

# Collegian

The Newsletter of The New England College Council

Fall 2012



## Colleges Moving Forward to Ensure Student Success **MWCC Expanding Dual Enrollment Opportunities**

### **President**

Dr. Lucille Jordan  
President  
Nashua Community College  
505 Amherst St.  
Nashua, NH 03063  
Tel: (603) 882-6923  
www.nashuacc.edu

### **Vice President**

Raymond DiPasquale  
President  
Community College of Rhode Island  
400 East Avenue  
Warwick, RI 02886  
Tel: (401) 825-1000  
www.ccri.edu

### **Treasurer**

Dr. Daniel M. Asquino  
President  
Mount Wachusett Community College  
444 Green St.  
Gardner, MA 01440  
www.mwcc.edu

### **Secretary**

Dr. Barbara Douglass  
President  
Northwestern Connecticut  
Community College  
Park Place East  
Winsted, CT 06098  
www.nwcc.commnet.edu

### **Executive Director**

Robert Ross  
(617) 426-1920

The Collegian edited by Robert Ross  
The Collegian newsletter design by Dana  
Armstrong  
The Collegian is available online at:  
www.newenglandcollegecouncil.org

Mount Wachusett Community College has been awarded a prestigious grant from The American Psychology Foundation to support a new dual enrollment program for North Central Massachusetts high school students interested in careers in the field of psychology. In addition, the college received a new grant from the Winchendon-based Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation to provide a one-year, full-time dual enrollment program that will allow up to 20 Winchendon students to simultaneously earn an academic certificate and their high school diploma.

The goal of the Careers in Psychology project is to provide exposure for underrepresented, gifted high school students to the field of psychology and the range of career options it offers. Building on the college's existing Introduction to Psychology class, MWCC will recruit 60 additional high school students from throughout North Central Massachusetts to a second offering of the course as well as a higher-level course, Human Growth and Development.

Both courses will be redesigned to include a career component which illustrates the breadth of potential career choices available to those who major in psychology. The courses will incorporate a speakers' series made up of professionals working in counseling, forensic psychology, addiction counseling, executive coaching, sports psychology, elder care human services, management, and other areas, all of whom began with degrees in psychology. The courses will also incorporate field trips to mental health facilities, giving students exposure to the operation and services of the facilities, as well as other career resources that will be integrated into the curriculum.

The Introduction to Psychology course has consistently had a high level of interest, resulting in a larger number of qualified students than available seats. Funding from the APF will allow the college to triple the number of college-level psychology courses to accommodate high school students who want to get a jump start on their academic studies.

The Careers in Psychology program will be led by Director of Dual Enrollment Veronica Guay. Dr. Ruth Slotnick, Director of Articulation and Learning Assessment, will provide oversight for evaluation of the program outcomes, and instructor Stephen Dubzinski will teach the courses.

In the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation Career Tech Scholarship program, six Murdock High School seniors are enrolled at MWCC full-time this year to simultaneously earn their high school diploma and an academic certificate from

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MWCC. By the time the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation Scholars graduate in spring 2013, they will have earned academic credentials to enter the workforce and will have completed the first year toward an associate or bachelor's degree.

Through this generous donation, the students are provided with scholarship funds to begin a trade or technical program in the automotive technology, allied health, information technology support or accounting certificate programs. The foundation awarded \$29,600 for the current academic year to the MWCC Foundation to support the new program and cover full tuition and fees. The cost of textbooks is being covered through the MWCC Foundation's David Jacques Memorial Book Fund.

The scholarship program provides the students with an opportunity to learn a trade that will allow them to enter the labor force once they finish high school or soon after and earn a higher wage than they would with only a high school diploma. At the end of the first year, the program will be reviewed for possible grant renewal to support seven additional students in the 2013-2014 academic year, and seven additional students in the 2014-2015 academic year, for a total of 20 seniors over a three-year period.

"We are most grateful to the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation for their generous support of this new initiative to benefit Murdock High School students," said MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino. "Through innovative partnerships such as this, we not only help students achieve their goal of obtaining a college education without accruing tremendous loan debt, but we ultimately support the economic development of the region by preparing young people with skills they can directly apply in the workforce."

MWCC's Division of Access & Transition has been preparing North Central Massachusetts students in grades K-12 for college for more than two decades. The division oversees 20 K-12 programs that serve more than 3,500 students in the region.

