

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

March 23, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) was held virtually on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair ¹

Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair

Charles Bianchi, Voting

Student Member, State

University segment

Ann Christensen

Veronica Conforme

Alex Cortez

Patty Eppinger

JD La Rock

Paul Mattera

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Paul Toner

Jorgo Gushi, non-voting Student Advisor, Community College segment

Kush Patel, non-voting Student Advisor, UMass segment

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The following Board Members were absent:

Judy Pagliuca

Mike O'Brien

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Sheila Harrity called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and announced that this meeting is being held remotely and in accordance with Governor Baker's recent Executive Order which suspended certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law for the purpose of authorizing public bodies to allow remote participation by all members while the state of emergency is in effect. Vice Chair Harrity announced that the meeting is being livestreamed via Zoom and

¹ Joined the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

recorded; and that members of the public who signed up for public comment would be allowed to join the Zoom meeting to provide comment. Chair Gabrieli will join the meeting later this morning. DHE Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis, then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Vice Chair Harrity reported that there were four requests to address the Board during the public participation period and asked that remarks be kept to three minutes. Participants would be announced in alphabetical order. Vice Chair Harrity welcomed Salem State University Professor, Tiffany Chenault; Massachusetts Community College Council Vice President, Rosemarie Freeland; Massachusetts Teachers Association Vice President, Max Page; and Former Quinsigamond Community College Staff Member, Erin Roache.

Salem State University Professor, Tiffany Chenault commented that Salem State University (SSU) is the only state institution to impose furloughs and possible retrenchments for their own state institution. As a result, the neediest and most vulnerable are affected. These challenges impact both SSU staff and students as campuses try to educate students and move forward from the pandemic. Dr. Chenault concluded by asking the Board to consider what devastation retrenchments could cause.

Massachusetts Community College Council Vice President, Rosemarie Freeland commented on the FY21 SUCCESS fund (Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services) and the urgent need for wraparound services to better assist students in addition to funding for educators. Ms. Freeland compared the services available today with the services provided to her as a single mother during the 1990's welfare reform, which included a cash allocation, housing subsidies, a food allowance and subsidized childcare. She implored the Board to consider similar wraparound services to help meet student needs on a broader scale. Ms. Freeland concluded by thanking President Lane Glenn and the Community College Presidents for advocating for increased funding.

Massachusetts Teachers Association Vice President, Max Page opened with three points regarding the Equity Agenda. Dr. Page commented that Salem State University should be confronted regarding furloughs and possible retrenchments. He noted the retrenchment could ill affect several departments including women and faculty of color. Dr. Page next acknowledged the pandemic's effect on students of color, which is resulting in an unprecedented number of Community College, State University and University of Massachusetts dropouts. As a resolve, he proposed Board support of the CHERISH Act, which would in turn furnish the SUCCESS fund and MASSGrant Programs to assist both faculty and students. He concluded by requesting funds allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act be used for values central to the Equity Agenda.

Former Quinsigamond Community College Staff Member, Erin Roache, commented on COVID-19 and its' impact on the Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) Children's School, college students, faculty, staff and the field of Early Childhood Education. The school closed amid

the pandemic and has yet to reopen. Its closure has contributed to a void in quality affordable care for a diverse population of preschool aged children in Worcester. Ms. Roache shared that having higher education and early education programs helps parents improve their life opportunities while supporting their children's developmental needs, both essential in ending intergenerational poverty. She concluded by asking the Board to support the reopening of the QCC Children's School this fall.

Board Member Paul Mattera asked to be recognized for the purpose of addressing the public comments referencing Salem State University where he sits as a Board Trustee. He commented that the financial stresses Salem State University and other public colleges and universities are experiencing aren't caused principally by COVID, but in part by persistent under enrollment that will require structural change. Member Mattera also noted a defunct retrenchment plan had been improperly circulated by a faculty member, and it currently has no bearing on Salem State University. Lastly, he addressed the matter of faculty layoffs as being in error since the institution had not laid off staff.

