

# MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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September 25, 2023

3 p.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

## Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Advisory Council was held virtually on Wednesday, September 25, 2023, via teleconference (Zoom).

### **The following Board Members were present:**

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Alex Cortez, EBPM Chair

Ann Christensen

Noe Ortega, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

### **Other Board Members were present:**

Cindy Mack, Student Advisory Council (SAC) Chair & BHE Student Member

Andrew Whitcomb, non-voting Student Advisor, UMass segment

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order and said that we did not have minutes to circulate as there was no previous meeting. He then handed over the meeting to EBPM Chair Cortez.

## **II. EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Chair Gabrieli had a few comments before EBPM Chair Cortez began. First, Chair Gabrieli expressed his gratitude to Chair Cortez for agreeing to conduct the meeting. He also mentioned that the Board feels strongly about EBPM.

Chair Cortez opened the session by welcoming new faces to the BHE. He also mentioned topics to discuss in the meeting included a set of things to ground the Council in the great work of the department, parallel efforts around the education to career hub, including how this work is going to help the Council continue to execute on the strategic plan for racial equity as well as the purpose of the council and encouraged open discussion. Chair Cortez then spoke of three perspectives on the role of data:

1. What is the information or data that we wish individuals have to best equip them to make choices about their pathways?
2. What information we want our institutions that we serve of higher education to have to drive continuous improvement and decisions for their future?

### 3. What we want to have as a board and as department for our role and authority and oversight?

Chair Cortez then invited Commissioner Ortega to make any remarks. Commissioner Ortega then welcomed the attendees to the meeting, including two new DHE staff, Michael Dannenberg, Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Dr. Richard Riccardi, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success.

Dr. Mario Delci, Associate Commissioner for Research and Planning, then began the presentation. Associate Commissioner Delci indicated different topics for discussion:

- Work of the Research and Planning office,
- Education and career data hub
- Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, performance measurement
- Conversation in response to Chair Cortez' questions

Associate Commissioner Delci indicated that Research and Planning has three main focus areas: data research and analytics, and research and reporting and digital services. Associate Commissioner Delci said that Research and Planning has one mission, which is to drive organizational transformation by prioritizing the evidence over intuition with data at the center of every conversation. Driving across all three areas is protection of student privacy, prioritizing equity from data collection through research and reporting and engaging campus partners in system-wide collaboration on data collection analysis and reporting.

Associate Commissioner Delci said that the work of the Office of Research and Planning brings the office in contact with a lot of people inside and outside the office, citing the critical role of departmental staff as well as external partners, including segmental leadership and MACC, the state university council presidency, MACC'S president's office, and EUIT both on the IT infrastructure side . Associate Commissioner Delci also mentioned current objectives in creating efficiencies in data collection and reporting, improving the quality and scope of the HEIRS data collection, as well as aligning existing accountability efforts with the strategic racial equity and what that means for performance measurement, evaluations and strategic planning. Associate Commissioner Delci also mentioned the Education-to-Career Hub (E2C) and said the main goals is to promote shared ownership of progress on educational goals to produce actionable research on what leads to progress on long-term outcomes.

Chair Gabrieli then asked Associate Commissioner Delci about the new features of the E2C hub and Associate Commissioner Delci responded eventual research on merged data sets from the three educational agencies. Associate Commissioner Delci then also indicated that it is a public website.

#### **Strategic Plan for Racial Equity (SPRE)**

Associate Commissioner Delci mentioned the goals and targets of the SPRE, emphasizing the role of universal targets for all racial/ethnic subgroups. He mentioned that there were not targets developed for enrollment for students of color, sense of belonging for students of color, and social and economic mobility. Associate Commissioner Delci said that the goal is to have metrics and targets for BHE review and approval hopefully this academic year but no later than the first meeting of next fall.

#### **Social and Economic Mobility**

Associate Commissioner Delci introduced Moira Chiong, Assistant Director of Academic and Workforce Analysis to speak about the Office of Research and Planning's work on social and economic mobility. Assistant Director Chiong began the conversation by including a quote from the SPRE which outlined the BHE charge on social and economic mobility. She indicated the different research that Research and Planning has done on social and economic mobility including Raj Chetty's Mobility Rate (MR), Third Way's Economic Mobility Index (EMI), Dallas College's Economic Mobility Index 2 (EMI2) and Mathematica's Economic Mobility Indicator. Assistant Director Chiong prefaced a technical discussion of the indicators by saying that the metrics determine how higher education catalyzes changes in mobility. Assistant Director Chiong outlined the differences between the metrics including components, data sources, and differences in calculation. Chair Gabrieli then commented about the strength of factoring in price of credential into the calculation of an index. Member Mack raised the importance of recognizing students who are not working in the Third Way calculation. Associate Commissioner Delci responded by emphasizing that the analysis is Research and Planning's attempt to survey the national landscape to identify a measure that's been used nationally across different states that we can either incorporate into the report or somehow work to recreate using local data resources. Associate Commissioner Delci added that there are some nice elements about a number of these.

Assistant Director Chiong then spoke of the challenges of the four indicators, including lack of access to intergenerational or longitudinal data, need to specify the metric by educational sector and lack of race/ethnicity acknowledged in a measure. Associate Commissioner Delci then followed up by stating that it surprised the Research and Planning office that measures were not disaggregated by student group. Associate Commissioner Delci then outlined a timeline on the Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS) metrics.

Assistant Director Chiong stated that there are two metrics in the PMRS that pertain to earnings and by extension, social and economic mobility: pre/post enrollment earnings and post high school graduation earnings. After stating the definition of the each metric, Assistant Director Chiong showed a decision tree map for each metric outlining the student's trajectory from college to the workforce or high school to the workforce. Chair Gabrieli raised the issue of the pre/post enrollment earnings metric only looking at non-traditional students, and indicated the importance of studying traditional students using this metric as well.

After showing both metrics, Assistant Director Chiong discussed how the "green box" in the decision tree maps or earnings can align with calculation of mobility measures.

Associate Commissioner Delci then provided an update on the PMRS metrics, stating that the Office of Research and Planning is planning to do is proceed with developing the metrics that were designed for performance measurement using existing data through the state data system and modeling these data and extracting the data, modeling the data, operation and testing the metrics, working with DHE partners on the data council and bringing those back to the board for review of course and updates.

## **Discussion**

The meeting was then handed over to Chair Cortez. Chair Cortez opened the discussion to comments. Chair Gabrieli raised the issue of program review, citing the lack of retrospective analysis of programs. He also indicated the broad view that value and return on investment have really not been part of BHE functions, whether it's program approval, finance, design, etc. Associate Commissioner Delci indicated that this work can be done collectively in concert with other metric work. Commissioner Ortega expressed his interest in looking at the mobility metrics by groupings, by race/ethnicity or segment.

Assistant Director Chiong stated that there is data available for the Chetty MR, Third Way EMI and Dallas College EMI2. Chair Gabrieli suggested that people could be brought together to analyze the data, to see what can be learned, what strikes the Advisory Council and what is problematic. Commissioner Ortega then asked if there is possibility to have some of the data available in January, possibly at the Board Retreat. Associate Commissioner Delci indicated that we could have that data ready by January.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Cortez then made a motion to adjourn.