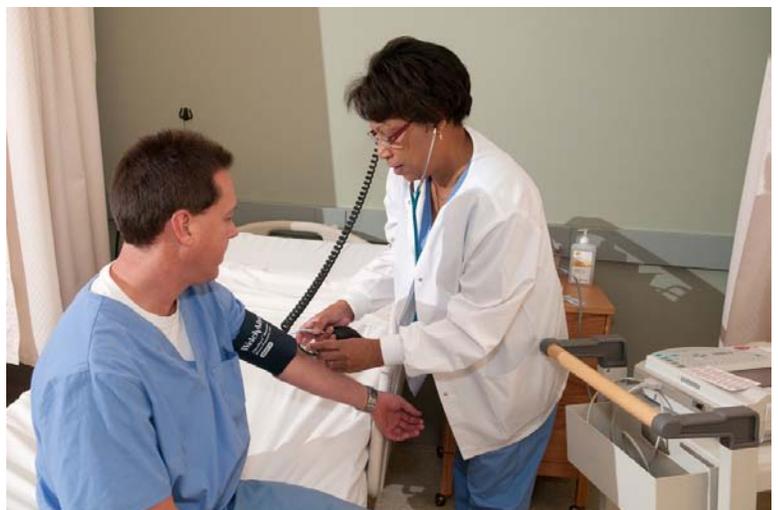
***"Through innovative partnerships such as this, we not only help students achieve their goal of obtaining a college education without accruing tremendous loan debt, but we ultimately support the economic development of the region by preparing young people with skills they can directly apply in the workforce."***

## NECC Announces New Medical Lab Tech Degree

After collaborating with area health care employers, Northern Essex Community College is now offering an Associate of Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Technology for the first time this fall through iHealth@NECC.

Designed especially for adults, the program combines online courses with traditional classroom courses. As a result, students only need to be on campus two days a week.

"We're looking for adults who are interested in a career in health care," said Linda Comeau of iHealth. "The demand for skilled technologists in hospital and other clinical labs in the Merrimack Valley is strong so our graduates will be well-prepared for the job market."



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Medical laboratory technicians perform and report laboratory testing and work in hospitals, physician's offices, and clinical laboratories.

"Building and delivering programs that meet community and student needs is what we are about at NECC," says NECC Vice President of Academic Affairs Bill Heineman.

For more information, visit the program website at <http://www2.necc.mass.edu/ihealth/programs/medical-laboratory-tech/>.

The medical laboratory program was recently approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

# Acceleration & Contextualized Math: Key Factors in Developmental Math Reform at Bunker Hill Community College

Bunker Hill Community College has successfully reformed its developmental mathematics education program. The guiding principle of this reform has been "the completion agenda" of increasing the students' retention and success rates consistently while addressing students' Habits of Mind.

The research, design, and implementation of the new program directly resulted from strong collaboration between the faculty, staff, and administrators while being entirely faculty-driven. Both full-time and part-time faculty designed pathways that increase completion rates, instituted an acceleration policy, and designed effective learning environments through targeted classroom interventions. Elements critical to the reform were an acceleration option, contextualization, a student-centered teaching approach using project-based and service learning, reflective writing, and technology like ePortfolios.

### *Why the change?*

From fall 2008 to spring 2012, Bunker Hill offered a 3-course sequence for developmental mathematics. Data analysis by the College's Institutional Effectiveness and Research team found that in the 2010-2011 academic year, amongst students placing into the first developmental level course, only 23% completed College Algebra for STEM, 51% completed College Algebra, and 58% completed Statistics. With only 50% of students placing into the first level of the sequence passing the course on their first attempt combined with the seven possible points of exit, student success rates were unsatisfactory.

### *Acceleration*

Significant success in two models of acceleration, where students could complete the first two levels in one semester, piloted from 2008 to 2012, showed evidence of student success rates at over 75%. The Institutional Effectiveness team compiled two main indicators to compare the pilot accelerated courses to stand-alone regular sequence courses: course success rates (grade of C or better) and retention rates from the initial developmental course through the college-level math sequence. The data



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gathered provided overwhelming evidence that students were more successful on both indicators in the accelerated pilots. The pilot courses reduced exit opportunities for students improving retention within the sequence, allowing students to advance to college level courses at a greater rate. Summarized and presented to the math department in 2011, these indicators allowed for data-driven decision-making. Additionally, extensive research of current best practices across the nation further informed the reform.

The new developmental math program constitutes a 2-course pathway for non-STEM degrees and a 3-course pathway for STEM-degrees, much in line with the Carnegie Foundation's Statway™ and Quantway™ models.

