

**MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

6:00 p.m.

Approved October 16, 2024

Attendees: Bonnie Blackler, Tom Carroll, Eshita Chakrabarti, Jim Dunphy, Kacey Hilton-Gilleo, Laura Lawson, Eval Silvera

Absent: Carl Kowalski, Steve Murphy, Kate Welch

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes

Vice Chair Dunphy – yes

Trustee Blackler – yes

Trustee Chakrabarti - yes

Trustee Hilton-Gilleo – yes

Trustee Lawson - yes

Trustee Silvera – yes

Chairman's Report

Chair Carroll welcomed everyone to the meeting and is excited to start the new school year. The Transformation through Renovation project is underway, and it will transform our college and the community. The Governor and legislation signed and passed free Massachusetts state community college, and we are grateful for this investment. They see the value that this will provide to the communities we serve and will develop a much-needed labor force. The strategic plan was very well thought out with great input from the college community. Now we need to align and execute the strategic plan. If we do those things and demonstrate this, we will show the Governor and legislation that free community college is one of the best decisions they have made.

President's Report

President Mitchell appreciates the support that has been received from Chair Carroll and the Board of Trustees. On September 17, 2024, the Governor and the legislation signed authorization to implement a collective bargaining agreement that was agreed upon in March 2024. Thank you to our union colleagues that worked behind the scenes, meeting with key stakeholders and the community college Presidents. The retro piece from July 1 will be in the next pay period of September 27. Vice President Gazzara Hess acknowledged Ms. Allison Arsenault, Director of Human Resources and Ms. Kristen Connor, Assistant Director of Payroll who have been working for weeks preparing for the retroactive pay increases for our faculty and professional staff. Ms. Arsenault was recently recognized by the Commonwealth for her work on classification studies (21) for the community college to utilize. We welcomed 400 new students to Massasoit this fall, and our enrollment is up 12%. Downtown Brockton is now open, and our Work Institute team is located there. We are planning an Open House on November 2. We held a welcome back BBQ on the Brockton campus on September 18 with over 500 students, faculty and staff attending. The Canton welcome back BBQ will be held on September 24. President Mitchell will be interviewed by WCVB regarding the benefits of free community college. The interview will be shown on City line on Sunday, September 22.

Student Trustee Report

Trustee Hilton-Gilleo reported that the fall semester is off to a great start, and she enjoyed seeing and interacting with all the new students. The next Board of Higher Education meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 22. On Tuesday, September 17, she attended a student trustee orientation hosted by the Student Advisory Council and met student representatives from all over the State. The next Student Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 17. The Student Senate held recruitment events on September 10, 11 & 12 in collaboration with Student Life & Communications. Eleven new students registered for recruitment. The first Senate meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 25. Student Life held numerous welcome back events for the students including an ice cream truck, giant

outside games, the annual registration day and constitution day for students to exercise the right to vote. A club fair will be held on Wednesday, October 2. Speaker, Mike Miller, will return to meet students in a fun activity to learn about their own personality style, leadership skills and what makes you tick. Trustee Hilton-Gilleo attended the Transformation through Renovation design committee meeting. Presidential Student Ambassador's had an in-depth training on campus tours due to the upcoming construction on campus and received information on free community college. Presidential Student Ambassador's also attended the AACRO meetings and provided feedback on the student experience. Students are excited to learn about the Dean of Students second round interviews. The student theatre production is Lizzie Borden of Fall River and will be held on October 25 through October 27. Opening night for our musical, Pippin, is Saturday, December 7. Chair Carroll expressed how grateful he is to Trustee Hilton Gilleo for her continued perspective of students on campus.

MCC Foundation Report

The Golf tournament will be held on Monday, September 30. The Foundation continues to refine their policies and procedures. The next Foundation meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9. Foundation President Terravecchia, Vice President Badger and President Mitchell met and interviewed new members for the foundation.

Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Trustee Dunphy and seconded by Trustee Blackler to approve items 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes
Vice Chair Dunphy – yes
Trustee Blackler – yes
Trustee Chakrabarti - yes
Trustee Hilton-Gilleo – yes
Trustee Lawson - yes
Trustee Silvera – yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Free Community College Presentation by Dr. Ruben Barato, Vice President of Enrollment & Student Services, Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Mr. William O'Neill, Vice President of Administration/CFO, & Mr. Alex Villanueva, Executive Director of Communications & Marketing

Vice President Dr. Ruben Barato reported that there are two distinct programs, Mass Educate and Mass Reconnect that result in free community college. Mass Reconnect was passed in 2023 and is for students 25 and older with no previously earned associate or bachelor's degree, it covers all course related tuition and fees for eligible courses and provides an allowance of up to \$600 per semester towards books and supplies. Mass Educate was passed in 2024 and is for any student with no previously earned bachelor's degree, it covers all course related tuition and fees for eligible courses and provides an allowance of up to \$1,200 per academic year towards books, supplies and other expenses. The eligibility criteria for these programs include; that you physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term, are either a U.S. citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations or a high school completer who attended three years in Massachusetts, have earned a high school diploma or equivalent, anyone who has a balance after federal and state aid are applied. The eligibility and "applying" for free community college include students must complete an application or readmit application to Massasoit, complete a free application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA), register for at least six credits in an approved degree or certificate program, last dollar financial award is applied automatically to students who are eligible.

Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Gail Gibson Sheffield, spoke on how we will get our students through completion which include; focus on the social and economic advancement of the region, hire faculty and staff to strengthen the curriculum and support systems, align academic budget process with achieving divisional goals, focus grant development towards prioritizing the vision of the strategic plan, remove barriers including; clarify

communication and pathways to completion, strengthen core curriculum/open electives/advising, increase opportunities for experiential learning/internships, track multiple on ramps to Massasoit to identify additional barriers. She shared the strategic vision: Massasoit Community College will be known as a regional leader that works together to provide a collaborative, respectful, student-centered community, with racially equitable opportunities and pathways to enhance individual and regional economic and social mobility. Massasoit will be recognized as the place to; develop an entrepreneurial mindset to build thriving communities that meet the South Shore regional business needs, study human behavior to foster civic engagement, service leadership, individualized education, and social justice, appreciate the human experience through the exploration of societal systems, development of critical and creative thinking, foster diverse cultural and social perspectives, and celebrate forms of expression and communication, advance health sciences practice and scholarship to create healthier communities through education and service, equip students with the foundational knowledge, practical hands-on technical skills, opportunities to develop professionalism and strengthen critical thinking necessary to enhance the STEM pipeline in Massachusetts and beyond.

Vice President of Administration/CFO Mr. William O'Neill discussed the fiscal implications of free community college and described it as a historic investment. The Commonwealth has invested \$92.5M in Mass Educate and \$24M in Mass Reconnect. Other states have some version of free community college, however, Massachusetts is considered the most inclusive, the most all-encompassing. We are currently waiting for clarification and final decisions from the State to be made. Executive Director, Todd Hughes and Director Kerri Jacobs of Student Financial Services and Financial Aid have been working behind the scenes to ensure that we are set up to succeed. Questions have arisen as to if this is a disbursement model, reimbursement model or a hybrid model which would have some disbursement, and the rest Colleges would have to fund. Our strong financial position allows us significant flexibility in whatever model is chosen. We have included four enrollment services positions in the approved FY25 spending plan that will assist with the surge of students.

Executive Director of Communications, Mr. Alex Villanueva, discussed the marketing efforts associated with free community college. We began marketing free college with Mass Reconnect last year utilizing institutional dollars and grant dollars specifically for the implementation of Mass Reconnect. We've had billboards across the region both static and digital, we wrapped the shuttle bus, and we also sent postcards to our stop out students. Once the legislator passed Mass Educate, we started marketing free community college. The State has asked that we use the language "free community college" instead of Mass Reconnect & Mass Educate.