III. WELCOME

Vice Chair Harrity welcomed everyone to the fourth full Board meeting of the fiscal year. She noted that last week, the Board reconvened its AAC and FAAP Committees, and the Board will consider motions being advanced by each committee. Vice Chair Harrity said there would also be a presentation on the STEM Starter Academy program.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Harrity asked for a motion to accept minutes of the last Board meeting, which was held on February 2, 2021. The motion was duly moved and seconded. With no further discussion the motion proceeded to a roll call vote and passed, with one absention, as follows:

- Charles Bianchi – Abstained
- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary James Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

V. REMARKS & REPORTS

A. Chairman's Remarks

None.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago thanked Vice Chair Harrity for chairing the Board meeting. He opened with an appeal to end the senseless acts of racial violence prevalent across the country. The Commissioner shared how although great efforts were made to express sympathy to victims and their families, the violence has become normal to the point of desensitizing the community about what is really happening to make a difference. The Department, the State University Presidents, and the Community College Presidents will continue to show solidarity.

The Commissioner discussed the FY22 budget and mentioned a recent interview with Politico on the state financing of public higher education. He recalled how this time last year was one of great uncertainty due to the pandemic. The greatest fear was a potential decline in state revenues and how that would impact public higher education. However, according to the Grapevine Report, a SHEEO sponsored annual document, Massachusetts funding for higher education has done comparably better than other states. The Commissioner credited the Equity Agenda for paving the way for these outcomes. Since launching the Equity Agenda in 2018, the financial aid line has increased approximately 25% between FY18 and FY21. The BHE continues to support covering the unmet need for all low-income and Pell Grant students and increased financial aid through Mass Grant Plus. It will be extended to the State Universities and the fall of 2021 and continued in the Community Colleges.

In alignment with the new Financial Assessment and Risk Monitoring (FARM) regulations, Commissioner Santiago shared the public statement released regarding Becker College on March 2nd, in which he required Becker College to post public notice informing all stakeholders that its financial situation had become "sufficiently uncertain that the Department believes the institution is unlikely to sustain full operations through the next academic year." Public notice is required whenever an institution is identified as at risk of imminent closure. The law includes strict confidentiality provisions, which prohibits the release of details regarding the deliberative process. Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall and Department staff are working with President Crimmin, the Provost at Becker, and others from the president's team to advance contingency closure planning as required under state law. The Commissioner thanked President Crimmin and provided a brief summary of the contingency closure planning process.

Consistent with our standard requirements, our goal in the contingency closure process is to make sure that in the event of closure, institutions have mapped out potential partners and that students have multiple transfer options. Therefore, institutions are engaged in this contingency closure process need to do the following:

- Identify at least two or three transfer options per program
- Establish MOUs with receiving institutions that includes some minimum standard requirements, such as the pledge to admit any student in good standing
- Waive application fees and deadlines

- Offer maximum flexibility on issues such as accepting transfer credits and waiving residency requirement

Contingency closure plans must also include a budget to support transfer advisers, counselors and temporary structures to ensure the smooth transition of students either completing their degrees at the closing institution or transferring to another college or university.

Chair Chris Gabrieli joined the meeting at approximately 10:39 a.m.; he asked that Vice Chair Harry continue to chair the remainder of the meeting.

C. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education's (EOE) Remarks

Secretary Peyser provided a brief update on the Baker-Polito Administration's Reopening Plan. Now in Phase IV, Step I, the plan addresses changes to gathering limits and social distancing requirements. Public outdoor gatherings increased to 150, while indoor public gatherings increased to 100. Private indoor gatherings remain at 10, with a maximum of 25 outside. Social distancing requirements remain at six feet, along with wearing masks as a precautionary measure.

Secretary Peyser concluded by expressing optimism about getting through the spring and summer as the people who want to be vaccinated, are vaccinated. He looks to seeing what this will mean for the Fall semester.

