



February 21, 2025

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

We, the nine presidents of the state universities, write to share yesterday's statement by Patrick Tutwiler, Massachusetts Secretary of Education, regarding federal actions that impact our students, employees, and the Commonwealth:

*“This country has long fought for all students to have equal access to a public education. Resting policy on the denial and retelling of history and demanding that we do so as well is neither sustainable nor acceptable. This is an attempt to take us back decades, exacerbating real inequities that still exist today. Massachusetts will continue to acknowledge and address historical and persistent gaps in student access and achievement, including Black and Brown students, students with disabilities, low-income students and other marginalized student populations. We are working with our Attorney General's Office to support schools and higher education institutions to continue progress, within the law, towards building a more equitable education system for all students.”*

We stand united with Secretary Tutwiler and write to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to inclusive education. Massachusetts' state universities have long been dedicated to the fundamental belief that public higher education should be accessible, inclusive, and empowering for all students. Our mission is rooted in the principles of opportunity, access, instructional excellence, academic freedom and the transformative power of education.

We are dedicated to providing a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all our students and employees. Our universities exist to educate, uplift, and empower students from all backgrounds, perspectives, and identities. We recognize that many within our community are experiencing fear, uncertainty, and frustration with the executive actions coming from the federal administration. To those who feel this uncertainty and fear, know that we hear you, we support you, and we will continue to advocate for you.

Please be assured that we are collaborating with the Department of Higher Education, the Executive Office of Education, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, and our colleagues at the University of Massachusetts and community colleges as we all work “towards building a more equitable education system for all students.” We applaud Secretary Tutwiler for his leadership as we navigate the evolving federal actions and impact on our campus communities.

As public higher education institution leaders, we embrace our duty to champion policies and practices that ensure every individual has the opportunity to learn and to thrive. We are guided by our shared responsibility and remain committed to advocating for policies that support our campus communities.

Respectfully,



**Linda Thompson, President**

Westfield State University  
*Chair, State Universities Council of Presidents*



**James F. Birge, President**

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts



**Frederick W. Clark,  
President**

Bridgewater State University



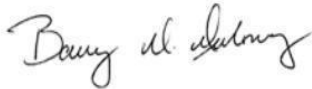
**Mary K. Grant, President**  
Mass. College of Art and Design



**Donna Hodge, President**  
Fitchburg State University



**John D. Keenan, President**  
Salem State University



**Barry M. Maloney, President**  
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**Francis X. McDonald, President**  
Massachusetts Maritime Academy



**Nancy S. Niemi, President**  
Framingham State University