



FY2015 PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE FUND



Focusing Resources on the “Big Three” Plan to Produce More College Graduates

A Report to the Legislature on the
Performance Management Set-Aside Line (7066-0025)

ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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|-------------------------|--|
| ■ 29 CAMPUSES | ■ 300,000 STUDENTS |
| ■ 15 COMMUNITY COLLEGES | ■ 40,000 FACULTY AND STAFF |
| ■ 9 STATE UNIVERSITIES | ■ 40,000 NEW COLLEGE-EDUCATED
CITIZENS & WORKERS ANNUALLY |
| ■ 5 UMASS CAMPUSES | |



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April 2015

The “Big Three” Completion Plan

Effective Strategies Underway at Our Campuses

PROJECTED SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED WORKERS

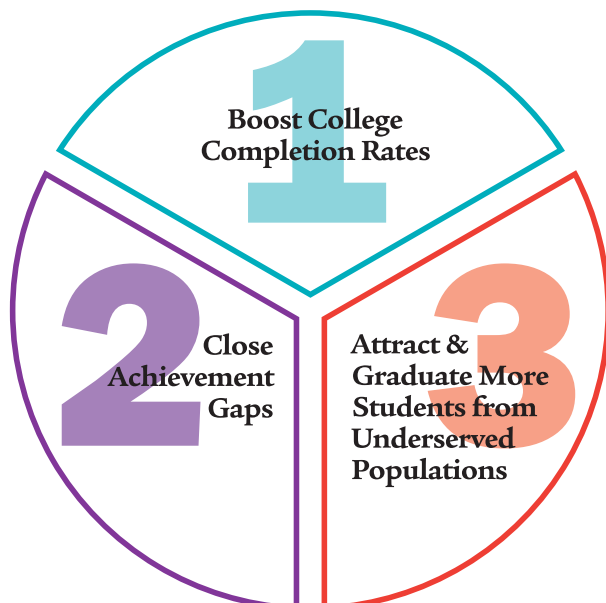


In October 2014, the Department of Higher Education (DHE) released the third Vision Project annual report, *Degrees of Urgency: Why Massachusetts Needs More College Graduates Now*. With an oncoming decline in the size of Massachusetts' adolescent population, the report projects fewer students enrolling

in and graduating from Massachusetts' public colleges and universities in the coming years. Unless offset by improved performance, this will lead to a shortage of tens of thousands of skilled college graduates needed for the workforce. More at www.mass.edu/vpreport

“BIG THREE” COMPLETION PLAN

To avert this shortage of college graduates and the threat it poses to the Massachusetts economy, *Degrees of Urgency* lays out a “Big Three” Completion Plan. It focuses on high-impact strategies under the umbrella of the Vision Project that will address the projected shortfall in students completing degrees and certificates at the state's community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses:



CAMPUS CONVENINGS

At a February 27 Vision Project Conference, DHE convened 250 faculty, staff and trustees of the public campuses to advance the “Big Three” agenda. Conference planners identified 15 specific, innovative strategies underway on Massachusetts public campuses to achieve the “Big Three” goals, and colleagues around the system shared successful approaches to implementing each of them. Work will continue this summer with a program of cross-campus collaborations designed to facilitate the scaling of effective strategies across the system.

PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE FUND

Many of these effective strategies have been developed using Vision Project Performance Incentive Fund grants awarded in FY2012–FY2015:

FY2012. With a \$2.5 million line item in the Commonwealth's FY2012 budget, the Fund provided grants to 18 campuses, along with a goal of encouraging long-term sustainability of funded initiatives through declining balance continuation grants: 2/3 of the original grant in Year 2 and 1/3 in Year 3.

FY2013 & FY2014. The Legislature increased funding to \$7.5 million for FY2013 and FY2014, greatly expanding the impact of the funds. DHE was able to issue grants for 41 new projects as well as the smaller continuation grants for previous years' projects. In addition, DHE was able to launch a system-wide initiative to facilitate transfer between two-year and four-year institutions.

FY2015. Due to funding constraints, the Fund was cut back to \$3.25 million, and grants were only awarded to continue projects from FY2013 and FY2014, including the system-wide transfer project.

DHE hopes that, in FY2016, the Fund will be restored to its FY2014 level so that it can be used to scale effective “Big Three” strategies across the system.

