

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**NO.:** BHE 21-31

**BOARD DATE:** October 20, 2020

**APPROVAL OF WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the **Worcester State University** Strategic Plan and authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education for final approval pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(l) and 22(l).

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by BHE 10/20/2020.

**Authority:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l);  
BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

**Contact:** Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic  
Planning and Public Program Approval

## **Background**

A fundamental responsibility of the BHE is to provide overall direction to the state's system of public higher education. The Board enacts this responsibility by establishing statewide goals and by regularly measuring and reporting progress toward these goals building upon the foundation of the Vision Project and Closing Gaps. Articulating statewide goals has no impact on creating greater equity in public higher education unless these goals and performance metrics are embraced by the individual colleges and universities and incorporated into their strategic plans. Massachusetts state statute therefore charges the BHE and the Secretary of Education with reviewing and approving campus strategic plans. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§9(f), 9(l) and 22(l); BHE By-Laws, Article I, Section 3(d) and Article III.

### **Worcester State University Planning Process**

Touch Point I took place at a site visit on November 7, 2019 with Commissioner Santiago and staff and President Maloney with the Worcester State University (WSU) strategic planning leadership committee. Commissioner Santiago presented an overview of the BHE expectations for campus strategic plans, emphasizing the significance of the equity agenda. As well, the Commissioner noted that any plans for new programs should be broadly included and identified in the plans. Discussion and questions followed the Commissioner's presentation.

Touch Point II began on June 10, 2020 when a draft of the WSU strategic plan was submitted to the Commissioner and staff for review (per Covid-19 changes to obtaining formative feedback through a written process in the absence of a Strategic Planning Committee meeting where verbal feedback would be provided). Once the staff review was completed, the draft was then distributed by staff to members of the Strategic Planning Committee on July 9, 2020 for their commentary and formative feedback. On August 19, 2020 Commissioner Santiago shared BHE member feedback with President Maloney. Members found the plan to be strong and to include all the required components in the BHE Campus Strategic Planning Guidelines. Members commented that it would strengthen the plan to include more actual target numbers, quantifying what is expected to be accomplished over the course of the five-year period. Members also noted that they would like to see the targets quantified at Touch Point III and offered that a target-range from attainable to aspirational may provide further evidence of WSU's attainment of goals.

Touch Point III: On September 10, 2020, the WSU Board of Trustees approved the strategic plan. On September 11, 2020, President Maloney submitted the plan to Commissioner Santiago and on October 13, 2020 the plan was distributed to the members of the Board of Higher Education.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Bristol Community College at Touch Point II and Touch Point III. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Worcester State University Strategic Plan, 2020-2025**.