

**The Question of University Status for Bridgewater State College:**

**A White Paper Prepared by  
the Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Trustees**

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**For Consideration by the Board of Trustees  
Bridgewater State College**

**May 8, 2007**

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## **Executive Summary: Why a University?**

University status for Bridgewater State College represents an historic opportunity to bolster the institution's enduring commitment to students and the public. The college's current, two-fold mission statement – to educate the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Commonwealth, and to use its intellectual, scientific and technological resources to support and advance the economic and cultural life of the region and the state – reflects the indissoluble connection between the institution and its work to improve the public good.

During this time of potential transformation, this same mission statement serves as one of three primary guideposts for the evolutionary journey that would lie ahead. No less important is the promise to remain an institution focused primarily on teaching and learning, and the commitment to students that any change in the status of the institution would be accomplished without placing additional financial burden on them.

A variety of essential factors have positioned the institution well to make a huge leap forward. Key sources of momentum include: a growing reputation marked by historic levels of demand for admission; a recent revamping of the college's undergraduate core curriculum; major institutional emphasis to strengthen the School of Graduate Studies and complementary efforts to foster a graduate culture; expansion of the pool of full-time faculty and librarians; fiscal stability; a sustained program of improvements to campus facilities; development of the college's first five-year strategic plan; sustained growth of the private endowment and enthusiasm for a new capital campaign; the formation of new centers for scholarship and outreach; the expansion of the college's resident population balanced by improved support systems for commuter students; and nationally recognized leadership in the areas of wireless infrastructure and technological integration into the academic curriculum.

Despite these obvious signs of progression, the underlying question remains: why a university at Bridgewater? Answering this question demands a keen appreciation of just how much the landscape, pace and challenges of our world have changed. Even more important are the impacts such changes have on the ability of students and graduates to compete, succeed and lead, as well as the capacity of the region to thrive.

The most obvious advancement that would be made possible through the attainment of university status is the ability to offer doctoral-level degrees. Southeastern Massachusetts is hungry for a workforce and citizenry in possession of more advanced skills, knowledge and training, and it should be noted that Plymouth and Bristol counties were two of only three Massachusetts counties (Worcester being the other) to experience significant population growth between 2000 and 2006. At the same time, a small number of key academic programs at the college are poised to begin offering terminal degrees. Such a proposition holds tremendous potential for improving the quality of social, economic and cultural life throughout the region, and for enriching even further the diverse teaching and learning environment at the institution.

Bridgewater would also gain from the added cachet that surrounds the university moniker. There is ample evidence to suggest that ongoing institutional efforts to tap into non-state funds from private foundations and national/international granting agencies would be aided considerably by the university label. Moreover, excitement for the name change could help galvanize support for fundraising efforts. Readyng students for positions of leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an increasingly expensive endeavor, and the development of new resource streams is made all the more essential against the backdrop of inconsistent and anemic levels of state support.

Finally, a change to university status focuses institutional attention on the need to offer students additional opportunities for more fully engaged forms of learning. Curricular innovations such as out-of-class experiences, hands-on laboratory exercises, inquiry-based studies, internships, undergraduate research projects, international travel opportunities, and other methods to intensify student interest in traditional coursework have already obtained great traction at the college, thanks largely to the commitments of faculty and librarians working above-and-beyond the scope of their responsibilities. When complemented by excellent classroom and library education, student exposure to these kinds of unique opportunities consistently leads to enhanced levels of academic and professional success. Though these activities have enriched the student experience and enlivened faculty and librarian life beyond Bridgewater's expectations, they have also given rise to the necessity for greater systemic support that will allow these changes to be sustainable. Asking of the university question provides the community with an important opportunity to assess such needs in detail, particularly as they pertain to a reallocation of faculty workload.

Though a change in the name of the institution could conceivably be accomplished very quickly through an act of the Massachusetts Legislature, the subsequent period of transition and evolution would likely last several years. During that time, the need for a healthy, sustained and transparent institutional dialogue would not only continue but intensify.

As the path to the horizon begins to take shape, the road already traveled continues to be as relevant as ever. An unwavering dedication to offer students rigorous, high-quality and truly transformative educational opportunities that are affordable and accessible to all has defined a Bridgewater education since its earliest days; so, too, has the desire – if not the *passion* – by members of the college and alumni communities to look outwards in applying the myriad of proceeds that often accompany educational enrichment and the awarding of academic credentials. The heart and soul of a Bridgewater education have remained unchanged for 167 years. Though historic in its own right, pursuit of university status constitutes but the next logical chapter in the ongoing story of public higher education in Bridgewater.

