Celebrating 30 years of Innovation and Excellence

Dr. Daniel M. Asquino

Mount Wachusett Community College
It is with both gratitude and humility that I pen my final President’s Letter and close my thirtieth and final year serving as President.

Over the last three decades, I have witnessed growth, transformation, challenges, and achievements. As a community, we have changed countless lives across North Central Massachusetts and beyond, and it is with this broad perspective that I now pause to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year.

From the launch of new academic programs designed to meet community needs such as new certificates in Substance Abuse Counseling and Community Health Work to the $325,000 in student scholarships awarded through the MWCC Foundation, Inc. in the past year, we focus on student and community need, made possible through strong community partnerships, caring staff, and faculty of the highest caliber.

Mount Wachusett Community College continues to demonstrate its fundamental value of civic engagement through community events with thought leaders like Robert Putnam who spoke about his recent book *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* on the growing inequality gap. The talk was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Our new LEED Gold Science Center is completed and offers a rigorous and engaging learning atmosphere for our faculty and students who now have state-of-the-art lab equipment, technology, and space to synthesize hands-on experiences, ultimately preparing them for in-demand careers in STEM-related fields or transfer to further study with our baccalaureate partners.

The future is bright for MWCC students. Our strategic vision for the college and our surrounding community becomes a greater reality every day as new students stream through our doors, building lifelong knowledge, skills and relationships.

It is with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment, that I offer this retrospective for your review as we prepare for a new leader to continue our legacy of transforming lives, families, communities, and the world. I hope you feel a similar sense of pride as you read about the transformative stories in K-12 partnerships, civic engagement, workforce development student services, and more that are captured in these pages.
The 2016-2017 academic year began amid a sea of change at the Gardner campus, following more than a year of construction and extensive renovations.

Construction began in spring 2015. In August 2015, state elected officials joined college and community leaders, trustees, foundation board members, students and contractors to mark a milestone in the construction of the new building, with a centuries-old beam signing ceremony.

The new building replaces existing laboratories nearly a half-century old and enhances the learning environment for all students, particularly those seeking careers in the STEM fields.

The $41 million project includes a 44,000 square-foot addition, a new 2,300-square-foot greenhouse and renovations throughout the existing Arthur F. Haley Academic Center. MWCC received $37.9 million in state capital funds for the project, as well as a $500,000 grant from Massachusetts Life Sciences for laboratory equipment.

Designed by Boston-based Architerra, Inc. to meet LEED Gold certification for efficiency and sustainability, the new building contains energy-efficient features to tie in with the college’s commitment to sustainability. Shawmut Design & Construction, also based in Boston, oversaw the 18-month project as construction manager.

Amenities in the new building include eight new classrooms and laboratories, four lab prep rooms, 24 new faculty offices, student study space and interior glass walls to highlight STEM student innovation. Renovations to the Haley Academic Center include a new visitor entrance, a multi-purpose room, an academic advising suite, a refurbished student-centered campus hub and increased accessibility to the Raymond M. LaFontaine Fine Arts Center. Last summer, Theatre at the Mount received a $49,600 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund for improvements to the theatre’s sound system.

From an economic standpoint, this is the largest construction project in North Central Massachusetts, which in itself helps boost the region’s economy by providing work for Massachusetts businesses and bringing more traffic to local businesses and service providers.
Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Science Center Dedication

Mount Wachusett Community College joined together for a celebration of students, innovation, leadership, and progress on November 15, 2016. With over 150 guests including Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance Commissioner Carol Gladstone in attendance with college staff, faculty, students, trustees, alumni, elected officials, honored guests and community members, the official ribbon was cut on the new Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Science Center, a state-of-the-art 44,000 square-foot addition to the Gardner campus.
New Programs
In May, the college received state approval to launch new academic programs: credit certificate programs in Substance Abuse Counseling, and Community Health Worker, and associate degree tracks in Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS) Law and LAS Earth Systems.

These new certificate programs were developed to serve needs expressed by local employers as well as in response to students who expressed interest in these fields. The degree programs were designed for students looking to transfer to four-year colleges or universities.

Students Benefit from Transfer Partnerships
MWCC has added many new transfer agreements to its offerings, which allow graduates to seamlessly transfer their associate degree credits into baccalaureate programs at public and private universities and colleges.

