



## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

We, the Presidents of Massachusetts' Community Colleges, State Universities and the University of Massachusetts, hereby enter into this Commonwealth Commitment with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to strengthen the partnership between and among our institutions with the goal of delivering academic excellence and affordability to Massachusetts students and families.

This agreement is framed by our shared public mission, as defined by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, to *"...ensure that Massachusetts residents have the opportunity to benefit from a higher education that enriches their lives and advances their contributions to the civic life, economic development, and social progress of the Commonwealth."* It will capitalize on the unique strengths of each taxpayer-supported institution of higher learning and will allow optimal access by full-time, degree-seeking students who seek to earn a four-year degree at an affordable price point.

We also recognize the growing urgency with which the state's employers seek qualified job applicants with degrees at the baccalaureate level and higher, and we acknowledge that a desired outcome of this agreement will be improved college completion rates. We believe that production of a larger pool of high-skilled college graduates will help support the talent development and retention goals of business and industry, which in turn help further the economic development goals of the state's elected officials and citizens.

This agreement is premised upon the need for stable and predictable state funding, necessary if we are to sustain academic excellence at our institutions and provide appropriate levels of support to students. We also take a realistic view of students' varying degrees of academic preparedness for college, and in signing this accord, pledge to:

- I. Provide students with information, advising, and other assistance to maximize opportunities for degree completion;
- II. Provide students with the means to successfully navigate the transition between institutions; and
- III. Work collaboratively to track students' progress toward completion of two- and four-year degrees.

Finally, we commit to full, public transparency regarding the costs which are covered by this agreement (tuition and mandatory fees) and additional expenses which are not covered (housing, health insurance, meal plans, books, study abroad, parking, supplies, or other college-related expenses).

## Student Eligibility and Benefits

- I. Students must be Massachusetts residents eligible for in-state tuition under the terms of the BHE's residency policy for in-state tuition.
- II. Students must have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- III. Students must declare their intention to apply to the Commonwealth Commitment program prior to earning 15 credits at a Community College.
- IV. Students accepted into the Commonwealth Commitment program will be eligible to receive a 10% discount off of their tuition and fees, payable at the end of every completed semester, in the form of a cash rebate or voucher issued by their campus.
- V. The tuition and fee rates in place at the respective community college, state university, and/or University of Massachusetts campus for the Fall of 2016 shall be the rates Commonwealth Commitment students beginning the program in Fall of 2016 will be charged for each year the student remains in the program, provided that said student maintains program eligibility, including full-time attendance.
- VI. The tuition and fee rates in place at the respective community college, state university, and/or University of Massachusetts campus for the Fall of 2017 shall be the rates Commonwealth Commitment students beginning the program in Fall of 2017 will be charged for each year the student remains in the program, provided that said student maintains program eligibility, including full-time attendance.
- VII. Community College students must complete an associate degree in a MassTransfer Pathways discipline within two and a half years before transferring to a State University or UMass campus.
- VIII. Students transferring to special mission institutions (Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy) will be required to transfer after one and a half years at a Community College and will "reverse transfer" credits back to their Community College. These credits will be applied towards meeting the associate degree requirements; students will be awarded an associate degree once degree requirements are met.
- IX. Community College students who earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 are guaranteed acceptance into a MassTransfer Pathways degree program, space permitting, at State Universities and UMass campuses.
- X. Students must earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0, in order to earn a guaranteed 100% tuition waiver (or "credit" at a UMass campus) under the terms of MassTransfer. Participating students who do not earn a 3.0 GPA at the time of University admissions will not be admitted under the terms of this agreement, but may be considered for general transfer admission.
- XI. Students who switch their major may jeopardize their ability to remain in the Commonwealth Commitment program, if the change of major will require them to take longer than two years to complete their degree program, or if the new major is not one of the designated MassTransfer Pathways programs.
- XII. Students must complete the requirements for graduating with a bachelor's degree within two years of transferring to a State University or UMass campus, or within two and a half years from special mission institutions (Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy).

- XIII. Students must enroll in a State University or UMass campus in the first semester immediately following completion of an associate degree. They may not attend another college or university in the interim, or will forfeit their place in the Commonwealth Commitment program.
- XIV. Commonwealth Commitment students will be granted equal access to available openings in all designated MassTransfer Pathways programs.