## **Guiding Principles Supporting an Enduring Mission**

While this document encapsulates many of the broader issues and themes surrounding the university question, it deliberately gives members of the college community considerable flexibility in collectivity charting their course following a name change. This is done for two reasons: first, the institution has an impeccable track record, particularly over the past two decades, of adapting to change and quickly seizing newly revealed opportunities; and second, recent history has shown that the political and economic climate surrounding public higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is subject to considerable variation.

Given this flexibility, however, the consensus of the college community is such that a number of guiding principles should function to shape the discussion and anchor the institution to a core set of values. These principles have clearly presented themselves through the process of consultation and are expressed as follows:

- I. Any change in the status of the institution must be accomplished without placing additional financial burden on students;
- II. Bridgewater must remain an institution focused primarily on teaching and learning. Commitment to faculty and librarian scholarship is extensive and substantial, but research, per se, is not at the core of the institutional mission. Scholarship must undergird student learning and not vice-versa;
- III. Transition to university status will provide opportunities for expanding and strengthening graduate education – including doctoral degrees in selected areas – while maintaining a strong focus on undergraduate education;
- IV. Intensive student engagement and collaboration with full-time faculty, marked by shared, active possibilities for enrichment and discovery (often referred to as “engaged student learning”), should be the defining feature of a Bridgewater education;
- V. The ability to inspire new modes of engaged student learning hinges upon a reconception of faculty and librarian worklife and a reallocation of workload;
- VI. The majority of additional operating costs brought about by a proposed transition must be offset by the generation of new revenues, the attainment of grant-based funding sources, or the redeployment of existing resources;
- VII. Improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts must remain integral to the mission of the institution. The region must share in the benefits accompanying any change in status;
- VIII. Special attention should be given to expanding the growing partnership with the Town of Bridgewater. The institution should work hand-in-hand with the town to

- mitigate arising challenges and explore new opportunities for mutual gains brought about by the transition;
- IX. The governing board must continue to be a local body composed of a diverse array of qualified, serious individuals capable of understanding and appreciating the changing needs of the institution, its people and the communities it serves. Integral to the success of the governing board is regular self-assessment and accountability to the public;
  - X. Regardless of a name change, the institution places tremendous value in its ongoing partnership with the Massachusetts state college system.

These principles constitute the general framework under which the university question is asked and any future transition would proceed. As college faculty, librarians, students and staff have proceeded judiciously and deliberately in reaching this consensus, it deserves to preface any strategic or operational framework.

### **A Changing Institution: The Path to the University Question**

Since the time of its founding in 1840, the institution now known as Bridgewater State College has had five names in all: Bridgewater Normal School, 1840-1846; Bridgewater State Normal School, 1846-1933; Bridgewater State Teachers College, 1933-1960; State College at Bridgewater, 1960-1965; and Bridgewater State College, 1965-present. While these name changes reflect changing attitudes towards public education, prevailing political agendas, and even significant shifts in the lexicon of higher education, it should be noted that the college's history, despite its occasional hiccups or surges, has been marked by a steady progression that largely mirrors the growth of the Commonwealth and Southeastern Massachusetts. In many ways, then, the timing of the university question seems only natural.

In its earliest days, the institution required students to complete three terms, each of fourteen weeks, to earn a certificate of graduation. By the 1860s, the curriculum had evolved to a two-year program. Beginning in 1921, state normal schools in Massachusetts were granted the authority to offer bachelor's degrees in education to anyone completing an elective four-year program, and since 1934, all academic programs have been geared towards degree-seeking students.

With the name change to State College at Bridgewater in 1960, the institution complemented its teacher-preparation programming with an array of new academic majors. This slate has continued to expand ever since, and in 1992, the college reorganized the academic structure and divided programs into two distinct schools each with its own identity and dean – the School of Education and Allied Studies and the School of Arts and Sciences. By 1997, the time had come for a third academic school – the School of Management and Aviation Sciences, the name of which was changed to the School of Business in 2005. As outlined in the college's most recent strategic plan, *BSC*

2011, plans are currently underway – regardless of the outcome of university discussion – to create one or two additional academic schools as part of a broader effort to foster cross-disciplinary cooperation and maximize the strategic use of resources.

