

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability **NO.:** AAC 10-28
COMMITTEE DATE: June 8, 2010
BOARD DATE: June 15, 2010

RENEWAL OF SALEM STATE 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 **Salem State 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

Contact: Francesca B. Purcell, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic and P-16 Policy

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June 2010

Salem State College

Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

Background

This motion concerns the continuation of Salem State 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 Salem State College.

Review Process

Salem State 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

On March 2, 2010, a visiting committee, comprising Ginger Hurajt, Professor of English/Honors Coordinator, Northern Essex Community College; Sara Pollak Levine, Associate Professor of Psychology/Honors Program Director, Fitchburg State College; and Elizabeth Donaghey, Honors Coordinator, University of Massachusetts Lowell, conducted the six-year review. Prior to the on-campus visit, the team 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 the Salem State College Honors Program substantially satisfies the CHP criteria. The visiting committee was impressed by the overall level of commitment and enthusiasm of the faculty, students, and administrators alike for the Program's growth and success. Of particular note was the extensive Social and Academic programming occurring within the Honors Program. The visiting committee recommended to the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee that it renew the membership of Salem State College in the Commonwealth Honors Program.

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

- Return the budget to its previous level of support.

- Explore the possibility of offering team-taught courses.
- Create a membership rotation for the Honors Program Advisory Committee so that not all of the Committee members turn over in the same year.

Institutional Response

Salem State College responded that the financial downturn has caused the College to be cautious in its budgeting but that the amount of Honors scholarship aid has increased in recent years and that the Honors Program will continue to be a direct beneficiary of fundraising efforts by the Salem State College Foundation. The Honors Program Advisory Committee will develop a proposal for offering team-taught courses for consideration by the Provost next academic year. The Honors Program Advisory Committee will submit a request through the Provost's office to Salem State's chapter of MSCA for staggered terms, beginning with next year's appointments.

Salem State 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 Salem State College in the Commonwealth Honors Program.