

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

March 13, 2024

2:00 p.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Advisory Council of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held virtually on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 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

Bob LePage

Other Board Members were present:

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

Andrew Whitcomb, non-voting Student Advisor, UMass segment

Harneen Chernow

I. CALL TO ORDER

EBPM Chair Cortez called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and said that he and Chair Gabrieli would forego opening remarks to allow for sufficient time for the panel discussion.

II. EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Discussion

List of documents used

EBMP PowerPoint Presentation, "Measuring Socioeconomic Mobility and Return on Investment" March 13, 2024

EBPM Chair Cortez introduced Mario Delci, Associate Commissioner of Research and Planning, who introduced the topic of Social and Economic Mobility and Return on Investment (ROI). Both Chair Cortez and Associate Commissioner Delci thanked each other for their respective work, leadership, and engagement on this topic. Associate Commissioner Delci began by reviewing the objectives work related to socio-economic mobility and ROI as well as key considerations of the subject area. Associate Commissioner Delci acknowledged: 1) fulfillment of the mandate that aligned with the 2018

revamping or readoption of the Performance Measurement System (PMRS), especially as related to employment and earnings; 2) work on social and economic mobility was reinvigorated last year with the advent of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity, which in turn stimulated the development of measures for social and economic mobility as one of the goals for racial equity; and 3) increased interests in measures of value for decision making.

Associate Commissioner Delci also mentioned key considerations as this work is advanced, including 1) the existence of multiple agencies with multiple purposes; 2) accountability in terms of performance measurement, reporting systems, and strategic plans; 3) the role of institutions, students, and families; and 4) the importance of collaboration between the BHE, educational agencies, and campuses. Associate Commissioner Delci stated that both the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and its Office of Research and Planning are turning to the BHE to advise on methodology implementation, to advise on approach and strategy, and to address goals and key considerations. Associate Commissioner Delci then turned the discussion over to Chair Cortez.

Chair Cortez outlined three main questions: 1) who to measure, 2) what to measure, and 3) how to measure. Chair Cortez briefly discussed these questions and then turned to the panel discussion and introduced three guest speakers on social and economic mobility: Joe Hartman, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMass Lowell; Chazz Robinson, Education Policy Advisor, Third Way; and Kathy Booth, Project Director for the Economic Mobility, Postsecondary Workforce Systems Team, WestEd.

Provost Hartman began the discussion with a presentation entitled "The Role of Higher Ed in Economic Mobility" and provided some data and commentary with regard to the opportunity of economic mobility, the concept that a degree is not a guarantee," and the role of higher education.

Chazz Robinson then continued the conversation with a presentation entitled "Measuring the Value of Postsecondary Pathways." First, Robinson laid out the work of Third Way, including accountability, transparency and equity. Robinson then discussed why Third Way is focused on ROI and economic mobility, the metrics Third Way uses to explore ROI and economic mobility, and how these metrics can support policy.

Booth concluded the panel with a presentation entitled "Measuring Socioeconomic Mobility & ROI." After setting the context for the discussion with a slide on making meaning of mobility and ROI, Booth addressed three main questions: what to measure, who to measure, and how to measure.

The discussion then opened up to questions and further discussion.

Member Whitcomb asked how outcomes have changed for students after five years, specifically at UMass Lowell. Provost Hartman then responded that students focus on graduation and getting a job

but may not build a network or building a career. Provost Hartman also indicated that UMass Lowell is putting together an orientation this year for students to further address issue.

Robinson then continued the conversation by inquiring as to the most meaningful and viable way to measure economic mobility and ROI, as well as the way in which we should look at these metrics. Booth responded to Robinson by explaining that there are multiple ways to look at these questions, and it is most important to understand how this information is going to be used. Chair Cortez mentioned the importance of measuring monetary and non-monetary value at the degree or institutional level. Chair Cortez then asked the panel to remark on the pros and cons of trying to track and report measures at the individual degree level. Booth then stated the need to pair information about economic outcomes with labor market data and information about the populations. Provost Hartman then asked Booth if the publication of the dashboards led to any immediate changes. Booth responded that there was a shift, specifically in the way people thought about things. Member Chernow then followed up with a question to the panel regarding the importance of the degree, and whether it impacts ROI studies and the fact of skills-based hiring practices.

Associate Commissioner Delci then asked the panel whether they had any parting thoughts. Booth responded by emphasizing the importance of deciding on-use cases. Hartman stated that metrics and data are already available, and underscored benefit of using metrics and data that are already designed and available, as opposed to building something new.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cortez made a motion to adjourn. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.