

Commission on Higher Education Quality and Affordability

The “We’re Not Done Yet” Task Force

October 30, 2024

The CHEQA task force was legislatively mandated to study and make recommendations on improving quality and affordability of higher education in MA

The task force shall review and evaluate...

- ▶ **State assistance programs and funding**, including, but not limited to, aid for tuition, fees, books, supplies and other **costs of attendance** and make recommendations to ensure the accessibility and affordability of said higher education institutions and how to achieve best outcomes
- ▶ **Student costs and debts** during and after attending said universities
- ▶ **Programs that improve student success**, including, but not limited to, academic support, career counselling, assistance with applying for state and federal benefits and improvements to facilities
- ▶ Improvements needed to **increase the recruitment and retention** of qualified adjunct and full-time faculty and staff
- ▶ **Financial assistance program design** and models to efficiently increase state assistance, improve outcomes and reduce student costs

Commission target study areas

1. **Student success**
2. **State financial aid redesign**
3. **Faculty recruitment and retention**

CHEQA will meet at least 4 times before the final report is due in March

Key activities	Task force timeline to final report							
	2024				2025			
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
Task force study areas								
Student success		Student success analysis						
State financial aid		State financial aid analysis						
Faculty and staff recruitment and retention			Faculty recruitment and retention analysis					
Monthly Commission meetings			▲ 11/7	▲ 11/26		▲ 01/21	▲ 02/11	▲ 03/04 (tentative)
Draft final report							★ 03/20	
Final report submission							★ 03/31	

■ Ongoing research and analysis
 ▲ Key CHEQA meeting
 ★ Key deliverable due

Suggested is establishing a to-be-codified North Star that guides the task force and Commonwealth's work

What makes a “North Star?”

- Clearly articulated purpose / goal
- Intuitive strategy for reaching the goal
- Commitment to sustained support over time

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

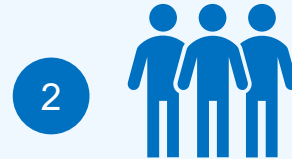
Our proposed North Star for the CHEQA task force is a set of recommendations to...

Example strategic framework

**A Comprehensive
Massachusetts
Program**



1
...advance student
success



2
...promote access
and affordability



3
... support faculty
recruitment and
retention

Goals

Promote student success, including retention, graduation, and post-graduate outcomes

Increase access to higher education and reduce student debt by making it more affordable

Invest in professionals to deliver the highest quality education to MA students

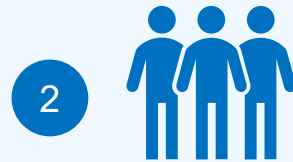
Guiding principles for program design

- Student-centered
- Prioritizes the neediest students
- Raises student success
- Simple and transparent
- Predictable and reliable for families and colleges
- Incentivizes recruitment and retention of faculty

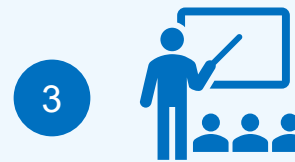
The following slides provide a very brief background for the key CHEQA study areas:



Student success



Financial aid design



**Faculty recruitment
and retention**

Detailed background and context information as well as options to explore will be provided to Members before each CHEQA meeting

The following slides provide a very brief background for the first CHEQA study area:



Student success



Financial aid design



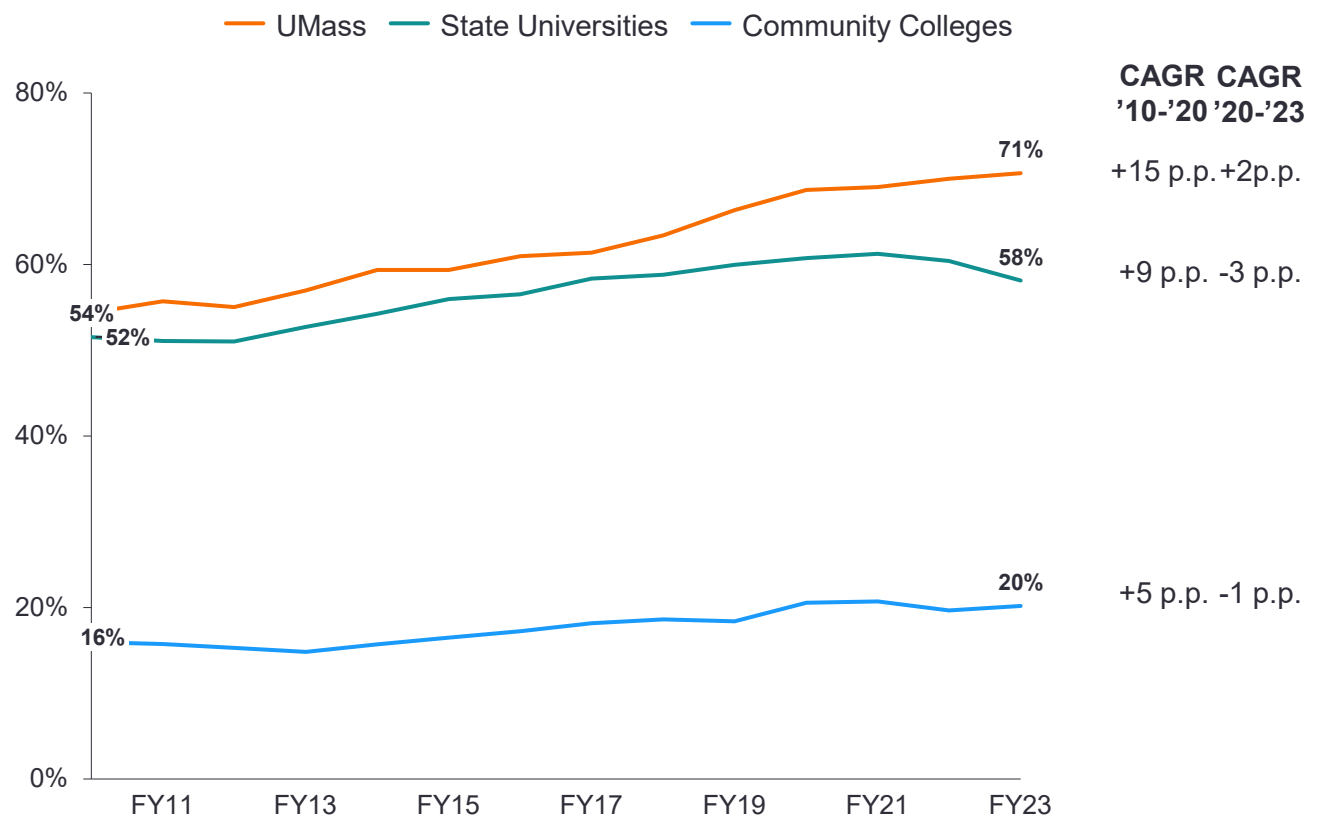
Faculty recruitment
and retention

Detailed background and context information as well as options to explore will be provided to Members before each CHEQA meeting

Completion rates vary by segment and are recently relatively stagnant; community colleges have leveraged advising and other best practices

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

MA graduation rates¹, FY10-23



Though there have been gains over the last 20 years, **completion rates have stagnated or even declined in recent years**

1. 150% of expected time to credential, weighted by institution enrollment
Source: IPEDs

Existing programs are leading the frontier for innovation in student success across the country

