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## **Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Community College President's Report**

Delivered by David Podell, President, MassBay Community College  
Chair, Community College Council of Presidents

June 21, 2022

Good morning Chair Gabrieli, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Santiago, and members of the Board.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to congratulate our newest colleague, Dr. Michelle Schutt. We look forward to welcoming her to Greenfield Community College in the coming months. I also want to say thank you to Dr. Rick Hopper who has been serving as Interim President at Greenfield since last August and has kept the institution moving forward in a positive direction. Thank you Rick for being a terrific colleague, and welcome Michelle to GCC and to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!

Since the Board's last meeting, the House and Senate have both moved their FY23 budgets forward. We are grateful to both branches for their investments in our community colleges, and, like so many, are anxiously awaiting the conference committee budget.

As I have mentioned twice before in my remarks to this Board, we have been pursuing a change in Chapter 15A to exempt the community colleges from Section 26, which prohibits the use of state dollars for evening or weekend courses. Section 26 creates logistical and financial challenges for the community colleges, and this change would ensure that all of our students have the same educational opportunities regardless of whether they attend classes during the day or in the evenings. Relieving the community colleges of this unnecessary restriction will allow us to improve the efficiency of our operations and ensure equitable access for all students to full-time faculty.

In collaboration with the MTA and MCCC (the faculty union at our colleges), we have proposed new agreed-upon language to the legislative conference committee that explicitly clarifies that the change will have no impact on the standing of the collective bargaining units or their bargaining representatives to continue to represent the units' members; no impact on the unit members' terms and conditions of employment; and no impact on the collective bargaining process in place under Chapter 150E. We are hopeful that this change will be adopted when the conference committee concludes its work in the coming weeks.

Our additional conference committee priorities include \$9.5 million for performance-based formula funding for community colleges; \$14 million for the line item for the SUCCESS Program (which stands for Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services); \$1.5 million for workforce training for the long-term underemployed; \$4.75 million for the STEM Starter Academy; \$10 million for early educator workforce development; and \$300,000 to realize efficiencies with our friends at the state universities through the PACE initiative.

Later this morning you will take up the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity. We applaud the work that has gone into this important plan, and look forward to additional conversations about what implementation will look like at our community colleges. Our schools long have been actively engaged in racial equity work to ensure that we are best supporting our students and our communities – we know there is more work to be done, and are ready to partner on a thoughtful implementation that is practical and sustainable.

We support the overall goals and priorities of the Strategic Plan for Racial Equity and we encourage additional conversation around some of the details of the plan itself. Yet to be developed are the specific individual metrics that will need to be achieved. Having ground-level stakeholders at the table, including large numbers of faculty and administrators, in developing specific targets is essential to the ultimate success of this work. The community colleges look forward to helping develop these specific metrics in collaboration with the BHE and DHE over the course of the next year.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank and congratulate Commissioner Santiago for moving the higher education system to such a pivotal point in this work on equity. Your steadfast support has helped us collectively focus on how we approach equity at our institutions. Getting us to this point has been no small feat, and we are grateful for your leadership. You led the charge that, in fact, changed our paradigm. Thank you for all you have done on this, and we look forward to working with your successor and this Board in moving forward this vital work.

As we conclude these meetings for the summer and look towards next fall, know that all fifteen of our colleges are committed to collaboration and innovation to help build our workforces and give all students educational opportunities. Our institutions are about to launch our Education Training Fund programming, a total of \$15 million in state funding designed to support short-term training in programs less than 1 year in length that lead to careers in high-demand industries. We look forward to providing you with a more in-depth update this fall once students are enrolled.

Lastly, when your Board next convenes for a regular meeting in the fall, you will have selected the next Commissioner of Higher Education. We are thankful to have community college input in this process and we are optimistic that the Board will find the right leader who can continue the momentum in our system and help raise the profile of public higher education across the Commonwealth.

Thank you, once again, for the chance to speak with you this morning on behalf of our 15 community colleges and their remarkable students.

**David Podell, Ph.D.**

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