

Higher Ed Authority Overview

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees

Community College and State University
Boards of Trustees

Includes citations to Massachusetts General Laws

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Mission Statements

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

The mission of the Board of Higher Education is to ensure that Massachusetts residents have the opportunity to benefit from a higher education that enriches their lives and advances their contributions to the civic life, economic development, and social progress of the Commonwealth. To that end, the programs and services of Massachusetts higher education must meet standards of quality commensurate with the benefits it promises and must be truly accessible to the people of the Commonwealth in all their diversity.

Massachusetts Public Higher Education System

Massachusetts Public Higher Education is a SYSTEM with a distinguished past, increasing and measurable accomplishments, and dedicated to being recognized as having one of the nation's most outstanding array of institutions. It comprises 15 community colleges, nine state universities, and five campuses of the University of Massachusetts. The system exists to provide accessible, affordable, relevant, and rigorous programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment. The public system is committed to continuous improvement and accountability in all aspects of teaching and learning. The Board of Higher Education, together with each respective Board of Trustees, expects all students, faculty, and staff to be held to exacting standards in the performance of their roles and responsibilities.

University of Massachusetts

The University's mission is to provide an affordable education of high quality and conduct programs of research and public service that advance our knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth.

State Universities

There are six comprehensive state universities—Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Salem State University, Westfield State University, and Worcester State University—and three specialized institutions—Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy. All state universities integrate liberal arts and sciences programs with professional education, and the three specialized institutions also focus on academic areas identified in their names.

Each state university places a special emphasis on teaching and lifelong learning and promotes a campus life that fosters intellectual, social, and ethical development. Committed to excellence in instruction and to providing responsive, innovative, and educational programs of high quality, they seek to develop each student's critical thinking, quantitative, technological, oral, and written communication skills, and practical appreciation of the arts, sciences, and humanities as they affect good citizenship and an improved quality of life. The state universities provide a campus environment where the ideas, values, perspectives, and contributions of all students are respected.

Massachusetts state universities are strategically located to facilitate access to baccalaureate and master's degree programs for Commonwealth residents who meet their high standards for admission. In recognition of their responsibilities to Massachusetts taxpayers to manage their resources efficiently and to maintain tuition and fees at a level as low as possible, each state university has a distinctive academic focus based upon its established strengths and regional and state needs. Each state university is a leader and resource for the community and contributes to the region's cultural, environmental, and economic development.

Community Colleges

The fifteen Massachusetts Community Colleges offer open access to high quality, affordable academic programs, including associate degree and certificate programs. They are committed to excellence in teaching and learning and provide academic preparation for transfer to four-year institutions, career preparation for entry into high demand occupational fields, developmental coursework, and lifelong learning opportunities.

Community colleges have a special responsibility for workforce development and through partnerships with business and industry, provide job training, retraining, certification, and skills improvement. In addition, they assume primary responsibility, in the public system, for offering developmental courses, programs, and other educational services for individuals who seek to develop the skills needed to pursue college-level study or enter the workforce.

Rooted in their communities, the colleges serve as community leaders, identifying opportunities and solutions to community problems and contributing to the region's intellectual, cultural, and economic development. They collaborate with elementary and secondary education and work to ensure a smooth transition from secondary to post-secondary education. Through partnerships with baccalaureate institutions, they help to promote an efficient system of public higher education.

The community colleges offer an environment where the ideas and contributions of all students are respected. Academic and personal support services are provided to ensure that all students have an opportunity to achieve academic and career success. No eligible student shall be deprived of the opportunity for a community college education in Massachusetts because of an inability to pay tuition and fees.