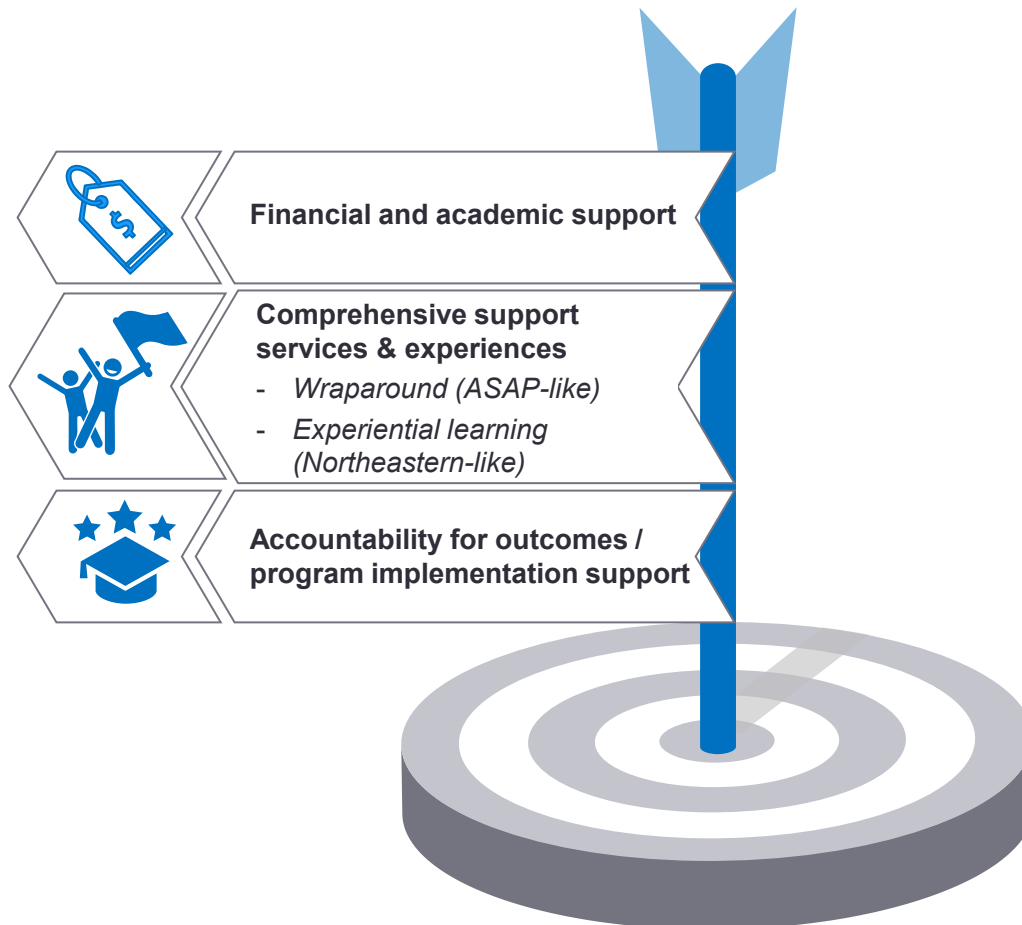
1	Student success
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	CUNY ASAP / ACE	Georgia State Student Success Department at GSU
Program overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) is a comprehensive, integrated, data-driven program launched in 2007 and offered at 9 CUNY community colleges. It is designed to help students in associate degree programs graduate on time by eliminating financial, academic, and personal barriers ▶ ACE is an adaptation of ASAP that supports bachelor's degree students and is available at 7 CUNY colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Georgia State University's (GSU) student success department has adopted several innovative approaches to improve student outcomes, especially for first generation and low-income students
Program elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Financial support – MetroCards for free public transportation, tuition waivers, and textbook stipends ▶ Academic support – structured pathways, one-on-one, high touch advising, enrollment in required developmental courses, and student success seminars ▶ Structured schedules – advising to maintain a full-time enrolment schedule to assist students in balancing work and other commitments outside of school ▶ Career and transfer services – career development services and support with transfer applications for students interested in pursuing a 4-year degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Retention grants – “microgrants” in the amount of ~\$300 - \$2,000 awarded to students who are close to graduating but face potential financial shortfall that may jeopardize degree completion due to small, unpaid balances ▶ GPS Advising is a predictive analytic tool that tracks over 800 risk factors to identify students at risk of falling behind ▶ Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs) – cohorts based on shared academic interest to provide structured and supportive first year experiences ▶ Success Academy – competitive program that admits students to GSU and provides 3 semesters of an extended learning community starting the summer prior to freshman year ▶ Keep HOPE Alive program – supports students who lost GPA-based scholarships by providing targeted academic support and financial aid to support regaining scholarship
Impact and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A 2020 randomized controlled trial found ASAP participants earned an average of 8.5 more credits, were 16 p.p. more likely to have graduated, and were 6 p.p. more likely to have enrolled in a four-year college or university ▶ ASAP has been replicated at community colleges in 7 other states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ GSU has seen a 14 p.p. increase in 4-year graduation rates since implementing the program in 2012, to achieve a 55% total graduation rate in FY23 ▶ Since the program's inception, the number of bachelor's degrees earned by Black students has increased 103% and GSU leads the country in bachelor's degrees conferred to Black students each year ▶ Since implementing GPS advising, GSU PELL student graduation rate rose to 58% (2021), from 31% (2007, pre-innovation) ▶ Partner institution replications averaged 8.8 p.p. improvements to retention rates
Associated costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ~\$1,850 to \$3,400 per student, based on context and supports offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ~\$800-2,500 per student based on size of retention grant provided