The graduate program has an equally rich, if less lengthy, history. The college introduced the first master’s degree program at Bridgewater in 1937 and the first degrees were awarded in 1938. Until relatively recently, nearly all of the master’s programs offered were focused on enhancing the skill sets of K-12 teachers and administrators. Today, the college is home to master’s programs in criminal justice, English, psychology, computer science, physical education, public administration, management and social work in addition to an array of concentrations offered through the Master of Education (M.Ed.), Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) tracks.

In 2005, the college made the strategic decision to create formally a School of Graduate Studies and to separate its operations from what had been the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. This distinction is unusual among state colleges in Massachusetts and reflects growing emphasis that the college places on the development of traditional graduate programming and the enhancement of graduate student life. As a further indication of Bridgewater’s desire to foster a true “graduate culture,” the college separated its graduate and undergraduate commencements beginning with the spring 2006 convocation exercises and a national search for a permanent graduate dean has been completed.

### **Comparative Analysis: Today’s Public Higher Education Landscape in the U.S.**

Much is made of the moniker of “state university” versus that of “state college” and with good reason. Throughout the nation there are numerous examples of state colleges making the transition to state universities with considerable positive consequences for enrollments, prestige, endowment levels, etc. Interestingly, though Massachusetts is home to some of the oldest public institutions of higher learning in America, it remains one of only five states that persists with the nomenclature of the “state college” without also having a “state university” option. As shown in Appendix A, only Nebraska, Nevada, Rhode Island and Vermont fall into this category, and of note, all of Massachusetts’ chief economic competitors (e.g. California, Texas, Ohio, Illinois, etc.) have made the transition.

Only one-third of state public higher education systems currently use the “state college” label at all, whereas three-quarters employ the “state university” moniker. And while there were once hundreds of normal schools throughout the country, only twelve outside of the six in Massachusetts continue to be called “state colleges.” Bridgewater’s enrollments far exceed those of all but two (see Appendix B).

## **The Moment of Opportunity: Bridgewater's Advantages and Momentum**

The question of university status for Bridgewater State College is not a new one. For nearly two decades, campus conversations around the topic have persisted and strategic decisions have been made with an eye towards operating as a state university-like institution. In considering the university question, the college possesses a number of critical advantages and has generated considerable positive momentum. Highlights include:

- A growing reputation marked by historic levels of demand for admission;
- Fiscal stability and improved college systems;
- A sustained program of improvements to campus facilities, key additions to the college's physical plant, and land acquisitions making for a large and contiguous campus footprint;
- Development of the college's first five-year strategic plan which emphasizes engaged student learning, enhanced campus participation in diverse and global society, and the strengthening of institutional relationships with regional partners;
- Growth of the institutional endowment, currently \$16 million and the largest among state colleges in Massachusetts;
- The full revamping of the college's core curriculum, including the introduction of first- and second-year seminars, emphasis on writing across the curriculum, greater flexibility in the selection of electives, and smaller class sizes;
- A concerted effort to expand and diversify the pool of full-time professors, resulting in a net gain of 41 additional faculty since 2002;
- Redeployment of new and existing administrative resources towards faculty development and growth;
- Addition of critical services within the Academic Achievement Center;
- Expansion of the Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research, the Honors Program, internship and service-learning programming, the Office of Community Service, and other programs designed to stimulate inquiry-based learning;
- The formation of new mechanisms for scholarship and outreach such as the Center for Sustainability, the Center for the Advancement of Science Education, the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Center for Global Studies, all of which complement the array of existing centers and institutes;
- Establishment of the School of Graduate Studies and complementary efforts to foster a graduate culture;
- Expansion of the college's resident population balanced by improved support systems for commuter students;
- Establishment of the enrollment management unit within the Division of Academic Affairs;
- Nationally recognized leadership in the areas of wireless infrastructure and technological integration into the academic curriculum.

