



the Vision Project

A PUBLIC AGENDA for
HIGHER EDUCATION
in MASSACHUSETTS

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Charles Desmond, Chairman, MA Board of Higher Education
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MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

A New Agenda for Public Higher Ed

- Where We Are **Today**
- Where We **Need to Be**



Student Enrollments Up Statewide

- **21% enrollment increase** in last decade
- New enrollment highs *across all segments*: over 40,000 undergraduates in MA state universities
- Enrollment not as dramatic as last year's, but still consistent and impressive

Good News at a Glance...

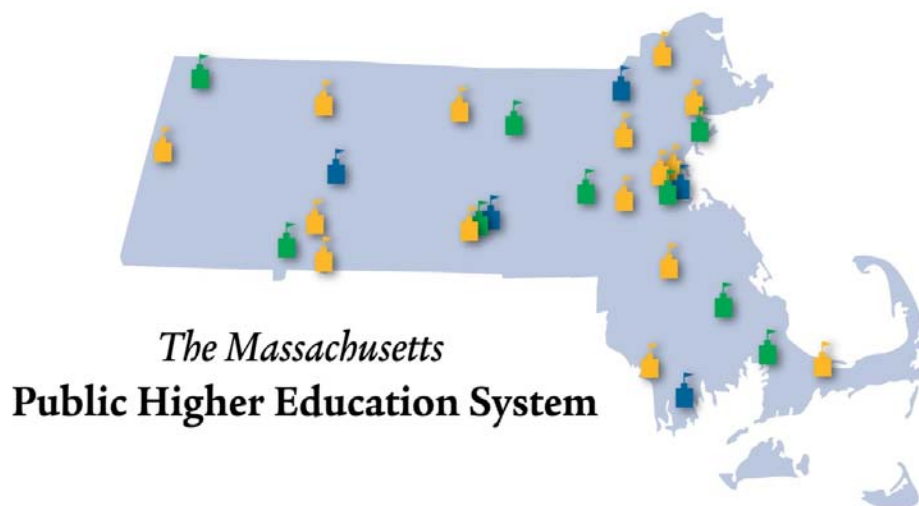
- **Strong Patrick-Murray Administration Support :**
 - \$2B bond bill for campus building projects
 - Tight FY12 budget maintains student scholarships, dual enrollment, supports Vision Project goals



**Greenfield Community College
Campus Core Modernization**

...But Current Context a Challenge

- **Fierce Economic Competition Among States, Nations**
 - Investment, jobs, talent
- **Public Higher Education Plays Critical Role, *but...***
 - Public system complex, decentralized
 - History of uneven state \$ support
 - Private colleges & universities often perceived as “better”



Urgent Need to Build Support for MA Public Higher Ed

- **Innovation Economy**
 - Demands educated workforce
- **Stagnant Population Growth**
- **Private College “Brain Drain”**
 - Private college graduates often go elsewhere; public college graduates stay
- **National Context**
 - Inter-state competition will intensify

Sharing The Vision

National K12 Leadership



- **Major Investment in K-12 Ed Reform**
 - Mass. investment in K-12 sustained since 1993
 - Business community has offered leadership, support
 - Mass. ranks #1 in NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) scores

Similar Focus on Higher Ed Needed

- **Historically, fewer \$ for Public Higher Ed**
 - State support per FTE ranks in middle of pack (25th among 50 states, FY '01-'09)
 - Biz leadership increasingly engaged, but...
 - Statewide public support still questionable



Making Our Case for Public Higher Ed

- **We Must Change Public Perceptions**
 - *Build appreciation* of the system's value, economic impact
 - *Increase awareness* that Massachusetts' "educational leader" mantle depends on strong public system
 - *Foster sense of urgency* about public higher ed
- **We Must Be More Aspirational and Accountable**
 - To justify increased support, we need *clear goals*, system-wide performance measurements, annual progress reports

The Strategy

- **The *Vision Project* will:**
 - Articulate the most important contributions of public higher education to the Commonwealth
 - Engage all public campuses in achieving these contributions
 - Hold public higher education accountable for a high level of achievement in this work
 - Generate greater appreciation of and support for public higher education

*In sum, the Vision Project will demonstrate that **public higher education can act in a unified and focused way to ensure the future well-being of the Commonwealth and that **we are ready to hold ourselves accountable for results to the people of the state.*****

Our Vision: A Bid for National Leadership

We will produce the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the nation.

We will be a national leader in research that drives economic development.

Key Outcomes: Measuring Achievement

■ **National Leadership in Education**

- College-going rates of high school graduates
- Graduation and student success rates
- Alignment of degree production with key areas of workforce need
- Academic achievements on campus-level and national assessments of learning
- Comparable learning outcomes among different ethnic/racial, economic and gender groups

■ **National Leadership in Research**

- Research activity related to economic development
- Economic activity derived from research

The Vision Project

Working Together



- **29 Campuses Unified Behind Effort**
 - Strong support from community colleges, state universities, UMass system
 - Board of Higher Education endorsement May 2010
 - Vision Project “launch” conference September 30

The Road Ahead

- **Work of DHE Organized Around Advancing Vision Project**
 - Project teams for each educational goal
 - Participation by campus personnel and non-academic stakeholders
 - Research supports policy, program intervention
 - Metrics to measure progress
- **Pursuit of Outside Funding to Support Efforts**
 - The Boston Foundation
 - The Nellie Mae Foundation
 - The Davis Educational Foundation



Critical Need for Faculty Engagement

- **Governance bodies:** asked to familiarize themselves with Vision Project goals on each campus
- **Provide feedback** through Presidents' offices by **March 15**
- **Be cognizant of Vision Project goals** in work with students
- **Communicate** your concerns, hopes to me at:
commissioner.freeland@bhe.mass.edu

The Vision Project

In the End...

*...Massachusetts will have the system
of public higher education that its
citizens demand.*