Most notably, MWCC has joined all 29 public colleges and universities in the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s Commonwealth Commitment, which provides seamless transfer, rebates and locked-in costs for community college graduates entering the state universities and University of Massachusetts campuses.

The statewide agreement was inspired by the $30K Commitment adopted last year by the four Worcester County public higher education institutions: Mount Wachusett Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Fitchburg State University and Worcester State University. Qualifying students are guaranteed their associate and bachelor’s degrees in high demand programs for $30,000 or less in four years.

“Collaborative agreements such as the Commonwealth Commitment and the $30K Commitment create opportunities while controlling costs and addressing crucial areas such as college completion, economic development, innovation and college readiness,” said President Asquino.

As part of the goal to increase cost savings and predictability, tuition and mandatory fees will be frozen for participants as of the date they enter the program. Students will begin their studies at one of the state’s 15 community colleges, enrolling in one of 24 Commonwealth Commitment/Mass Transfer Pathways programs in fall 2016 (14 programs) and fall 2017 (10 additional programs). Students must attend full-time and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. After earning an associate’s degree in two-and-a-half years or less, students will transfer to a state university or UMass campus to earn a baccalaureate degree.

Other recent partnerships include an associate to bachelor’s degree agreement with Northeastern University College of Professional Studies, in fast growing fields such as information technology, health management, biotechnology, and management. In addition, a practical nursing certificate to bachelor’s degree in nursing pathway with Labouré College, which provides licensed practical nurses (LPNs) a pathway toward an advanced degree and licensure as registered nurses (RNs).
“Without the community colleges, so many people would be without the opportunity to access college.”

The Humanities Project

Following an inaugural year with Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* and last year’s theme of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the Humanities Project began its third year this fall with an artistic focus on “Imagining Work.”

During this academic year, students, faculty, staff and members of the greater community delved into the many ways artists, writers and photographers have expressed the changing nature of work over the past 150 years. From farm to factory in the 19th century to our present-day knowledge economy, the effects of automation, globalization, immigration, war, and race on the identity of the American worker will be explored. A variety of events scheduled at the college and in the community are free and open to the public.

Funded through a multi-year challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the MWCC Humanities Project strengthens the college’s humanities curriculum; supports collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching and research in the humanities; examines the intersection between the humanities and other academic disciplines; and engages the college and the greater community in the discussion of enduring themes from the world’s many cultures and traditions.

Increasing Student Success

Over the past three decades, President Asquino has focused his efforts on enhancing curriculum, community outreach and economic development. Under his leadership, the college’s enrollment has grown to over 12,000 credit and noncredit students and satellite campuses have been established in Leominster, Fitchburg and Devens.

“From a macro point of view, community colleges are very significant. As I’ve said over and over, community colleges are the Ellis Island of higher education. Without the community colleges, so many people would be without the opportunity to access college. Whether they were training for the workforce or planning to attend a four-year institution, they would be priced out of education. It was true when I started and is still true today. Then, the four-year colleges wouldn’t look at anyone over 21. That left out career changers and military veterans. Community colleges are welcoming. Now it’s the community college that has the most difficult students to work with, and we’re the most underfunded. That’s the challenge,” said President Asquino.

Building Excellence in Early Education

Within the School of Liberal Arts, Education, Humanities, and Communications, the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education in June received the highest level possible on the state Department of Early Education & Care’s Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), which assesses the level of quality in early care & education and after-school settings.

The MA QRIS offers guidance to professionals in early education, recognizing that higher expectations of programs must be matched with increased support like strong career paths, financial incentives, and professional development.
Mount Wachusett Community College’s innovative Math Modeling program, designed for students who need remedial instruction in arithmetic and basic algebra, has quadrupled in size and continues to expand. Developed by college faculty and local math teachers to prepare high school seniors for college-level math, the program launched in 2013.

Rather than taking a math remediation course in college, students take MWCC’s four-credit Foundations of Mathematics course during their senior year in high school. Seventy percent of the participants complete the course with a grade of C or better, and are ready to take a college level math course during their first semester at MWCC or another public college or university in the state.

Consequently, enrollment in Developmental Math at MWCC has dropped from 27 percent of the student body in fall 2013 to 16 percent in fall 2015, with Math Modeling among the contributing factors.

