awakening the citizen in every student
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ON THE COVER
Students SOS Office Intern Nick Mucciarone, whose work provided a foundation for Students SOS services within the Veterans Success Center and at the Leominster Campus.
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Be engaged.
Be civic-minded.
Be impactful.
CULTIVATING CHANGE

Heading into this year, my second year as the Endowed Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement, all of us at the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement were enthusiastic about the year’s prospects. Previous hard work yielded extraordinary results: more than 2,300 students engaged in experiential educational and volunteer opportunities provided an economic impact of over $3 million for the North Central region through more than 144,000 hours served.

Now, looking back, I can tell you that this year was one of the Center’s finest years. The Center’s faculty and staff have been at the forefront of many national, state, and local efforts to better our communities and the world. At the national level, we partnered with Keene State College to co-lead the American Association of State Colleges and University’s National Economic Inequality Initiative, challenging students and community to confront the complex causes of economic inequality.

At the state level, Mount Wachusett Community College is now the first college in the Commonwealth to offer a liberal arts degree option that blends both civic knowledge and civic engagement. The Civic Engagement and Community Leadership degree is designed to help students apply the general knowledge gained from a liberal arts degree combined with a focus on political, economic and social justice studies to everyday life. Students enrolled in this program will engage with local, national, and world communities with intentions to be positive agents of change. In addition, a new Certificate in Nonprofit Management was approved, which will allow professionals in our region to gain certification in this quickly growing field.

Locally, our students continue to impact the region through thousands of hours of service inclusive of tutoring, health care, service to veterans, and working one-on-one with individuals with disabilities, and other substantial activities in our community. Our faculty and staff are also very engaged in the community serving on non-profit boards and volunteering their own time to help those in need. Every year, the faculty and staff of the college participate in record numbers in support of our days of service, donation drives and for any opportunity to support our students in their quest to improve lives in the region.

The programs and initiatives of the Center have been recognized locally and nationally. This year Mount Wachusett Community College received a renewal of the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification. We are one of only 20 community colleges in the country to receive this prestigious classification. The Center was also honored once again with the Presidents Higher Educational Honor Roll, this year with Distinction. In addition, Center staff were honored with a citation from the Commonwealth for Outstanding Performance. This particular honor meant more to the faculty and staff of the Center than all the national accolades as it was truly a recognition of our efforts from our colleagues and peers, and an affirmation of the high standards to which we hold ourselves accountable - for ourselves, for our community and for our students.

Respectfully,

Dan Soucy
Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement/Assistant Professor of Philosophy
at the forefront of a NATIONAL MOVEMENT
“Civic engagement is a key component of our mission as a student- and community-centered institution, and it is a tremendous honor to be recognized once again by the Carnegie Foundation for the outstanding work and commitment of our students, faculty and staff in this regard,” said MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino. “Since 2001, we have placed great emphasis on the importance of integrating classroom learning with community service, and continue to expand our programs and opportunities. Students gain practical experience that sets them apart in a competitive job market and communities benefit tremendously by this engagement.”

Colleges and universities with an institutional focus on community engagement were invited to apply for the classification, initially offered in 2006 as part of an extensive restructuring of The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Institutions elect to participate by submitting documentation describing the nature and extent of their engagement with the community, including examples showing alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, resources and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement. Just two-percent of community colleges in the U.S. have received the designation.

Through its endowed Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, Mount Wachusett is among the institutions of higher education deeply embedding civic learning into its culture and serving as a state and national model. The college uses a multi-tiered approach that engages students, faculty and community partners.

Since the last Carnegie classification, MWCC civic engagement staff has continued to focus time and energy on enhancing programs, services, community outreach and partnerships and aligning programming and activities with the college’s strategic plan.

“We have worked extremely hard to embed civic learning within the fabric of the MWCC experience, and to ensure that faculty and staff have opportunities to engage in meaningful and reciprocal ways within our community.”

FAGAN FORHAN, CENTER DIRECTOR
MWCC is one of only 20 community colleges in the country, representing less than 2% nationwide, to receive the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification.
“The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement has changed my life in so many ways, bettering my commitment to my community, self and my education. I now have a better understanding of the needs of my fellow citizens.”

JOHN S. DAY
John was not initially a student who exemplified student engagement, but rather one of those students who came in for class and left immediately afterwards. Through an initial opportunity with our Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, John has become entrenched in the very fabric of our campus community, from clubs to community service to student involvement.

