



# MASSACHUSETTS HIGHTECHNOLOGYCOUNCIL

*Dedicated to Growth... Committed to Action*

**December 22, 2020**

## **As I See It: Chris Anderson, President**

On March 18, 2020, after consulting with our Executive Committee (**Udit Batra, Bob Reynolds, Aron Ain, Jane Steinmetz, Steve Pagliuca, Ed Mackey, and Bill Achtmeyer**), I shared the following comments in an early COVID-19 response email message to all MHTC Members:



***"Today, the COVID-19 health crisis and near certainty of a national recession in 2020 has altered some—but not all—of the immediate priorities of the High Tech Council. Our policy and program focus remains the same, but the game plan has shifted to a recovery focus."***

Throughout the year, Council leaders drove an action-oriented response that has generated more member and community engagement in Council-lead initiatives than in any prior year, as captured in our [2020 year-end Leadership in Action recap](#). My March email continued:

***"This will be a challenging time for many organizations. But for nearly 43 years, the High Tech Council has thrived due to the focus and effectiveness of the organization."***

Because of you, MHTC thrived again in a big way in an improbable year! I'll keep this brief: **Members of the Mass. High Technology Council are THE BEST!** Thanks to each of you who stepped up, shared guidance, helped colleagues think through and learn from various pandemic response strategies, and confirmed why so many leaders across Massachusetts respect and appreciate the "dedication to action" that the Council represents.

Below is a bit more detail on the journey we've been on together this year, and a look at what we will face together next year. **Mark Gallagher--known to you for leading our outstanding advocacy strategy and State House presence--and I are deeply grateful to each of you, and wish you all a blessed, healthy, and rejuvenating holiday season. Be not afraid!**

## **2020 Hindsight and a Vision for Recovery in 2021**

Before the pandemic hit in March, the Council was engaging with our members, policymakers and civic leaders to advance a multiyear agenda to extend the Commonwealth's robust economic expansion, support historic levels of funding for public investments in education and infrastructure, and leverage billion-dollar

state budget surpluses to repair long-lingering instabilities in the Commonwealth's underlying fiscal condition. Maintaining Massachusetts economic momentum while avoiding the "unforced errors" and self-inflicted harm of policy choices that would discourage job creation and investment were a primary objective.

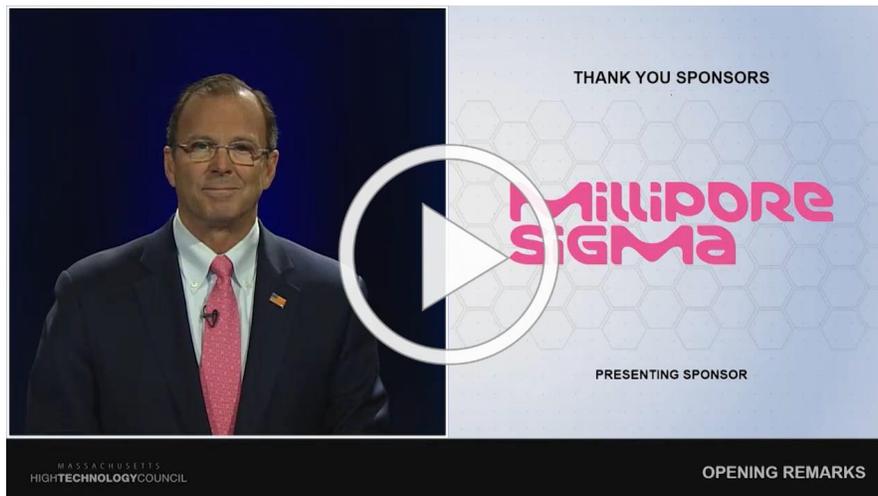
We warned in 2018 and 2019 that in the event of a recession, which seemed on the horizon, our fortunes would be reversed. Who knew it would be a pandemic to usher in just such a scenario. COVID-19 unleashed an unforgiving and unrelenting devastation on lives and livelihoods in ways no one could foresee, demanding the full attention of business and political leaders.