## **Our Bottom Line: Student Success**

Though students would immediately share in the added prestige brought about by a change in status, the institution will be far more proactive in harnessing transformative energies for direct student benefit. Woven deep into the fabric of the institution is the call to minister to students a deep appreciation for social responsibility, cultural sensitivity, global consciousness, public service and advanced citizenship. This appreciation is the natural result of students having access to exceptional growth opportunities defined by intensive engagement with devoted faculty and librarians, and is nurtured by a rich academic and social support system. Student transformation – and the institution’s measure of success – is marked by the achievement of new forms of personal empowerment (e.g. expressive, artistic, scientific, mathematical, political, economic, critical, etc.) that are then applied throughout the student’s life to improve some greater good.

Curricular innovations, such as out-of-class experiences, hands-on laboratory exercises, inquiry-based studies, internships, undergraduate research projects, international travel opportunities, and other methods to intensify student interest in traditional coursework have already obtained great traction at the college, thanks largely to the commitments of faculty and librarians working above-and-beyond the scope of their responsibilities. When complemented by excellent classroom and library education, student exposure to these kinds of unique opportunities consistently leads to enhanced levels of academic and professional success.

## **Faculty & Librarians: Supporting Excellence**

Early innovators at Bridgewater paved the way for the rapid growth in active scholarship that is evident today. Faculty and librarians now engage in scholarship and/or creative activities as natural parts of their responsibilities and professional identities. They secure external grants, publish books and articles, present papers at professional conferences, develop and implement curricular changes, lend their expertise to the public, and display and perform creative works. These activities have enriched the student experience and enlivened faculty and librarian life beyond Bridgewater’s expectations. Moving to university status would provide several opportunities for faculty and librarians. The most obvious is recognition of the tremendous amount of scholarly activity and service to the college being achieved by current faculty and librarians, but not calculated into their existing workload. Through careful and prudent planning, faculty and librarians would be able to reallocate a portion of their existing workload to include scholarly and creative activity, curriculum development, service-learning mentorship, and service to the institution and surrounding communities. This will have a ripple effect on the curricula as faculty and librarians have more opportunities to explore new ways of teaching to engage students in a more informed educational environment.

Workload reallocation will require additional tenure-track faculty positions as resources allow. Though this effort may result in a temporary reliance upon more part-time faculty to teach needed courses, the college is committed to hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty

and librarians to meet programming needs. Discerning the optimal number of full-time faculty is a complex and critically important issue affecting every corner of the university and hence will require serious investigation and planning.

To preserve its commitment to providing quality and accessible education, the institution must maintain or reduce class sizes, encourage engaged learning experiences, and continue to mentor students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

University status will clearly assist in the recruitment and retention of faculty and librarians as we seek to build a more diverse campus community. This has the potential to lead to a broader and more culturally rich curriculum, and to provide a more inviting, supportive environment for our increasingly culturally diverse student body. University status will also make the institution more competitive vis-à-vis grant opportunities to support and/or supplement faculty and student projects, thus further enriching the education and service provided to students, the region and the Commonwealth.

Along with increasing the number of faculty and librarians and reallocating workload to meet program needs, it will become necessary to assess the advisability and feasibility of changes in organizational structure. The above changes may increase the workload, term length and accessibility expectations for department chairs, which in turn may entail summer employment and compensation and/or the addition of assistant chairs to perform necessary duties.

As Bridgewater State College moves toward university status, several issues must be openly discussed. The more critical issues include: salary; salary equity; expectations for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review; reliance upon part-time faculty; and workload of department chairs, librarians, and graduate faculty. Although it may be easier to develop a plan for workload reallocation for faculty and department chairs, careful thought must go into developing a fair and equitable workload reallocation for librarians. All of these issues need to be negotiated through established collective bargaining processes over time.

### **Expanding & Strengthening Graduate Education**

Over the past decade, Bridgewater has expanded its graduate programs considerably, adding master's degrees in public administration, management, computer science, criminal justice and social work. In a university environment, these programs would continue to grow and be supported with increased faculty and staff resources. In doing so the institution would build upon recent initiatives such as the creation of graduate-only departments and the aggressive expansion of the range of services offered to support graduate students and faculty.

Among the primary curricular opportunities that university status would offer the institution is the ability to offer doctoral degrees. The area in which the college is closest to granting such degrees is in the School of Education and Allied Studies, which currently offers Certificates of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS), often thought of as a

stepping stone towards a doctoral program. Moreover, a doctoral program in education would solidify the link between Bridgewater's future and its proud heritage as a teacher preparation institution. Regional interest and need is already very clear; a doctoral program in education is needed in this area.