D. Report from Presidents

State University Segmental Report

For a copy of President Birge's full remarks, please see: <https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2020-12-15%20Report%20from%20SU%20Presidents.pdf>

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts College President James Birge spoke on behalf of the Massachusetts State University segment. President Birge opened by reflecting on this time last year. He stated the two goals of higher education leaders back then was to ensure the health and safety of students, and to not allow the COVID pandemic to detail the education of students. He expressed his appreciation for the successful transition to remote learning made possible by state universities, faculty, staff and students. President Birge recounted the physical updates made such as the installation of plexiglass, supplying PPE, the investment in cleaning and sanitizing practices, and student and staff training on COVID-19 prevention. He commented on building upon the knowledge gained over the past year as plans for the start of the 2021-2022 academic year begin. A full academic schedule will be offered with on-campus, hybrid and online course options for returning students. On-campus housing opportunities and double room occupancy will also return to provide an enhanced student college experience.

President Birge concluded with a request for the Board's support to get COVID vaccines pushed down to each public and private college in the Commonwealth before commencement to vaccinate all students before they leave campus for the summer. With the availability of the

COVID-19 vaccine, he also requests the state to relax COVID-19 restrictions by allowing modification of classroom desk positioning from six feet to three feet apart.

Community College Segmental Report

For a copy of President Mabry's full remarks, please see:

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2021-03-23%20Report%20from%20CC%20Presidents.pdf>

Middlesex Community College President James Mabry shared updates from the Massachusetts Community College segment. President Mabry addressed how the Community Colleges are preparing for the Fall semester. He stated that the successful transition to remote and hybrid learning modalities now affords collaborative processes involving the entire campus community. Their objective is to safely serve all students and provide the learning opportunities they need to thrive. Looking to FY22, he expressed hope that the Legislature would continue targeted equity investments in areas such as the SUCCESS Fund and Early College.

President Mabry then emphasized the distinction of Community Colleges by providing insight on the populations served. The average student age is 26-28, with many representing low-income communities adversely affected by both the pandemic and the recession. Unable to meet basic needs due to unemployment has shuttered a disproportionate number of students from returning to school. He shared an inclusive approach where communication remains a dialogue with students even if they did not return to class. Fall additions include, on campus, hybrid, online day and evening courses. Short-term courses, and mini semesters have also been added to meet student needs.

President Mabry concluded by stating the number one priority of the Community Colleges is to always provide Massachusetts residents with the most affordable and accessible pathway to higher education. With 15 colleges with campuses operating in all corners of the Commonwealth, the Community Colleges are the engine of equity for the Commonwealth.

E. Report from Student Advisory Council

Community College Segmental Advisor Jorgo Gushi opened by referencing the release of a statement on behalf of the Student Advisory Council. The statement addresses the lives lost to violence in the Atlanta Spa killings on March 16, 2021 and it reads:

Together as leaders of all public higher education institutions in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We stand united against racism, bigotry and racial inequities. As representatives of the student population of our respective institutions, we pledge to fight the hate against Asian-American Pacific Islander communities that has risen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that many institutions are wondering around the issue and they are not specifically addressing it, we asked the US president and his administration to act swiftly and stop this hatred against our valuable populations.

Mr. Gushi stated that as Community Colleges look toward the fall, their safety and health continue to be the highest priority. Being the least resourced aspect of higher education, he implored the Board's full support to help repopulate community college campuses in addition to protecting state funding allocated for their programs. He highlighted the unmet financial needs of community college

students as an inability to pay for necessities such as food, housing, transportation, childcare, and medical expenses. By his account, the pandemic has only worsened matters, which calls for a greater degree of assistance. He called upon the Department to expand its pilot housing program to cover more institutions. He also requested investments in food pantries to ensure students can continue their studies.

Mr. Gushi concluded by inviting the Board to increase their engagement with the Student Advisory Council and thanked them for their advocacy on behalf of their student population. He then turned it over UMass Segment Advisor, Kush Patel.

UMass Segment Advisor Kush Patel provided an overview of UMass Boston pandemic response. He shared updated information on the UMass System Commencement schedule, with some campuses planning in-person ceremonies given the new guidelines. He also reported on campuses planning for a return to in-person learning during the fall. Mr. Patel concluded by congratulating everyone involved in helping to pass the Student Trustee Bill. He reiterated that there remains a greater work to be done as the State Advisory Council looks to ensure that students are better represented, and their voices are heard.