Dual Enrollment in High School and College

In May, the college celebrated its largest graduating class of the Pathways Early College Innovation School and Gateway to College program. One of the first two innovation high schools created in Massachusetts, it is run in partnership with the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District and funded with school choice funds, allowing students to complete requirements for their high school diploma while simultaneously earning credits toward a degree.

“The partnership is so impactful for students whether they are in the Pathways program or Gateway program,” said Mahar Superintendent Tari Thomas. “Many are first generation college students. For them to be so embraced by this community college, to work with them to grow and achieve, I’m so grateful. And it’s not just for Mahar kids, but for kids all over the state. The way these academic programs meet individuals’ needs is profound.”

MWCC’s Gateway to College program, established in 2005 as the first Gateway site in New England, provides a second chance for students ages 16 to 21 who have dropped out of high school or are at risk of dropping out. Students simultaneously earn their high school diploma as well as college credits.

In June, MWCC was recognized with a 2016 Gateway Program Excellence Award from the Gateway to College National Network. The award honors the college for exceeding all four of the Gateway to College National Network’s performance benchmarks: grade point average, one-year persistence, two-year persistence and graduation rate.

“The Gateway to College program opens doors and provides a true second chance for students to achieve academic success,” said President Asquino. “We are proud to partner with the Gateway National Network in this transformative work, and are delighted to be recognized with this year’s program excellence award.”

Massachusetts College Application Challenge

For the past three years, MWCC and Fitchburg High School partnered on the successful Massachusetts College Application Challenge. The Massachusetts endeavor is part of a national initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Education’s GEAR UP program. By encouraging high school students to apply to college early in their senior year, they are more likely to apply to several schools and find the best match for their academic goals.

The Massachusetts College Application Celebration has been a great opportunity to motivate and excite our students about a crucial part of the college success process,” said High School Principal Jeremy Roche. “We are delighted that 100% of our seniors applied to college before graduation. This event highlights that college and career readiness is the goal for every FHS student.”

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is administered by MWCC’s Division of Access & Transition in partnership with the high school through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The GEAR UP team “was there for me every step of the way,” said senior Whitney Bailey, an aspiring attorney. “They are more than staff, they become mentors.”

Partnerships

President Asquino and Tari Thomas signing the 10th year dual enrollment agreement with Commissioner Carlos Santiago

Gateway student, Arturo Aponte-Cruz
Strong Collaboration Addresses Economic Inequality

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) is spearheading a national effort to engage students in the topic of economic inequality and its impact on democracy through a three-year initiative. Leading the 34 participating institutions in this effort are Mount Wachusett Community College and Keene State College.

A Commitment to Democracy: Exploring Citizenship

MWCC has been selected to join the Association of American Colleges and Universities and The Democracy Commitment in “Citizenship Under Siege,” a national program of public forums being sponsored this spring through a $200,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The AAC&U and The Democracy Commitment, in partnership with seven community colleges in the country, will facilitate a tapestry of public dialogues exploring who counts as citizens and who has been accorded full rights to democracy’s promises. These forums will be grounded in the nation’s history and explore creative ways to use the power of the humanities to bridge differences and build strong communities.

United Way Youth Venture

Through their participation in the UWYV program, these emerging change-makers are applying solutions to issues such as homelessness, hunger, foster care and autism and creating new educational and recreational opportunities for children, spreading cheer at nursing homes, and creating opportunities for peers.

United Way Youth Venture began in 2002 when the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, Mount Wachusett Community College, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture partnered to found the program to help schools integrate youth-based social ventures into their curriculum, afterschool activities and special events.

A Campus Visit by Robert Putnam

The growing divide between the haves and have nots in America is “the most important domestic problem facing our country today,” renowned political scientist and bestselling author Robert D. Putnam told an attentive audience of students, educators and community leaders this spring.

The event, sponsored by MWCC’s Brewer Center, was made possible through a grant the college received from the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Building Community

Students Visit Costa Rica to Be of Service

This year, a group of student volunteers traveled to Costa Rica for a week of service they describe as a life-changing experience.

MWCC students Cathy Teague, Jana Murphy, Chelsea Garrity, Shannen Pimental, Kelly Hillman, Karen Chapolonis, Esther Rivera and Justine Pottinger were joined by Associate Dean of Students Greg Clement and Shelley Errington Nicholson, Director of the college’s newly named Senator Stephen M. Brewer Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement.

“This international service trip was a life-changing experience,” said Rivera. “It opened our eyes to a completely different way of living and culture. From helping with the monkey cages, to planting for the local schools and farmers, every service job was something learned to take home with us.”