A second opportunity may entail the addition of new master's degrees. Up until now, the college has focused on discipline-specific master's degrees, but as faculty numbers increase and more academic schools are developed, the institution may explore possible interdisciplinary graduate programs that are tied to areas of mission-specific, strategic interest (e.g. sustainable development).

Planning for any additional graduate programs, including doctoral programs, would continue to be based on the intersection of two factors. First, the proposed degree must be sufficiently in demand – both by prospective students and by potential employers – to serve the changing needs of the region. Second, subject areas must be selected from those for which BSC is known to have a particularly strong foundation vis-à-vis the quality of faculty and curricula. Only if both criteria are met can the institution be reasonably assured that a program will succeed.

The primary risk of beginning any new degree program is the diversion of resources away from existing programs, particularly undergraduate education. With that said, a more subtle risk is the tendency to divert funds and resources away from smaller undergraduate programs into larger programs that may be more visible, hold added opportunities for increased student enrollment, or meet national accrediting standards. Planning for new degree programs would necessarily entail scrutiny of the financial feasibility of the new programs within the context of the institution as a whole.

Finally, the institution should not create an expectation that every department should have a graduate program or the sense that graduate education is more important than undergraduate education. Rather, new graduate programs must be woven selectively and judiciously into the fabric of the institution and must meet the needs of the region and the Commonwealth.

### **A Focus on Quality: Envisioning the Size and Composition of the Community**

A state university at Bridgewater defined by a mode of engaged student learning raises a number of ancillary questions pertaining to the size, reach and cultural fabric of the institution. Without question, reconceiving faculty and librarian work-life in the manner described above would require a considerable increase in the number of newlines. Since 2002, the college has incurred a net gain of 41 full-time faculty positions by redeploying existing administrative resources. Even before the university question was first posed, and is described in the college's five-year strategic plan, plans were underway to grow the pool of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty to 340 (currently 292) by 2011.

The move to university status, however, is motivated by the institution's desire to improve the quality of a Bridgewater education, and as such, the size of the faculty pool

must necessarily be considered relative to the projected size and composition of the student body. Enrollments at the institution are now directed by a fully mature and operational enrollment management unit incorporating the offices of admissions, financial aid, registrar, and academic achievement center. Regardless of the outcome of the university discussion, enrollments at Bridgewater will be capped at approximately 10,500 (and 11,000) (currently 9,700) with the following composition:

Enrollment Projections	Actual	Goal / Projected			
	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010
<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>9,655</b>	<b>9,859</b>	<b>10,069</b>	<b>10,284</b>	<b>10,499</b>
-- Full-Time	6,792 (70%)	6,901 (71%)	7,048 (73%)	7,199 (75%)	7,349 (76%)
-- Part-Time	2,863 (30%)	2,958 (29%)	3,021 (27%)	3,085 (25%)	3,150 (24%)
<b>Undergraduate Headcount</b>	<b>7,825</b>	<b>7,961</b>	<b>8,061</b>	<b>8,176</b>	<b>8,276</b>
-- Full-Time	6,457 (83%)	6,528 (83%)	6,610 (84%)	6,704 (86%)	6,786 (87%)
---- Residents	2,130 (33%)	2,045 (32%)	2,445 (38%)	2,445 (38%)	2,845 (44%)
---- Commuters	4,327 (67%)	4,483 (68%)	4,165 (62%)	4,259 (62%)	3,941 (56%)
-- Part-Time	1,368 (17%)	1,433 (17%)	1,451 (16%)	1,472 (14%)	1,490 (13%)
<b>Graduate Headcount</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>1,898</b>	<b>2,008</b>	<b>2,108</b>	<b>2,223</b>
-- Full-Time	335 (18%)	342 (19%)	361 (20%)	379 (21%)	400 (22%)
-- Part-Time	1,495 (82%)	1,556 (81%)	1,647 (80%)	1,729 (79%)	1,832 (78%)

Considerable discussion has led to these choices and there are a number of decisive factors:

- Smaller faculty-student ratios dramatically increase the quality of a Bridgewater education and underscore the mission of engaged student learning;
- The vast majority of campus and town constituencies feel strongly in their desire to maintain the existing socio-cultural setting, a setting that could be substantially changed by significant student enrollment growth;
- Even following an ambitious (and ongoing) expansion of the physical plant, capacity issues persist. Nearly 100 percent of day program spaces are taken and additional capacity made possible by the evening program continues to dwindle. At the same time, permanent faculty office and student residence hall space is at an ultra premium; the waiting list for the latter has at times approached 1,000 students;
- Full-time and residential student cohorts will be more likely to participate in engaged learning activities and contribute to a culture of active scholarship.

