

Baker-Polito Administration Delivers \$1.2 Million in Campus Grants to Drive New College Access, Affordability, Digital Learning Initiatives

Contact: Katy Abel

MA Department of Higher Education

(617) 994-6932 office (617) 429-2026 cell

Email: kabel@bhe.mass.edu<<mailto:kabel@bhe.mass.edu>>

Boston, MA - December 11, 2017 - The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$1.2 million today in grants to sixteen Massachusetts public colleges and universities to make college more affordable and accessible through enhanced digital learning opportunities.

Performance Incentive Fund (PIF) grants are issued by the Department of Higher Education and seek to incentivize the state's higher education institutions to produce cost savings for students through collaboration across the campuses. Since 2012, the fund has awarded more than \$25 million in grants.

"Performance Incentive grants allow our state colleges and universities to explore new digital innovations in teaching and learning to make higher education more affordable and accessible for students across the Commonwealth," **said Governor Baker**. "Massachusetts is poised to be a leader in online learning, and we are pleased these grants will help our public higher education institutions achieve that goal."

Last month, Governor Baker announced he will establish a new [Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning](#) to develop recommendations that will lead to more online learning opportunities for Massachusetts residents to obtain education and skills for in-demand fields.

"New approaches are needed to expand higher education opportunities for all Massachusetts residents, particularly for those who need flexibility and are not able to take traditional classes on a college campus," **Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said**. "Incentivizing grants like these will help ensure the Commonwealth's higher education institutions can provide services that meet the demands of today's students."

The Department of Higher Education strives to improve college access, affordability and completion of degrees and certificates.

"These grants are part of the Department of Higher Education's strategic focus on increasing opportunities for students to earn credentials that will position them for good jobs and continued career growth, especially in high-skilled industries that fuel the state's economic development," **Secretary James Peyser said**.

"From the start, the Performance Incentive Fund has encouraged campus leaders to think in new ways about some of the most intractable problems we face in higher education," **said Carlos E. Santiago, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education**. "We're now beginning to see the fruits of that effort, as we award grants to campuses that want to build on the gains and successes of prior years' funding."

"It's exciting for me to see our public campuses emerging as leaders in digital learning innovation, which is a key strand running through this year's grant proposals," said **Chris Gabrieli, Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education**. "We're also seeing a lot of energy go into work to improve the remedial coursework which, sadly, is required of thousands of our students who arrive on campus unprepared for college-level work. These efforts will help reduce barriers and accelerate the timetable for students to complete their degrees."

The following colleges and universities received Performance Incentive Fund grants:

North Shore Community College - \$100,000: The College will develop a new Flexible Learning Model with hybrid learning classes (in-person and online) and "fast track" seven-week, back-to-back courses to allow Liberal Arts Transfer students to accelerate completion of their associate degrees.

Bristol Community College - \$75,000: The College will use the grant to support a new technology-based Proactive Advising program to aid its growing population of adult students as well as those who need remedial (developmental) courses before enrolling in college-level classes.

Cape Cod Community College - \$79,952: Cape Cod Community College will increase its online course offerings to offer greater flexibility, advising and faster degree completion for working students. The College will develop new courses and redesign existing courses in order to offer three programs fully online: Liberal Arts, Business and Criminal Justice.

Greenfield Community College - \$69,958: The College will build a Technology Lending Library program to provide basic home computer and internet access to 725 low-income students. College officials estimate that one-third of its students lack access to technology resources when they are off campus.

Massasoit Community College - \$58,765 and Mount Wachusett Community College - \$16,235: The Colleges will launch new initiatives to increase use of Open Educational Resources (teaching, learning and/or research materials that are in the public domain) in a bid to reduce the use of costly textbooks. The "Massasoit Millions" Initiative aims to save its students \$1 million annually by 2019.

Northern Essex Community College - \$199,019: Northern Essex will collaborate with six other community colleges to reduce the time it takes for early childhood educators to earn degrees through new competency-based educational instruction designed for working professionals. The project will also increase costs savings for students by allowing them to access Open Educational Resources that reduce the need for textbooks.

Westfield State University - \$66,178: Westfield State will continue to develop its *Westfield Promise* program at five area high schools, giving students the chance to take Westfield State courses online and on campus beginning in their junior year. The classes will be team-taught by high school and college faculty and will help students save on tuition costs while they become more familiar with college-level work.

The Department also announced the expansion of the successful [100 Males to College](#) program to **Salem State University**. The University will use a grant of \$52,084 to support the college-going aspirations of young men of color from Salem, Lynn and Lawrence, most of whom will be the first in their family to attend college. A total of \$346,382 was awarded to five campuses to support *100 Males to College*

programs, including grants to support ongoing programs at **Springfield Technical Community College, Framingham State University, Worcester State University, and Bridgewater State University.**

Lastly, in a bid to reduce achievement and opportunity gaps among its diverse student population, the Department of Higher Education awarded \$100,000 to **Bunker Hill Community College** to develop a Center for Cultural Wealth and Equity, an institute that will foster culturally relevant teaching and learning practices.

Further details on the funding history and program highlights of the Performance Incentive Fund Grant Program can be found [here](#).

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