

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

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Noe Ortega
Commissioner
Chris Gabrieli
Board Chair

TO: Presidents of Massachusetts Public Colleges and Universities
FROM: Noe Ortega, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
DATE: September 23, 2025
RE: Our commitment to opportunity for all learners

Dear Presidents,

At the start of another academic year, I want to take a moment to thank you, your faculty, and your staff for your ongoing and unwavering dedication to making the benefits of higher education a reality for students every day.

I also want to reaffirm the steadfast commitment of our Department, our Board of Higher Education, and the Healey-Driscoll Administration, to affordable, equitable, and high-quality postsecondary opportunities for all learners. Higher education remains the surest way for students from all backgrounds to build better lives for themselves and their families.

To help further support and guide our higher education equity efforts, I am pleased to inform you that today, Governor Maura Healey and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell announced that they are issuing updated joint guidance in response to evolving court precedent and continuing attacks by the federal government on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies and programming. The new guidance, [available here](#), is meant to help you navigate the current landscape.

Massachusetts remains committed to ensuring safe, inclusive, and welcoming campus environments for all students. Our students and campus communities deserve nothing less. My DHE colleagues and I will continue to partner with your campuses as we strive for equity in higher education access and student success.

In addition, I want to take this opportunity to remind you of existing resources and guidance documents that Governor Healey and Attorney General Campbell have made available to help us continue to provide safe and supportive environments for our immigrant students and their families. The guidance documents are available through the following links:

- [AGO Advisory: Information for MA Colleges and Universities re: Immigrant Students](#)

- [AGO Emergency Planning Fact Sheet for Parents and Guardians with Uncertain Immigration Status](#)
- [AGO Know Your Rights: ICE Enforcement Guide for Immigrants, Families, and Communities](#)

Higher education brings more than economic growth and independence, it brings personal development, skills, and the tools to drive change in one's life and the world around them. The way forward is to continue to create and maintain safe and supportive educational environments to bring these opportunities to as many people as possible.

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noe Ortega', with a stylized, cursive script.

Noe Ortega

Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education