Since his first semester serving as an orientation leader, John has also served as Student Government Vice President and Treasurer, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society President, President of MWCC’s Beyond Str8 (LGBT student organization), as a participant in the MWCC Leadership for Life program, and as a founding member of the Students Serving Our Students (SOS) peer program. In addition, John just completed a term of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA* dedicated to increasing the capacity of our community partners to provide quality service and civic learning opportunities for MWCC students.

John is motivated, enthusiastic, and cares very deeply for his fellow students. John was instrumental in the planning and execution of the 2nd Annual United Way Day of Caring event held at MWCC on September 18th. John coordinated volunteers from students, alumni, staff and faculty who packaged 20,436 meals which were immediately dispersed to shelters, food pantries and veterans organizations in North Central Massachusetts. In addition, John coordinated a fundraiser on behalf of PTK which raised over $3,000 to benefit local food pantries and to combat hunger here on campus. John has been serving for the past two years as a peer mentor in the SOS Program where he has offered guidance and advice to fellow students who are often struggling to meet their most basic needs while at the same time pursuing their own education. Through this program, he has gained insights into the inequalities that exist in our communities and on our campus.

John was also selected as the MWCC student representative of a new national initiative focused on Economic Inequality. John participated in a five day institute held in Washington, D.C. with faculty and staff from across the country to focus on this important topic. He was one of three students in attendance, and helped to ensure that student voice was instrumental in the development of the national initiative. In addition to attending, John helped to plan the event and presented on his experience as a student who works closely with community partners and therefore sees economic inequality first hand in our community.

**JOHN S. DAY**

2014-2015 NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW AND AMERICORPS*VISTA
Mount Wachusett Community College was named to the 2014 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, with Distinction, for exemplary community service programs that enhance the visibility of effective practices in campus-community partnerships.

The Honor Roll's Presidential Award is the highest federal recognition an institution can receive for its commitment to community, service learning, and civic engagement. The Corporation for National and Community Service has administered the award since 2006 in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the American Council on Education, Campus Compact, and the Interfaith Youth Core.

Mount Wachusett has been named to the honor roll every year since its inception, and twice with Distinction. MWCC's efforts coordinated through its Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement align with the Corporation for National and Community Service's strategic commitment to engage millions of college students in service.

“This annual recognition is a great source of pride for all at MWCC. We are dedicated to ensuring that our students receive a high-quality, well-rounded education, which includes preparing them to be active citizens. Our students consistently demonstrate a willingness to share their skills, time and talents to assist residents and organizations in our region. Our faculty and staff have done an outstanding job integrating civic engagement into their programs, and our community partners embrace these mutually beneficial opportunities to enrich our communities.” PRESIDENT DANIEL M. ASQUINO

MWCC was cited for six exemplary service-learning initiatives coinciding with the 2012-2013 academic year. During the academic year, students contributed 144,000 hours to their communities through service learning, volunteerism, internships, practicums, co-ops and field experience.

“We’re incredibly pleased to be recognized for this prestigious honor. We have a vibrant community-engagement platform that challenges our students, faculty and staff, and area partners to work together in addressing unmet needs in the community. The reciprocal relationships we’ve built over the years have become pivotal in our students’ educations, and we are truly grateful for the considerable time and energy that our nonprofit community puts into serving as co-educators of our students.” FAGAN FORHAN
SIX SERVICE LEARNING AND VOLUNTEER PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTED IN MWCC’S RECOGNITION INCLUDE:

The Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Commonwealth Corps supported a grant-funded peer veteran program through which veteran students completed nearly 3,000 hours of service during a nine-month period and included coordinating campus-wide events, mentoring, collaborating with state and local veterans organizations, and fundraisers to support various programs;

The Students Serving Our Students (SOS) volunteer peer mentoring program, which connected at-risk students to trained mentors with knowledge of internal support systems and social services offered by more than 400 community partners;

The United Way Youth Venture Fall Kick Off, an annual event that offered training to children and teenagers in such areas as creative fundraising, mentorship, leadership, and team building as they prepared to lead and launch service projects within their communities. During the 2013 event, 30 volunteers helped lead training exercises for more than 450 middle and high school students;

