

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 19, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Livestreamed, via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Higher Education (“BHE” or “the Board”) was held virtually on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 on the web-conference platform Zoom.

The following Board Members were present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Ann Christensen

Veronica Conforme

Alex Cortez

Cameron Costa

Patty Eppinger

Paul Mattera

Tom Moreau, Secretary of Education Designee

Judy Pagliuca

Paul Toner

Bill Walczak

Jorgo Gushi, non-voting Student Advisor, Community College segment

Cindy Mack, non-voting Student Advisor, State University segment

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The following Board Members were absent:

Mike O’Brien

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chris Gabrieli called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and announced that this meeting was being held remotely and in accordance with relevant amendments to the Open Meeting Law. Chair Gabrieli announced that the meeting was being livestreamed via Zoom and recorded, and members of the public who signed up for public comment would be allowed to join the Zoom meeting to provide comment. Department of Higher Education (DHE or Department) Chief of Staff Elena Quiroz-Livanis, then took roll call attendance (see above for attendance roster).

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Board did not receive requests for public comment.

III. WELCOME

Chair Gabrieli welcomed everyone to the first, full Board meeting of the fiscal year. He remarked that the agenda consisted of two motions and two presentations. He also noted that this was the first BHE meeting after the implementation of Advisory Councils, and that there would be an opportunity to hear report outs from the BHE Co-Chairs of each Advisory Council.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the last Board meeting, which was held on June 22, 2021. The motion was duly moved and seconded. With no further discussion the motion proceeded to a roll call vote and passed unanimously by all members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Abstain
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Tom Moreau, Secretary of Education Designee – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

V. REMARKS & REPORTS

A. Chairman's Remarks

Chair Gabrieli opened with commentary on the work done by the Department in furtherance of the Equity Agenda. He stated that initiatives such as the New Undergraduate Experience, Basic Needs Security, and other actionable items would be the focus of the Advisory Council discussions over the next 18 months.

Chair Gabrieli acknowledged this week was STEM week in Massachusetts and commented on Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECHs), an early college program that focuses entirely on STEM careers. He remarked that the program's ability to create greater student opportunities should be considered in all states. Member Harrity expressed support for Chair Gabrieli's comments. As a member of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, she encouraged the Board to engage in the different STEM Week activities. Member Cortez commented on the importance of identifying the pipeline of where students are falling off to help the Department better understand their challenges. Member Bill Walczak asked if there was any follow-up to the PTECH seminar and Massachusetts providing PTECH-like programs. Chair Gabrieli stated that in most cases,

PTECH programs operate through new schools. He shared a grant opportunity offered by the state for planning, which will fund support for implementing the whole school Early College and PTECH's. He thanked the Board for their mutual interest in STEM before turning to Commissioner Santiago.

B. Commissioner's Remarks

Commissioner Santiago opened his remarks with acknowledging STEM week and the work done in that area. He reported on the positive outcomes through the STEM Starter Academy (SSA), where 31,000 students have benefited by either receiving a degree, certificate, four-year transfer, or being transferred into the STEM workplace. He noted that Black SSA students were twice as likely to achieve positive outcomes than those not participating in these programs. Commissioner Santiago commented on MassTeach, an NSF program of support for students becoming STEM teachers.

The Commissioner also discussed the SAT Optional Program. He highlighted an article that appeared in Inside Higher Education, which states that 75% of the higher education institutions in the country are participating in some form of SAT Optional Admissions and that we are seeing a move toward more holistic admissions.

C. Secretary of the Executive Office of Education's (EOE) Remarks

Assistant Secretary Tom Moreau indicated that he did not have remarks.

D. Report from Presidents

State University Segmental Report

For a copy of President Birge's full remarks, please see:

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2021-05-04%20Report%20from%20SU%20Presidents.pdf>

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts College President James Birge spoke on behalf of the State University segment. He provided updates on three key areas: Fall 2021, America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Supplemental Budget Request, and collective bargaining.