### *Contextualized Math*

#### *An example in Foundations of Algebra*

Each course in the new sequence engages students in completing a common group project that was designed by full- and part-time faculty collaboratively over summer 2012. In Foundations of Algebra, the project recognizes the impact of energy consumption on the College's carbon footprint and drives students to consider their own carbon footprint as well as that of the entire Bunker Hill community. It promotes environmental awareness while integrating mathematical content where students create, use, and interpret linear models to track and predict carbon emissions of future years. Based on these predicted emissions, students are asked to reflect on their lifestyle as well as that of the Bunker Hill community driving students' creativity on how to incorporate sustainability into their everyday lives.

Bunker Hill is one of the original signatories of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), a national environmental pledge that directly aligns with the College's sustainability goals developed by the Office of Sustainability. This project has facilitated the engagement of approximately 3000 students in the process of carbon emission calculation. The data collected by students for the project will ultimately inform annual reports for the ACUPCC and will be accessible to all other 650+ signatory colleges as well as the general public. This large-scale integration of sustainability within developmental mathematics courses is the only known program of its kind amongst ACUPCC signatory community colleges located in Massachusetts or in the entire northeast region.



In addition to providing important real-world application of sustainability best practices, students are also introduced to a variety of resources such as green building tours, the student-led Sustainability Club, green car parking permits and access to the College's building dashboard that illustrates live energy usage. This unique collaboration between faculty and staff has resulted in a dynamic learning experience designed to increase student retention.

### *Highlights of the new program*

- **Offers an Acceleration Option**

Students are further motivated to excel in the courses by the possibility of completing two courses in one semester.

- **Shifts pedagogy in content delivery**

Emphasis on contextualized problem solving and project-based learning that integrates service learning and e-Portfolios to showcase student work increases focus on student engagement and community building in order to shift non-college ready students' dispositions and habits of mind. Technology such as MyMathLab provides skills development, the weekly activity hour stresses time-on-task, and the Learning Community First-Year Seminar option linked with a developmental math course supports student success.

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- **Streamlines students based on their degree or concentration**

Pathways for STEM and non-STEM degree students shortened the path for 89% of students who pursue non-STEM degrees and strengthens Algebra skills for STEM majors.

- **Supports students' college-readiness**

Targeted advising, tutoring, and student services to include deeper faculty involvement, free bootcamps and summer bridge programs for incoming and current students, and a free online Accuplacer review for improved placement results ensure students transitioned smoothly to the new sequence. The Accuplacer placement scores were realigned to begin with the Algebra test followed by the Arithmetic or College Math Test based on student performance.

- **Individualizes student learning and standardizes faculty practice**

According to the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), “currently in higher education, both on campus and online, we individualize faculty practice (that is, we allow individual faculty members great latitude in course development and delivery) and standardize the student learning experience (that is, we treat all students in a course as if their learning needs, interests, and abilities were the same). Instead, we need to do just the opposite: individualize student learning and standardize faculty practice.

Guided by this recommendation, working groups composed of full-time and part-time math faculty and staff developed common syllabi, common MyMathLab coordinator courses, common service-learning oriented projects, and common assessment tools with rubric. Extensive collaboration amongst the working groups helped align expectations of the courses for uniformity and cohesiveness. Additionally, a series of professional developmental workshops were, and continue to be, provided throughout the semester to involve all math instructors in the shift.

## Norwalk Community College Hospital Simulation Unit Promotes Student Success

In a college nursing program, student success isn't just a matter of pride, it can mean the difference between life and death. That's why Norwalk Community College is so proud of its new Center for Science, Health and Wellness. The \$38 million LEED Gold-certified facility features a hospital simulation unit with patient mannequins called Sim-Men.

These high-tech teaching tools can breathe, talk and tell you where it hurts. Costing up to \$100,000 each, Sim-Men are programmed to display realistic symptoms and teach students a variety of patient care scenarios in a risk-free setting.

Sim-Men have heartbeats, make lung and abdominal sounds, and can even perspire or turn blue. Interchangeable body parts are added to simulate wounds and burns. NCC's Sim-Men (and women) include eight adults, a child and an infant.

“The faculty or lab staff create patient care scenarios that we want the mannequins to perform,” said Mary Ann Tessier, Nursing Department chair. “You can have a patient go into shock, say ‘I don't feel well’ or ‘I have chest pains.’ We can make their blood pressure go up and down, or their heartbeat irregular.”