Success programs are needed in MA, especially as substantial investment in financial aid is increasing postsecondary access

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

Student Success Framework



Success programs and ACARE Recommendations

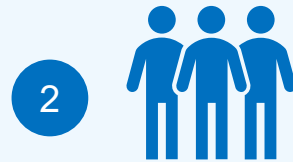
The CHEQA task force can build on recommendations¹ identified by the ACARE advisory group to continue to improve outcomes for underrepresented student groups including:

- 1. Increasing early exposure and access to higher education for K-12 students**, especially programs that target underserved and underrepresented students, to encourage equal and consistent access to information, tools, guidance and resources to pursue postsecondary options
- 2. Re-engage adult learners to encourage participation in higher education**, including access to resources required to pursue various postsecondary options and career training opportunities
- 3. Implement innovative recruitment, admissions and enrollment policies** to improve and enhance recruitment efforts, enrollment policies and admissions practices
- 4. Improve equity in financial aid and enhance support for historically underserved and underrepresented students and the institutions that serve them** by enhancing state support and institutional capacity to remove financial barriers to pursuing higher education opportunities
- 5. Increase persistence and completion for historically underserved and underrepresented students in higher education**; enhance state funding and institutional capacity to provide ongoing and equal access to essential academic and support services

The following slides provide a very brief background for the second CHEQA study area:



Student success



Financial aid design



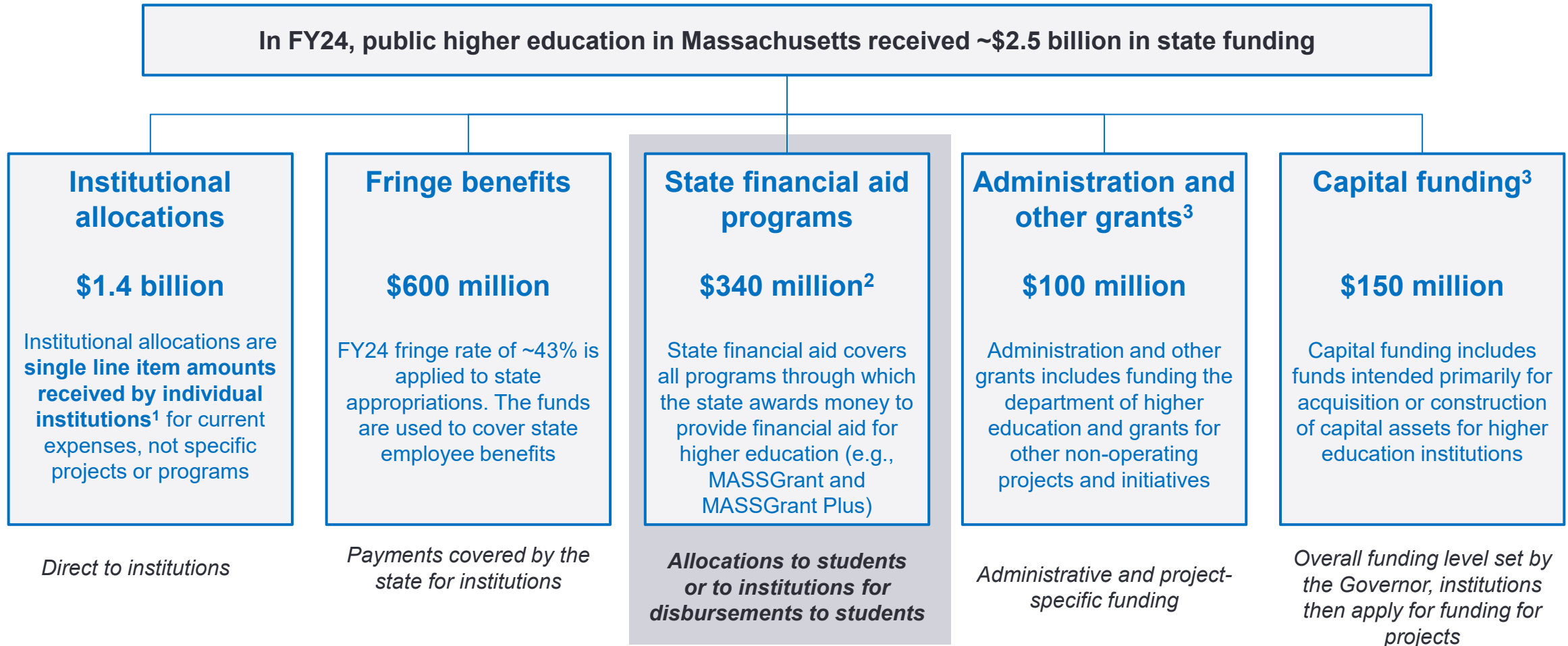
**Faculty recruitment
and retention**

Detailed background and context information as well as options to explore will be provided to Commissioners before each CHEQA meeting

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

Of \$2.5B in state spend, the vast majority (\$1.4B) is allocated to institutions rather than student financial aid or success programming

Total state funding for public higher education, by category



1. Sum of enacted budget directed towards UMass, state universities, and community colleges. UMass receives one institutional allocation to fund all campuses; UMass Medical is excluded from this analysis

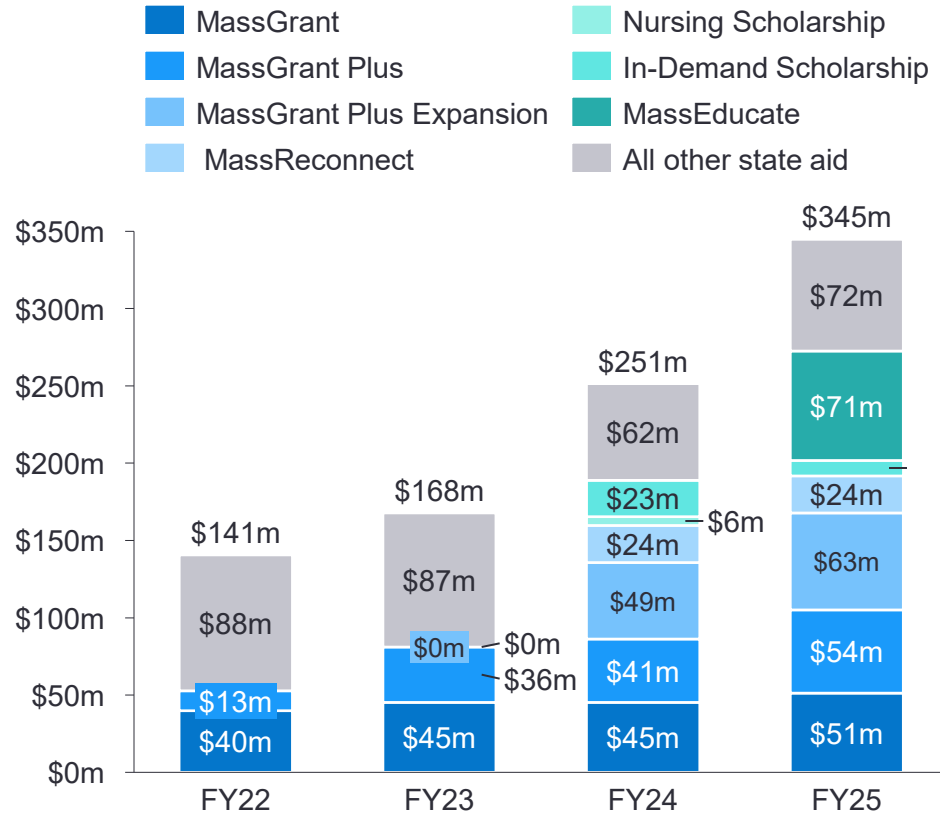
2. Portion of Department of Higher Education budget *appropriated* specifically for financial aid programs. Specific budget lines include Financial Aid Expansion, Mass Reconnect, Targeted Scholarships, Nursing Programs, Department of Higher Education, Foster Care Financial Aid, Foster Care and Adopted Fee Waiver, and Massachusetts State Scholarship Program

3. Capital Funding is pulled directly from Line Item 1596-2417 from the Department of Higher Education enacted budget. Administration and other grants makes up the remainder of the \$490m set aside for the DHE.