Before moving on to the motions, Chair Gabrieli asked for an update on room capacity and spacing guidelines as higher education institutions in the Fall. Secretary Peyser responded there were too many evolving factors to provide campuses information for fall planning at the moment, but he hoped it would be available in the future.

VI. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

AAC Motions 21-03 through 21-06

FAAP Motions 21-03 through 21-11

BHE Motion 21-40

Links to Videos accessible before the meeting:

- [AAC 21-03 through AAC 21-04](#)
- [AAC 21-06](#)
- [FAAP 21-03 through FAAP 21-11](#)
- [BHE 21-40](#)

A. Academic Affairs Committee

Vice Chair Harrity reported that the AAC met last week and considered two letters of intent (LOIs): one from Bridgewater State University to offer the BS in Childhood Studies; and the second from UMass Boston to award a BA and BS in Urban Public Health. The committee is also advancing a motion to approve the application of Bay State College toward the Master of Science in Business Analytics.

Dr. Kim Burns and Jody Carson from Northeastern Essex Community College, presented about the development and expansion of competency-based education, a project funded by the Department of

Higher Education's Innovation Fund. The AAC looks forward to learning more about the Prior Learning Assessment Project being led by North Shore Community College at the next monthly meeting. The group also discussed plans to safely repopulate the Community Colleges and noted a resolution would be presented after voting on motions AAC 21-05 thru AAC 21-06.

Co-Chair Harrity asked for a motion of approval for AAC 21-05: *Consent Agenda*. On a motion duly made and seconded, AAC 21-05 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, without discussion, as follows:

- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Jim Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

AAC 21-05

CONSENT AGENDA

VOTED:

- AAC 21-03 Approval of Letter of Intent of Bridgewater State University to award the Bachelor of Science in Childhood Studies and Authorization for Fast Track Review
- AAC 21-04 Approval of Letter of Intent of the University of Massachusetts Boston to Award the Bachelor of Arts in Urban Public Health and the Bachelor of Science in Urban Public Health and Authorization for Fast Track Review

Authority: Article III, Section 6, By-Laws

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

Vice Chair Harrity then asked for a motion for approval on AAC 21-06: *Application of Bay State College to Award the Master of Science In Business Analytics* The motion was moved and seconded. AAC 21-06 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, without discussion. as follows:

- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes

- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

AAC 21-06 APPLICATION OF BAY STATE COLLEGE TO AWARD THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Articles of Amendment of **Bay State College** to award the **Master of Science in Business Analytics**.

Authority: M.G.L. c. 69, § 30 et seq.; 610 CMR 2.0 et seq.; AAC 14-35

Contact: Cynthia Farr Brown, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner for Regulatory and Veterans Affairs

Vice Chair Harrity returned the discussion to safely repopulating Community Colleges. During last week’s AAC meeting, the Committee heard from representatives of the Community College segment regarding plans to repopulate campuses next academic year. Participants in the discussion included: President Pam Eddinger, Bunker Hill Community College; President Lane Glenn, Northern Essex Community College; President Ellen Kennedy, Berkshire Community College; and President James Mabry, Middlesex Community College. Committee members had a chance to ask the Presidents about the biggest challenges with planning for the Fall. After a period of interactive dialogue, the AAC agreed to develop a series of guiding principles in collaboration with the Community College segment. She thanked the Presidents for their participation and acknowledged their dedicated commitment to respond to student demands for in-person, on demand and hybrid courses.

Vice Chair Harrity asked for a motion for approval on *BHE 21-41 Board of Higher Education Resolution on Guiding Principles Required for Safely Repopulating Community Colleges for the Fall of 2021*. The motion was moved and seconded.