Simulation learning is the latest innovation in healthcare education. “The advantage of using simulation in nursing education is that students can practice, make mistakes or do things extremely well in a controlled setting,” Tessier said. “This allows for feedback and retraining.”

Students are less anxious practicing blood draws or wound care on a mannequin than a real person because if they make a mistake, there's no harm done.

And simulation learning makes it possible for students to observe rare or life-threatening scenarios they might not see in clinical rotations, such as trauma or organ failure.

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The NCC hospital simulation unit is used by students in the nursing, medical assistant, medical office management, physical therapist assistant, respiratory care and non-credit certificate programs. It features a unique suite of hospital rooms that were designed to resemble patient rooms at area hospitals.

NCC faculty worked with Greenwich, Stamford and Norwalk Hospitals to set up hospital rooms that mimic what the students will see in these hospitals, down to the room layout and equipment.

“The hospitals were extremely helpful in the planning,” Tessier notes.

Long before students begin their hospital rotations, they already know how to operate each institution’s beds, intravenous pumps, wall consoles and blood pressure cuffs, and where to find the outlets for oxygen and suction.

NCC’s first-year students use Sim-Men scenarios to make a “head to toe” assessment of an adult patient. During the maternity rotation, they complete a simulation assessment of an infant mannequin by checking its muscle tone, skin color, heartbeats and respirations.

Second-year students learn how to dispense a variety of medications to multiple patients with technology similar to the computerized dispensing system used in area hospitals. When students administer a medication to the patient mannequin, they scan its I.D. band and bar-coded medication packet.



Norwalk Community College nursing students practice a patient care scenario on a Sim-Men mannequin.

“The mannequin can sense if an incorrect medication has been given and responds with symptoms related to the incorrect medication,” Tessier said. “This can have a significant impact on student learning.”

Second-year students also participate in emergency scenarios where patients experience multi-organ failure from heart failure or trauma.

The hospital simulation unit features a computerized electronic medical records system, the latest in patient file management. Students learn how to use this cutting-edge technology to access doctor’s orders, record patient care notes, and transmit files electronically.

NCC shares this amazing technology with the community. Physicians from a local hospital bring their staffs to the hospital simulation unit to practice trauma procedures on the Sim-Men. The mannequins are programmed to simulate unusual or life-threatening scenarios that emergency room workers may seldom encounter.

## The Hartness Library – Providing Tools for Teaching

By Eileen Gatti, Assistant Director of the Hartness Library, Community College of Vermont

As the cost of textbooks skyrockets, many faculty members are re-designing their courses to become textbook-free. One way to do this is to take advantage of the wealth of materials available from your college library. These resources are already paid for, and cost nothing for students to use. Links to database articles and eBooks can be added to course management systems, to make it even easier for students to access. Faculty can also provide students with citations so they can practice their library search skills. Open Education Resources (OER) comprise another large and growing pool of course materials that are available for the taking. The challenge is figuring out where to begin.

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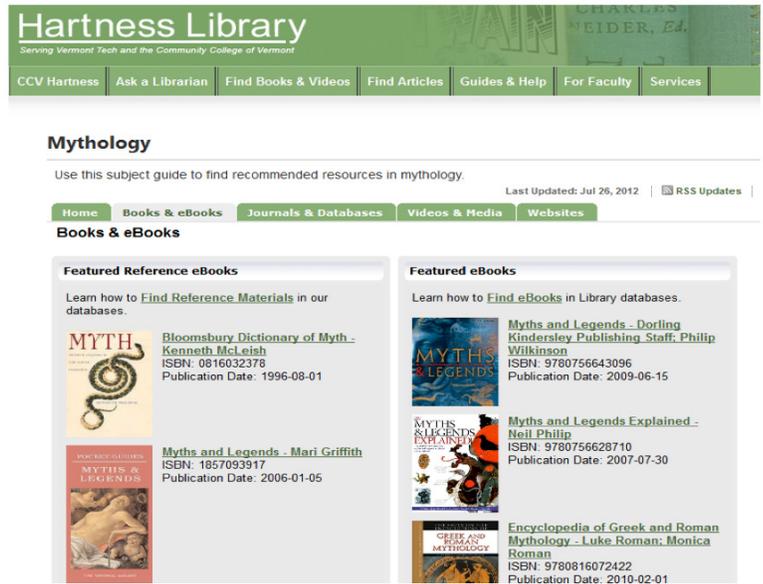
The Hartness Library, serving both the Community College of Vermont and Vermont Tech, has created Subject Guides especially with faculty in mind. With over 45,000 books, over 16,000 eBooks, and 30,000 journals in over 50 databases, it can be difficult to know where to begin without some sort of road map. Using LibGuides by Springshare, a tool that is familiar to many librarians, we've created Subject Guides in all the major program areas we support at the colleges. We are gradually adding more guides to correspond with popular course areas like Psychology and Mythology.