Furthermore, a campus community of this size and composition requires a complementary support and enrichment system, in terms of both human and capital resources. For faculty and librarians, particular attention must be given to ensuring an adequate supply of office, laboratory and studio space; travel and professional development funding; relevant equipment and supplies; and other support, such as graduate and research assistants. Equally central to these endeavors are adequate library resources at a level consistent with or greater than other universities in the same mission

class. This will in turn require a financial commitment to provide the necessary monetary and personnel resources to improve and diversify library holdings and offerings.

For students comprising an increasingly full-time and residential community, steps must be taken to encourage further the development of systematic on-campus programming. While student leaders have already undertaken a variety of initiatives in this regard, general student participation in social and cultural events remains sporadic and uneven, particularly for weekend functions.

### **Revenue & Expenses: Ensuring Affordability, Accessibility and Quality**

The commitments to ensure that a Bridgewater education would remain both affordable and accessible would continue to be paramount priorities irrespective of any change in the status of the institution. Though Bridgewater State College remains far less expensive than its private counterparts, anemic and inconsistent levels of public support, combined with a governance structure that currently prohibits the institution from retaining tuition revenues, has led to gradual erosion of its affordability for working families. At the same time, rising levels of prestige and a relative sense of perceived value translates into the possibility – if left unchecked – of more students who have no other feasible, higher education option of being “crowded out” of institutions like BSC.

In striving to remain true to its core constituency and historic mission, Bridgewater State College already faces these challenges on a day-to-day basis. The added cachet of university status will only add to the value proposition, generate demand, and threaten access and affordability. As such, it is vital to state clearly and unequivocally, that any change in the status of the institution must not be accomplished by passing any additional financial burden on to students. The cost of attendance (tuition plus fees) must not increase as a result of university status being achieved. Furthermore, the institution must resist any temptation, either immediately or in the future, to establish a tuition and fee schedule that is inconsistent with its historic norm. Put another way, there will be no cost schedule, either in concept or practice, that pegs the price of attending a state university at Bridgewater as being any different than that of Bridgewater State College.

A significant opportunity will be afforded to Bridgewater upon attainment of university status in regards to private gifts. Corporate, business and individual gifts may be attracted to assist the institution with expanded undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, student travel abroad programs, expanded regional public service efforts, regional economic research and development initiatives, and high-need program development and implementation initiatives. Additionally, with an impending endowment campaign moving into a “quiet phase” in the fall of this year, the achievement of university status could be utilized as an exciting catalyst for the campaign as the institution moves to an even higher plane of achievement, excellence and expanded external recognition. University status will assist current institutional efforts to promote engaged student learning; improve levels of strategic financial aid; create faculty chairs, professorships and lectureships; and support graduate teaching assistantships.

In addition to its endeavors to tap into philanthropic sources, the institution holds terrific potential – as well as a solid track record – to draw on federal, state and private grant sources. In particular, university status would greatly expand Bridgewater’s opportunities to attract federal Department of Education, Massachusetts Department of Education and private foundation dollars for research and collaborations in the area of primary and secondary teacher preparation. It should be noted that the development of existing engaged student learning initiatives has already afforded the college new, if limited, access to a number of prestigious funding opportunities (e.g. the National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, the US Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and the Teaching of American History Grant).

While affordability is a leading predictor of accessibility, other factors deserve attention as well. Bridgewater State College currently makes a four-year education available to a large number of successful community college graduates. This so-called “2+2” model is representative of the connectivity of public higher education institutions in Massachusetts and must only be strengthened by a possible change to university status. With the founding of the Connect Partnership in 2003 between BSC, the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, Massasoit Community College and Cape Cod Community College, transfer articulation agreements have grown stronger than at any point in Bridgewater’s history. Operational improvements and innovations, such as standardizing the evaluation of basic writing requirements among the institutions (and a similar endeavor underway with respect to mathematics) and the hiring at BSC of a full-time transfer coordinator, speak to the importance that the college places on the community college pipeline.