Fall 2021 Update

President Birge announced that all nine State Universities developed post-pandemic return plans that keep the health and safety of the campus communities a top priority. He stated that although the group continues to address the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains optimistic about the gradual return to pre-pandemic life and traditional on-campus operations. Campuses are full of activity, and students are taking part in the full college experience. President Birge remarked that all of the State Universities require all students, staff, and faculty to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Students are required to be vaccinated to attend in-person classes and participate in campus life activities. In addition to the vaccine requirement, campuses also

have implemented varying levels of mask requirements. Most campuses require students, employees, and visitors to wear masks in public and academic, indoor campus spaces, regardless of social distancing or vaccination.

He stated that all nine State Universities continue to offer COVID testing for students and employees on their campuses and contact tracing to stop the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. All campuses update and share COVID-19 data weekly through a public-facing COVID dashboard. With the cooperation of students, staff, and faculty, He reported that the State Universities have nearly a 100 percent compliance rate with the health and safety mandates and protocols and an overall vaccination rate that exceeds 90 percent across the segment. As a result, the positivity rate was below one percent.

ARPA and Supplemental Budget Request

President Birge shared some of the areas of need that the State Universities have asked the state to consider when allocating the ARPA and surplus revenue. He stated that the State Universities are an essential element of any future economic recovery plan. Investments of one-time funds in critical areas would improve the affordability and financial stability of the Commonwealth's nine State Universities. The funds would bring much-needed relief to post-secondary students and their families. Through investments made by the state in these critical areas described, the state universities will emerge from the pandemic to provide the best value-proposition for Massachusetts residents to earn a four-year degree and offer more affordable pathways to our students.

Bargaining Update

President Birge provided an update on contract negotiations with three of the employee bargaining units. He remarked that the Council of Presidents appreciates how its employees helped navigate the campuses through the most challenging times. They continue to advocate for a reasonable, fair, and meaningful set of economic parameters indicative of their gratitude for their colleagues' work. He stated the group remains hopeful that the fourth contract will be settled shortly. President Birge also shared the Council of Presidents has informed the House and Senate leadership that agreements have been reached on the three contracts.

President Birge concluded by thanking Deputy Commissioner Tom Simard for his work as Department CFO and wished him well.

Community College Segmental Report

For a copy of President Podell's full remarks, please see:

<https://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/2021-05-04%20Report%20from%20CC%20Presidents.pdf>

MassBay Community College President David Podell shared updates from the Massachusetts Community College segment. He welcomed Dr. Rick Hopper, Interim President of Greenfield Community College; Ray DiPasquale at Massasoit; Phil Sisson at Middlesex; and Dr. Bill Heineman at

North Shore. He stated that the segment's Fall 2021 plans were informed by the students and the colleges' planned accordingly while also doing their best to maintain a safe learning environment. Last month, we announced a vaccine mandate at all 15 Community Colleges, which will go into effect this January. Campus leaders have done an outstanding job in an extremely tight time frame to build out programs that will significantly impact student success outcomes for historically underrepresented student groups. President Podell shared his gratitude for colleagues Lane Glenn at Northern Essex and Phil Sisson at Middlesex. Both have taken on leadership roles in the Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services (SUCCESS) initiative.

President Podell remarked that to build on the good work already being done, the group hired Lutful Khan to serve as the Senior Project Director of SUCCESS. He also noted that all fifteen presidents and all fifteen of Board Chairs submitted testimony supporting legislation establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative. With 42 to 56% of community college students in Massachusetts reporting food insecurity, he shared that the legislation would provide additional supports to the institutions that are already doing work to support students' basic needs.

President Podell provided an overview of the importance of community colleges. He shared his encouragement that conversations are happening around the value of community colleges and support the concept of free community college through America's College Promise. He continued that it was long overdue that everyone understands the opportunities community colleges provide. Current legislation calls for implementing a median tuition rate. In states where the average tuition fees exceed that rate, such as Massachusetts, states would be required to increase their contribution to meet the free-tuition obligation. In Massachusetts, that would represent a 17% increase.