College instructors struggling to get students to use appropriate sources for their research papers often find it helpful to build library use into their regular class routine. Assigning students to read materials from the library helps teach information literacy and critical thinking skills. It reinforces an approach that values quality scholarship over common web surfing. For instance, why have students start exploring their Psychology topic in Wikipedia when you can assign them to use the Encyclopedia of Human Behavior online instead?

Subject Guides are not a new concept, of course. Over the decades, libraries have tried to provide some sort of subject discipline guidance to users. You may remember the print "pathfinders" that helped you navigate the library when you began to study in a new field. They clued you in to the key subject encyclopedias and other reference books that allowed you to get an overview of the discipline, as well as guiding you to the right indexes and abstracts and top journals in your field. The pathfinder was a great starting point, and usually gave you a place to stand as you dug deeper into your research topic.

Libraries are helping their users navigate the electronic seas as well, and are doing it in ever more dynamic ways.

The Hartness Library's Subject Guides include recommended websites and links to openly-accessible media. Academic libraries are increasingly involved in helping their communities take advantage of Open Educational Resources. The Hartness Library's new OER Guide is another great tool that we have just rolled out for our faculty. It is designed to work hand-in hand with our Subject Guides to steer faculty toward free course materials, lectures, electronic journals, videos, audio clips, images and more. The Hartness Library is a great place to turn for faculty who want to take the plunge into textbook-free (or nearly textbook-free) teaching.



Sample Subject Guide on the Hartness Library website.



Guide to Open Educational Resources (OER).

## Student Leaders Take the “Leap” at NHTI, Concord’s Community College

The purpose of college is to educate students as future members of society. As part of this education, it is understood that leaders will emerge to fulfill roles necessary to advance the quality of life for their neighbors. Community colleges may best be positioned to understand the importance of leadership responsibilities given their deep connection to the life of the community. In response to the need for leaders, NHTI, Concord’s community College has embraced a student leadership program which has evolved into an elite group of community ambassadors. Over the course of the past seven years, student leaders have been selected to participate in leadership training in the form of retreats, workshops, institutes, mentoring, and a variety of other opportunities.



These student leaders receive constant training and immediately give back by offering campus tours to potential students, speaking to high school groups, orienting new students, leading student organizations, guiding teammates on the athletic surface, tutoring their peers in the Learning Center, and residing in the halls as resident assistants. Although on paper this process appears seamless, there were certainly growing pains throughout the development of the program. One of the largest obstacles, as is common at many community colleges, is finding a common time for student leaders to receive training. Many NHTI students have constraints on their time from spending hours with their studies, families, jobs, and social lives, to the variety of Student Life initiatives in which they commit.

Enter Leap 101. Leap 101 is a zero-credit course designed specifically for identified student leaders. This program was created to allow student leaders to build leadership education into their schedule, allow participation in formal training to be visible on their transcripts, and to create a consistent forum for leaders to connect. Leap 101 is a bi-weekly program intended for returning student leaders with at least a 2.5 grade point average. Additional criteria includes the interest in being involved in the life of the campus and a nomination from a campus faculty or staff member.

The Leap 101 curriculum and model as a whole is a new initiative stemming from the student leadership program’s advisory team. With generous financial support from the Student Senate, the team has established a series of workshops open to all students interested in leadership training entitled “The Leadership Lecture Series”. It is from this open series that students are observed and selected as emerging leaders to be nominated for the Leap 101 course. The pilot version of the bi-weekly seminar went extremely well during the spring 2012 semester and there are currently twenty-two elite student leaders enrolled in the fall 2012 section.



Leap 101 and NHTI’s student leadership program as a whole are currently the focus of a research study which will offer additional direction. There is presently an assessment of anticipated outcomes along with participant interviews being analyzed to enhance the leadership program for the future. At NHTI, the campus takes the tagline of allowing students to “Start here...Go anywhere” very seriously. It is the belief that having better quality student leaders helps to facilitate the life of the campus and will allow students to experience the feeling of being an effective leader in society.

