

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Minutes**

The January 16, 2018 meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was held in the 21st Floor Conference Room, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

SPC Members Present: J.D. La Rock
Paul Toner
Commissioner Carlos E. Santiago, ex-officio, non-voting member

Other BHE Members Present: Secretary of Education Jim Peyser

Department Staff Present: Kate Flanagan; Patricia Marshall Constantia Papanikolaou; Elena Quiroz-Livanis; Thomas Simard

Campus Guests: Bunker Hill Community College President Pam Eddinger; Associate Dean Liya Escalera; MassBay Community College President David Podell

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting SPC Chairperson Paul Toner called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. He remarked that he is filling in for SPC Chair Fernando Reimers today.

II. MINUTES

Acting Chair Toner brought forth a motion to accept the minutes of the December 5, 2017 SPC meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by all SPC members present.

III. REMARKS AND REPORTS

A. Committee Chair's Remarks

In the interest of time, Acting Chair Toner did not make remarks.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago made brief remarks, noting that we are here today to review Touch Point II for two institutions today, Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and MassBay Community College (MBCC). He remarked that Touch Point II is the point in which the members of the SPC can comment on what has been received thus far and provide guidance to the campuses moving forward to the final document. He remarked that he made reference to a triad earlier this morning during the AAC meeting regarding the program approval process and how it relates to the strategic planning process, noting that the program approval process will be changing and that strategic plans and performance review will be central to academic program

approvals. With those caveats, the SPC hopes to provide some guidance to the campuses as they move forward. He remarked that he has visited both campuses throughout the process so far. He then noted that Associate Commissioner Winnie Hagan is ill today.

IV. PRESENTATION

A. Touch Point II – Bunker Hill Community College

Acting Chair Toner invited BHCC President Pam Eddinger to make remarks. President Eddinger introduced Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Liya Escalara and remarked that she is charged with providing guidance internally and externally to move the planning process forward. She then provided an overview of BHCC's planning process, describing their approach as "strategic thinking," noting that it is necessary to get the entire campus community to think strategically because their efforts will be unsuccessful without community buy in. She continued that they have separated the process into three steps: think, plan and do and described each element. Thinking includes institutional learning outcomes, college goals, mission, vision and values. Planning includes a coherence and alignment of intermediate plans including the education master plan, strategic enrollment plan, financial plan, and facilities and technology plan; the overarching artifact is the Strategic Plan and all of the other plans will drive it. Finally, the action component is that all of the college level units are required to do an annual unit plan, and that at any one time, the program level action plans will inform the Strategic Plan. She stated that the goal is for every single person on campus to understand the value of strategic thinking and how their annual plans are tied to overall Strategic Plan.

Board member La Rock remarked that that he appreciates the plan's layout of activity by level, but noted that sometimes plans include generalities that seem appropriate in concept but do not result in meaningful action and further, that unnecessary segmentation is not productive. President Eddinger responded that the plan does contain specificity, and that campus segments are required to demonstrate how their goals fit in with the overall plan and with the DHE's "Big Three" priorities. Associate Dean Escalara remarked that the plan's structure is like working backwards, where we are looking at outcomes and then building a plan based on those outcomes, similar to the process of developing curriculum. Secretary Peyser remarked the plan seemed more focused on the process than content, and he would prefer more of the latter. President Eddinger responded that she will focus the remainder of the presentation on content, beginning with the Table of Contents on what will be the final plan document.

President Eddinger then provided an overview of the Table of Contents document, noting that some elements of this were also required for accreditation. She highlighted Item IV, Environmental Scans, remarking that they provide information with respect to their student profile, financial projections, academic programs, enrollment strategies and projections. She additionally stated that they just had a balanced budget, but when she started they had a \$4 million structural budget deficit.

Secretary Peyser asked for clarification on the status of these scans. President Eddinger responded that they are completed but still need to be formally written, pending the Touch Point II today. She continued that strategic thinking will not stop because we have a plan, and the

process will continue. There is an annual program plan that is also ongoing, more nuanced scans are coming out of the programs, and the work of the different plans is all coming together.