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

State financial aid has increased significantly in recent years, with disbursements more than doubling from FY22 to FY25

State financial aid disbursed to public institutions, FY22-25 (projected)



Enrollment²	153k	148k	153k	167k
% change		-3%	+3%	+9%

Timeline and key focus area of major state financial aid programs

MassGrant

- ▶ **Launched:** 1965
- ▶ **Key focus:**
 - Need-based financial aid for **full-time students** in public or private institutions

MassGrant Plus Expansion

- ▶ **Launched:** 2023
- ▶ **Key focus:**
 - Expands MassGrant Plus to full-time **middle-income group** in public institutions

MassEducate

- ▶ **Launched:** 2024
- ▶ **Key focus:**
 - Free tuition, fees, books & supplies for community college students; additional stipend for basic needs

MassGrant Plus

- ▶ **Launched:** 2018
- ▶ **Key focus:**
 - Expands MassGrant to **part-time students** in community colleges
 - Expanded to state universities in 2021 and UMass in 2023

Mass Reconnect

- ▶ **Launched:** 2023
- ▶ **Key focus:**
 - Free community college for students **25 and older**

1. FY24 and FY25 is sourced from simulated data and reflect preliminary estimates of allocations to students attending public institutions of higher education
 2. Enrollment is sourced from Fall enrollment data reported by DHE Data Center. The following growth rates were applied to project enrollment to FY25: 15% community colleges, 5% state universities, 5% UMass
 Source: Institution and preliminary estimates of FY24 distributions, EY-Parthenon analysis

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

A range of possible financial aid options will be presented and discussed at 11/26 meeting

Guiding principles for program design

- Student-centered
- Prioritizes the neediest students
- Simple and transparent
- Predictable funding stream for students and institutions

Discussion topics for 11/26

- Identify financial aid redesign options should the task force consider to:
 - (1) Promote access and affordability,
 - (2) Enable student success, and
 - (3) Enhance navigability
- Identify the biggest flaws and missing elements associated with the current suite of Massachusetts financial aid programs for those attending public & private institutions
- Identify which other states could serve as a reference point for successful programming
- Identify other important considerations to keep in mind with a financial aid redesign

The following slides provide a very brief background for the third CHEQA study area:



Student success



Financial aid design



**Faculty recruitment
and retention**

Detailed background and context information as well as options to explore will be provided to Commissioners before each CHEQA meeting

The CHEQA task force is comprised of stakeholders across the system to study, advise, and make recommendations for the Commonwealth

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

Desired qualitative inputs

- ▶ **Campus and other stakeholder conversations** (e.g., liaisons) to highlight current **constraints and pain points** re: recruitment and retention (e.g., work rules, salary floor)
- ▶ Review of **current reporting** on compensation and other approaches to similar challenges (e.g., MBTA compensation)
- ▶ **Landscape analysis** of other state approaches to similar challenges

