



Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report

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Chair, Community College Council of Presidents

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Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Tutwiler, Commissioner Ortega, and members of the Board: thank you for having me today. You've had a particularly full agenda today, so I will keep my remarks brief in the interest of time.

First, thank you to Secretary Gorzkowicz for the important discussion around the BRIGHT Act and the House 1 proposal which together would revolutionize capital planning in Massachusetts higher education. We are confident that this is a smart, strategic way forward and the community colleges will continue to partner with the administration as the proposals move through the legislative and budget processes.

While we are fully supportive of the intent of the BRIGHT Act, we do have reservations about how the funding would ultimately be allocated. This legislation would significantly benefit all sectors of higher education, but we have real concerns about the drafted distribution amounts. Currently, the bill allocates \$1.25 billion to UMass and splits the other \$1.25 billion between the state universities and community colleges. We believe that reserving 50% of the funding to the UMass system – which already has a larger capacity for capital planning and which serves fewer students than the community colleges – will exacerbate an already existing gap in the funding and support given to the sectors of public higher education. We hope the legislature will consider changes to the BRIGHT Act that allocates funding in a more equitable distribution.

We also appreciate the robust conversation around reduced credit degrees and look forward to further discussion on this important topic. I want to thank my colleagues for their insight and feedback, and I am grateful to President Eddinger for representing our community college voice.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't continue to publicly note the importance of talking about community college faculty and staff compensation – as we continue to implement free community college and undertake other initiatives across the system, ensuring that our faculty and staff are appropriately compensated for their work remains a critical component of our success.

Thank you – I am happy to take any questions you might have.