To make the transition to university status as smooth and efficient as possible for both the campus community and the general public, the institution should be prepared to incur a handful of one-time costs. These include:

- Physical changes in signage, stationery, athletic and employee uniforms, etc. to reflect a name change;
- Design costs of updating the college’s logo and basic visual/verbal identity system;
- Supplementary advertising to convey the name change, the meaning behind it, and the additional opportunities it makes possible;
- A myriad of additional outreach activities to private businesses, foundations, high school guidance counselors, community colleges, potential out-of-state students, etc.;
- Expenses pertaining to the recruitment process for new faculty;
- Research activities surrounding the development of new doctoral programs, private giving prospects, and heretofore unavailable grant opportunities.

Faculty salary and fringe benefits may be fully borne by the institution if faculty teach only at the graduate level. If undergraduate courses are taught by graduate faculty as part

of their day load, then the state of Massachusetts may absorb some of the fringe benefit costs of new graduate faculty. Non-state supported faculty costs incurred as a result of graduate teaching loads should be offset by graduate student tuition and fee revenue.

Finally, it should be noted that the existing capital facilities plan identified by the Eva Klein study remain Bridgewater priorities. Special emphasis would continue to be placed on the institution's critical need for a new science facility. In addition, Bridgewater may consider conducting an in-depth review and possible revision of the campus plan for possible realignment of capital priorities in light of the achievement of university status.

### **Governance: Charting the Path of Excellence**

Bridgewater State College has thrived in large part because atop its organizational structure has been a local governing board filled with a diverse array of individuals capable of understanding and appreciating the changing needs of the institution, its people and the communities it serves, and committed to regular self-assessment and accountability to the public. This type of structure would continue to be optimal should the paradigm of the state university be adopted. At the same time, the institution would continue to place tremendous value in a statewide governance structure that considers Bridgewater a sister institution of the eight other state colleges. Though a split in the statewide governance mechanisms now operating between the state and community colleges may ultimately be preferable, there is no desire to break from the existing governance and collective bargaining structures uniting the nine institutions.

In refocusing institutional efforts around the needs of a teaching university, it is hoped that the local governance structure will be one in which faculty have more input into decisions concerning campus life, that the best ideas of the faculty come together with those of the administration and the Board of Trustees, and that all of this happens without any type of concurrent rise in workload expectations. In addition, a new structure may precipitate, through the collective bargaining agreement, the further development of the role of academic deans.

Increased emphasis on graduate education brings to light important concerns surrounding the existing division of the faculty contracts into "day" and "DGCE" with different implications for workload, scheduling, evaluation, and compensation. The administration and the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) will need to investigate jointly how to integrate graduate teaching in a more seamless manner into the workloads of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty members. As additional graduate programs are implemented, the campus will need to negotiate how the MSCA collective bargaining agreement and the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE) agreement fit with the changing times. More generally, issues related to collective bargaining must be openly discussed and a clear and projected timeline for negotiations must be agreed upon. Key to these negotiations are issues of salary, salary equity, working conditions, and expectations for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review.

## **Community Impact: Building the Model College & Community Partnership**

Since Horace Mann set forth with his bold experiment in 1840, the Town of Bridgewater has become synonymous with the virtues and the challenges of hosting an institution of public higher education. In recent years, the college and town have worked together like never before, united by a shared desire to build a model college and community partnership. As each is a source of tremendous strength to the other, and as so much of the college's identity is woven around its geographic location, it should be clearly stated that the institution insists that any new label brought about by a change in status continue to include "Bridgewater."

While there is much excitement in the town concerning the possible added cachet of university status, important concerns persist as to the possible effects that such a change would have on municipal resources and quality of life. Though it is clearly noted elsewhere in this document, it is worth restating here that a change to university status would bring with it only a very small change in the campus population, the majority of whom would be working professionals participating in graduate study. Furthermore, the addition of numerous well-paid, highly-educated faculty should only add to the social, economic and cultural health of the community. The college is by far the largest employer in the Town of Bridgewater, and though it operates as a non-profit/tax-exempt entity, its direct and indirect contributions to the general welfare of the town are immense.

