

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Basic Needs Security Advisory Committee Commissioner's Charge | December, 2020

The Committee's Objective

At the direction of Massachusetts Higher Education Commissioner Carlos Santiago, the Basic Needs Security Advisory Committee will review and assess economic barriers to retention and degree completion by students enrolled in the Commonwealth's public higher education system, paying close attention to racial and geographical disparities evident in both qualitative and quantitative data. The Committee is asked to make policy recommendations to the Commissioner with the goal of further developing a systemic response to basic needs insecurity experienced by students. Recommendations should adhere and respond to both DHE's mission and the goals of DHE's Equity and Racial Justice agenda. The recommendations should consider and directly reference:

- Demographic and geographic realities
- Priority areas for student support (food, housing, childcare, transportation, technology access, health care)
- Emergency versus preventative response
- Basic needs security as a component of the undergraduate experience
- Institutional, community and government resources
- Existing or proposed statutory mandates
- Plans to measure and evaluate program and policy effectiveness

Level of Authority

The Committee has the authority to make non-binding recommendations to the Commissioner of Higher Education, who may elect to present them to the Board of Higher Education in spring, 2021.

Expected Outcomes

The Committee's recommendations will inform a strategic plan for basic needs security in higher education. The strategic plan, due to the Commissioner by April 30, 2021, will be prepared by DHE staff with Committee members providing review and comment.