Comparison of Major Authority: General

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
	Analyze present and future goals, needs, and requirements of public higher education and establish goals to achieve a well coordinated quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(c)</i>	
Submit five-year master plan to BHE and Secretary of Education for approval. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(l); Ch. 75 §1A(l)</i>	The institutional five-year master plans for public higher education are submitted to the BHE and the Secretary of Education for review and approval.	Submit five-year master plan to BHE and Secretary of Education for approval. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(l) and §22(l)</i>
	Prepare a five-year master plan for public higher education, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Education, taking into account the BHE's analysis of present and future goals, needs and requirements of public higher education, and the five-year plans submitted by individual boards of trustees. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(f) and (c)</i>	
Develop and submit institutional mission statements for approval by the BHE and the Secretary of Education. <i>Ch. 75, §1A(n)</i>	The institutional mission statements are submitted to the BHE and the Secretary of Education for review and approval. <i>Ch. 15A, §7</i>	Develop and submit institutional mission statements for approval by the BHE and the Secretary of Education. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(n)</i>
	Develop mission statement for the overall system of public higher education and segmental mission statements for approval by the Secretary of Education. <i>Ch. 15A, §7</i>	
Develop a performance measurement system for the University, in consultation with the Secretary and the Board of Higher Education. <i>Ch. 15A, §7A</i>	Develop a performance measurement system in consultation with the institutions and the Secretary (for the state and community colleges). <i>Ch. 15A, §7A and §22(0)</i>	
The University board of trustees shall have all authority, responsibility, rights, privileges, powers and duties customarily and traditionally exercised by governing boards of higher education institutions and shall not be subject to other state entities except as specified in statute. <i>Ch. 75, §1</i>		
Establish policies for administrative management of staff services, and general business of university. <i>Ch. 75, §1</i>		Establish policies for administrative management of staff services, and general business of institution. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(c)</i>

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
	Coordinate activities among the public institutions, and engage in advocacy on their behalf. <i>Ch. 15A, §5 and §42</i>	
	Collect, analyze and maintain data from institutions of public higher education as may be relevant to the discharge of its purposes, functions, and duties. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(s)</i>	
	Coordinate among postsecondary institutions, public or private, and resolve conflicts of policies or operations arising in public higher education. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(u)</i>	

Comparison of Major Authority: Fiscal Affairs

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
Submit recommendations for tuition rates to BHE for approval. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(i)</i>	Set tuition rate for state and community colleges. For UMass, approve tuition rate adopted by UMass Board of Trustees. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(i)</i>	
Establish all fees. <i>Ch. 75, §1(a), (b)</i>	No authority.	Establish all fees. <i>Ch.15A, §22(b)</i>
Prepare estimates and requests for the Secretary to use in maintenance and capital outlay requests. <i>Ch. 75, §1A (q)</i>	The Secretary of Education shall submit budget requests for the system of public institutions of higher education in accordance with legislatively prescribed procedures. <i>Ch. 15A, §15 and §15B</i>	Prepare estimates and requests for the Secretary and BHE to use in maintenance and capital outlay requests. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(a)</i>
Have overall responsibility for property, real and personal, owned or occupied by the University. <i>Ch. 75, §1A(d)</i>	Have overall responsibility for the property real and personal, owned or occupied by the BHE, the state colleges, and the community colleges. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(m)</i>	
Apply to BHE for BHE to submit applications to HEFA to undertake projects for the University. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(aa)</i>	Submit written applications to HEFA requesting they undertake projects on behalf of one or more public institutions of higher education in accordance with legislative prescribed procedures. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(aa)</i>	
Approve charges established by the University of Massachusetts Building Authority for use of Authority buildings. <i>Ch. 75 App., §1-9</i>	Approve charges established by the State College Building Authority for use of Authority buildings. <i>Ch. 73 App., §1-9</i>	

