



New England Conference for Student Success | September 23, 2011

Creating State Policy to Boost College Completion



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

Working Group on Graduation & Student Success Rates

Background: National Agenda

- **Growing public interest** to increase college graduation rates to eliminate disparities across race/ethnicity, income, and gender; and to increase overall number of degrees



Background: Massachusetts Context

- **MA need for a highly educated workforce**
 - 49% of young adults in MA hold college credential
 - 68% of jobs will require college credential by 2018
 - Demand at multiple levels
- **Challenges**
 - Decline in number of high school graduates
 - Decline in the value of financial aid
 - Uneven state support for public higher education
- **Focus on graduation and student success rates**
 - Builds on ongoing work
 - Sets direction for future work

Introduction

- Vision Project - May 2010
- Graduation & Student Success Working Group - June 2010
- 17 engaged members representing diversity of stakeholders
 - Regular meetings and communications
 - Research literature
 - State and national data
 - Comprehensive campus survey
 - National conferences
 - Leading experts

Working Group Charge

- I.** Recommend **graduation and student success rate goals** by 2016 and 2021 for the community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts benchmarked to peers.
- II.** Review campus goals and plans to improve graduation and student success rates and **make recommendations on how campuses and the Department of Higher Education can most effectively proceed.**
- III.** Review and **prioritize existing and emergent statewide policies and practices** which support the increase of graduation and student success rates.

Working Group on Graduation & Student Success Rates

Part I: Recommendations on graduation and student success rate goals

Goal 1: Meet the following segmental goals and reduce system achievement gaps by 25% by 2016 and by 50% by 2021.

State University Segment	2016	2021
Overall Graduation Rate % (IPEDS): 51.9%	56%	62%
Percentage point gap between Hispanics and Whites: 13	10	6
Percentage point gap between Blacks and Whites: 10	7	5
Percentage point gap between women and men: 7	5	3

Working Group on Graduation & Student Success Rates

Part I: Recommendations on graduation and student success rate goals

Goal 1: Meet the following segmental goals and reduce system achievement gaps by 25% by 2016 and by 50% by 2021.

Community College Segment	2016	2021
Overall Graduation Rate (IPEDS): 16.2%	19%	22%
Percentage point gap between Hispanics and Whites: 9.8	7	5
Percentage point gap between Blacks and Whites: 8.4	6	4
Percentage point gap between women and men: 1.8	1	0
Student Persister/MD Model: 73.5%	78%	83%
Achieving the Dream Model: 34.5%	40%	45%

Part I: Recommendations on graduation and student success rate goals

Goal 2: Leverage financial resources

- Ensure and prioritize student financial aid to promote college access and completion
- Prevent and reverse the erosion of student financial aid and state support
- Secure funding to implement and reward campuses
- Create Vision Project Working Group focused on student financial aid to promote degree and certificate completion

Part I: Recommendations on graduation and student success rate goals

Goal 3: Enhance degree completion goals

- Campuses to set individual goals
- Campuses to maintain a clear commitment to student access and high academic standards
- Establish a unifying Vision Project goal for increasing the total number of degrees and certificates produced by public higher education
- Adopt national community college success measure when available



Discussion of Part I Goals

Part II: Recommendations on how campuses and DHE can proceed

■ Survey

- 100% response rate
- Examples of Strengths
 - Committed Leaders
 - Significant amount of data collection
 - Campus collaboration
 - Broad range of programs and support services
- Examples of Challenges
 - Publication of goals
 - Use of data to create change
 - Fuller faculty involvement
 - Fiscal resources

■ Research Literature

- Certain campus policies and practices associated with higher graduation and student success rates
- Structure, choice, and time
- Lack of student academic preparation is a major barrier to college completion

Part II: Recommendations on how campuses and DHE can proceed

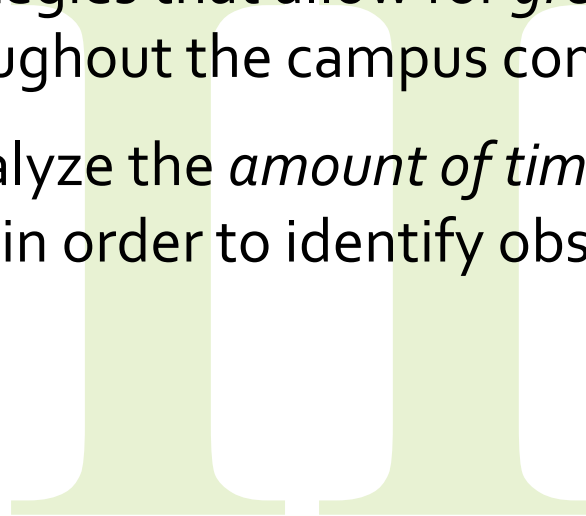
Goal 1: Make graduation and student success a clear institutional priority

