

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 21-40

BOARD DATE: March 23, 2021

APPROVAL OF STUDENT TRUSTEE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

MOVED: The Board hereby approves the following, minimum eligibility criteria which define minimum credit hours and academic standing for student trustees serving on Community College and State University boards of trustees:

A student with a high school diploma or GED is eligible to serve as a student member of the board of trustees of a State University or Community College, provided the student is:

- matriculated, degree-seeking and continuously enrolled in a minimum of **six credit hours** at the institution where the student seeks to serve as a trustee; and
- is in good academic standing and maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional standards.

VOTED: Motion adopted by BHE 3/23/2021.

Authority: Sections 11, 12 and 13 of Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020; M.G.L. c. 15A, § 4 and M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

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Background

Recently enacted law amended the minimum eligibility requirements for students who wish to serve as trustees on the boards of Massachusetts Community Colleges and State Universities. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21, as amended by [Section 13 of Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020](#). Specifically, the new law removed the requirements that students must be enrolled “full time” and maintain “full time” status to become and remain eligible to serve.

The law was amended as a result of tremendous student advocacy, led by members of the Board of Higher Education’s Student Advisory Council (SAC). Community College SAC members in particular noted the inequitable impact the “full time” requirement had on students from diverse backgrounds, pointing to data which indicated that students from minoritized and low-income populations tend to enroll in college part-time and, as such, the law was inequitable in application.

The new law directs the Board of Higher Education to set the eligibility criteria by striking the “full time” requirement, and further providing as follows:

Student member eligibility shall be established by number of credit hours and grade point average established by the board of higher education after consultation with representatives from the higher education institutions.

Id. The Commissioner and staff from the Department have consulted with several stakeholders including: Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, and members of the Student Advisory Committee. Based on feedback received through the consultation process, the Department is recommending the following criteria related to minimum credit hours and grade point average (*e.g.*, academic standing) for BHE approval:

A student with a high school diploma or GED is eligible to serve as a student member of the board of trustees of a State University or Community College, provided the student is:

- matriculated, degree-seeking and continuously enrolled in a minimum of **six credit hours** at the institution where the student seeks to serve as a trustee; and
- is in good academic standing and maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional standards.

Staff Recommendation

Department staff recommend approval of the proposed criteria which define minimum credit hours and academic standing for student trustee eligibility.