## Haverhill High School Students Jumpstart College

This fall, 19 Haverhill High School students began their sophomore year of high school and their first year of college.

These students were selected for an Early College Program which the high school is offering in partnership with Northern Essex Community College. The goal of this program is to raise college readiness skills and college completion rates.

Designed for students in the middle of the class academically, the program will feature three college courses—US History 1, American Literature 1, and College Success Seminar—which will be team taught at the high school during the regular school day by faculty from Northern Essex and a high school teacher.

The hope is that students who participate in the program will graduate from high school better prepared for college and will be more likely to attend college and graduate on time.

“We’re targeting students in the middle-of-the-pack academically,” says Sue Grolnic, Northern Essex’s dean of humanities and social sciences. “We looked for students who had the aptitude to succeed but hadn’t yet proven themselves academically. We want to raise the bar and help them realize that college is in their future.”

“The Early College program is a great opportunity for our students as it gives them a boost of confidence to reach their fullest academic potential,” says Jacquie Vlahos Haverhill High’s Early College Coordinator. “The design and mission of the program ensures a team-based approach to teaching a rigorous, college level curriculum that challenges and encourages students to want to learn, work together, and have fun.”

The history and literature courses will satisfy the American Studies component that all high school sophomores are required to take and the College Success course will focus on how to study, how to be a self-directed student, and how to read and write at the college level.

Students in the program will continue to take courses for college credit throughout high school and will graduate with up to 48 college credits. This translates to a full year and a half of college.

“While we hope that Early College Program students will consider attending Northern Essex, the reality is that those credits they earned while in high school will transfer to other colleges and universities as well,” said Grolnic.

Haverhill’s Early College Program is modeled after a successful program which was launched at Amesbury High School in the fall of 2009.

For more information on the Haverhill High School/Northern Essex Community College Early College Program, contact Sue Grolnic at 978 556-3893 or [sgrolnic@necc.mass.edu](mailto:sgrolnic@necc.mass.edu).



These two Amesbury High School graduates were in the first group to complete the Early College Program, a partnership between the high school and NECC. Haverhill High School is now offering the Early College Program to their students.

## Recognizing and Supporting College Excellence

# Governor Patrick Announces \$37.9 Million Investment in MWCC for New Science and Technology Building

In October, Gov. Deval Patrick visited Mount Wachusett Community College to announce \$37.9 million in capital funds for the college's new science and technology building, furthering the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to building an affordable, world-class system of public higher education in Massachusetts. MWCC will use the funds to modernize the Haley Academic Center and construct a new science and technology wing.

"These funds will help the students and faculty seize the opportunities before them," said the governor, who was joined by Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville, MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino, State Senator Stephen Brewer, chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means Committee, State Senator Jennifer Flanagan, vice chair of the committee, and Student Trustee Christine Eck, in announcing the funding to the college community.

"This is historical in the sense of the development of Mount Wachusett Community College and our students," President Asquino said.

Funding for the design phase of the expansion and renovation was approved in February, and is now underway. The project is envisioned as a 39,000-square-foot addition on the Gardner campus for new laboratories, specialized space, and general classrooms, the replacement of the existing greenhouse and critical infrastructure upgrades and accessibility improvements to the Haley Building. Following the design and study phase, the construction project will be one of the largest in North Central Massachusetts.

Students enrolled in MWCC's Natural Resources and Energy Management programs, the health sciences and other programs requiring science courses, would be among the beneficiaries of this new state-of-the-art wing. Community colleges across the state are receiving a total of \$298 million over five years through the Patrick-Murray Administration's Capital Plan.



Mount Wachusett Community College president Daniel M. Asquino and Gov. Deval Patrick following an announcement of \$37.9 million in capital funds for the college's new science and technology building.

## MWCC Named a Top Military-Friendly College

GARDNER – Mount Wachusett Community College has been listed as a top military-friendly college by two organizations, including a new report that ranked MWCC No. 1 in a review of best career and technical colleges for veterans.

Public community and technical colleges accounted for six of the top 10 spots in a new survey of best skills schools for veterans by Military Times Edge, with MWCC taking the top spot among career and technical colleges. MWCC is being showcased on the Military Times and Military Times Edge websites and affiliated Gannett Company publications, including the newsweeklies Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times and the Marine Corps Times.

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In addition, for the third consecutive year, MWCC has been named a Military Friendly School by Victory Media, publisher of G.I. Jobs and other magazines. The 2013 list of Military Friendly Schools honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that demonstrate outstanding services for student veterans. The 2013 list was compiled through research and a data-driven survey of more than 12,000 VA-approved schools nationwide.

