

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**NO.:** BHE 21-46

**BOARD DATE:** May 18, 2021

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**MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the May 4, 2021 recommendation of the Middlesex Community College Board of Trustees recommending Philip Sisson as President of Middlesex Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about July 3, 2021, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment.

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by BHE 5/18/2021.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

## Background

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) is a coordinating board, with some governing authority, over the public higher education system. Among the BHE's governing functions are its statutory responsibilities to approve the appointment and removal of, and set the compensation for, the president of each state university and community college within the public higher education system. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(q) and 21.

In furtherance of these legislative requirements, and consistent with the BHE's responsibility to establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth, to establish coordination between and among institutions, and to resolve conflicts of policies or operations, the BHE issued guidelines and procedures for the search, selection, appointment and removal of the chief executive officers at state universities and community colleges. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(c) and (u). [BHE Presidential Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal Guidelines \(2013\)](#). The BHE Presidential Guidelines establish minimum procedural expectations for Board of Trustees conducting presidential searches, delegate to the Commissioner the authority to act on behalf of the BHE as specified therein, and include several touchpoints between local Board of Trustee Chairs and the Commissioner to ensure that the Presidential search process is being conducted consistent with the BHE and the Commissioner's expectations.

The Middlesex Community College (MCC) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the President of MCC in September 2020, and conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at Isaacson, Miller. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the Commissioner appointed a voting member to the search committee, Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall, who participated in the development of the position profile, the selection and interviews of semi-finalist candidates, and the search committee decisions to recommend final candidates for public interviews. (The MCC Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/presidentialsearch/Downloads/profile.pdf>).

Five finalists participated in MCC Board of Trustee interviews and virtual campus visits during the month of April, 2021. During that time, the BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all five candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential

Guidelines. The Commissioner and the Secretary of Education engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all candidates on behalf of the BHE.

On May 4, 2021 the MCC Board of Trustees voted unanimously to recommend Philip Sisson to the BHE for approval and appointment, subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

The Commissioner has received and reviewed the MCC Board of Trustee's recommendation, along with all supporting materials, and has determined that the submittal is complete and the search was conducted in alignment with the BHE Presidential Guidelines. Accordingly, the Commissioner is forwarding the recommendation to the BHE for consideration and formal action.

***Attachments to BHE 21-46:***

03a\_Philip Sisson Middlesex Presidential Search Cover Letter

03b\_Philip Sisson Resume (CV)

03c\_Terms of Appointment Letter\_P. Sisson

03d\_Letter from Middlesex Chair Campbell to Commissioner Santiago

03e\_Middlesex Search Process Summary