By April 2020, the pandemic had slammed the brakes on a state economy that was previously growing at one of the most robust rates in the nation. The Council, our members and leaders from across the Commonwealth pivoted quickly to support effective public health responses and help employers weather the early COVID-19 storm and position themselves and our economy for a sustained recovery in the future.

In May, the death of George Floyd exposed with new and painful clarity just how far our nation must go to fulfill its promise of offering equity and opportunity for people of all races. The society-shaking effects of Floyd's killing inspired-- indeed compelled-- each of us to reconsider our own roles in the enduring scourge of systemic racism and to act on our responsibility to embrace new, more urgent approaches to remedying it. A look back at 2020 makes clear that the work required of the Council leadership team over the past year was dominated by circumstances and events that we could never have foreseen as the year began. Forces beyond our control reminded us that oftentimes life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans.

We are proud of the way Council leaders responded to these rapid shifts and how they rallied to act in support of their colleagues, their organizations, our economy and our communities. One of the unexpected gifts of 2020 was the discovery and adoption of innovative approaches to effectively deliver value to Council members and contribute to our Commonwealth and its innovation ecosystem.

Though we lost the ability to gather in-person, we found new ways to convene, including at our first-ever virtual Annual Meeting produced by **MilliporeSigma**, where hundreds of attendees paused to recognize Council leaders and honor the Health Care Heroes battling COVID-19. We used new tools in new ways to deliver actionable information to our members and to engage and advocate on behalf of technology employers.



Looking ahead, we can be certain of one thing: 2021 will bring both new opportunities and new demands on how we demonstrate leadership in action. We look forward to continuing to work with each of you to leverage our shared dedication to growth and commitment to action as we find amplify our enduring mission to make Massachusetts the world's most attractive place in which to live and work, and in which to create, operate, and grow high technology businesses.

## COVID-19 Recovery and Return to the Workplace

Under the leadership of the Council's Executive Committee and Steve Pagliuca, the Council took on a unique role driving business community responses to COVID-19 in 2020. From the outset of the pandemic, the Council brought together subject matter experts and convened a series of 19 free-to-all [COVID-19 Recovery and Return to the Workplace Roundtables](#) to share data, information and insights to help Council members and public officials make the best decisions possible to ensure employee safety, advance public health strategies, and minimize economic damage.

Described as the "most meticulous roadmap for Massachusetts' economic comeback that state officials have seen so far" and characterized by Governor Baker as "must see work", the Council's [Recovery and Return to the Workplace Framework](#) became a key source for elected officials and employers to frame the conditions that support our resilient private sector and a sustained recovery for the MA economy.



Looking ahead to 2021, the Council is committed to continuing its leadership in response to COVID-19 as employers and public officials design and implement testing, vaccination and operational strategies that will allow a safe return to the workplace and support a sustained economic recovery.

A team of Council leaders will also begin to explore and pursue opportunities to make Massachusetts a national and global leader on pandemic preparation and planning, in ways that will leverage our region's intellectual capital and create opportunities for members of our innovation ecosystem to provide lifesaving and life changing solutions to the world.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative**

At our July 9 Annual Meeting, the Council announced the launch of a multiyear Diversity, Equity and Opportunity Initiative that will provide access to information, insights, and programming to translate "intent" into measurable "action" beginning in 2021.

In September, we conducted a month-long virtual roundtable series featuring Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officers and senior executives from 10 organizations to share data, experiences, and insights on effective actions to address racial equity challenges.



With the support of **Bain & Company** and the guidance of Bain leaders Rob Ruffin and Diane Ledingham, the DEO Initiative has already attracted an anchor team of more than 20 C-level and senior executive leaders and will launch a first-phase data collection exercise in January which will inform the DEO initiative's efforts to support employers' development of their organizational diversity ambitions and the advancement of inclusion and equity objectives across the Council's membership and throughout the innovation economy.