Point of Pride: Carnegie Classification

Mount Wachusett Community College was selected to receive the 2015 Civic Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. MWCC will retain the designation through 2025, when it is next eligible to apply.
Programs for Those Most in Need: TRIO grants Visions Plus and Rx

Mount Wachusett Community College has been awarded three five-year grants from the U.S. Department of Education totaling $4 million to continue support programs that help low-income students, first-generation college students and students with disabilities succeed in college. The grant awards will be used to continue the college’s successful TRIO Student Support Services programs, Visions, Rx and Visions Plus. The goal of each program is to improve student outcomes in the areas of retention, graduation and transfer to four-year institutions to earn a bachelor’s degree.

The Student Support Services STEM Health Sciences program, known on campus as the Rx Program, provides comprehensive services to 120 students annually who are majoring in health sciences programs including nursing, practical nursing, dental hygiene, dental assisting, physical therapist assistant, complementary health care, medical laboratory technology, medical assisting, medical office, biotechnology, bio-manufacturing, fitness leadership and exercise science, and general studies allied health. Program participants receive wrap-around support services that include tutoring; academic advising; career, personal and transfer counseling; supplemental courses; financial aid advising and workshops; and financial and economic literacy education.

MWCC’s Student Support Services TRIO program, known on campus as the Visions Program, now entering its 38th year, serves eligible students enrolled in any non-health services major. The program provides a variety of comprehensive services to 200 students each year, including academic advising, personal, career and transfer counseling, tutoring, seminars, financial aid advising and workshops, financial literacy education, a faculty and peer mentoring program and supplemental courses.

Additionally, MWCC was awarded a five-year, $1.1 million TRIO Student Support Services federal grant to help students with disabilities graduate with an associate degree or academic certificate and continue on for a bachelor’s degree. The new program, called Visions Plus, was developed based on an extensive review of best practices in SSS programs across the country and the needs of students with disabilities. The goal is to improve student outcomes in the areas of retention, graduation and transfer to four-year institutions.

Veteran Students and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas See Eye to Eye

MWCC student veterans, college officials and community leaders had the undivided attention of Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, who visited the college’s Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success and our neighboring partner, the Northeast Veteran Training and Rehabilitation Center, owned and operated by Veteran Homestead in March.

The Congresswoman, who serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee and Natural Resources Committee, said she was impressed with MWCC’s innovation and leadership in these and other areas.

She lauded the partnership between MWCC and the NVTRC, which provides housing and support services to veterans and their families.

“This is a great partnership because it really does help veterans and their families move on. It provides the families with access to education, homes and extended support. It’s unique. Community colleges are rooted in the community and are always looking for ways to solve problems. The Mount is certainly an example of that.”

Keeping Our Campuses Safe

MWCC has been selected as a national model in sexual assault prevention for community colleges for students and employees. With a diverse student body, both in terms of age and background, MWCC has incorporated online programs and data collection through EverFi’s Haven program, into a comprehensive sexual assault prevention strategy. The data is used to inform several in-person efforts, including an innovative bystander intervention program.

“This is a great partnership because it really does help veterans and their families move on.”
Building the Workforce

Boston Foundation’s Deval Patrick Award
In March of 2016, MWCC was awarded the Deval Patrick Award for Community Colleges by the Boston Foundation, in recognition of progress and excellence in establishing partnerships between employers and higher education. The annual $50,000 award is given to a community college selected by a volunteer committee of representatives from the higher education, workforce and business communities.

MWCC was selected for developing its Advanced Manufacturing Technology Programs, which are stackable programs that address local employer training needs. Interested students can take non-credit or credit classes that lead directly to employment opportunities, industry credentials, and a pathway for completing additional credit courses at the college. Over the past two years, 291 students have enrolled in the program.

“We are very fortunate to be working with industry partners to ensure we are providing employers with a trained and skilled workforce so that we can support and grow our regional economy,” President Asquino said.

Creating Opportunities for Education
The North Central Educational Opportunity Center (NCEOC), administered through the Division of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development, was awarded a five-year, $1.18 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to continue providing adults in the region with comprehensive services to successfully transition to college or other postsecondary education.

Providing Second Chances
Mount Wachusett Community College is one of 67 colleges and universities selected by the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Second Chance Pell pilot program, which is part of a national effort aimed at reducing recidivism and strengthening communities by providing education and job training to eligible inmates.

