UMass Amherst

MSP MSP <msp@umass.edu>

Urgent: Reduced-credit baccalaureate proposals before the Board of Higher Ed. (BHE)

1 message

MSP <msp@umass.edu> Wed, Jun 3, 2026 at 3:57 PM
To: MSP Board and Reps <mspboardandreps@groups.umass.edu>

Dear colleagues,

I know there have been a lot of asks already this summer, but I want to draw your attention to the urgent email below and ask that you forward it back to your department colleagues.

The BHE has been fast tracking the 90-credit degree program, despite the many harms that will occur to students educators, and public higher education in MA, including but not limited to:

- **A two-tiered system** of public higher education that puts the most financially vulnerable students at risk of obtaining a weaker degree, widening inequities and the opportunity gap in our state;
- **Gutting of a liberal arts education** that equips students for a rich civic and professional life;
- **Job losses and increased workloads** on faculty, librarians, and staff who remain;
- **Loss of formative fourth year opportunities** such as capstones, senior theses, research opportunities, double majors and minors, internships, etc.

We need academic voices to be heard. Please take the following actions and encourage members in your departments to do the same:

1. Please take **one minute ASAP** to sign/send the alert to policymakers: Action Network link
2. Submit written comments to the BHE – written comments are due by 5pm on Friday, 6/19 (see attached "Instructions for submission of public comments")

We have a real chance to push back and make clear that reduced-credit baccalaureate degrees that close doors for students should not be approved in Massachusetts. **The Commonwealth should address affordability by expanding opportunity and investing in students — not by shrinking the education they receive.**

In solidarity,

Jacquie

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **MSP** <msp@umass.edu>
Date: Wed, Jun 3, 2026 at 3:52 PM
Subject: Urgent: Reduced-credit baccalaureate proposals before the BHE
To: All Unit Email List <allunit@groups.umass.edu>

Dear colleagues,

The Board of Higher Education has posted the first reduced-credit baccalaureate proposals now moving through the approval process.

Merrimack College has proposed four **96-credit Applied Bachelor's Degrees** in **Psychology, Communications, Criminal Justice, and Business Administration**. **Suffolk University** has proposed a **94-credit Applied Bachelor's Degree** in **Healthcare Administration and Innovation**.

You can read the full proposals here:

1. Merrimack Full Text Proposals
2. Suffolk Full Text Proposal

These proposals will be heard at the **Friday, June 26 Board of Higher Education meeting**, scheduled from **10:00 am to 1:00 pm.** Written public comments are due by **Friday, June 19, at 5:00 pm.**

This is a critical moment. Reduced-credit baccalaureate degrees threaten to weaken the meaning of the bachelor's degree in Massachusetts and to create a two-tier system in which students under the greatest financial pressure are asked to accept the riskiest credential. These degrees may close doors to graduate school, professional programs, licensure pathways, and employment. They also narrow the broad liberal arts education students need to adapt across a lifetime of professional change, especially in an economy being reshaped by AI.

We have an opportunity — and a responsibility — to push back. Please take 1 or more of the following actions

1. Sign and send the Action Network alert

Please take **one minute** to sign/send the alert to policymakers: Action Network link

2. Submit written comments to the BHE (see attached "Instructions for submission of public comments")

Please submit public comments by email using the attached instructions. You must use your full name and address in the email as well as indicate the subject line "Merrimack or Suffolk Public Comment". The deadline for receipt of public comments is **Friday, June 19, at 5:00 pm**, but earlier is better. The Board needs to hear our concerns immediately and repeatedly, not only at the deadline.

After you **send your comments via email to PublicComment@dhe.mass.edu**, please let us know by *forwarding* your email to: no90bachelors@massteacher.org

3. Faculty in related fields: review the proposals closely

If you are a faculty member in departments connected to the five proposed programs, you are especially well positioned to identify subject-specific weaknesses. Please review the proposals and consider whether graduates with a 3-year 96-credit degree (e.g., in Psychology) would be prepared for graduate study, professional school, licensure, or employment in the relevant field.

Comments grounded in disciplinary expertise will be particularly powerful. If our own graduate programs would not admit applicants with one of these reduced-credit baccalaureate degrees, or would require additional coursework, that should be stated clearly. The same is true for concerns about licensing, accreditation, clinical preparation, internship expectations, or employment standards.

The Board needs to hear from faculty who can explain, concretely and credibly, what students may lose when the baccalaureate degree is compressed. Please submit public comments to: **PublicComment@dhe.mass.edu** by **June 19 at 5:00 pm** using the attached email instructions — and once you do, forward your comments to no90bachelors@massteacher.org so we can track the comments submitted.

We have a real chance to push back and make clear that reduced-credit baccalaureate degrees that close doors for students should not be approved in Massachusetts. **The Commonwealth should address affordability by expanding opportunity and investing in students — not by shrinking the education they receive.**

In solidarity.

No90 Action Group

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Massachusetts Society of Professors
The union representing faculty & librarians at UMass Amherst.

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Instructions for submission of public comments.docx
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