1 Boost College Completion Rates

GRANT EXAMPLES—VISION PROJECT PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE FUND

■ Create programs targeted at first-year students.

- ✓ **4 current & 1 past project**
- ✓ Early warning systems
- ✓ Registration outreach
- ✓ First-year experience courses
- ✓ Learning communities

One example is **Salem State University's** MAP-Works early alert/retention system, which identifies at-risk students for targeted interventions. The new system has served to rally the campus around the issues of student retention and success. Salem's fall-to-fall retention rate increased from 74% to 81% since MapWorks was implemented in summer 2012. ([Funded FY13–FY15](#))

■ Ensure students don't take excessive or unnecessary credits.

- ✓ **5 current & 2 past projects**
- ✓ Capping degree credit requirements
- ✓ Offering highly structured degree plans
- ✓ Aligning two-year and four-year curricula to facilitate ease of transfer
- ✓ Improving credit transfer policies

For example, **Middlesex Community College** created semester-by-semester Curriculum Maps for 75 different academic programs. As part of this initiative, they have also targeted programs that require 60+ credits in an effort to fit them into the standard 60 credits for associate's degrees. They are now rethinking academic advising and technology platforms to further support this initiative. ([Funded FY14–FY15](#))

■ Rethink scheduling to better support completion.

- ✓ **2 current projects**
- ✓ Prioritizing 15-credit/semester scheduling
- ✓ Providing structured & predictable schedules
- ✓ Mapping out degree program schedules
- ✓ Ensuring availability of milestone courses
- ✓ Creating meta-majors

Bristol Community College's use of the national *Guided Pathways to Success* (GPS) model combines block scheduling, milestone courses, peer support, proactive advising, and workforce connections. GPS students' retention rates were 11 points higher than those of other Bristol students (88% vs. 77%) with GPS students averaging 16 credits per semester—six more than the campus-wide average. ([Funded FY14–FY15](#))

■ Transform developmental (remedial) math.

- ✓ **2 current & 2 past projects**
- ✓ New standards for placement decisions
- ✓ Simultaneous developmental & college-level coursework
- ✓ 5-day/week & accelerated models
- ✓ Better high school/college alignment

Fitchburg State's redesign of developmental math courses and policy increased the percentage of first-year students who enroll in a match course from 62% to 83%, and the percent completing college-level math within their first two years from 72% to 77%. ([Funded FY13–FY15](#))

■ Tap institutional research, financial incentives, and non-academic support to promote full-time attendance.

- ✓ **1 past project**
- ✓ Using institutional research to drive completion interventions
- ✓ Providing financial incentives to promote attending full time and facilitate fewer hours spent at off-campus jobs

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts launched an initiative focused on ensuring students complete 30 credits by the start of their sophomore year, a critical milestone towards on-time completion. Through student education on the value of on-time completion and intentional scheduling, MCLA has gone from 34% to 64% of students having 30 credits by the start of their sophomore year. ([Funded FY12–FY14](#))

2 Close Achievement Gaps

GRANT EXAMPLES—VISION PROJECT PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE FUND

■ Consciously create supportive relationships for students.

- ✓ **3 current & 3 past projects**
- ✓ Student-to-student mentoring
- ✓ Faculty/staff-to-student mentoring, advising, coaching

For example, **UMass Lowell** hired and trained 23 peer tutors for gateway courses in engineering and science majors. These tutors, recommended by UML faculty, provided one-on-one and small group sessions, thus providing individualized academic support for students in these STEM fields. (Funded FY12–FY14)

■ Provide targeted support for underrepresented students.

- ✓ **3 current & 2 past projects**
- ✓ Providing curriculum, student services, and resources focused on first-generation and low-income students and students of color

UMass Boston hired a transition coach to provide targeted support to students who had transferred from **Roxbury Community College**. These students received coaching on both academic and non-academic issues, peer tutoring, and guidance on how to take advantage of campus resources. A tracking system keeps the program informed about student GPAs and credit accumulation. (Funded FY14–FY15)

■ Provide targeted support for low-income males/males of color.

- ✓ Positive youth development programs
- ✓ Gender, academic and socio-emotional supports
- ✓ Cultural asset-based activities

DHE efforts with this population post-date the last Performance Incentive Funding round, but the Department was able to use a one-time federal grant in FY2015 to launch *100 Males to College* in partnership with **Springfield Public Schools, Springfield Technical Community College, Westfield State University, and UMass Amherst**. This pilot initiative combines outreach, mentoring, and professional development to increase student access and success.