MWCC is partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections to provide academic programs to approximately 72 inmates at the North Central Correctional Institute in Gardner, the Massachusetts Correctional Institute in Shirley, and the Federal Medical Center in Devens.

“The power of education to transform lives cannot be underestimated,” said President Asquino. “In Massachusetts and across the country, more money is spent on incarcerating prisoners than is spent on public education. In the long run, society and taxpayers are better served by investing in programs that help people become contributing members of their communities.”

The Second Chance Pell pilot program is one of a series of federal education and jobs programs designed to prepare people who are returning from prison to the community with skills and resources necessary to obtain employment, support their families and contribute to society. It is geared toward prisoners who are likely to be released within the next five years.

Creating Bridges to College
Mount Wachusett Community College and the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office launched a prison education program to prepare inmates for college entry and the workforce.

The grant-funded Bridges to College program will provide education and workforce training opportunities to 100 inmates at the Worcester County Jail and House of Corrections in West Boylston. The program’s goal is to lower recidivism rates by providing ex-offenders with skills needed to enter college, as well as the field of advanced manufacturing.

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education recently awarded a $79,000 grant to MWCC to create the program.

Transforming Healthcare through Training
Since June, 2015, every Nashoba Valley Medical Center employee, at all levels, has been participating in a healthcare Workforce Transformation grant training program, which is benefiting the hospital and the community. Partnering with MWCC over a 24-month period, the hospital is providing training to all 485 employees that is impacting all areas of the hospital.

“We are the only community hospital in the region to receive this grant. To be able to offer a healthcare-directed training program to our employees has been a marvelous opportunity,” said NVMC President Salvatore Perla.

Building the Workforce

LIFELONG LEARNING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelides, MWCC Vice President of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development Jacqueline Belrose, and President Asquino announced in November 2015, a new Bridges to College Program at the Worcester County Jail and House of Corrections in West Boylston.
Partnering with Local Businesses

Mount Wachusett Community College is a leader in workforce development and we actively work with partners on workforce development grants—some of our many business partners who have received these grants to fund workforce development include:

- TAACCCT III
  The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funded the Advanced Manufacturing Mechatronics and Quality Consortium (AMMQC) that Mount Wachusett Community College has led in partnership with three other schools. The AMMQC is exceeding its training and employment goals as it moves towards completion in 2017. Local employers have hired over 100 participants from the program in the 3 years of its existence and continue to send incumbent workers for more advanced training. This, along with outreach to area high schools and workforce partners has led to a robust enrollment in credit manufacturing and quality programs at the MWCC Devens campus for Fall 2016. The success of the AMMQC has enabled Mount Wachusett Community College to build a partnership with Middlesex, Northern Essex, and North Shore Community Colleges and the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative which has resulted in a $4 million grant from the U.S. DOL that will enable additional advanced manufacturing programming.
Our People

Bringing Our Mission of College Access Online

In January 2001, shortly after attending a conference on tele-learning, President Asquino founded Massachusetts Colleges Online, which grew into a consortium of the state’s 15 community colleges and nine state universities.

In appreciation for his leadership, the consortium presented President Asquino with a Contributor of Distinction Award during its annual conference in May at Greenfield Community College. MWCC librarians Ellen Pratt and Suzanne Levasseur were among the faculty members statewide to receive Course of Distinction Awards for their online courses.

A Campus for Everyone

The Leominster Campus celebrated the 10th anniversary of housing the college’s ESL (English as a Second Language) Program at its annual “End of Academic Year” celebration (May 2016). Twenty-eight enrolled ESL students received certificates of completion allowing them to enhance their employment in the area work force or continue their studies at the academic degree level.

People are Our Greatest Resource

The Division of Human Resources is active in the Diversity Consortium, which is supported by the Council of Community College Presidents. The consortium’s work includes identifying and implementing data-driven practices to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps in higher education.

In collaboration with the Shine Initiative and Community Healthlink, mental health first aid training was provided by the Campus Police Department in May.

As a college committed to safety, MWCC’s Division of Human Resources has worked to enhance the Title IX website to offer resources and confidential reporting options to students and employees, and many faculty and staff have participated in emergency training procedures.