We appreciate the early (and growing) sponsorship of our 2021 program from the Council members including: **Onto Innovation, PTC, Creation Technologies, People's United Bank, Oasis Systems, and Monster, and Steve and Judy Pagliuca.**

### **Women in Leadership Initiative**

Notwithstanding the impacts of COVID-19, the Council's Women in Leadership Initiative (WIL) and 2020 Annual Sponsor **PTC**, expanded its reach and impact in inspiring ways in 2020.

More than 500 individuals participated in a series of quarterly WIL Initiative roundtable discussions focused on eliminating unconscious bias; managing career, community, and family; and creating an inclusive and supportive workplace. Dozens of Council members provided their subject matter expertise, thought leadership and organizational resources to host these events, which utilize peer-to-peer sharing of data, experiences and best demonstrated practices to help organizations and individuals take action to advance women leaders and make progress toward gender equity.

In addition, 165 individual leaders completed *Unlocking the Potential of Women*, an immersive 6-week digital course offered to Council members by longtime WIL Initiative knowledge partner **McKinsey & Company**. In December, the Council joined with **PTC, McKinsey and reachHIRE** to host our fifth annual year-end event focused on key data and findings from the yearly [\*Women in the Workplace\*](#) report from McKinsey and LeanIn.Org.

This year's event, *Women in the Workplace 2020: A Critical Crossroads*, drew more than 800 registrants and featured content from C-level leaders focused on effective employer responses to the emerging pressures the COVID-19 pandemic is putting on the careers and advancement opportunities of women leaders.



In 2021, the WIL Initiative will continue to leverage collaborations with Council members, external partners and thought leaders to support continued progress and identify opportunities to take action. With the leadership of Kathleen Mitford, Chief Strategy Officer of 2021 WIL Annual Sponsor **PTC** and a team of contributors, supporters and knowledge partners including: **Brooks, Onto Innovation, Bain Capital, McKinsey & Company, reachHIRE, The MITRE Corporation, and the Center for Women and Business at Bentley University**, the WIL Initiative is positioned for even greater impact in 2021.

### **Public Policy: Pro-growth Advocacy Agenda**

The economic impacts of COVID-19 captured nearly all the attention of lawmakers at the federal and state level in 2020. Reversing and recovering from its fiscal impacts will require years of collaborative leadership from elected officials and business leaders.

In Massachusetts, the availability of federal aid to states, a replenished state “rainy day” fund, and surprisingly resilient state revenue collections helped Massachusetts policymakers address multi-billion budget shortfalls in the current fiscal year. Lawmakers avoided making major tax policy decisions in 2020, consistent with the [Council’s advocacy and admonition](#) to move cautiously and await further clarity on federal aid.

Throughout 2020, the Council continued to work with our Board of Directors to shape and advance a multi-year strategy to enhance Massachusetts’ vibrant private sector, support a sustained recovery, and protect it from the demonstrable economic harm shown by high tax policies in states like Connecticut, New Jersey and Illinois.

In 2021, the Council will continue to prioritize the critically important objective of preserving Massachusetts’ highly progressive flat-rate income tax and we will lead efforts to ensure the graduated income “tax trap” proposal pending before the legislature is not approved.

We look forward to working with our members and like-minded leaders and organizations to educate policymakers and civic leaders that the best path forward for the Commonwealth lies not in a return to “Taxachusetts” but in adopting policies that will attract and welcome economic activity.

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## OUR MISSION

The Massachusetts High Technology Council, Inc. is an organization of CEOs and senior executives representing technology companies, professional services firms, and research institutions who are dedicated to creating and sustaining conditions that support investment, job growth and improved quality of life in Massachusetts. Our members are growth-oriented, knowledge-intensive employers and institutions that develop, deliver and depend on technology products, services and innovations to advance their organizational objectives—a definition which covers just about all

business enterprises in Massachusetts today.

Our mission is to help make Massachusetts the world's most attractive place in which to live and work, and in which to create, operate, and grow high technology businesses.

For more information [visit our website](#).

