

OFF-SITE MEETING**December 16, 2021****Remote Meeting**

Present for the Board: Butts, Chisholm, Contreras, DeSimone, German-George, Mattera, Maldonado, Russell and Lutts (chair). Also participating President Keenan and Board Secretary Montague

Absent: Zahlaway-Belsito

I. Welcome, agenda review, announcements

Chair Lutts convened the meeting at 1:03 pm and thanked the trustees for taking the time attend the Off-site meeting. President Keenan remarked on the NECHE accreditation, the submission of the BOLD application in the coming weeks and provided an update on the unwelcome visitor to campus. Lutts then reviewed the agenda, made brief remarks and introduced the first speaker, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago.

II. Equity Agenda**Advancing the Massachusetts Statewide Equity Agenda at the Institution and System Level**

Commissioner Santiago greeted the Board of Trustees and then spoke to the group about the advancement of the Equity Agenda, and the changes necessary to ensure racial equity across public postsecondary education in Massachusetts, and, more specially, to better serve racially minoritized students attending institutions of public higher education in Massachusetts. Commissioner Santiago's talk was followed by a question-and-answer session. (See the attached presentation)

III. Updates:**NECHE****Provost and Academic Vice President Silva**

Provost Silva detailed the NECHE accreditation process and thanked the faculty, staff and administrators for their excellent work

(See the attached letter from NECHE).

BOLD

A briefing memo was sent in advance of the meeting.

(See the attached update)

Salem State University Strategic Planning Process**President Keenan**

Executive Director of Civic Engagement & Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee,

Cynthia Lynch

President Keenan and Executive Director of Civic Engagement & Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, Cynthia Lynch discussed that the Strategic Planning Committee had recently been convened and that there would be many touch points and opportunities for input in the future.

IV. 2021 Board Survey – Self-Evaluation
Dr. Stephen Reno, Facilitator

Steve Reno facilitated a discussion with the Board of Trustees regarding a self-evaluation that was recently completed by the members. Reno discussed with the trustees that it has been a difficult time in higher education due to COVID, zoom, stress and healthcare concerns, racism, enrollment and education costs just to name a few. He stressed the importance of the trustees role versus the president and administration’s role.

Reno then reviewed the Board’s self-evaluation results. Seven trustees took the survey. Of the respondents, six trustees have served for three years, and one has served for one year. There were five major takeaways from the survey:

- 1) The board does not feel that there is adequate time for substantial topics and there are too many items on the board meeting agenda.
- 2) In general, the board is satisfied with the committee structure, however they feel that too much time is spent on reports.
- 3) The board needs to be better informed on education issues on the national level and best practices.
- 4) The board is not able to monitor progress made on the strategic plan via the dashboards.
- 5) The board agrees that good communication exists with the president and there is support for the work that he has done.

Conclusion and Adjourn

- Chair Lutts thanked Dr. Reno for joining today’s event and for his thoughts on the board’s evaluation. President Keenan added a special thanks to his team and to the board for their input.

There being no further business to come before the Board Chair Lutts called for a motion. On a motion duly made by Trustee Mattera and seconded by Trustee Chisholm it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn

Voting in the affirmative:	Butts, Chisholm, Contreras, DeSimone, German-George, Mattera, Maldonado, Russell and Lutts (chair)
Voting in the negative:	None
Absent:	Zahlaway-Belsito

The meeting ended at 2:40

President,



John D. Keenan

Lynne Montague

Lynne Montague
Secretary to the Board of Trustees



The Equity Agenda

Achieving Racial Justice in
Massachusetts Public Higher Education

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner
Salem State University Board of Trustees
Presentation
December 16, 2021

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

Equity Principles—Toward an Anti-Racist Frame

These values guide our work to fulfill the Equity Agenda

Racial equity:

- Is the **top policy and performance priority** for the Department of Higher Education
- Will be achieved **when race no longer determines one's outcomes** in the Massachusetts public higher education system
- Must be **embedded** system-wide and permeate the Department's structure, culture, and policies
- Requires the use of **asset-based language** to minimize the threat of harm, deficit, and stereotype reinforcement
 - *"Asset-based language" defines people by their aspirations and contributions, rather than the systemic barriers and challenges they face*
- Requires **acknowledgement, remedy, and repair** of policies and practices which have excluded or created barriers

Equity Principles—Toward an Antiracist frame


These values guide our work to fulfill the Equity Agenda

We must:

- Recognize that **clarity** in language, goals, and measures is vital to racially equitable practices
- Promote **culturally sustainable campus climates** in which all students can thrive and are regarded in the totality of their human dignity
 - *“Culturally sustainable” means recognizing, maintaining, and developing cultural identity and diversity, as they are assets, not weaknesses (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012)*
- Create and cultivate an **inclusive environment** to encourage the support and participation of relevant stakeholders
- Acknowledge the **experience and knowledge** of people of color, and seek to engage people of color in the pursuit of racial equity in meaningful ways
- Incentivize the development and support the implementation of **equity-minded, evidence-based solutions**

Cultural Conditions toward Racial Equity--Participatory Leadership

To achieve racial equity, DHE has developed various **formal and informal networks** to catalyze and support staff in developing knowledge, building relationships, and implementing policy changes

	Individual	Groups	Agency and System	
<p>Networks include but are not limited to:</p> 				
<p>Internal Communications & Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHE ICPD Working Group DHE Community Conversations DHE Equity Book Club DHE Equity Institutes (completed) and future professional development 	✓	✓		
<p>Policy & Program Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHE Policy & Program Audit Learning Community BHE Committees & Full Board 		✓	✓	
<p>New Undergraduate Experience Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee Student-Ready Institutions Committee Teaching & Learning Committee 		✓	✓	✓
<p>Coalition Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHE Strategic Communications Team Equity Coalition 		✓	✓	✓

Cultural Conditions toward Racial Equity: Shared Departmental Values

At the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education,
we share these interconnected values:

Equity

Understanding and confronting oppression in all its forms

Accountability

Answering for the outcomes of decisions and actions

Community

Showing care and respect toward others

Empowerment

Facilitating others' opportunities for growth and contribution, within teams and across DHE

Intentionality

Acting with purpose and clarity

Teamwork

Embracing the power of unity, collaboration, and collective insight

Equity Agenda Overview

The Equity Agenda outlines an action plan that covers five key areas:

Policy Audit

- Complete a Department-wide policy audit to assess all policies and initiatives
- Identify and remove policies that exacerbate racial inequity
- Redesign the Department's policy scheme to build a culturally sustainable public postsecondary system where students can thrive

Student Experience

- Reimagine the undergraduate experience in order to dismantle systemic barriers by recognizing students' cultural wealth and transforming teaching and learning (*New Undergraduate Experience*)
- Align system and institutional efforts to create student-ready campuses

Data and Evidence

- Expand data dashboards to measure progress toward the goal of racial equity and include baseline projections and benchmarks of Massachusetts public higher education enrollment through 2030
- Value students' experiences through qualitative research
- Identify and support the implementation of equity-minded, evidence-based solutions

Community of Practice

- Support the growth of a system-wide community of practice
- Elevate the work of equity leaders
- Create digital resources for campuses, which may include implementation toolkits and digital archives to allow sharing across campuses
- Develop a statewide professional development curriculum focused on culturally sustaining teaching practices

Sustained Transformation

- Convene and support a broad coalition of equity partners
- **Develop a 10-year statewide strategic plan focused on advancing racial equity**



Discussion

completed in November. The university was recommended to stay the course and not break the project into smaller projects.

What preparatory activities are underway?

We are working with DCAMM to market South Campus. They expect to issue an RFP in January and select a winning development team to sign a preliminary contract by August 2022. Because of due diligence and other contractual steps, the sale of South Campus will not close until late 2024. At that point, the university intends to lease back the Harrington Building until the Horace Mann renovation is complete and the South Campus-based programs can be relocated to North Campus. We are working with MSCBA regarding Bates residence hall. As part of that process, in May 2022 we will shutter Bates and defease the remaining debt.

What are the funding sources?

Funding is anticipated from a variety of sources, the largest of which is the Commonwealth's award that we are working to receive. With an upcoming change in state Administration, we are hopeful of a more favorable level of Commonwealth funding than the current \$30M cap. As you know, BOLD is a \$10M goal in the fundraising campaign. While some fundraising for BOLD is underway, we anticipate the biggest success will come after the Commonwealth funds the project and upon completion of the study and design process that immediately follow the announcement of an award. The university's commitment figure will be finalized after the Commonwealth award and proceeds from sale of South Campus are determined. Before issuing debt that may be needed or advantageous as part of the university's financial commitment, discussion will be held within the Finance and Facilities Committee. An appropriate motion will be put forward by the committee to the full board.

An overview of the timetable follows:

- a. Submission of funding proposal – December 2021
- b. Sell South Campus – January 2022 through December 2024
- c. Commonwealth Funding Decision – June 2022
- d. Begin formal required studies – August 2022
- e. Board of Trustees vote on debt, if any – TBD – 2022 - 2023
- f. Complete construction/move in mid to late 2026