Continuing with the overview of Table of Contents, President Eddinger noted that they finished campus conversations at the end of last spring, and from that, they have put together a preliminary set of goals and strategies that are aligned to the “Big Three.” She concluded by stating that they will reassess their progress after Year 3.

Board member La Rock asked if the final document will have more organization and clarity about strengths and weakness, i.e. a SWAT analysis. President Eddinger responded that yes, it will. Secretary Peyser stated that the process seems fine, but he does not have a good enough sense of the content here from this document and he encourages some further conversation prior to coming back so we can get some calibration that the content is sufficient. President Eddinger asked to clarify if that included a clearer SWAT articulation in the document and Secretary Peyser responded yes; he wants to avoid BHCC coming back having drawn the wrong conclusions from their process. Commissioner Santiago stated that he will ask the BHE to state their questions and approaches as clearly as possible so when the campuses respond, the questions have not changed.

Acting Chair Toner thanked President Eddinger and Associate Dean Escalera.

B. MassBay Community College

Acting Chair Toner invited MBCC President David Podell to make remarks. President Podell remarked that the campus embarked on this process in July 2016, soon after his arrival. He remarked that the planning process was timely because it allowed him to learn about the college as they were engaging in this. He stated that his predecessor developed a few planning documents before he left and they served as building blocks that they could build off of throughout the process. He stated that he quickly realized they needed a subcommittee structure and decided to use the six areas of the Vision Project as subcommittees, and then they ended up adding three more on safety, infrastructure and financial strength. The subcommittees were then clustered into five groupings, and referred to the MBCC Strategic Plan, 2017-2022: A Catalyst for Transformation document. He stated that this is very much a draft, and that some of the goals are grand, and some are small, and it is missing the larger stating of their goals.

He continued that last March, they engaged Grey Associates, a firm that conducts analyses for demand for academic programs using demand from your geographic regions. He remarked that they gave MassBay a treasure trove of information on their current programs and potential for new programs, which was very useful. They were able to identify new potential programs, programs they should phase out and programs that they should invest further in and this process has augmented the work of the plan. He continued that they have awareness they are not in a period of growth, and enrollment has declined modestly and they must use resources as wisely as possible.

He stated that they are at a point where the process is starting to gel, but they do not yet have coalescence into a coherent document yet. He stated that this is a dynamic process that will

lead to a final point when they bring the document together, and they do not want a plan that is so aspirational that it is out of our reach, but so pragmatic that it does not excite anyone. He wants to improve their institution so their focus is sharper and is more responsive to the needs of the community.

Board member La Rock asked President Podell to summarize the top three things he wants to achieve. President Podell responded first, it would be student success and student completion; making students succeed on their terms, laser focused on what their issues are and getting them to come to the door and then getting them through. Second, the development of more imaginative workforce partnerships, as there is a gap in what the workforce expects and what we are producing. He cited that their automotive program enjoys a 97% employment rate and much of their success is due to employer investment in their program. He wants to develop this model in other industries. Finally, the development of imaginative and successful partnerships with four year colleges and high schools, and he cited several aspects of the successful partnership with Framingham State University as an example.

Secretary Peyser responded that was helpful, and that these plans need focus; it is good to be comprehensive but they need to outline their strategy. Acting Chair Toner remarked that when we started this process, he thought it would be more of a template or a platform for campuses to use, and we are now in a situation where we are asking the campuses to reinvent the wheel each time; it is not necessary to ask the campuses to explain the process of planning and we want them to maintain their individuality. Commissioner Santiago remarked Strategic Plan approvals are a new process and we got some resistance from the campuses before we started. Thus, we agreed to focus on two elements, the Vision Project and its goals and full participation the campus community. He continued that we modified the guidelines and the campuses asked to maintain their individuality. He stated they may modify the guidelines again as we go through this process. He concluded by stating we do not have a system-wide Strategic Plan, which could be a valid critique of us. It is an evolving process and we are learning over time.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Acting Chair Toner called for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.