AAC Co-Chair Patty Eppinger stated the resolution was motivated after recognizing that an option to learn 21st-century skills in an in-person environment is an important one to not only help reengage students, but to also provide a sense of connectedness. The goal was not a standalone offer for in-person instruction, but to ensure enough options are available so that those students who do want to be on-campus have the opportunity to do so, provided the environment is kept as a safe one for them.

Chair Gabrieli thanked both AAC Co-Chairs Sheila Harrity and Patty Eppinger on their leadership in moving the resolution forward. He commented on the importance of the work given the vulnerability of those students most impacted by the pandemic and expressed his gratitude for the flexible options offered by the Community Colleges Presidents to help their students. In agreement, Board member J.D. LaRock also thanked the AAC and Community College Presidents. He highlighted the student’s demand for in-person, online and hybrid courses across as a great

inclusion to the resolution. Member LaRock requested a language change to the resolution to acknowledge the fact that enrollment downturns have impacted all segments and for the sector as a whole. General Counsel Papanikolaou stated that his comment would be reflected in the minutes, and confirmed that existing language already captures that sentiment, noting the opening language which states that the Community College segment has experienced “some of the most significant” enrollment downturns this academic year. President Mabry recognized the resolution and the diverse approach taken by institutions to be a support to their students.

After discussion, BHE 21-41 was approved unanimously by all Board members present.

- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Jim Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

**BHE 21-41 BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESOLUTION ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES
RELATED TO SAFELY REPOPULATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE FALL OF
2021**

VOTED: **WHEREAS** within the context of current enrollment challenges experienced throughout the higher education sector, the Community College segment in particular has faced some of the most significant enrollment downturns this academic year, with the losses greatest among first-time students from the most economically disadvantaged and racially minoritized populations;

WHEREAS the Commonwealth’s Community Colleges serve the largest and most diverse student population within the public higher education system, welcoming students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as students at different points in their educational trajectories and students with diverse learning styles;

WHEREAS the Board of Higher Education (the Board), working by and through its executive agency, the Department of Higher Education (the Department), is responsible for analyzing the present and future goals, needs and requirements of the public higher education system and, where appropriate, establishing coordination between and among institutions;

WHEREAS in furtherance of the Board’s statutory, coordinating role the Board

recognizes and seeks to support the important work of our 15 Community Colleges to provide the most welcoming, appropriate and effective approaches to serving their students as the state of emergency is anticipated to be lifted and pandemic recovery proceeds;

WHEREAS the Board, the Department and the Community Colleges all acknowledge the uncertainties on key public health factors and embrace the need to communicate broadly, timely and transparently to enrolled and admitted students, as well as students who have paused their educational pursuits and non-traditional adult learners who have never enrolled, that the doors to opportunity are wide open in formats that meet students' needs, preferences and strengths;

THEREFORE, based on collaborative discussions with and feedback from Community College leadership and in service of our Equity Agenda goals, we recognize and advance the following Guiding Principles for safely repopulating the Community College segment this Fall 2021:

- 1) The Board, the Department, and the Community Colleges commit to prioritizing the safety of students, faculty and staff by, first and foremost, following Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines; and
- 2) The Board and the Department commit to supporting the Community Colleges by advocating for and helping to shape sector-specific policies and guidance, such as mandatory minimum spacing in classrooms; the Board and Department further commit to supporting this work as expeditiously and collaboratively as possible, and will seek to include the voices of key stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, administrators, operations experts, college governance, and collective bargaining); and
- 3) The Community Colleges commit to being as flexible as possible in course scheduling and operations, adjusting to meet the challenges of an evolving public health landscape; and
- 4) The Community Colleges will continue to prioritize critical on-ground labs in allied health and nursing, advanced sciences, career technical programs, and other clinical and practicum-oriented classes, particularly for students who need these experiences to complete their degrees; and
- 5) The Community Colleges will continue to offer high-quality teaching and learning through course modalities designed to serve multiple populations, including traditional students, post-traditional working adults, first-generation and immigrant students, student parents, students with disabilities, and other key profiles; and

