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**MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENDS
TEMPORARY IN-STATE TUITION RATE TO EVACUEES FROM PUERTO
RICO, AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) voted on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, to grant in-state tuition rates to evacuees from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been displaced by Hurricane Maria. With yesterday's vote, the state community colleges, state universities, and the University of Massachusetts campuses will offer in-state tuition rates immediately through spring semester 2018.

To qualify for in-state tuition rates, students must provide documentation of their displacement and meet all the admission and transfer requirements of a public higher education institution. Although students will still be required to pay fees and other education-related expenses, the savings differential, in-state versus out-of-state, can be significant.

For example, an evacuee enrolling at Bristol Community College for the spring semester, would pay tuition at an annual rate of \$4730 instead of an out-of-state rate of \$9674. While students will continue to remain eligible to participate in federal financial aid, they will not be immediately eligible for state financial assistance.

“Offering the opportunity of in-state tuition is in line with the important outreach that BCC has already begun with the Latino community” said BCC President Laura L. Douglas. “We will continue to collaborate with community leaders to best serve those tragically displaced by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico” added Dr. Douglas.

[The following quotes and information were included in a press release distributed by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education on Tuesday, December 12, found here:

<http://www.mass.edu/about/whatsnew.asp - maria>]

“Hurricane Maria left a devastating impact on the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, causing major disruptions for students and families who have relocated to Massachusetts,” Governor Baker said. “Our administration is working collaboratively to provide critical resources and opportunities for our fellow Americans from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands during this difficult time, and I am pleased the board approved this important opportunity to provide in-state tuition to make education more affordable for these students.”

“Granting in-state tuition rates to students relocating temporarily to Massachusetts because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria is an important part of what the Commonwealth is doing to help people from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands,” Education Secretary James Peyser said.

“While we expect the number of students who take advantage of the resident tuition rates to be modest, the Board’s vote today helps ensure that any student who wants to continue with his or her education here will find it easier to do so,” said Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos E. Santiago, who is a native of Puerto Rico. “Our goal is to make sure that no one’s college dreams are derailed by the roar of a hurricane.”

“I’m very proud of the Board for taking action today to assist student evacuees,” said Chris Gabrieli, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education. “This is a gesture that aligns with the Baker-Polito Administration’s plans to request financial assistance for local school districts that are receiving an influx of evacuees. We are helping those who have been uprooted from their communities and need support as they begin to recover from significant losses.”

In November, Governor Charlie Baker announced plans to request additional school funding to help local school districts pay for the education of children who have been evacuated. The number of evacuees fleeing the impact of Hurricane Maria has increased in recent weeks, and additional families are expected to arrive after the holidays.

This is not the first time Massachusetts extended relief and humanitarian aid to students and families impacted by federally declared disasters. Students displaced by Hurricane Katrina were offered in-state tuition waivers in 2005-2006. The BHE also approved a 2001 tuition waiver for spouses and dependents of victims of the September 11 attacks.

About Bristol Community College

Bristol Community College is a leading resource for education and workforce development in Southeastern Massachusetts. BCC has locations in Fall River, Attleboro, New Bedford, and Taunton, along with flexible online offerings that lead to an associate degree, a career-ready certificate, or the ability to seamlessly transfer to baccalaureate colleges throughout the state and country.

The College's Center for Workforce and Community Education provides customized training for businesses and the community including healthcare, workforce and sustainable initiatives, corporate services, and Kids College.

The BCC Foundation, a non-profit organization utilizing community donations and partnerships, supports the College's mission to meet the lifelong educational needs of the community. For more information, visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/aboutbcc/>.