of Mt. Ida students displaced by the sudden closure of the college, may submit applications for approval between April 15 and August 15, 2018. These options have been created and are offered as a triage based on the immediate and urgent needs of Mt. Ida students. There are two options available to institutions planning to reach out to students and families, and they are detailed below:

**I. Application for New Degree Granting Authority to address Mt. Ida Student Needs: May 3, 2018–August 15, 2018**

1. Consideration of proposed External Reviewers will be a top priority and processed ASAP.
2. Letters of Intent may be submitted at any time and will be circulated as always, but the comment period will be condensed to 5 business days in the interest of immediate student needs.
3. Proposals may be submitted following the end of the comment period. Proposals will be reviewed by staff consistent with the existing processes and according to the existing guidelines.
4. Once a proposal is deemed complete by staff, a motion will be written and brought forward to Commissioner Santiago with a recommendation per delegated authority.

Applications for New Degree Granting Authority to address Mt. Ida student needs will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. In all cases, staff will work as quickly as possible through the review. BHE has directed staff to prioritize and conduct such reviews by taking into account the needs and best interests of the Mt. Ida students. Institutions are reminded that "Changes to Existing Programs" (<http://www.mass.edu/foradmin/academic/publicchangeprograms.asp>) can be submitted year round. If institutions offer existing programs that could be modified consistent with this policy, to articulate with a closing Mt. Ida program, BHE encourages you to do so.

**II. Application for Teach-Out Authority to Assist Mt. Ida Students to Complete Degrees: May 3, 2018–August 15, 2018**

1. No External Review is required; BHE staff will identify and utilize a pool of disciplinary experts as needed.
2. Letters of Intent may be submitted to BHE staff at any time and will be circulated as always, but the comment period will be condensed to 5 business days in the interest of immediate student needs.
3. Proposals may be submitted following the end of the comment period. Proposals will be reviewed by staff for a) completeness, b) appropriateness to and consistency with the program Mt. Ida students seek to complete; and c) the needs and best interests of the Mt. Ida students. A distinct template has been created for this limited purpose.
4. Once the template has been deemed complete, approval will be processed internally by BHE staff.
5. Teach-Out Authority will be conditional and limited to the teach-out period only. During the teach-out period, institutions may determine that they would like to obtain full degree granting authority for the program. In this case, the institution would submit a proposal consistent with existing BHE policy.

Thank you in advance for any effort you can make regarding the Mt. Ida students and their opportunities to complete their degrees at our public institutions in a timely manner and with fidelity. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the content of this memo.