Capital expansion brought about by the college's natural evolution and any change to university status must be accomplished in consideration of local conservation, environmental, public safety and utility concerns. The institution and the community must work together to strike the appropriate balance concerning matters of growth. As the college has direct oversight over a large (270+ acres) footprint of land that is centrally located within the community, the opportunity exists for the creation of an on-campus, publicly accessible green space.

A teaching university would bring with it enhanced opportunities for community enrichment and ancillary business development. The college has already made a significant commitment to improving town residents' awareness of on-campus campus lectures by BSC faculty and visiting luminaries, arts and cultural opportunities, and other types of specialized programming. The cultivation of new teaching and researching endeavors, particularly vis-à-vis the notable expansion of science and science education activities made possible by the construction of a new facility, should have a multiplier effect with the town itself.

Lastly, the institution's commitment to a model of engaged student learning will have immediate and lasting benefits to town residents, be it through direct outreach, community service, the intense study of local issues, or otherwise. Ultimately, Bridgewater State College hopes that the town will be a full partner in its journey in posing the university question, and that it will be a primary beneficiary of any benefits received through the result of a change.

## **Conclusion**

Before Bridgewater State College may lie the possibility of becoming a different kind of institution. This opportunity deserves full consideration as it holds the potential to promote more enriching forms of student learning, improve the quality of work-life for all, expand program offerings at the graduate level, and enhance the institution's ability to deliver on its historic and enduring mission of supporting and enhancing the public good. Ensuring affordability and accessibility must go hand-in-hand with any proposition to improve the quality of academic life. Finally, it is critical that this dialogue be open, transparent, and include participation by students, faculty, librarians, administrators, staff, citizens of the Town of Bridgewater, alumni and other friends of the college.

**APPENDIX A:  
STATE NOMENCLATURE FOR PUBLIC, FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS**

State	State College Only	State Univ. or State College / State Univ. Mix	Univ. of
Alabama		√	√
Alaska			√
Arizona		√	√
Arkansas		√	√
California		√	√
Colorado		√	√
Connecticut		√	√
Delaware		√	√
Florida		√	√
Georgia		√	√
Hawaii			√
Idaho		√	√
Illinois		√	√
Indiana		√	√
Iowa		√	√
Kansas		√	√
Kentucky		√	√
Louisiana		√	√
Maine			√
Maryland		√	√
Massachusetts	√		√
Michigan		√	√
Minnesota		√	√
Mississippi		√	√
Missouri		√	√
Montana		√	√
Nebraska	√		√
Nevada	√		√
New Hampshire		√	√
New Jersey		√	√
New Mexico		√	√
New York		√	√
North Carolina		√	√
North Dakota		√	√
Ohio		√	√
Oklahoma		√	√
Oregon		√	√
Pennsylvania		√	√
Rhode Island	√		√

South Carolina		√	√
South Dakota		√	√
Tennessee		√	√
Texas		√	√
Utah		√	√
Vermont	√		√
Virginia		√	√
Washington		√	√
West Virginia		√	√
Wisconsin			√
Wyoming			√

**APPENDIX B:  
NORMAL SCHOOLS AS STATE COLLEGES (NON-MASSACHUSETTS)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Original Name and Founding Date</b>	<b>Enrollment Fall 2005</b>
Adams State College	Alamosa, CO	Adams State Normal School, 1921	9,157
Dixie State College of Utah	St. George, UT	Dixie Normal School, 1911	8,945
Keene State College	Keene, NH	Keene Normal School, 1909	4,846
Lewis-Clark State College	Lewiston, ID	Lewiston State Normal School, 1893	3,451
Chadron State College	Chadron, NE	Chadron State Normal School, 1911	2,472
Western State College of Colorado	Gunnison, CO	Colorado State Normal School, 1911	2,253
Wayne State College	Wayne, NE	Nebraska Normal College, 1891	2,253
Peru State College	Peru, NE	Peru State Normal School, 1867	1,959
Johnson State College	Johnson, VT	Johnson Normal School, 1828	1,866
Bluefield State College	Bluefield, WV	Bluefield Colored Institute, 1895	1,708
Glenville State College	Glenville, WV	Glenville State Normal School, 1872	1,392
Lyndon State College	Lyndonville, VT	Lyndon Training Course, 1911	1,364

*Source: IPEDS College Opportunities Online Locator (COOL)*