President Podell concluded his report by addressing STEM at MassBay Community College. He remarked that the STEM Starter Academy, supported by the state, focuses on recruiting underrepresented students and helping them, has been a bedrock on which student success in STEM rests. The CyberSecurity program recently received a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to create a Center for Cybersecurity Education.

Chair Gabrieli thanked President Podell and asked if there were questions or comments from the Board. With no further questions, Chair Gabrieli proceeded to the Student Advisory Council.

E. Report from Student Advisory Council

Student Voting Member Cameron Costa opened by introducing himself to the Board. He shared a brief history of his journey as a student, including UMass Dartmouth, where he serves as the school's Class of 2022 Treasurer. Member Costa commented that affordable higher education was one of the things students are looking for and talking more about this year. He stated that increasing hate statements towards students are also of concern, with the most significant issue being the emails distributed at UMass Amherst and the safety of students. He stated that he would continue to work with students and campuses to gauge the impacts on student life. Member Costa closed by addressing menstrual equity as an initiative UMass Dartmouth was trying to advance on their campus. He turned to Community College Segmental Advisor, Jorgo

Gushi, to provide the Student Advisory Council's report.

Segmental Advisor Jorgo Gushi opened by expressing his disappointment with the recent racist incident at UMass Boston, and proceeded to read a statement released by the Student Advisory Council condemning the same. Segmental Advisor Gushi next provided an overview of the Student Advisory Council's strategic plan, including launching a statewide climate survey, community check-ins with students, and implementing diversity audits to advance the Equity Agenda. He stated that the Student Advisory Council would launch a new legislative campaign to address student fees and extend voting rights on the DHE Board to include student representation from each of the three segments. He remarked on the Student Advisory Council's commitment to supporting the Department's Open Educational Resources and the Basic Needs Security work. Mr. Gushi concluded by requesting the Board's active engagement with students and notification of scheduling one-on-one meetings to begin the conversation. Segmental Advisor Cindy Mack stated how the Department's support was urgently needed and appealed to the Board for their help to move the process along more quickly.

Chair Gabrieli thanked Jorgo Gushi and Cindy Mack for the presentation and expressions of urgency. He noted that student membership voting rights as an item to be brought back to the Executive Committee for discussion. Chief Legal Counsel Papanikolaou pointed out that adding more voting student BHE members would require a statutory modification. Member Bill Walczak thanked the Student Advisory Council for their strategic plan and the stand taken regarding the UMass letters. Member Pagliuca asked if the climate for students has improved compared to this time last year. Segmental Advisor Gushi stated the situation remains at the same level, and the climate surveys will benefit uncovering what was happening to students. Presidents Birge and Podell commented that their students still need counseling and mental health supports due to the pandemic. Chair Gabrieli thanked Member Pagliuca and the Board before moving to Advisory Council Reports.

VI. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS

A. Academic Affairs and Student Success

Co-Chair Patty Eppinger provided an update from the Academic Affairs and Student Success Advisory Council (AA&SS). She reported that her group heard presentations on two topics: Developmental Education and SAT Optional Admissions. Regarding Developmental Education, Co-Chair Eppinger commented that students enrolled in non-credit-bearing courses were less likely to graduate on a timely basis. Black and Latinx students represented a higher enrollment in non-credit-bearing courses. She stated the group discussed enrollment and placement models to decrease the likelihood of student placement in non-credit-bearing courses based on national trends, which show great success. She followed with an update on SAT Optional Admissions and remarked that the SAT was a barrier to access as a matter of equity. Co-Chair Eppinger stated that data shows no significance in success when comparing SAT submitters and SAT non-submitters. She concluded that the group would continue their discussion and would look at national trends to inform our research agenda.