Chair Carroll asked Vice President O'Neill if this has changed the state appropriation from the State. Vice President O'Neill stated that it has not impacted the line item. Funding for free education comes from the fair share instead of state appropriation which comes from State revenue. 276 students had qualified for Mass Reconnect and received a benefit through the program. That number doesn't represent the true magnitude of Mass Reconnect impact because many students have already received financial aid from the Pell Grant or the State. Vice President Gibson Sheffield added that we will invest in the programs that we think students are going to want to stay with. We are looking for additional faculty and support for each division so that we can meet the needs of the students. Trustee Dunphy asked if a student did not complete their course would we still be reimbursed. Dr. Barato responded yes, we would be reimbursed as it is handled like financial aid. President Mitchell added that the Satisfactory Academic Progress still plays into a student who habitually does not do well or drops out. They would not be eligible because they would not be eligible for financial aid. Trustee Blackler asked if we would be following these students in an increased capacity. Vice President Barato answered that yes, we will continue to track our students to be successful.

SUCCESS Presentation by Mr. Joseph Harris, Associate Dean for Student Success

Mr. Joseph Harris, Associate Dean of Student Success, reported on Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services. According to the community college research center at Columbia, the COVID pandemic led to a steep decline among students of color and low income. Late in 2020, and in direct response to these challenges, the Massachusetts legislators established supporting urgent community college equity through student services or "success fund". The Fund's goal is to improve outcomes for what the Commonwealth terms its most vulnerable student community college populations, including, but not limited to, first generation students, students of color, low-income students, student with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ students. By the end of the year, the SUCCESS Fund will have provided the state's 15 community colleges with more than \$60M in its first five fiscal years, with Massasoit receiving more than \$4M of that total. Colleges must use 80% of those funds to hire staff, implement and deliver

proven best practice and high impact strategies such as intrusive advising, early alert interventions and peer in peer mentoring. The remaining 20% will be spent on presenters, student trips to four-year colleges, staff professional development and other operating expenses. Statewide in AY22, SUCCESS programs supported 8,491 students, representing nearly 10% of all credit seeking community college students in the Commonwealth. AY 21 fall to fall SUCCESS persistence exceeded comparable peers for every subgroup examined which included first time, non-first time, continuing, male, female, 18-24 yrs., black, Hispanic, Asian, and White. AY22 fall to fall SUCCESS persistence for freshmen & transfers largely exceeded comparable peers. At Massasoit, SUCCESS supports 600 – 700 eligible students, 8 full time positions, 2 part time positions and peer staff positions. Two additional full-time positions are partially supported by SUCCESS. Massasoit’s SUCCESS students have consistently been among the highest performing in the Commonwealth. AY21 and AY22 Massasoit’s SUCCESS students outperformed every state average and benchmark. AY21 Massasoit’s SUCCESS Scholars were number 1 in fall to spring retention of first-generation students, number 2 in fall to spring retention of low-income students, and number 4 in retention of students of color. AY22 Massasoit’s SUCCESS Scholars were number 3 in part time freshmen persistence and number 5 in freshman and transfer persistence. Chair Carroll thanked Mr. Harris and his team for his dedication to our students.

Public Comments:

Ms. Eve Jankey, Department Chair of Medical Assisting, addressed the board as she represented the MCCC union. She stated that the 2025 contract has been funded by the Governor’s office and the union would like to express their appreciation to President Mitchell and all the community college Presidents. She noted that the union will continue to work for fair wages for faculty and staff.

A motion was made by Chair Carroll and seconded by Vice Chair Dunphy to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes
Vice Chair Dunphy – yes
Trustee Blackler – yes
Trustee Chakrabarti - yes
Trustee Hilton-Gilleo – yes
Trustee Lawson - yes
Trustee Silvera – yes