- 6) Responding to student demand for in-person, on-line, and hybrid courses, all students who want or need an in-person learning experience, either full-time or part-time, will have a robust set of affordable and accessible options across all degree programs at all Community Colleges, especially for first-year students; and
- 7) The Board and the Department encourage the Community College segment to continue to rapidly refine, expand and evolve their online, remote, and hybrid offerings that show promise to recapture enrollment and to offer students, especially working adults and experienced students, both now and in the future, a more flexible and affordable, high-quality route to the skills, credentials and degrees they pursue; and
- 8) The Community Colleges commit to reaching out to and re-engaging students who discontinued their studies due to difficulties with online, remote and hybrid learning modalities implemented due to the pandemic; and
- 9) The Board and Department commit to advocating on behalf of the Community Colleges to obtain the resources necessary to safely re-populate their campuses in the Fall of 2021.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A § 9(c) and (u)

Contact: Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner

B. Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy

Vice Chair Harrity introduced the Financial Affairs Administrative Policy (FAAP) Committee Chair, JD LaRock for the next part of the agenda. Board member LaRock reported that the Committee met last week, and considered a series of motions on tuition rates for FY22 and conducting a tuition retention feasibility study for the Community Colleges and State Universities.

The group agreed to a friendly amendment to expand the membership of that working group to include the current Community College and State University segmental BHE representatives. And the committee also discussed priorities for the remainder of the fiscal year. Other discussion items included:

- engaging in the construction of the Department's own budget proposals to support campuses;
- reviewing the overall financing system for public higher education by the end of 2022; and
- finding a more appropriate standard to ensure the basic financial integrity of both private and public colleges

Board member JD LaRock asked for a motion of approval for *FAAP 21-10: Consent Agenda*. On a motion duly made and seconded, FAAP 21-10 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, without discussion.

- Charles Bianchi – Abstain
- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Jim Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

FAAP 21-10

CONSENT AGENDA

VOTED:

- FAAP 21-03 Community Colleges
Resident Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-04 Community Colleges
Non-Resident Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-05 State Universities
Resident Undergraduate Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-06 State Universities
Non-Resident Undergraduate Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-07 State Universities
Resident Graduate Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-08 State Universities
Non-Resident Graduate Tuition Rates for FY2022
- FAAP 21-09 Berkshire Community College and
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Alternative Non-Resident Undergraduate Tuition Rates for FY2022

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6

Contact: Thomas Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Finance

Board member LaRock provided statutory background to the motion to set tuition rates and explained the Community College and State University boards have the authority to set fees. The tuition and fee schedule is unlike most states and can be confusing to the customer.

In recent years, the legislature granted UMass the authority to set and retain its own tuition. The FAAP Committee discussed how it would be prudent to examine the feasibility of extending similar authority to the Community College and State University segments. He then asked for a

motion for approval on *FAAP 21-11: Community College and State University Tuition Retention Feasibility Study*. The motion was moved and seconded. FAAP 21-11 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, without discussion.

- Charles Bianchi – Yes
- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

**FAAP 21-11 COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND STATE UNIVERSITY TUITION RETENTION
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (the Board or BHE) hereby directs the Commissioner to examine and make recommendations on tuition and fee setting authority, including tuition retention, related to the Community Colleges and State Universities.

To that end, the Commissioner is authorized and advised to convene a working group consisting of stakeholders to help examine and identify the steps necessary, including any proposed statutory changes aimed at improving tuition and fee setting processes, and tuition retention authority for State Universities and Community Colleges for the start of fiscal year 2023. At a minimum, the Board advises that the working group should include the following members, or their designees: 3 Community College presidents; 3 State University presidents; the Secretary of Education; current Community College and State University segmental BHE representation; and the Executive Director of the Massachusetts State College Building Authority.