For the past three years, MWCC, the SHINE Initiative and Heywood Hospital have worked together to present the Mental Health Awareness Conference. More than 325 students, staff, faculty, and community members attended this year’s free conference, which featured a keynote address by musician and activist Meg Hutchinson and a panel discussion.

The President’s Scholastic Diversity Competition, supported by the Diversity Committee, awarded a free three-credit course to four students.

Second annual Culture Fest showcasing the cultures, countries and backgrounds that make up the college community.

Building Future Leaders

From the 121,000 service hours completed by students this past academic year to the decades-long legacy of President Asquino, the transformative power of service and volunteerism was the resounding theme of MWCC’s 51st Commencement. This year, 810 associate degrees and certificates were awarded to 734 graduates.

“This is an amazing, transformative, magical college. Lives change here like nowhere else,” President Asquino told the jubilant crowd of gathered for the ceremony.

During the ceremony, Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke, a former Trustee, was presented the 2016 Alumnus of the Year Award and Raymond M. Martino, President and CEO of Simonds International and Chair of the MWCC Foundation, received the 2016 Service Above Self Award for his community leadership and engagement.

Student Trustee Thomas Berger was recognized with the James Murphy Trustees Award, and three graduates, Mellissa Richards, Jonathan Inman and Kelly Veautour were awarded the President’s Key for academic excellence.

“To my fellow alums, when you come to the two roads diverging in the woods, whether you take the one less traveled or not, always remember and be proud that your road began here at MWCC.”

Mark Hawke, Mayor of Gardner, 2016 Alumnus of the Year

FACULTY & STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

People are Our Greatest Resource

People are Our Greatest Resource

The North Central Education Opportunity Center (housed on the Leominster Campus) Annual Performance Report to the Department of Education was submitted in November 2015. Two highlights included:

*LIFG = Low Income, First Generation

CLIENTS SERVED

LIFG SERVED

Funded to serve 1000/yr

Actually served 1003

Mandated to serve 67%

Actually served 67.9%
Established in 1971, the MWCC Foundation now offers 38 scholarships for continuing students and transfer students pursuing certificates and degrees in a wide range of academic disciplines. More than $260,000 is awarded to students annually.

**Achieving Greater Impact**

Paying for college, often while juggling family and job responsibilities, remains as critical an issue for students today as it did when the MWCC Foundation Inc. was established.

Having earned the support and commitment of area philanthropists, President Asquino secured a $2 million donation to endow the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement in 2012, a $1 million donation for student scholarships from the Sterilite Corp. in 2009, a recent $100,000 donation for student scholarships from Hubbardston residents Jim and Barbara Carpenter, yearly donations from local veterans’ organizations, and sizeable donations from former faculty and staff.

A private, independent, nonprofit organization, the foundation has grown tremendously over the decades. In 1971, its first year, the foundation awarded just $259 in scholarships. Now, thanks to the generosity of local businesses, organizations, alumni and individual supporters, and funds raised through benefit events, the foundation is able to award more than $260,000 each year to deserving students, as well as support other college and community initiatives.

Beginning in the late 1980s, President Asquino, former Foundation board chair Charles Bowles and other board members worked together to build the foundation’s endowment, which now tops more than $9 million, the highest community college endowment in Massachusetts and one of the highest in the country.

“I hope wherever I go I can continue to dedicate as much time as I can to the community,” said, Chelsea Garrity recipient of the “Pay it Forward” scholarship for students who are engaged in the community. Due in part to financial support from the Foundation, Chelsea graduated from the college with a Liberal Arts degree in communications.

**The Babineau-Johnson Family Legacy**

Two scholarships benefiting veterans and nursing students were created through a generous $100,000 donation from Hubbardston residents Barbara and Jim Carpenter. The gift honors Mrs. Carpenter’s family members who served in the military. She donated the proceeds from the sale of a house she inherited from her uncle, Clarence Babineau, to create the Babineau-Johnson Nursing Scholarship and the Babineau-Johnson Veterans Scholarship.

**2016 Citizen of the Year**

In May, the MWCC Foundation honored Douglas J. Petersen, president and CEO of Workers’ Credit Union, as the 2016 Harold E. Drake Jr. Citizen of the Year for his leadership and service in the community. The award, presented in memory of Harold E. Drake, Jr., treasurer and former president of Royal Steam Heater Co. and Lynde Hardware & Supply, Inc., recognizes community members who exemplify Harold Drake’s extraordinary commitment to the North Central Massachusetts region.