### Available Programs

- I. Students may choose from among 16 MassTransfer Pathway majors, which currently serve 70% of all students enrolled in Massachusetts public colleges and universities, or from eight additional programs offered by the special mission institutions (Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy). The following disciplines are covered by this agreement, and may be offered to students as part of an on-line or continuing education program, or as part of a regular day program, depending on the institution's program offerings and space availability:
  - a. (Available to students entering Community College in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017) **Biology, Chemistry, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology.**
  - b. (Additional programs available to students entering Community College in Fall 2017) **Business, Criminal Justice, Communications and Media Studies, Computer Science, Early Childhood Education, English, Liberal Arts, Mathematics, Sociology, STEM Physical or Natural Sciences.**
  - c. (Available to students entering Community College in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 who intend to transfer to Massachusetts College of Art & Design) **Painting, Printmaking, Sculpture.**

- d. (Available to students entering Community College in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017 who intend to transfer to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy) **Emergency Management, Marine Safety & Environmental Protection, Energy Systems Engineering, Facilities Engineering, International Maritime Business.**

### Additional Program Stipulations

- I. The Commonwealth Commitment price cap is exclusive of housing, health insurance, meal plans, books, study abroad, parking, supplies, or other college-related expenses. Students wishing to live in on-campus housing should expect to pay additional costs.
- II. No student's financial aid should be adversely affected as a result of their participation in this program.
- III. Costs associated with developmental (remedial) coursework are not counted toward the Commonwealth Commitment price cap and may therefore require additional expense.
- IV. Students will transfer with junior year status with regard to registration, unless they enroll at a special mission institution (Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy).
- V. Community College students will remain eligible for the program based on their satisfaction of the enrollment requirements and successful progress towards completion of their degrees.
- VI. All students must maintain good academic standing, as defined by their host institutions, to remain in the program. Failure of courses, withdrawals from courses, and not satisfactorily meeting course grade requirements will likely result in additional costs.

- VII. Students should be advised that not all MassTransfer Pathways programs will be offered at all participating institutions.
- VIII. Students who successfully complete dual enrollment coursework will have their applicable dual enrollment credits counted toward completion of a degree through the Commonwealth Commitment program.
- IX. Community College students transferring to four-year institutions covered by this agreement will not be required to take more than 68 additional credits to receive a baccalaureate degree, unless they enroll at a special mission institution (Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Massachusetts Maritime Academy).
- X. Community College students transferring to fine arts programs at Massachusetts College of Art & Design will be required to produce a portfolio as part of the acceptance criteria.
- XI. In cases of special circumstances, students may appeal to their host institution for an extension of the time limits set forth in this agreement; no more than two possible appeals will be granted at the discretion of the host institution.
- XII. Annually, the Community Colleges will provide the State Universities, UMass campuses, UMass President's Office and the Department of Higher Education with an update on the number of qualified students projected to enter the program at the four-year institutions.
- XIII. Upon completion of an associate degree, Community Colleges will certify each student who has satisfied the requirements of the Commonwealth Commitment program.
- XIV. Community Colleges will require written authorization in the form of a Participation Agreement from student participants to share certain educational information with the University to which they intend to transfer, thus allowing institutions to track student progress through data-sharing.
- XV. Nothing in this agreement will prevent students from transferring between public 2-year and 4-year institutions with fewer than 60 credits and/or no completion of an associate degree; however, students who lose eligibility in the Commonwealth Commitment program may still be eligible for a tuition waiver (or "credit" at UMass campuses) through the MassTransfer program.

### **Communication and Advising**

- I. Participating institutions will incorporate a summary of this agreement into official publications and websites.
- II. Participating institutions agree to encourage qualified students to participate in this program by providing information, advising, and other assistance required to foster a seamless transition from a Community College to a State University or UMass campus.
- III. Participating institutions agree to develop appropriate transfer guides and make these available to administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
- IV. Participating institutions agree to work with the Department of Higher Education to develop statewide marketing materials and social media strategies to inform the public of the Commonwealth Commitment program, and to include information about this articulation agreement in relevant publications for the purposes of promotion and advising.

### **Implementation and Length of Agreement**

- I. All parties affirm that this Agreement takes effect on August 1, 2016.
- II. This Agreement will apply to two cohorts of students entering Community College in Fall 2016 and Fall 2017.
- III. This Agreement does not preclude participating institutions from entering into

similar agreements with other institutions of higher education.

- IV. This Agreement does not replace, alter or abrogate other existing articulation agreements.

**Review/Revision**

- I. Annually, a working group of campus and DHE representatives will meet to review all aspects of the program, including cost structures, program operations,

implementation, accreditation and licensure related issues, and will recommend operational changes or adjustments as deemed necessary.

- II. Based on feedback received from the working group and from the institutional pilot year review, DHE staff will report back to the MA Board of Higher Education and will make any necessary recommendations to help further the goals of this initiative.

**Closure**

By signing below, each President and the Commissioner commit the institutions that make up the Massachusetts system of public higher education to be full and active participants in the implementation of this endeavor.

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**President Marty Meehan**  
on behalf of the  
University of Massachusetts

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**President James Mabry**  
on behalf of the  
Community Colleges of Massachusetts

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**President Barry Maloney**  
on behalf of the  
State Universities of Massachusetts

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**Commissioner Carlos E. Santiago**  
on behalf of the Massachusetts  
Department of Higher Education