

**Massachusetts Board of Higher Education  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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June 03, 2024  
3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Higher Education ("BHE" or "the Board") was held on Monday, June 3, 2024, virtually on the web-conference platform Zoom.

Committee Members Present: BHE Chair Chris Gabrieli; Alex Cortez; Bill Walczak; and Commissioner Noe Ortega (non-voting, ex officio).

Committee Members Absent: Veronica Conforme.

BHE Members Present: Secretary of EOE designee Robert Lepage; Ann Christensen; Cindy Mack (BHE Student Voting Member); and Andrew Whitcomb (non-voting UMass Student Segmental Advisor).

Department Staff Present: Constantia Papanikolaou; Elena Quiroz-Livanis; Jose Louis Santos; Clantha McCurdy; Matthew Cole; Richard Riccardi; Matthew Cole; and Alex Demou.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. Roll call attendance was taken (see above for attendance roster).

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Chair Gabrieli began the meeting by proposing a motion to approve minutes. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the motion to approve the Executive Committee minutes for April 22, 2024, was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

### **III. MOTIONS**

#### List of Material's Used

#### *BHE Motions 24-47 through 24-58*

Chair Gabrieli noted that given time constraints, he will be presenting the motions out of order, as some of the motions can be presented at the Board meeting without an Executive Committee vote.

Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-47 Approval of Letter of Intent of the University of Massachusetts Amherst to Award the Bachelor of Arts in Film Studies and Authorization for Fast Track Review*. Upon hearing no discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-47. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the BHE Motion 24-47 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Next, Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-48 Application of Degree Granting Authority for Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for the Degree Program Doctor of Philosophy in Theological Studies*. Upon hearing no discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-48. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-48 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-49 Approval of Criminal Justice Programs Under the Guidelines for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Academic Programs*. Chair Gabrieli asked if the Board has previously considered similar motions. Chief of Staff Quiroz-Livanis confirmed that a similar motion was voted on for a different institution regarding the Police Career Incentive Pay Program. Upon hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called a motion to approve BHE 24-49. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-49 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli soon after introduced *BHE 24-53 Approval of Board of Higher Education Motions 24-50 through 24-52 on a Consent Agenda*. Chair Gabrieli stated that the motion seeks to bundle, approve, and place the following motions on the Consent Agenda for next week's Board meeting:

- BHE 24-50 Renewal of Middlesex Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program

- BHE 24-51 Renewal of Northern Essex Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program
- BHE 24-52 Renewal of University of Massachusetts Lowell in the Commonwealth Honors Program

Upon hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-53. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, bundled BHE Motion 24-53 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Next, Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-54 Approval of Bridgewater State University's Strategic Plan*. Chair Gabrieli gave Bridgewater State University's (BSU) President Fredrick Clark an opportunity to provide highlights of the Strategic Plan to frame the discussion and vote. President Clark informed the Executive Committee Members that this is BSU's second strategic plan during his presidency. He acknowledged that BSU incorporated mental health and wellness, racial justice, physical campus priorities, capital campus affordability, pathways to employment for the students, enrollment management for post-traditional learners, and course gateway communities. President Clark continued by commenting on the tremendous campus participation, receiving helpful input from the Department's Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success Richard Riccardi, and iterated BSU's priorities and goals. President Clark concluded by advising that BSU uses the nesting design where all divisions on the campus have strategic plans that fold under the institution's strategic plan. Chair Gabrieli thanked President Clark for how aggressive BSU is pursuing "BSU Works" and stated that he appreciates the way it was framed.

President Clark spoke on BSU's improvement with articulating pathways for students to obtain employment or receive career counseling. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called a motion to approve BHE 24-54. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-54 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-55 Approval of Massasoit Community College Strategic Plan*. Chair Gabrieli expressed his condolences for the passing of President Ray DiPasquale. He asked the Massasoit Community College (MCC) representatives to speak to what is distinctive about their strategic plan. Interim President William Mitchell responded that one of the biggest points in their strategic plan is removing barriers for students, as some of the processes are cumbersome and complex, and reorganizing to better align with the academic side. Vice President of Academic Affairs Gail Gibson Sheffield added that they will be reviewing all their programs to ensure that they are investing in programs that makes the most sense in their regional community. Hearing

no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called a motion to approve BHE 24-55. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-55 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Soon after, Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-56 Approval of Amended Guidelines for the Department of Children and Families Foster Child Tuition Waiver and Fee Assistance Program*. Chair asked for clarification as to whether the motion was to align the guidelines with the Department of Child and Families (DCF) policy change with the six (6) month custodial requirement. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou confirmed that his understanding was correct, and further explained that the DCF students the Department funds through the DCF financial aid program, are referred to the Department by DCF; the Department therefore defers DCF's judgement, expertise, and needs. Attorney Papanikolaou concluded by informing the Executive Committee Members that the request came from DCF, to align with a policy and practice that they have already implemented. Upon hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-56. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-56 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Next, Chair Gabrieli introduced *BHE 24-57 Financing Approval of Massachusetts State College Building Authority Refunding Revenue Bonds State University Program*. Upon hearing no discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-57. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-57 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

Chair Gabrieli introduced the final motion *BHE 24-58 Approval of the Community College and State University Funding Formula Allocations for FY2025 and Authorization of Timeline to Review and Update the Funding Formulas*. Chair Gabrieli invited the Department's Deputy Commissioner of Administration, Finance, and Operations, Matthew Cole, to provide a background on the motion. Deputy Commissioner Cole explained to Committee Members that the funding formula currently utilized was established approximately ten (10) years ago. This motion will approve the continued use of the funding formula for fiscal year 2025, subject to the appropriations the Department receives through the FY2025 Budget, once finalized. He continued by adding that the motion would allow the Department to use the formula, at the Commissioner's discretion, for allocations of other grant funding. Deputy Commissioner Cole concluded by noting that the motion allows the Commissioner look into the efficacy of the formula itself. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Gabrieli called for a motion to approve BHE 24-58. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, BHE Motion 24-58 was approved unanimously by all Executive Committee members present, by roll call vote.

### **III. DISCUSSION**

There was no further discussion.

### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **V. ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.