The Commissioner shall report findings and recommendations to the Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy Committee no later than October 2021. The Commissioner's report shall include findings and recommendations on the following matters:

- (a) the costs and benefits associated with implementing tuition retention in a manner that transparently and succinctly presents total student charges;

(b) the implications of authorizing State Universities and Community Colleges to set their own student charges, within parameters established under multi-year strategic plans required pursuant to M.G.L. c. 15A, section 22(l) and subject to approval of the Secretary of Education in consultation with the Board;

(c) the manner in which campuses and the Board currently define "state supported" versus "non state-supported" for the purposes of establishing remittance amounts, allocating collective bargaining costs, determining state and campus fringe costs, and determining the applicability of tuition waivers within and across the public higher education system, and recommendations, including any necessary statutory changes, for establishing a consistent set of standards by which campuses and the Board may define "state supported" versus "non state-supported" courses and activities for said purposes;

(d) potential methodologies for establishing a revenue neutral implementation plan, including the mitigation of revenue variability due to future fluctuations in enrollments;

(e) calculations and recommendations relative to the value of all tuition waivers currently in effect, and authorized under section 19 of chapter 15A of the General Laws, any other general or special law or otherwise collectively bargained, along with recommendations for procedures and approval mechanisms to recognize the value of such tuition waivers as tuition credits;

(f) the possibility of alternative implementation timelines, including phasing in tuition retention or implementing it on separate timelines for the State University and Community College segments; and

(g) any Commonwealth financial obligations, such as collective bargaining and fringe costs, that may be affected by the implementation of tuition retention.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 15A, Section 9(i)

Contact: Thomas J. Simard, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance

C. Board of Higher Education

Vice Chair Harrity introduced the final motion, *BHE 21-40: Approval of Student Trustee Eligibility Criteria*. She noted that the motion is a direct result of student advocacy from across our public institutions and led by the Student Advisory Council, and seeks to respond to recently enacted state law which amends the minimum eligibility requirements for students who were to serve as trustees on the boards of Massachusetts Community Colleges and State Universities. The new law directs the Board to set the criteria, which define minimum credit hours and academic standing. The proposed criteria are specified in the motion and were developed based on feedback through

the consultation process.

Vice Chair Harrity asked for a motion of approval for *BHE 21-40: Approval of Student Trustee Eligibility Criteria*. On a motion duly made and seconded, BHE 21-40 was approved unanimously by all Board members present, without discussion, as follows:.

- Charles Bianchi– Yes
- Anna Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair-Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- JD LaRock – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Secretary Jim Peyser – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes

BHE 21-40 APPROVAL OF STUDENT TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

VOTED: The Board hereby approves the following, minimum eligibility criteria which define minimum credit hours and academic standing for student trustees serving on Community College and State University boards of trustees:

A student with a high school diploma or GED is eligible to serve as a student member of the board of trustees of a State University or Community College, provided the student is:

- matriculated, degree-seeking and continuously enrolled in a minimum of **six credit hours** at the institution where the student seeks to serve as a trustee; and
- is in good academic standing and maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional standards.

Authority: Sections 11, 12 and 13 of Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020; M.G.L. c. 15A, § 4 and M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel
Stacy Bougie, Associate Director for External Affairs

VII. PRESENTATIONS

- Equity Agenda Update
 - STEM Starter Academy: Achieving Racial Equity at Scale

List of Documents:

- [STEM Starter Academy Achieving Racial Equity at Scale](#)

Commissioner Santiago introduced the STEM Starter Academy (SSA) program. He stated that although the program's initial purpose was to bring more students into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, it has morphed into bringing greater diversity to the STEM fields by focusing on students of color. It is a targeted program with a far reach that has received a significant amount of funding. The Commissioner then turned to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Trustee and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR) Executive Director, JD Chesloff, to talk more about STEM.

Mr. Chesloff opened by thanking the Commissioner and members of the Board. He commented that the MBR partnered with the SSA after former House Speaker Robert DeLeo's work and hearing the importance of having an established STEM pipeline from employers. STEM became part of a strategy to secure talent. Recent efforts include anti-racism and addressing structural racism by providing opportunity pathways for people of color. Mr. Chesloff concluded by thanking STEM programs leads, Assistant Commissioner P-16 Alignment & Outreach, Allison Little and Associate Commissioner of Workforce and Economic Development and STEM, David Cedrone, along with the BHE for its leadership before turning back to Commissioner Santiago.