“Mount Wachusett Community College has a long history of serving veterans, and we’re delighted to be recognized for our commitment to those who courageously serve our country,” said President Daniel M. Asquino. “Most recently, we have enhanced our services through our new Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success, which is helping veteran students and their dependents transition to college life and receive ongoing support.”

The center, established in January 2011, and other services for student veterans have helped MWCC create a culture of positive energy and enthusiasm for its military students. Established through a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the center is among the first 15 in the county selected to serve as national models and has become a staple in the lives of student veterans at MWCC. Support services address the unique academic, financial, social and physical needs to veterans transitioning to college life.

MWCC is also a designated Yellow Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. In addition, the college developed a First year Experience course designed specifically for veterans and many of the students are active in the veterans club on campus, which is affiliated with Student Veterans of America.

## 90 Leaders gather at Nashua Community College for 2012 Best Practices Conference

The 2012 Associate Degree-Granting Institutions Best Practices Conference took place on October 19 at Nashua Community College. This year’s theme, Opportunities to Drive Student Success drew a highly competitive set of presentation proposals from which 15 were selected, representing five New England states.

Jane Oates, Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor delivered the conference keynote address. Ms. Oates is well known to New Englanders from her years of service as a senior policy advisor to Edward Kennedy and her background and interest in education. As Assistant Secretary, Ms. Oates has overseen significant investment in the region’s community colleges. Currently Rhode Island’s Pathway to Advance Career Education, New Hampshire’s Advanced Manufacturing Partnership and Massachusetts’ Workforce Development Transition Agenda are working to increase the connections between the needs of regional employers and the training needs of the workforce. She passionately endorsed the efforts of New England to embrace the employment challenges through creative innovation and collaboration.

“Giving young people the opportunity to gain the skills that they need to enter and be successful in the workplace is critical for their future and the future of the nation.”

Peer led presentations highlighted efforts at New England Colleges to assure student persistence and success.

The conference was topped off by a panel conversation on the challenges and opportunities stimulated by the current level of attention being paid by government and business on the two-year college. The panel included Cathryn Addy (President of Tunxis) representing Connecticut, Ellen Kennedy (President of Berkshire) representing Massachusetts, Lucille Jordan (President of Nashua) representing New Hampshire, and Ray DiPasquale (President of CCRI and Commissioner of Higher Education) representing Rhode Island. They addressed the changing landscape of higher education as regards developmental education and institutional autonomy and institutional accountability. Each discussed the topic from the vantage of their state environment and the impact on students and faculty.

The Best Practices conference is a signature event co sponsored by the New England College Council and the New England Regional Office of the College Board.

## Manchester Community College Has Been Named One of the Top Work Places of 2012

Manchester, CT (October 4, 2012)...Manchester Community College is pleased to announce that it has been selected as one of The Hearst Media Groups and Hartford Courant/Fox CT Top Workplaces. MCC was selected from among 649 Connecticut companies who were invited to participate in this year's competition and came in third place among large companies.



Top Workplaces recipients are determined solely on employee feedback. The survey is conducted by WorkplaceDynamics, LLP, a leading research firm on organizational health and employee engagement. WorkplaceDynamics conducts regional Top Workplaces programs with more than 30 major publishing partners and recognizes a National list of Top Workplaces. Over the past year, more than 4,500 organizations and 1 in every 100 employees in the U.S. have turned to WorkplaceDynamics to better understand what's on the minds of their employees.

The Hearst Media Group published the complete list of winners on Sunday, September 19 while The Hartford Courant and Fox CT Connecticut published the complete list of Top Workplaces on Sunday, September 23. For more information about the Top Workplaces lists and WorkplaceDynamics, please visit [www.topworkplaces.com](http://www.topworkplaces.com) and [www.workplacedynamics.com](http://www.workplacedynamics.com).

Students of any age who possess the desire to pursue higher education are welcome at Manchester Community College. MCC is proud of its academic excellence, new facilities, flexible schedules, small classes, low tuition and faculty with both academic and "real world" credentials. The college offers over 60 programs, transfer options, financial aid and scholarships, as well as access to baccalaureate degrees through guaranteed admissions programs with several universities. MCC is situated on a park-like campus and is easily accessible from I-84.

## NECC Partners with Tufts on Summer Internship Program

Steve Brown of Andover, who recently graduated from Northern Essex Community College with high honors and an associate degree in liberal arts, is spending his summer at Tufts University doing research full-time on the European wool-carder bee.