B. Strategic Planning

Chair Gabrieli introduced the Co-Chair Bill Walczak to provide an update from the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC). Co-Chair Bill Walczak opened by thanking his Co-Chair Francesca Purcell and DHE Senior Associate Commissioner Winnie Hagan for their roles on the team. He reported that the group discussed the goals and history of the strategic planning process and discovered that the way strategic plans were handled before 2015 and now differ substantially. He stated the group would soon meet with Winnie Hagan to review the Advisory Committee's charge and discuss guidelines on aligning the process with the overall goals of the Board and the Department.

Member Paul Mattera asked what role the new Advisory Council would play regarding strategic plans and the institutions. Chair Gabrieli responded that Advisory Councils do not have delegated authority to vote on the plans and will primarily review the process. Co-Chair Bill Walczak's stated the importance of reviewing processes to see what works and needs to change. Chair Gabrieli thanked Co-Chair Walczak and turned to Co-Chair Veronica Conforme for the final to Advisory Council report.

C. Finance and Administrative Policy

Co-Chair Veronica Conforme thanked Chair Gabrieli thanked former Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Tom Simard for his time with the DHE and wished him well. She commended the Student Advisory Council's leadership around equity and their stance on ensuring black students feel safe on our campuses. Co-Chair Conforme referenced her Co-Chair, JD LaRock, and reported that the group discussion centered around public higher education financing and hiring a company to help the Department review it. She stated that the group also discussed the scope of work with some consensus on the information needed to engage the appropriate stakeholders. Co-Chair Conforme commented that student unmet need and leveraging MASSGrant to support unmet need were also topics discussed. She concluded by sharing her enthusiasm for the progress made. Chair Gabrieli thanked Co-Chair Conforme and moved to the next section of the agenda.

VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Gabrieli reported that the Executive Committee met last week and considered two motions. The first was the application of a new institution, Knowles Johnson Institute of Graduate Studies, and the other was a motion for approval for the Commissioner's FY2021 and FY2022 Salary Adjustments.

VIII. MOTIONS

List of Documents Used

BHE Motions 22-14 through 22-15

Links to Materials:

- [BHE 22-14](#)
- [BBH 22-15](#)

A. Board of Higher Education

Chair Gabrieli stated that the Executive Committee had the opportunity to hear from the Knowles Johnson Institute's founding leadership team and commended their innovation. Member Pagliuca asked what the return in investment (ROI) would be for students attending the Knowles Johnson Institute. Assistant Deputy Commissioner Pat Marshall commented that ROI was beyond the scope of the Department's regulatory review, as the Department mainly focuses on a new institution's academic quality and financial stability. Regarding the latter, she explained how the Department looks to ensure that the new institution can demonstrate 18-months of financial stability, ensuring that cash was on hand or accessible. Deputy Associate Commissioner for Regulatory & Veterans Affairs Cynthia Brown shared that the Department Financial Assessment and Risk Monitoring (FARM) regulations assist with the analysis of an organization's stability. She stated it was why KJI was given conditional approval with reporting to monitor their progress. Member Pagliuca asked if the institution requires accreditation. DHE staff reported that accreditation is not necessary, and that the Board's regulations have two review sections one for accredited and another for non-accredited institutions, noting that new institutions often must be in operation for a set number of years before seeking accreditation. Knowles Johnson Institute President, Rick Maybury, confirmed that the institution is not accredited. KJI was an in-person, Massachusetts-based program. He remarked that each course has a field-based practicum exposing students to a variety of opportunities.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-14. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Tom Moreau, Secretary of Education Designee – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-14 NEW INSTITUTION APPLICATION OF THE KNOWLES JOHNSON INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES TO AWARD THE DEGREES OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) hereby conditionally approves the Articles of Incorporation of **THE KNOWLES JOHNSON INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (KJI)** with the authority to award the following degrees: **Doctor of Philosophy in Human and Organizational Development** and **Master of Arts in Human and Organizational Development**.