A prominent figure in North Central Massachusetts business circles since joining Workers’ in the mid-1990s, Mr. Petersen serves as chairman of the boards for the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and is also a member of the MWCC Foundation board of directors and a member of the HealthAlliance President’s Council.

**Cultural Events that Benefit Youth Programs**

The “Magic of Motown at the Mount” benefit concert, co-sponsored by the foundation and the Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster, raised more than $100,000 to support student scholarships and youth programs in the region.
Building a Legacy

For Dan Asquino, transitioning into his college presidency in 1987 was a cake walk compared to the transition he’s enduring now, retiring from the place, mission, and community he’s championed for three decades: Mount Wachusett Community College.

Back then, all eyes were on the 45-year-old successor to the college’s founding president, Arthur Haley, and the ideas and initiatives he brought with him following 17 years in administrative leadership within Massachusetts public higher education.

The oldest of four siblings in a family of “no means,” President Asquino understands the struggles of college students, particularly those juggling family, jobs and academic studies, because he traveled that path.

After graduating from high school and certain he would be unable to attend college because he was told he was not “college material,” he worked for a year in construction as an apprentice brick layer. Wanting more, he joined the Navy. His four years of service from 1961 to 1965 fostered an abiding love of country and of service, not to mention lightening quick typing skills honed as a court martial reporter transcribing manuscripts verbatim. While enlisted, he also taught general education development courses to court maritaled prisoners, and administered the high school equivalency test, which provided the first glimpse into his future career path.

“I didn’t think it was fun at the time, but it was probably the best thing that ever happened to me,” Asquino said about his military service. “Really, the rest is history.”

He returned to civilian life with a growing family, $200, a broken down car and nowhere to live. Determined to create a better future for his young family, he enrolled full time at Southeastern Massachusetts University, now UMass Dartmouth.

During those challenging early years, the family relied on state assistance for food and housing while he attended college during the day, worked 60 hours a week at three part-time jobs in the evening and on weekends, and then hit the books at midnight.

A year into his bachelor’s degree, he became eligible for veterans tuition benefits under a newly revised GI Bill, which helped finance his education through graduate school. After earning his bachelor’s degree in political science, with a minor in economics, he went on to UMass Amherst for a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in public administration.

While pursuing his master’s degree, he interned for the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges, which oversaw the state’s 15 community colleges. He was hired by the board in 1971 as an assistant to the president and was promoted to various administrative positions over the next several years. From there, he became assistant dean of administration at Bristol Community College for three years before being hired by Cape Cod Community College in 1980 as dean of administration and development.

Seven years later, he rose to the top of 100 applicants vying for the presidency of MWCC.

“My aspiration was to become a community college president because I thought I could make a difference,” he said.

His belief in the community college experience is so strong, that each of his four children began...
their academic careers at Massachusetts community colleges before transferring on to earn advanced degrees in varied fields. President Asquino’s partner in life, his wife Alberta Del Prete, is a community college English professor.

If you were to ask any number of the hundreds of MWCC graduates, faculty, staff, or community partners whether Daniel Asquino has made a difference, while you may get a hundred different stories, the thread that weaves them all into a 47-year legacy is the answer, “Yes.”

**PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS**

Among his many professional and community affiliations, he is a charter member of the Massachusetts College Success Campaign, The Democracy Commitment and the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment. He currently chairs the Massachusetts Community College Council’s Labor Relations Committee and Distance Education Committee. In addition, he is a member of the American Association of Community Colleges Commission on Communications and Marketing. He has twice chaired the Massachusetts Committee of Community College Presidents and is a past chair of the College Board’s National Community College Advisory Panel. He is a member and past two-term chair of the New England College Council, and a member of the Massachusetts Campus Compact Executive Board of Directors.

Locally, Dr. Asquino serves as an officer and past chair of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts Board of Directors, officer and past chair of the Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster and past chair of Greater Gardner and North Central Massachusetts Chambers of Commerce. He is a member and past chair of the Board of Trustees for Heywood Hospital, and the GFA Supervisory Board.

**A Legacy Steeped in Sustainability**

When MWCC’s main campus was built in the early 1970s, electricity was expected to be an inexpensive commodity. Instead, the cost escalated, and by the late 1990s, the college was spending more than $750,000 a year on electricity alone – a figure that would top $1 million in today’s dollars.

