

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability **NO.:** AAC 10-27
COMMITTEE DATE: June 8, 2010
BOARD DATE: June 15, 2010

**RENEWAL OF QUINSIGAMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEMBERSHIP IN THE
COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the
Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and renews the
membership of **Quinsigamond Community College** in the
Commonwealth Honors Program for six years.

Authority: Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as
Revised by the Board of Higher Education in November 2006

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and P-16 Policy

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June 2010

Quinsigamond Community College

Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

Background

This motion concerns the continuation of Quinsigamond Community College's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP). According to the Commonwealth Honors Program Guidelines, once Commonwealth Honors Program approval has been obtained by an institution, the Program will be reviewed every six years by the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee. The report of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval. This is the first renewal cycle for Quinsigamond Community College.

Review Process

Quinsigamond Community College prepared a self-study document presenting its Honors Program structure and operations in terms of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements. The report provided evidence documenting fulfillment of the following criteria:

- A. Mission
- B. Organization and administration
- C. Admissions criteria
- D. Transfer criteria
- E. Program curriculum
- F. Graduation criteria
- G. Program resources
- H. Curriculum review process

Visiting Committee Findings and Recommendations

A visiting committee, comprising Robert Darst, Honors Program Director, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; Susan Edgerton, Honors Program Co-director; Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; Matthew Silliman, Honors Program Co-director; Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; and David Winsper, Honors Program Coordinator, Springfield Technical Community College, conducted the six-year review. Prior to the on-campus visit on March 13, 2010, the committee reviewed the self-evaluation prepared by the College.

On the basis of the campus visit, the review of the self-evaluation, and the materials received during the on-campus visit, the committee concluded that Quinsigamond Community College Honors Program substantially satisfies the CHP criteria. The visiting committee found that the Commonwealth Honors Program at QCC is a thriving program, well directed by its committed director, and guided by an active Honors Advisory Committee. The Committee noted that the goals of the Program are well integrated into the mission of the College, and the QCC Honors Program is well respected and supported by the College's administration.

The visiting committee provided the following recommendations to further strengthen the program:

1. Expand the program to roughly twice its present size over a five-year period.
2. Identify and address barriers to expansion to currently underserved student populations, such as Business and Engineering.
3. Recruit additional faculty members or academic advising staff members to share advising duties with the Honors Program director and extend early registration to honors students.
4. Make small modifications in enrollment management to make more efficient use of the director's time.
5. Provide the program director with better, more regular access to clerical support.
6. Enhance the curriculum by increasing the number of Honors courses, expanding faculty participation in teaching Honors classes and by providing stipends to reward the work of faculty who oversee Honors contracts.

Institutional Response

Quinsigamond Community College agreed that the Honors Program should be significantly expanded and is undertaking initiatives to encourage more students to consider pursuing their studies within the context of an Honors curriculum. For example, QCC implemented an "early notice" component to placement testing, allowing the Honors Coordinator the opportunity to be more proactive in reaching out to students who may be interested in such a course of study. There is now a full-time academic advisor in the Advising Office who will serve as the point-person to the Honors Program. The President initiated a scholarship program, which will annually recognize a deserving Honors student. Additionally, the Honors Coordinator has initiated discussions with the Assistant Registrar about the possibility of early registration for Honors students.

Quinsigamond Community College will provide a status report on its response at the spring 2011 Commonwealth Honors Council meeting.

Recommendation

Department of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and recommends that the Board approve the renewal of the membership of Quinsigamond Community College in the Commonwealth Honors Program.