

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

No.: BHE 23-61
Date: June 20, 2023

APPROVAL OF MASSACHUSETTS MARITIME ACADEMY SPECIAL MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN RENEWAL 2023-2028

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the **Massachusetts Maritime Academy** "*Special Mission Strategic Plan Renewal 2023-2028* Strategic Partnership plan and authorizes the Commissioner to forward the same to the Secretary of Education for final approval pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 7.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 6/20/2023.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Chapter 15A, Sections 7, 9 and 22; Sections 160 and 163 of Chapter 352 of the Acts of 2004; Section 25 of Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2005; and BHE 12-03

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D.,
Senior Associate Commissioner 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. 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 law therefore charges the BHE and the Secretary of Education with reviewing and approving campus strategic plans. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§7, 9(f), 9(l) and 22(l).

State law further provides that the board of trustees of a state or community college with the potential to expand its mission, profile, and orientation to a more regional or national focus may submit to the Board of Higher Education (BHE), for its approval, a five-year plan embracing an entrepreneurial model that leverages that potential in order to achieve higher levels of excellence. M.G.L. c. 15A, §7. Such plans, called special mission plans, shall include, but not be limited to, budget and enrollment projections for each year, projections for total student charges for each year, projections for in-state and out-of-state enrollments for each year, and plans to insure continuing access to the institution by residents of the commonwealth and affirmative action policies and programs that affirm the need for and a commitment to maintaining and increasing access for economically disadvantaged and minority students. *Id.* See also BHE 12-03.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy Planning Process

Touch Point I

MMA began its planning process as multiple transitions were taking place at the Department of Higher Education. It was determined in the Spring 2022 that MMA would begin the campus-wide efforts after speaking with former Deputy of Academic Affairs and Student Success Dr. Patricia Marshall. The special mission of the institution was an important determinant in

developing the plan. MMA must satisfy United States Coast Guard (USCG) licensing standards, such that students are required to accrue sea time, meet physical fitness standards, and pass the USCG licensing examination. This necessitates an education that differs significantly from traditional institutions of higher education. The leadership team ensured that input was solicited from all departments and offices across campus throughout the drafting process and during a series of targeted meetings with key stakeholders including students.

Touch Point II

On April 10, 2023, MMA submitted a draft of its Special Mission Renewal Plan for staff review. Staff found that the plan to be comprehensive a reflective of MMA special mission as well as in alignment with BHE priorities for racial equity. The review team also found significant evidence that MMA has established priorities such as recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students of color, a climate of inclusion, and inclusive excellence training on campus. Notably, the Presidential Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was charged with making recommendations for MMA to design responsive, effective changes and adjustments in this regard, based on data collected in a 2023 Climate Survey administered across campus. This process and its outcomes reflect an ongoing commitment to alignment with BHE priorities. Additionally, several consultations and discussions with multiple cross-divisional stakeholders, were followed by a two-day retreat and served as the basis for the plan. The Presidential All-University Committee further reviewed and distributed the draft to standing committees, collecting their comments and questions for the administration. A highly iterative process with internal community-wide perspectives informed the plan significantly. MMA's Special Mission defines external stakeholders as other Maritime entities with whom MMA interfaces and integrates student learning experiences. External stakeholders such as the US Maritime Administration, the US Coast Guard, the National Security Multiple Mission Vessel, Patriot State II, and Schooner Ernestina Morrisey were included in planning by way of the requirements, policies and procedures that are essential to MMA's relationships to these entities.

The review team suggested that MMA consider providing more definition of what will be included in the planned expansion of recruitment and retention for racially diverse students, as well as provide an estimated timeline for extending and developing the community partnerships that are referenced in the plan. It was also recommended that more information be included describing how MMA will collect evidence of the effectiveness of planned events, how student voice is represented in the planning process, and how MMA will ensure racially diverse participants will be included in evaluating the plans effectiveness.

Touch Point III

The Massachusetts Maritime Academy Board of Trustees approved the plan on 6/2/23 and the same day notified Commissioner Ortega. The draft version of this approved plan was previously reviewed by Commissioner Ortega and staff, after Touch Point II for logistical reasons in the interest of including the plan on BHE's June agenda. All of the recommendations provided at TP II were reflected in the submitted plan that was approved by local governance.

STAFF ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL REQUEST

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by the **Massachusetts Maritime Academy** at Touch Point II and Touch Point III. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Massachusetts Maritime Academy Special Mission Renewal Plan 2023-2028**.