Comparison of Major Authority: Academic and Student Affairs

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
Subject to general authority of the Secretary and the BHE, establish, locate, support, consolidate or abolish classes, courses, curricula, departments, divisions, schools or colleges. <i>Ch. 75, §2</i>	Define and authorize new functions or new programs, consolidate, discontinue or transfer existing functions, educational activities and programs. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(b)</i>	
Submit admission standards and program standards to BHE/subject to disapproval by BHE. <i>Ch. 75, §2</i>	Require boards of trustees to submit admission standards and program standards, which shall be published by the Board if not disapproved. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(b)</i>	Submit admission standards and program standards to BHE subject to disapproval by BHE. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(h)</i>
Subject to BHE authorization, offer degree programs and award degrees, submit program approval requests to BHE. <i>Ch. 75, §1a and §1k</i>	Confer degree powers on public institutions. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(a)</i>	Subject to BHE authorization offer degree programs and award degrees, submit program approval requests to BHE. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(j), (k)</i>
Establish and operate programs, including summer and evening, in accordance with degree authority. Summer and evening programs are self-sustaining. <i>Ch. 15A, §26; Ch. 75, §51(a)(j)</i>		Establish and operate programs, including summer and evening, in accordance with degree authority. Summer and evening programs are self-sustaining. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(j) and §26</i>
Offer doctoral programs independently, or with other public institutions with BHE approval. <i>Ch. 75, §2</i>		
Establish standards for promotion, graduation. <i>Ch. 75, §1A and §2</i>		Establish standards for promotion, graduation. <i>Ch. 15A, §22 and §22(g)</i>
Confer honorary degrees. BHE gives power. <i>Ch. 75, §2</i>		Confer honorary degrees. BHE gives power. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(k)</i>
	Establish guidelines for and administer financial assistance/scholarship programs authorized by legislature. <i>Ch. 15A, §16</i>	

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
Administer graduate student waivers. Submit to BHE annual report on graduate tuition waiver policies and distribution of said waivers. <i>Ch. 15A, §19</i>	Administer a tuition waiver program. <i>Ch. 15A, §19</i>	Administer graduate student waivers. Submit to BHE annual report on graduate tuition waiver policies and distribution of said waivers. <i>Ch. 15A, §19</i>
	Develop and implement a transfer compact among public institutions. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(k)(v)</i>	
	Review enrollment levels for each institution in the system (subject to disapproval of BHE). <i>Ch. 15A, §9(k)</i>	
	Administer the Police Career Incentive Pay Program (PCIPP) for cities and towns and the state police. <i>Ch. 41, §108(l)</i>	
	Prepare a system of student assessment to measure student improvement at public institutions of higher education between the first and fourth years. <i>Ch. 15A, §32</i>	
	License independent institutions of higher education. <i>Ch. 69, §30 and §31</i>	
	Respond to consumer complaints. <i>Ch. 69, §30 and §31; Ch.15A, §9(u) and §22</i>	

Comparison of Major Authority: Personnel

Board of Trustees of University of Massachusetts	Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	Boards of Trustees of Community Colleges and State Universities
	Submit to the Secretary for approval, a recommended candidate for appointment as the Commissioner of Higher Education, who is secretary to BHE, its chief executive officer, and chief school officer for higher education. <i>Ch. 15A, §6</i>	
Have complete authority for election or appointment of president, officers, and professional staff terms and conditions of employment. <i>Ch. 75, §14</i>	For state and community colleges, fix the classification, title, salary range within the general salary schedule for each member of the professional staff, establish salary for chief executive officers and certain other professional staff. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(x) and (y)</i>	Establish salaries for professional staff in accordance with ranges set by BHE. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(x) and (y)</i>
	Approve appointment and removal of chief executive officer and approve and fix the compensation of the chief executive officer of each institution within state and community college system. <i>Ch. 15A, §21 and §9(a)</i>	
Implement and evaluate affirmative action policies plans. <i>Ch. 75, §1A(f)</i>	Establish an affirmative action policy and implement a conformance program throughout the system. <i>Ch. 15A, §9(w)</i>	Implement and evaluate affirmative action policies. <i>Ch. 15A, §22(f)</i>
Employer for collective bargaining for University employees. <i>Ch. 150E</i>	Act as “employer” for collective bargaining purposes for employees of the public system of higher education, excluding employees of the University of Massachusetts. <i>Ch. 150E</i>	
	Publish a report every four years assessing overall faculty productivity and overall teaching effectiveness within the public system of higher education. <i>Ch. 15A, §33</i>	
	Administer the optional retirement program for higher education employees. <i>Ch. 15A, §40</i>	