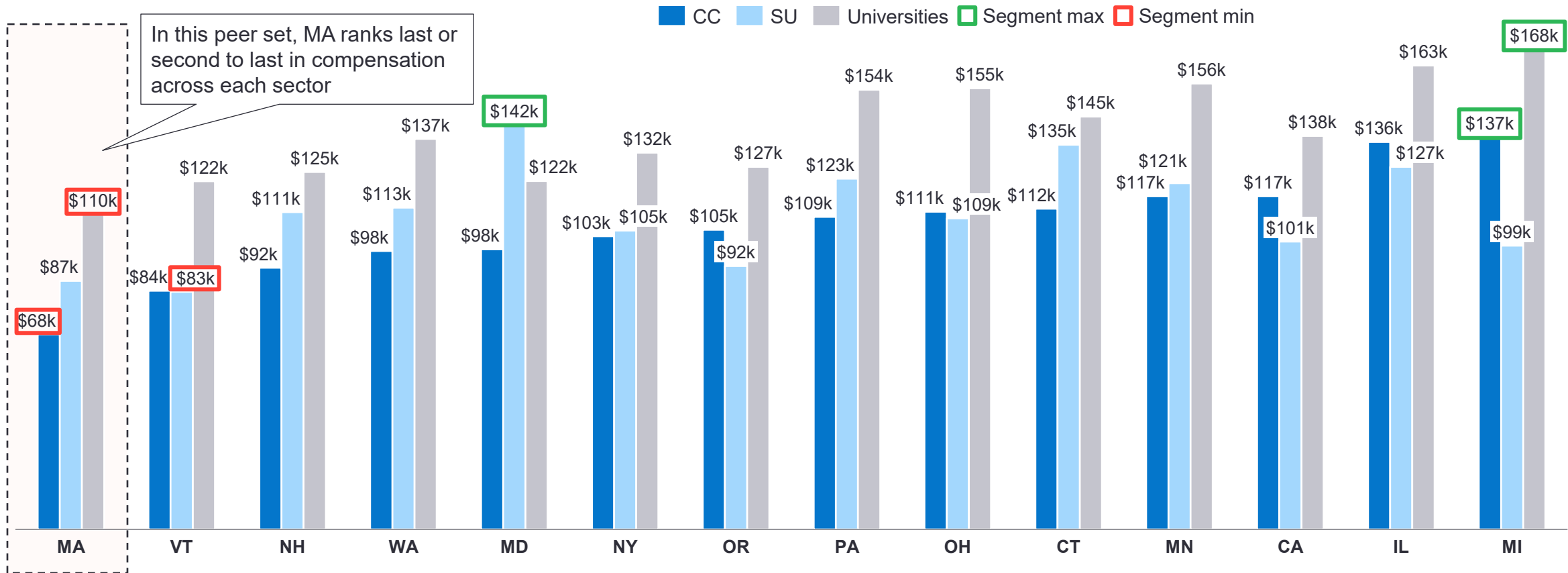
Desired quantitative inputs

- ▶ **Cost to recruit** by segment (CC, SU, UMass) and position type (tenure, non-tenure track, adjunct)
- ▶ Estimates of **faculty retention** by segment and position type
- ▶ Detail on **benefits packages** by segment and position type
- ▶ Current and historical share of faculty **with and without employee benefits** (e.g., adjunct vs. other)

1	Student success
2	Access and affordability
3	Recruit and retain faculty

A recent MTA study shows that average pay in MA lags peer states, a potential contributor to lower faculty recruitment and retention

Comparison of 2021-22 average faculty salaries, adjusted for cost of living, between Massachusetts and nearby and peer states



Note: Faculty salaries are weighted averages computed across states for the 2021-22 academic year, and are corrected for cost of living, based on each state's cost of living index from the [World Population Review](#). The faculty salaries for states are equivalent to MA salaries.

Appendix: Task Force Composition

The task force shall consist of...

- ▶ 2 members of the Board of Higher Education, who shall serve as co-chairs
- ▶ The chairs of the Joint Committee on Higher Education or their designees
- ▶ The Secretary of Education, or a designee
- ▶ 1 member appointed by the Minority leader of the House of Representatives
- ▶ 1 member appointed by the Minority leader of the Senate
- ▶ The Commissioner of Higher Education, or a designee
- ▶ The President of the University of Massachusetts, or a designee
- ▶ A representative of the state universities
- ▶ A representative of the community colleges
- ▶ 5 persons appointed by the governor, 2 of whom shall represent faculty or staff working at a university and 2 of whom shall represent students currently enrolled at a public institution of higher education
- ▶ The executive director of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Inc. or a designee
- ▶ The executive director of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, Inc. or a designee
- ▶ The executive director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, or a designee
- ▶ The executive director from the Massachusetts Teachers Association, or a designee
- ▶ The executive director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, Inc.