Under the administrative leadership of President Asquino and Executive Vice President Emeritus Edward R. Terceiro, Jr., the college sought renewable energy solutions while simultaneously implementing Energy Conservation Measures to drastically reduce energy consumption.

MWCC was at the forefront of the national climate movement when it converted its all-electric campus to biomass heating in 2002 to save on energy costs and reduce its carbon footprint. The tremendous success of that initiative – implemented at zero net cost to the college through grants and energy rebates – led to other renewable solutions, including solar and wind energy.

“The wind energy project is the crowning achievement in our portfolio of green energy projects,” said President Asquino. “Combined, these renewable technologies provide an invaluable learning tool for the general public as well as students. The turbines have become a source of pride and a symbol of progress for the college and for the local community.”

In 2012, MWCC surpassed the clean energy target set by the state. While the target for campuses and state agencies was set at 25 percent, MWCC achieved an 86 percent reduction, more than any other state entity by far.

Over the past 15 years, MWCC has been the recipient of top state and national sustainability awards, including the American Association of College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Wildlife Federation.
$50,000 to support the Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Scholarship Fund

Newly renovated grand entrance to the Arthur F. Haley Academic Building
$25,000 Sponsors

James & Peggy Garrison

New microbiology lab in the Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Science Center
$15,000 Sponsors

Salvadore Auto

Seaman Paper

Simonds International

Workers Credit Union

Banking that works.

Thank you sponsors & donors.

New Murphy conference room in the Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Science Center.
$10,000 Sponsors

The Law Offices of RICHARD A. CELLA

Enterprise Bank
CREATE SUCCESS

North Middlesex
SAVINGS BANK
Smart banking made easy.

GFA

Rollstone
BANK & TRUST

Donors ($500– $5,000)

$5,000
Scot & Janice Barrett
Raymond & Susan Martino

$2,500
William & Karson Aubuchon
Dennecrepe
The Drake Family
Fitchburg State University
Scott & Betsy Howard
George & Mary Beth Jones
Langysen Development LLC

$2,000
Wachusett Mountain Ski Area

$1,000
Mr. Charles Bowles
Senator & Mrs. Stephen M. Brewer
Ms. Gail Carberry
Ms. Sheila Daly
David & Robin Duncan
Ms. Suzanne Farias
Feddeley Bank
Hibutela Oil & Propane
IC Federal Credit Union
Ed & Helen Lepkowski
Ms. Ann McDonald
Molds International &
Consulting Co., Inc.
Montachusett Regional Vocational
Technical High School
Montour Tire Inc.
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Muldown
Douglas & Lisa Petersen
Ms. Linda Racine
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Teterino
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Wironen
The Zottoli Family

$500+
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Dwyer, IV
The Gardner Rotary Club
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Gerry
Mr. William Hart
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond LaFond
Ms. Karen Tummi
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Toomey

New student study space in the
Dr. Daniel M. Asquino Science Center

Newly renovated Commons area in the
Arthur F. Haley Academic building
Vision & Mission

Mount Wachusett Community College is the college of opportunity and a model of teaching and learning excellence. MWCC is a lifelong learning community dedicated to excellence in education and responsive to the changing needs of the communities we serve. Our focus is the preparation of individuals for lives of fulfillment, leadership, and service in a diverse and global society. We are committed to engaging students in rich and challenging learning opportunities within a small college atmosphere that is known for its personal touch.

Values

Mount Wachusett Community College is a community of learners where all are welcomed, valued for their individuality, and applauded for their unique contributions to making the college a special place to learn, work, gather, and grow. Students, faculty, and staff recognize the importance of diversity in sustaining a rich, healthy, and vibrant environment and affirm the following values that unite us as a collective body and guide our daily interactions.

Values

• Human Potential
• Pursuit of Excellence
• Mutual Respect & Trust
• Institutional Integrity
• Considerate Open Communication
• Creativity & Responsible Risk Taking
• Cooperation & Collaboration
Gardner
444 Green Street
Gardner, MA 01440
978-632-6600

Devens
One Jackson Place
27 Jackson Road
Devens, MA 01434
978-630-9569

Leominster
100 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453
978-630-9810

Fitchburg (Dental Programs)
326 Nichols Road
Fitchburg, MA 01420
978-630-9413

Online
mwcc.edu