Provided further that the BHE will undertake to review, during the twelve-year period set forth in 610 CMR 2.05(5), the continued progress of the institution toward meeting and maintaining compliance with the BHE's regulations, the Visiting Committee's recommendations, the goals and representations set forth in connection with the institution's petition to the BHE, and its compliance with the following conditions:

1. For the first five years of operation, the institution shall submit to the BHE semi-annual status reports by January 15th and July 15th of each year, providing narrative and statistical information on the institution's compliance with BHE standards and with the goals and representations set forth in connection with the institution's petition, including the institution's enrollment, finances, student learning outcomes, and other information as requested by Department staff.
2. Within the first two years of the program's operation, the Department will schedule a periodic review to monitor the institution's ongoing compliance with the Board's regulations.

The Knowles Johnson Institute's conditional approval to award the Doctor of Philosophy in Human and Organizational Development and Master of Arts in Human and Organizational Development shall continue through the first five years of operation. The conditional approval period, and the conditions imposed upon its approval, may be extended once by the Commissioner, for up to an additional five years, upon a determination by the Commissioner that the institution is not meeting or maintaining regulatory compliance and/or is not complying with the terms of the conditions.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 69, Section 30 et seq.; 610 CMR 2.05(5).

Contact: Cynthia Farr Brown, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner for Regulatory and Veterans Affairs
Patricia Marshall, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Student Success

Chair Gabrieli moved on to the next motion, BHE 22-15 Commissioner's FY2021 and FY2022 Salary Adjustments. He stated that the Executive Committee recommended specific adjustments that aligned with the adjustments that Executive Office of Administration and Finance (ANF) authorized for state employees and public higher education non-unit professionals. Chair Gabrieli added that ANF does not govern the decision for the Commissioner by statute, but rather the Board does. He commented that the motion would cover two years of review instead one since the FY2021 review was done so late in the year, amid a number of review sessions.

Chair Gabrieli asked for a motion of approval for BHE 22-15. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved unanimously by all Board members present, as follows:

- Ann Christensen – Yes
- Veronica Conforme – Yes
- Alex Cortez – Yes
- Cameron Costa – Yes
- Patty Eppinger – Yes
- Chair Chris Gabrieli – Yes
- Vice Chair Sheila Harrity – Yes
- Paul Mattera – Yes
- Tom Moreau, Secretary of Education Designee – Yes
- Judy Pagliuca – Yes
- Paul Toner – Yes
- Bill Walczak – Yes

BHE 22-15 COMMISSIONER’S FY2021 AND FY2022 SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

VOTED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves a salary increase, along with a one-time 1.5% payment, for the Commissioner in full alignment and consistent with the amounts and timeframes as authorized by Administration and Finance for Department staff for FY21 and FY22 and as specified in the attached background statement.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 6; BHE 19-01

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

IX. PRESENTATIONS

- Preliminary Report on Massachusetts Public College and University Enrollments
List of Documents Used
[Preliminary Report on Massachusetts Public College and University Enrollments](#)

Chair Gabrieli introduced Commissioner Santiago to provide background information on the enrollment report. Before proceeding, the Commissioner expressed his gratitude for the Student Advisory Council and remarked on the thoughtfulness of their commentary. He stated that they represented their colleagues on the campuses well and that the engagement between students and Board members was always genuine and critical.

The Commissioner also acknowledged the need for accessible remote mental health counseling and the Executive Office of Education's work in this area. He noted that the DHE's Basic Needs Strategic plan is currently under review, and that it includes components around counseling. It will be taken to the campuses this week for vetting and then back to the Board for consideration during a subsequent meeting.

Commissioner Santiago commented on Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance Tom Simard's departure from the DHE and how much his contributions have assisted the Department. He

acknowledged Tom's professionalism and ability to communicate across many groups as exceptional attributes. He closed by opening the floor to Tom for remarks. Deputy Commissioner Tom Simard thanked the Commissioner and the Board for the opportunity to serve. He stated that it was an honor to work for the benefit of all students and the Commonwealth as a whole.

