MassBay Supports Department of Higher Education’s Call for Highly Educated Workforce in Massachusetts

President John O’Donnell praises the work of the Vision Project while embracing the challenges and inspiration of its goals

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BOSTON – September 20, 2012 – At an event at the Massachusetts State House today, the Department of Higher Education (DHE) released a new report on the changing role of public higher education in Massachusetts. The first annual Vision Project report, entitled, Time to Lead: The Need for Excellence in Higher Education provides an in-depth evaluation of where the Massachusetts public higher education system stands on such important metrics as completion rates, student success, and workforce development.

In a news release issued by the Department of Higher Education, Governor Deval Patrick said, “I am proud of the progress we have made strengthening our public higher education system to create a well-educated workforce. This report provides valuable information on the areas where we are doing things right in higher education, and the places we still have room to grow.”

“The Vision Project has set a clear leadership goal for Massachusetts,” added Education Secretary Paul Reville. “We are doing well already, but doing well isn’t good enough. Our aim is to be the best, and the benchmarks set forth in the Vision Project give us a clear path leading there.”

Time to Lead offers clear evidence to support the thesis that Massachusetts will not succeed unless its public colleges and universities succeed,” said Richard M. Freeland, Commissioner of Higher Education. “It will take equal measures of hard work by the campuses of the Massachusetts public higher education system, strengthened collaboration with partner institutions and organizations, and sustained investment by the Commonwealth to get us where we need to be: national leaders in public higher education.”

The Vision Project is the Patrick Administration’s strategic plan for the public higher education in the Commonwealth. The Time to Lead report discusses the first two years of work under the Vision Project, and sets the statewide strategy for national leadership in the areas of college participation, college
completion, student learning, workforce alignment, elimination of achievement gaps, civic participation and research to drive economic development.

MassBay Community College President John O’Donnell, who attended today’s State House ceremony, issued the following statement today in response to the *Time to Lead* report:

“The Vision Project, the roadmap for the future of public higher education in Massachusetts, makes this an historic time for all of us to be involved in advancing our public colleges and universities. The themes of broad-based excellence and national leadership are both challenging and inspirational. The Vision Project also provides metrics to meet what is a primary theme heard from many citizens and from the business sector: accountability for higher education.

From the perspective of community colleges, these metrics acknowledge the proud history and excellent performance of the Massachusetts Community College System. Given the evolving nature of our economy, the complexity of the modern-day workplace skill set, and the social challenges of our time, the Vision Project asks Massachusetts community colleges to meet these challenges with purposeful evolution based on that proud history.

For Massachusetts Bay Community College, the goals and values of the Vision Project are key components of our new strategic plan. We plan to benchmark the College with the leading community colleges in the nation and to define ourselves as a national leader. The Vision Project report also provides a level of realism, acknowledging that state funding has declined, the cost of attendance has increased, and state scholarship funds no longer cover a substantial portion of tuition and fees. These are the challenges of the day. To enable us to do the critical work of assisting our students cope with these financial realities, the Vision Project provides our colleges with a framework for financial advocacy.

On behalf of MassBay Community College, we thank all who were involved in developing the Vision Project report, *Time to Lead: The Need for Excellence in Public Higher Education*. We look forward to continuing our partnership so, paraphrasing Governor Deval Patrick, Massachusetts’ educational assets will be “firing on all cylinders.”


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