

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 24-54

BOARD DATE: June 11, 2024

APPROVAL OF BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves **Bridgewater State University Strategic Plan 2.0 (2024-2029)** 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 approved and advanced to the full BHE by the Executive Committee on 6/3/2024; and adopted by the BHE on 6/11/2024.

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

Contact: Richard Riccardi, Sc.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

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. 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).

Bridgewater State University Planning Process

Touch Point I: On April 28, 2022, Commissioner Santiago and his staff spent the day on Bridgewater State's campus meeting first with President Clark, Provost Ismaili, Chief of Staff Leuenberger, and Vice President Jean, then with President Clark's Cabinet, Bridgewater State's Board of Trustees, and finally with the campus community in a town hall format held in-person as well as with a Zoom option. The focus of the meetings was on the equity agenda as well as what this next strategic plan would be. As President Clark noted, his first strategic plan was the first one of his presidency at Bridgewater State, so the next strategic plan would reflect both the progress made in implementing the first one while recognizing that there was still more work to be done in advancing the goals of the institution. Bridgewater State then conducted a thorough, inclusive strategic planning process, including over 45 listening tour sessions that included dialogues with Bridgewater State University faculty, librarians, staff, and students to capture their input as well as the administration of numerous campus climate surveys. Data on workforce development and community partnerships was collected from stakeholders in the region through focus groups and electronic surveys. Listening tours and focused meetings with community partners in K-12 education, local government, non-profit organizations, and business organizations gathered information on economic and workforce development. Regular

updates were provided to the campus community and a data dashboard was developed to be aligned with the Department of Higher Education's Performance Measurement System (PMRS). A planning summit in November 2023 offered another opportunity to receive feedback on the plan and its outcome measures. A virtual meeting on December 7, 2023 was held with Chief of Staff Leuenberger and DHE staff to discuss the status of Bridgewater State's plan in conjunction with the strategic plan guidelines in anticipation of the next touchpoint in the process.

Touch Point II: Bridgewater State submitted the Touchpoint II draft plan on January 11, 2024. After a comprehensive DHE staff review, a Touchpoint meeting (virtual) was held on March 22, 2024 with President Clark, Chief of Staff Leuenberger, Vice President Jean and DHE staff to provide feedback. The staff noted the updates made to reflect the current campus and inclusion of new strategic priorities which spanned 11 areas of focus built on a foundation of data-informed decision making. The staff also noted the commitment to adopt and advance the language, spirit and strategies of the DHE's racial equity goals and metrics, informed by the Student Success Framework, PMRS, and SPRE. Finally, the staff offered suggestions for improvement in the plan such as a commitment to more near-time analytics of early success metrics and requested that the plan expound more on how far Bridgewater State has to go to raise performance and eliminate disparities in outcomes. Those suggestions were incorporated in the final plan.

Touch Point III: President Clark submitted the plan to DHE staff on May 1, 2024. The plan was distributed to the members of the Board of Higher Education in late May. A draft of the plan was approved by Bridgewater State's Board of Trustees at its December 2023 meeting. Once approved by the BHE, the final plan will be brought back to Bridgewater State's Board of Trustees for adoption.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Bridgewater State University at Touch Point II and Touch Point III. Staff recommendation is for BHE approval of the proposed **Bridgewater State University Campus Strategic Plan 2.0 (2024-2029)**.