



State Universities
of Massachusetts

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State Colleges Praise Governor, State Legislature for Creating Massachusetts State University System

(Boston) –Surrounded by hundred of state college students, presidents and faculty and state legislators, Governor Patrick today signed House 4864-10, creating a state university system for the nine current Massachusetts State Colleges.

“This is an historic day for our colleges,” said Frederick Clark, Executive Officer of the Council of Presidents of the Massachusetts State Colleges. “As comprehensive institutions offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in a wide range of disciplines, the State Colleges all meet nationally recognized criteria of being universities. Now the state has recognized us for what we are. We cannot thank Governor Patrick and our supporters in the state legislature enough.”

“Our students, alumni and staff could not be more excited,” said Clark. “This legislation is really generating a renewed sense of pride in the excellence of their colleges.”

As a result of this bill, six state colleges will be renamed as Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Salem State University, Westfield State University and Worcester State University. The three specialized state colleges– Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Massachusetts Maritime Academy – which serve very unique missions, will retain their existing names but as part of a state university system.

Since today’s Massachusetts State Universities were first created as “Normal Schools” in the 1830’s and 1840’s, the institutions have adopted name changes to fit their evolving mission – shifting to “State Teachers’ Colleges,” “State Colleges” and now to “State Universities.” Forty-five other states in the U.S. already have made the transition to state university systems.

"The governor and legislature have taken an important step forward in recognizing the fine work of our nine state colleges by voting to rename them state universities," said Richard Freeland, Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education. "As I see it, this action simply aligns Massachusetts with the practice found in more than 40 other states, where public four-year and Master's institutions were long ago designated as state universities. This

action reaffirms the growing importance of our public higher education institutions. It represents a strong show of legislative support for the achievements of our faculty and students."

"We believe strongly that this change will enhance the value of our students' and alumni degrees and help them compete for jobs; help our colleges compete for private and federal grants and attract the best faculty from national pools of candidates; and, benefit our state by keeping more Massachusetts students in state to attend college," Clark stated.

The name change does not create any new programs or degrees, and will not require any additional state funding because it does not change the colleges' missions as teaching universities.

The nine-member Massachusetts State University system comprises 4-year, baccalaureate and masters degree-granting teaching universities. They include six comprehensive institutions that combine a liberal arts education with professional development training, which include Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Salem State University, Westfield State University, Worcester State University, and three specialized colleges, including the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay. The state university system educates more than 50,000 students each year, and has more than 230,000 alumni.