■ Build a campus climate that supports and enhances diversity.

- ✓ **1 current project**
- ✓ Ensuring administration, faculty, and staff are diverse along lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation
- ✓ Addressing micro-aggressions
- ✓ Offering cultural competency trainings

Springfield Technical Community College launched a range of targeted initiatives to improve the success of Latino/a students, including leadership training for Latino/a student mentors, a Spanish language session of new student orientation for students and families, and a summer bridge program, *Prepárate!*, which focused on skills ranging from time management to test taking. (Funded FY14–FY15)

■ Make learning relevant and applied where appropriate.

- ✓ **10 current & 1 past project**
- ✓ Using internships, co-ops, and service learning to connect the classroom to career
- ✓ Offering contextualized developmental math
- ✓ Providing information about high-demand careers of which students may be unaware
- ✓ Recruiting industry experts to speak or teach on campus

Bunker Hill Community College's *Learn and Earn* internship program enables students to intern 16–30 hours/week at \$15/hour and earn credits in their major. This program, whose corporate partners include Staples, Raytheon, and Liberty Mutual, has increased the career readiness of a diverse group of students, many of whom have gone on to seek four-year degrees. (Funded FY13–FY15)

Attract & Graduate More Students from Underserved Populations

GRANT EXAMPLES—VISION PROJECT PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE FUND

■ Actively recruit adult learners, veterans, and out-of-school youth, and support their transition to college.

- ✓ **2 current & 1 past project**
- ✓ Veterans' outreach programs
- ✓ Outreach to adults with some college credits
- ✓ Recruitment of 16- to 24-year-old youth who are neither enrolled in school nor employed
- ✓ Partnerships with adult basic education, ESOL, and adult college transition programs

Working as a consortium, **MassBay Community College** and **Framingham State University** established the MetroWest College Planning Center to provide extensive pre-college counseling support and college financing information to underserved students in the MetroWest region. No such resource previously existed in the region. (Funded FY14–FY15)

■ Engage in Early College work with traditional-age students.

- ✓ **1 current project**
- ✓ College access activities
- ✓ Dual enrollment
- ✓ Math boot camps
- ✓ Hybrid high school-to-college models.

North Shore Community College's Early College initiative enables high school students in Lynn Public Schools to take college-level courses for both high school and college credit. This program has enhanced the academic preparation, college acceptance, and college scholarship opportunities of the 112 students who have been served to date and given them a headstart on their college degrees. (Funded FY14–FY15)

■ Develop strategies to increase college participation of students of color and low-income students.

- ✓ **1 past project**
- ✓ Outreach to community-based organizations
- ✓ Summer bridge programs
- ✓ College access and success programs
- ✓ On-site registration/acceptance

Through **Worcester State University's** Teaching Corps Program, Latino/a undergraduates trained in literacy and conflict resolution receive paid internships in Worcester Public Schools. The program provides high school students with Latino/a role models, builds the pipeline of future Latino/a teachers, and has increased the retention rates of Worcester State Latino/a students. (Funded FY12–FY14)

■ Build strong partnerships with K–12 schools and districts.

- ✓ **3 current & 2 past projects**
- ✓ Joint curriculum development with high school and college faculty
- ✓ Programs to bring K–12 students onto campus
- ✓ Engaging high school-based liaisons

Quinsigamond Community College has offered Math IV, an algebraic reasoning course that has enhanced college readiness, to nearly 300 Worcester public high school students who needed this support. Participants were identified based on the results of an Accuplacer exam administered during their junior year of high school. (Funded FY12–FY14)

■ Develop institution-wide approaches to enrollment and retention.

