



Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report

Bill Heineman, President, North Shore Community College
Chair, Community College Council of Presidents

October 20, 2026

Good morning Chair Gabrieli, Assistant Secretary Lepage, Interim Commissioner Santos, and members of the Board:

Thank you for your time this morning.

In the interest of time I will keep my remarks brief, but want to offer gratitude – on behalf of all the college presidents in the Commonwealth's Community Colleges – to Interim Commissioner Santos who has spent his first weeks in the role visiting campuses, speaking to students, faculty, and staff.

We were lucky to have him at North Shore just last week where he toured an almost completed Life Sciences Pathways Center that will transform the way our science students experience education.

And as you just heard from Interim Commissioner Santos, Associate Commissioner Delci and Assistant Commissioner Mealey, the community colleges continue to see enrollment increases overall. Notably, I want to reiterate the fact that the state universities are beginning to see an influx of community college transfer students.

While this was an expected outcome when we began implementation of free community college, we are pleased to see students continuing their education and that many are doing so at one of our excellent state universities.

I also want to note for the Board what these percentages really mean – at North Shore alone, since the implementation of free community college, we have welcomed more than **1,800 additional students**. In 2026, NSCC conferred 14.6 percent more associate degrees and 21.2% more certificates than in 2025.

Yesterday we also had the opportunity to celebrate the announcement of TRAIN grants being distributed to all 15 community colleges. These grants support the community colleges' workforce development efforts with a particular focus on addressing the needs of un- and underemployed adults in reentering the workforce. Grants include workforce programs in healthcare, education, and advanced manufacturing.

Finally, and at the risk of repeating myself, I cannot overstate the importance of the Department completing the faculty and staff compensation study promptly.

The later we finish, the later we find solutions to what we are confident the study will prove: our faculty and staff are dramatically under compensated for the work they do. We greatly appreciate the Department's work to date and simply ask that it continue to keep the need for expediency at the forefront in this work.

Thank you again for your time today – I am happy to answer any questions you might have.