Commissioner Santiago turned to Associate Commissioner Mario Delci for the enrollment report, but first reminded the group that the data was based on preliminary aggregate enrollment data. Official data will arrive in December/ early January. He also cautioned that we are amid an extended enrollment decline accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic for a second Fall.

Associate Commissioner Mario Delci opened by thanking the institutions and providing an overview of enrollment for Fall 2002 thru Fall 2021 in all three segments (Community Colleges, State Universities, and the UMass System). He commented that there was a sharp decline in first-time student enrollment for the Community Colleges from fall 2019 to fall 2020, with a slight increase this year. The State Universities and UMass experienced their second year of steady declines in first-time enrollment. Associate Commissioner Delci next displayed first-time student enrollment data for the Community Colleges throughout the last 20 years, which he stated confirmed the uptick in first-time enrollment.

He displayed 20-year first-time student enrollment data for the State Universities and the UMass System, where he commented that many of the State Universities were at their all-time low. He stated that UMass Amherst, and UMass Lowell followed a similar trend, although not as drastic, with UMass Boston experiencing positive growth and UMass Dartmouth trending downward for many years.

Associate Commissioner Delci displayed student enrollment data for all undergraduate students, where he remarked on the eight years of decline in total student enrollment for most institutions. He turned the conversation to the kinds of information available once finalized enrollment data was on record in early January. Associate Commissioner Delci cited race, ethnicity, types of students enrolling, and the calculation of retention rates as results the Department looked forward to sharing. He displayed a graph of declining enrollment from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 and highlighted the decrease in Latinx student enrollment since their initial increase before the pandemic. Retention rates showed an overall decline compared to students returning to campuses in previous years. He commented that retention rates for African Americans show a stark decline across all three segments.

He closed by stating that addressing the declines in enrollment and retention are essential to the Department's Equity Agenda before opening the floor to the Board for questions.

Commissioner Santiago requested that segmental leaders President Jamie Birge and President David Podell provide contextual commentary on the data before opening the discussion. President David Podell commented that the Community Colleges are heartened by the increased enrollments for first-time first-year students but saddened by the loss of returning students during the pandemic. He stated that the Community Colleges remain optimistic about next year. President Jamie Birge remarked that the State Universities' campus occupancy rates, first-time, and full-time student

numbers all remain stable. Retention rates have declined, but the Early College program shows an increase in numbers, resulting in higher transfer rates at the State Universities.

Due to time constraints, Commissioner Santiago deferred to continuing the enrollment discussion instead of presenting on the Equity Agenda. He stated that today's Equity Agenda presentation would be made at the December 2021 Board meeting to address where the Equity Agenda and the Lumina-funded Strategic Plan relate to the Department's statutory master plan.

Chair Gabrieli opened the floor to more enrollment questions. Member Pagliuca asked what was being done to increase retention or turn it around. President Birge responded that some of the measures taken were enhanced academic programs, including TRIO, and increased MASSGrant Plus options to assist students from lower economic backgrounds. President Podell commented that the same could be said of the Community Colleges. He stated that the SUCCESS fund has greatly benefited students as Community Colleges hire and train support staff to build up the various academic programs.

Member Christenson asked what efforts were being made to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Commissioner Santiago stated that the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and school districts successfully mounted a FAFSA completion campaign. President Birge commented that after noticing inequities in how the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts awarded financial aid, they made changes this fall, resulting in their highest percentage of in-class students of color. Student Advisor Cindy Mack remarked on the challenges he faced as a nonconventional first-generation student and the need for the Board to engage with students more directly.

Chair Gabrieli thanked the Board for their engagement before moving to adjourn the meeting.

- Equity Agenda
 - Strategic Plan for Racial Equity Agenda Update – *Tabled until December 2021 Board Meeting*

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carlos E. Santiago
Commissioner and Secretary to the Board