- ✓ **1 current project**
- ✓ Work across campus departments and divisions—from the registrar to faculty, from financial aid to tutoring and curriculum alignment—to develop a coordinated approach to student success

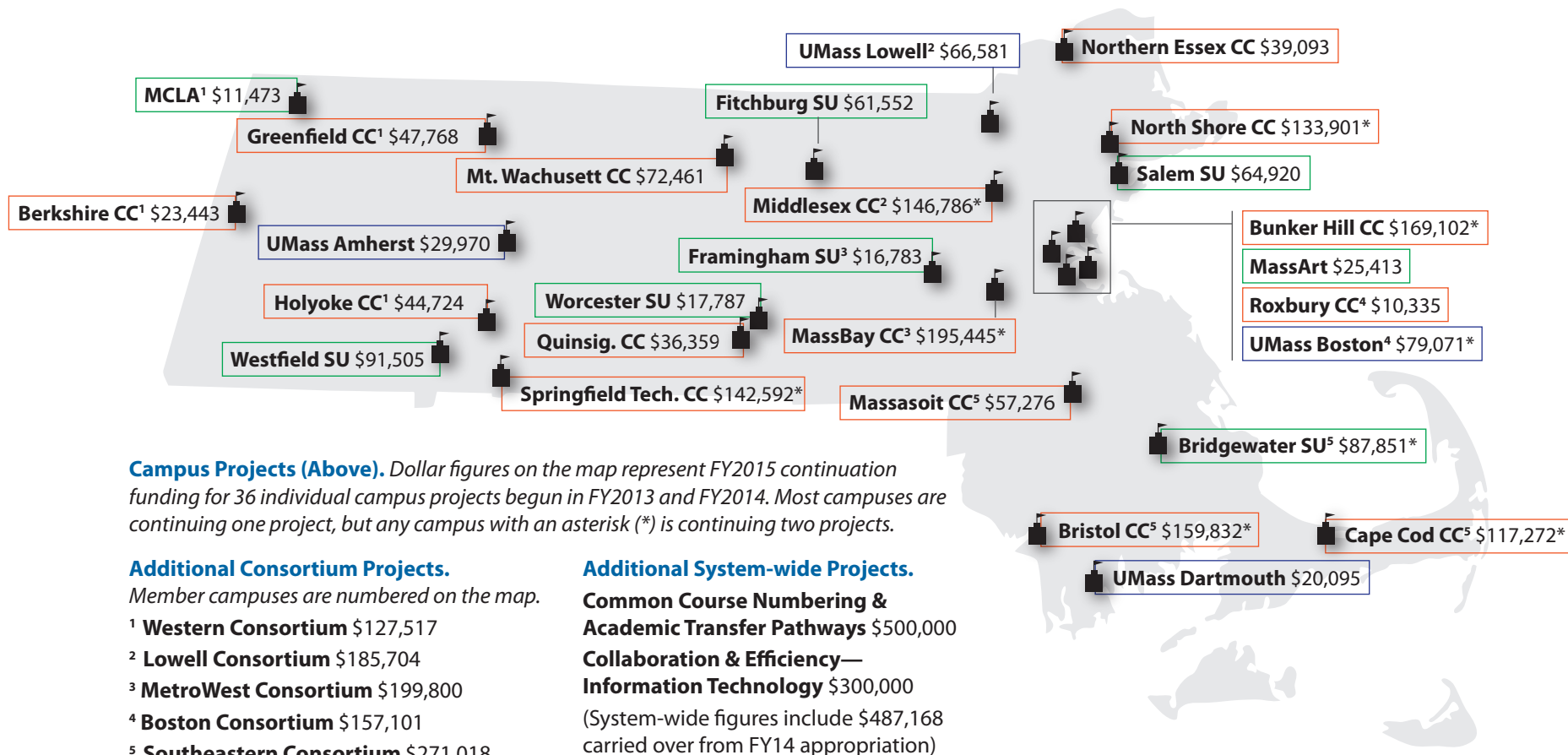
Bridgewater State University partnered with three area community colleges—**Bristol, Cape Cod, and Massasoit**—to improve the graduation rates of students who transfer to Bridgewater. This project combines curriculum alignment, improved transfer advising, and academic and social support once students enroll at Bridgewater. (Funded FY14–FY15)

Geographic Distribution of FY2015 Performance Incentive Fund

Community College

State University

UMass Campus



About the Vision Project

If the Commonwealth is to compete effectively for jobs, investment and talent—and sustain our rich civic landscape—**Massachusetts needs the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the nation and needs to be a national leader in research that drives economic development.**

Excellence at the Commonwealth's 29 public colleges and universities is essential to meeting these needs. Through the Vision Project, the Commonwealth's community colleges, state universities and University of Massachusetts have united with the Massachusetts Department of

Higher Education in an ambitious strategic plan to strengthen our performance in both educational achievement and research—while holding ourselves accountable to the public for results.

More information about this initiative is available at www.mass.edu/visionproject.