

As a Boston Globe subscriber, you enjoy exclusive benefits, including events, offers, and contests. Check out the latest now.

TEXT SIZE | MANAGE ACCOUNT | LOG OUT

The Boston Globe

NEWS ▶	METRO ▶
LOTTERY ▶	OBITUARIES ▶
GLOBE NORTH ▶	GLOBE SOUTH ▶
GLOBE WEST ▶	DATA DESK ▶
MAGAZINE ▶	INSIDERS ▶
TODAY'S PAPER ▶	

Report offers ways to curb predicted shortfall in degrees

Funding boost, refocusing urged

By **Matt Rocheleau**

| GLOBE CORRESPONDENT | OCTOBER 28, 2014



COMMENTS

To counter a projected shortage of graduates, colleges should intensify their focus on science, technology, engineering, and math programs, improve minority and low-income student success, and attract more adult learners and military veterans, Massachusetts education officials say.

In a report due out Tuesday, the state Department of Higher Education predicts that by 2025 public campuses will produce 55,000 to 65,000 fewer degrees than employers need.

“This report is intended as a wake-up call to the state,” said Richard Freeland, commissioner of higher education. “It is not tenable for Massachusetts to underfund public higher education as it has forever because we believe we can rely on

the great private universities we have. That's not going to be sustainable.”

It is the second study this month warning that the state is facing an eventual shortage of degree-holding workers. A key reason is that the generations entering high school and college now are smaller in numbers than their predecessors.

Overall undergraduate enrollment at Massachusetts' public colleges declined this fall by about 1 percent compared to a year ago, marking the first time enrollment has dropped in a decade and a trend state officials and other researchers expect will continue in coming years.

“A ‘perfect storm’ of factors — our economy's need for more college graduates, projected declines in the number of high school graduates, and the cumulative impact of historic underfunding of public higher education — threatens our ability to attract and retain knowledge-based industries that drive economic prosperity,” said the latest report, titled “Degrees of Urgency: Why Massachusetts Needs More College Graduates Now.”

The public higher education system is of particular focus because officials say it attracts a large number of the state's high school graduates and because public college graduates are more likely to remain in Massachusetts to work or continue their studies than graduates from the region's private colleges.

To take the steps recommended by the report, the higher education department is calling on legislators to increase funding for public campuses. A special higher education finance commission that lawmakers created this past year is expected to call for a \$475 million boost over the next five years, plus \$210 million over that span for a grant program that helps the state's neediest students pay for college.

Although the state made notable increases to higher education funding in each of the last two budget cycles, the level of support is still significantly down from the early 2000s and Massachusetts ranks as one of the worst states in the country at providing need-based aid.

Top higher education officials, policy makers, and business leaders are scheduled to discuss the report's findings and recommendations at a forum in Boston on Tuesday.

Natalie Higgins, executive director of the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts, a group of faculty, students, staff, and alumni, said she endorses the report's emphasis on increasing funding.

But she said there is concern about parts of the state higher education department's vision, including the call to tie funding for campuses to certain measurable aspects of their performance.

“What's being measured a lot times are the easy things to measure — graduation rates, completion rates — but

that can lose sight of a lot of other things that are important about a college education.”

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele)



As a Boston Globe subscriber, you enjoy exclusive benefits, including events, offers, and contests. Check out the latest now.

| [MANAGE ACCOUNT](#) | [LOG OUT](#)

The Boston Globe

NEWS	METRO
ARTS	BUSINESS
SPORTS	OPINION

Trending Articles

MOST VIEWED

MOST COMMENTED

MOST SHARED

1 Thomas M. Menino, Boston's longest serving mayor...

2 Brittany Maynard's dilemma: choosing the right ti...

3 High school scoreboard

4 Charlie Baker acknowledges he flubbed fisherman's...

5 Vote all you want. The secret government won't cha...

6 Why do people earn what they earn?

Learn more

7 Legal Sea Foods to close Prudential Center restaura...

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS](#) [EPAPER EDITION](#) [NEWS IN EDUCATION](#)

8 That letter to the future in golden lion time capsule...

[MY ACCOUNT](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[LOGOUT](#)

[HELP](#)

9 Yes on Question 3: Pull the plug on flawed casino law

[MY SAVED LIST](#)

[FAQS](#)

[MANAGE HOME DELIVERY](#)

[GLOBE NEWSROOM](#)

10 Baker says he may have gotten some details of fishe...

[ADVERTISE](#)

SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[TWITTER](#)

[GOOGLE+](#)

MORE

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

[TERMS OF PURCHASE](#)

[YOUR AD CHOICES](#)

[DIGITAL JOBS AT BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA](#)

[VIEW ALL JOBS AT BGM](#)

© 2014 BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA PARTNERS, LLC
