

Community College Evening and Summer State Support

Request: Change Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 15A, Section 26 to allow evening courses and summer courses taught at community colleges in the Commonwealth to be covered by state appropriations.

Context: Currently, Section 26 allows public institutions of higher education to offer courses to students in the evening and during the summer, but they must be “operated at no expense to the commonwealth.”

Specifically, the current language of Chapter 15, Section 26 reads as follows:

Each public institution of higher education may conduct summer sessions, provided such sessions are operated at no expense to the commonwealth. Each public institution of higher education may conduct evening classes, provided such classes are operated at no expense to the commonwealth.

Proposed Language:

The Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, on behalf of all fifteen college presidents, respectfully requests the language below be adopted as an outside section in the FY23 General Appropriations Act:

SECTION XX. Section 26 of chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- This section shall not apply to the community college segment, as defined in section 5.

Rationale:

- The current language is not reflective of a 21st century community college and instead relies on a dated model where the majority of students attended full-time and during the day. More than 44,000 students served at community colleges attend part-time, which accounts for about 2/3 of our overall population.
- As more students want to take courses in the evening, the community colleges must identify additional faculty to teach these courses, as full-time faculty can only teach during the daytime. This can be particularly problematic for high demand evening health programs, whose accreditation requirements require full-time faculty staffing and leadership. Additionally, full-time faculty without sufficient daytime courses available for workload normally cannot be assigned evening courses due to this restriction.
- While students may see a bill that is consistent between day and evening courses, behind the scenes lies a complicated administrative burden in order to not cause student confusion or disparities.
- The current structure has resulted in separate collective bargaining units for faculty: one for those teaching full-time during the “day” and one for the “evening/adjunct

courses taught by the course” (DCE). One of the primary reasons for a separate bargaining union was the fiscal budgetary process where the DAY faculty are part of the state appropriation budget process, while evening sessions rely on revenue generated from courses and faculty hiring for such courses is by the course with differing pay, benefits and job security. This remains necessary to ensure compliance with Section 26 as currently written but complicates serving expanding markets and prevents Community Colleges from hiring full-time faculty in circumstances where it would benefit students and increase equity to do so.

- This change would not result in an increased expenditure, as the state determines what level of support to provide to colleges through the annual appropriations process and increasing the scope of the academic day has no bearing on the amount of appropriation awarded overall. This change would allow state supported instruction to occur during the day or evening. A provision allowing tuition and fees to be retained by the Colleges would be needed to ensure there is no loss of funding to the Community Colleges as a result of this proposed change.
- Community colleges are the primary source for individuals looking to upskill to a higher-paying, in-demand career. Most of the individuals looking to do so work during the day and are looking to take courses in the evening. This change allows Community Colleges to meet the workforce demand that individuals and employers alike expect from our institutions.