Commissioner Santiago welcomed Massachusetts Bay (MassBay) Community College President, David Podell to introduce three SSA students. President Podell provided a brief background on the SSA's goal to recruit, ready, retain and graduate a diverse body of students earning STEM certificates and degrees who go on to transfer to a four-year STEM program or enter the workforce. The program began in 2013 and is active across all 15 Community Colleges across Massachusetts. He emphasized that two of the most successful programs within the SSA have been the Summer Program and the STEM Mentor Program, both of which target underrepresented students. President Podell then shared the significance of these programs by introducing Eden Lifshatz, a MassBay Community College student. Emerson Alexander, a Springfield Technical Community College graduate and Matthew Healy, a Massasoit Community College student. Each student was given the opportunity to discuss their respective experiences as SSA students.

Eden Lifshatz shared that the STEM Mentor Program, public speaking, goal setting, and working with a mentor on resumé updates and internship applications had the greatest impact on her growth as a student. Emerson Alexander noted the internship opportunities at UMass and the various connections made, while also identifying the presentation and research skills obtained from the program. Matthew Healy followed with his appreciation for the mentorship received, which taught him professional development in addition to building up his confidence. President Podell thanked each of the students for their contribution and turned back to Commissioner Santiago.

Commissioner Santiago thanked President Podell and expressed his gratitude for the students. He then introduced Dr. Jeremiah Johnson of the UMass Donahue Institute to discuss the STEM Starter Academy outcomes.

Dr. Johnson began his presentation by outlining three topics:

- 1) What is STEM Starter Academy (SSA)?
- 2) Who is served?
- 3) What are the key findings on student outcomes?

He stated that the program supports Community College efforts to recruit, ready, retain and complete students through Community College STEM pathway programs, leading to job placements with STEM professionals or transfer to university STEM academic programs. SSA works to meet the growing need for diverse populations of STEM skilled graduates by recognizing the untapped potential of underrepresented student populations, supporting differentiated approaches to meeting student needs, and engaging in a process of learning, evaluation, and application to implement at scale best practices that support all students. These students reflect the diversity of the Community College population. Over half of the students are women and over half are students of color; 64% of SSA participants have achieved positive outcomes, which include a degree certificate transfer, STEM workforce entry, and retention.

Dr. Johnson further commented that the DHE began developing a case management model during STEM's sixth year, which will transition SSA programs from interventions focused on elements of students, academic trajectories such as recruitment, readiness, retention, and completion, to a model with the core focus on supporting a set of students along the through-line from entry through completion. The BHE and the SSA community have embraced the model to ensure supportive connections along a student's trajectory and in-depth connections through relationships to help students feel included in community college.

Dr. Johnson concluded by sharing the SSAs promotion of equity by supporting a diverse group of students on a through-line from recruitment to completion of their community college experience. The program has emphasized the importance of supporting diversity in promoting equity by implementing best practices at scale while allowing for local flexibility in program implementation. The evaluation has served to document key indicators of student participation and success that are aligned with the SSA goals and model, which includes further diversifying the STEM growth pipeline.

Vice Chair Harrity thanked Dr. Johnson for his efforts. Secretary Peyser inquired about opening the STEM pipeline to high school programs, and what lessons one can learn from the data? Associate Commissioner Cedrone shared the strengthening of relationships within the Community Colleges as next steps in the pipeline pathway. Secretary Peyser encouraged everyone to think about making these connections more integrated. Dr. Jeremiah commented on an expected report to be generated next year utilizing a dosage measure. At present, the three general categories of student supports include: extra financial support, extra academic support, and counseling. The reports display the varying impacts of those three interventions on student outcomes. Associate Commissioner Cedrone noted the absence of progress, which contributed to instituting a case management program to follow a subset of students.

Commissioner Santiago commended work of Associate Commissioner Cedrone and Assistant Commissioner Little for their impressive efforts and results with SSA.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Harrity adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Carlos E. Santiago
Commissioner and Secretary to the Board*