- Establish a permanent *standing committee*
- Increase *the engagement of full-time and part-time faculty*
- Boards of Trustees to require that strategic plans include *graduation and student success rate goals* and publicly report annual progress
- *Engage* with local business, civic, and community organizations to complement and support institutional efforts

Part II: Recommendations on how campuses and DHE can proceed

Goal 2: Use campus data and evidence to improve policies, programs, and services

- Implement strategies that allow for *greater access and skilled use of data* throughout the campus community
- Monitor and analyze the *amount of time* it takes for students to earn degrees in order to identify obstacles to degree completion



Part II: Recommendations on how campuses and DHE can proceed

Goal 3: Make full use of empirically-supported strategies that support student completion and accelerate time-to-degree. Examples of proven strategies include but are not limited to the following:

- *learning communities*
- *first-year experience courses*
- *course redesign projects*
- *coherent academic program pathways*
- *individualized graduation plans*

Part II: Recommendations on how campuses and DHE can proceed

Goal 4: Transform developmental education

- Review the growing body of *literature* focused on developmental education
- *Experiment* with research-supported strategies which improve student completion of developmental education
- Explore *redesigned and accelerated approaches* to developmental education
- Investigate refocusing *developmental math education from algebra to statistics and quantitative reasoning*



Discussion of Part II Goals

Part III: Prioritize existing and emergent state policies and practices

Goal 1: Transform developmental education

- DHE to create a statewide *developmental education task force* charged to review and update the current statewide assessment policy to reflect research findings
- DHE to collect and analyze developmental education *student progression data* in support of institutional innovation efforts
- DHE to *identify mathematical competencies needed* at the public higher education campuses to inform proper focus for developmental math education

Part III: Prioritize existing and emergent state policies and practices

Goal 2: Advance student transfer

- Build a directory of statewide online course-to-course equivalencies
- Develop statewide transfer guides by majors that guarantee admission and full transfer and applicability of credit
- Implement an online system to support faculty review of course syllabi and development of common student learning outcomes
- Encourage and support regional and discipline-specific breakout
- Standardize the transfer of nationally-recognized exams international credits, and credits earned through prior learning assessments

Part III: Prioritize existing and emergent state policies and practices

Goal 3: Explore the creation of one-year certificates of value in the workforce

- Explore the creation of quality, occupational certificates connected to workforce needs and transferable into associate degree programs
- Support campuses in the identification of middle-skill job areas and to gauge potential employer interest
- Provide incentives and support to institutions to develop one-year certificate programs
- Review North Carolina's model
- Develop a clearinghouse of workforce certificate and degrees targeted to prospective employers

Part III: Prioritize existing and emergent state policies and practices

Goal 4: Provide leadership through coordination and advocacy

- Make permanent the Working Group on Graduation and Student Success Rates
- Hold an annual statewide completion summit
- Advocate for more accurate and comprehensive student success measures

Part III: Prioritize existing and emergent state policies and practices

Goal 5: Institute policies and practices that accelerate degree completion and reduce time-to-degree

- Perform an audit of credit requirements for currently-offered undergraduate degrees
- Examine credit requirements of proposed new academic programs
- Coordinate statewide effort to develop “reverse transfer” agreements
- Audit the April 1997 policy requiring campuses to charge students the full cost of education for course registrations in excess of 118 percent of academic degree program credit-hour requirements



Discussion of Part III Goals and Final Questions



MASSACHUSETTS
Board of Higher Education

Background: The Metrics

- **Baccalaureate-seeking:**
 - College/university graduation rates *from initial institution*, with national comparisons and disaggregation by student population groups.
 - College/university graduation rates *from any institution in the system, state or anywhere in the United States*.

- **Associate's/Certificate-seeking:**
 - Community college completion rates *for degrees/certificates*, with national comparisons and disaggregation by student population groups.
 - Community college success rates that measure *a range of student outcomes (including transfer to four-year institution and continuous enrollment)*, with national comparisons and disaggregation by student cohort populations.