Brown is working under the tutelage of Tufts University Biology Professor Philip Starks with whom he shares much in common. The two have the same birthday, although not the same year; grew up in Andover; and are graduates of Northern Essex Community College.

After graduating from Northern Essex in 1991, Starks went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Harvard, and his Ph.D. from Cornell. As a behavioral ecologist, he conducts research focusing on the adaptive significance of animal behavior.

Starks is particularly impressed with Brown, and points out that Steve had big shoes to fill. "We've run this program for 9 years now, and I've been the director the last 6. Steve is the 7th Northern Essex student to spend the summer researching with us. All have thrived in this environment, and Steve has done exceptionally well."

Brown is assisting Starks with research on the European wool-carder bee and its interaction with local plants. Brown explains how plants, for example, can emit toxic chemicals when under attack by insects. Their team is studying how this particular bee responds to chemical emissions.

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Calling the research “fascinating”, Brown says that it’s especially exciting because little is known about the European wool-carder bee.

Brown’s summer internship combines two of his passions: research and connecting with the natural environment. He will be back at Northern Essex in the fall to take additional classes but, after that, he plans to transfer to a four-year college or university and then, once he has his bachelor’s degree, travel around the world conducting research.

“I’m really hoping to work as a research scientist conducting field studies with a focus on conservation,” he says. “There’s a lot that needs to be done to promote environmental protection, and developing a deeper understanding of our environment is a crucial first step.”

In the science field, Northern Essex offers an associate degree in lab science and associate degrees in liberal arts with a biology or physical science concentration. For more information, contact enrollment services at [admissions@necc.mass.edu](mailto:admissions@necc.mass.edu) or 978 556-3700.



## State Grant Funds New Student Learning Initiative

Within two years, new students enrolled in all Northern Essex Community College associate degree programs will be required to complete at least one intensive course in each of six academic skill areas thanks to a \$146,744 grant awarded to NECC from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Performance Incentive Fund (PIF).

This PIF grant will fund a new Core Academic Skills Initiative. Under this new initiative, every student who is enrolled in an NECC associate degree program will have to complete at least one course designed to be intensive in written communication, oral communication, global awareness, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, or science and technology. The college’s faculty, in



consultation with employers and four-year universities, has determined that these skills are vital for students to be successful in their further education, in their professions, and in their role as citizens.

A total of \$4 million was distributed to Massachusetts community colleges to reward high performance and to continue support for increased skill training and workforce alignment and improved student learning outcomes and efficiency measures.

“We are thrilled that the state has made this commitment to and investment in the community colleges,” said NECC President Lane Glenn.

NECC faculty have already earned intensive designation for almost 100 courses. For instance, the Business Department’s Introduction to Entrepreneurship course is intensive in writing. This means it meets specific criteria aimed at developing learning outcomes related to writing, including creating a thesis, finding and using evidence to support it, and documenting

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that evidence. Over the next year, the PIF resources will help faculty create more courses intensive in the Core Academic Skills through coaching, professional development, and stipends.

These community college grants awarded through the PIF deliver on Gov. Patrick's pledge to invest in the state's community college system. The additional resources will allow campuses to promote higher completion rates of degrees and certificates, be more responsive to the needs of local economies as well as of the state's fastest growing sectors and adopt a system-wide standard core of course offerings.

"These grants will support our efforts to connect more of our students to meaningful work and will help provide more of those students with the educational and skill-building opportunities they will need to succeed in our knowledge-based economy," said Education Secretary Paul Reville.

**"We are thrilled that the state has made this commitment to and investment in the community colleges"**

## New England College Council Annual Scholarship Awards

The Annual Scholarship program of the New England College Council awarded three \$750 scholarships to deserving students enrolled at member colleges this Fall. The scholarship program is unique in that it supports students as they continue their studies at a member college. Over the past several years interest in the scholarship has grown and this past year's competition drew over 50 student applicants.

Although the program is interested in recognizing high performance it also weighs community and college service along with the support of faculty and college staff who write important references in evaluating the students.

With many deserving students the Scholar Selection Committee composed of college Presidents have their work cut out for them. This year three students rose to the top of the evaluator's lists.

Three women scholars distinguished themselves in academic performance, service and with by preparing outstanding applications. This years scholars included Karla Bermudez who attends Pine Manor College, Natalie DeJesus who attends Northern Essex Community College and Tammy Jones who attends Kennebec Valley Community College.