



## **Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report**

Bill Heineman, President, North Shore Community College

Chair, Community College Council of Presidents

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Good morning Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Tutwiler, Commissioner Ortega, and members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you all today.

This week community college leaders from across the country – including representatives from all 15 community colleges in Massachusetts – have gathered in Washington, DC for this year's National Legislative Summit. This annual event is an opportunity for us to advocate for policies that support our students and institutions and share the good news happening on our campuses with our Congressional representatives. As you can imagine, there is no shortage of topics in DC at the moment, and we are grateful for the opportunity to discuss topics like Workforce Pell with colleagues from across the country.

Back at home in the Commonwealth, we are similarly grateful to continue sharing stories from across the 15 campuses. Our students are an endless source of inspiration as they juggle hectic lives and their studies in pursuit of economic mobility and personal growth. We constantly encounter our alumni in the communities we serve driving our economy and the public good. It reminds us that community colleges are engines of economic opportunity and, in many ways, safe havens for our students.

And this spring, free community college has brought more students to our doors than we have seen in many years. We continue to talk about the importance of ensuring that those students have access to the supports that make them successful: that includes the SUCCESS program, which delivers student-centered supports that drive stronger outcomes in historically underrepresented populations; physical environments like modern classrooms and up-to-date lab space for our students to learn in; faculty and staff that are appropriately compensated for the work they are doing; and degrees and certificates that meet students' professional aspirations.

To that end, we support the passage of the innovation regulations before you. While there are differing opinions on how best to move forward in this area, we are comfortable and supportive of the flexibility built into these regulations and look forward to continued conversations around next steps.

Finally, while I am encouraged, excited, and energized by the direction our colleges continue to move in, I acknowledge that as we begin the annual budget process that conversations are well underway around funding priorities. Yes, the community colleges' enrollment is significantly up, and continuing to grow. But in order to ensure success, not only of our students but of our institutions as well, we need to pay particular attention to further necessary investments to ensure that we aren't bringing students to our doors without the necessary tools to help them succeed.

Thank you for your continued leadership. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.