AmeriCorps Job Ready Program provided academic tutoring and college access counseling to middle and high school students in the region. AmeriCorps Job Ready Members placed with MWCC’s Division of Access and Transition engaged students in career-exploration and job-readiness activities to foster increased academic success and progress toward career goals, while additional Members placed within the greater community worked to support the skill development and opportunities for success of unemployed and underemployed individuals in our region;

The Nursing Program provided timely assistance to area non-profits and social service agencies through several service learning projects, including coordinating a health fair at a local middle school and supporting the physical and emotional wellbeing of children, the elderly, homeless patients, and individuals suffering from addictions;

Free College Day, a public event held during the college’s 50th anniversary celebration that provided more than 60 free workshops and classes, prizes, career and academic resources, and tours presented by student, faculty and staff volunteers.
On October 16, 2014, the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University hosted a Summit on Civic Learning and National Service. This invitational Summit brought together 75 higher education leaders, government officials, representatives of civic organizations, and researchers studying civic learning and engagement. The rich conversation brought many themes and disagreements.

Mount Wachusett Community College was represented by Fagan Forhan, Director of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, and Students SOS Intern, Crystal Williams.

The Summit Proceedings are based on a review of the notes from the Summit, compiled and summarized by representatives from Tisch College. In our reflection on the discussion, seven themes emerged:

1. Colleges and universities must support democracy. Educating for democracy and generating knowledge to serve democracy were central purposes of the Morrill Land Grant Act, the GI Bill, and the creation of community colleges. The 1947 Truman Commission on Higher Education for Democracy stated that educating for democracy “should come first … among the principal goals for higher education.” But this heritage has largely been forgotten. The public, policymakers, and leaders of higher education now appear to focus primarily on preparing students for a competitive labor market.
2. Democratic education means engagement with politics, institutions, and contentious issues—by students, faculty, and staff in their capacity as teachers, learners, researchers, and civic actors. Serving democracy means more than service, although service-learning programs contribute to that mission. Colleges and universities should be places of courageous conversations and action, where the most pressing social, economic, and political needs the nation and world are identified, studied, and debated, and where students develop the skills and sense of agency to act on those needs.

3. Civic learning must move from “elective and available” to “pervasive and expected.” Since the 1980s, many colleges and universities have created impressive centers and programs for civic engagement, community service, community partnerships, and related topics. These special programs represent a valuable network, distributed across the country and connecting higher education to other sectors. However, they remain fairly marginal in academia itself, enlisting especially interested students and faculty. Some of the institutions represented at the Summit have taken the next step by making civic learning pervasive or even required on their campuses.

4. Colleges and universities should be partners in local problem solving and anchors in democratic communities. Campuses can support reciprocal faculty-community collaborative research, open their doors to the community, and serve as conveners to identify and facilitate change about local challenges.

5. Civic learning must be measured and assessed. Unless colleges and universities collect data and use it to improve programs and hold themselves accountable for results, civic learning will not be pervasively effective. Better measurement systems would also demonstrate the value of civic learning for employment and thus mitigate the tradeoff between education for democracy and education for work.

6. Higher education should tackle growing economic and social inequality based on class and social identity. Many students face economic barriers to civic engagement. At a time of rapidly rising college costs, students may have to work at least one job, may have children of their own, and may hold substantial debt. Some possible solutions to those barriers are course credit for public service experiences, loan forgiveness, and connecting civic and career skills.

7. Leadership must come from many places, including federal and state policymakers, college administrators, academic departments, students, and also from community-based organizations and business. Many positive steps were proposed at the Summit, from raising the proportion of work-study funds available for community work to changing state or even federal measurement systems to include civic outcomes. Above all, the stakeholders must return the civic and democratic mission of higher education to its traditional high status in American life.

Based on the Summit discussions, we would suggest both an interest in and a need for continued work in two areas:

- Collective work among scholars and practitioners on what the research shows regarding the nature, scope, and effectiveness of civic learning and engagement in democracy; and

- Further, focused discussion among educators and policy makers to prioritize specific actions at the campus, collaborative, state, and federal, levels to advance civic learning and engagement in democracy.

Community partners/representatives should be key participants in both sets of discussions.

addressing ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

THE DEMOCRACY COMMITMENT
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT
ECONOMIC INEQUALITY INITIATIVE
“They are going to evict me!”

So she or he is studying full-time...

puts a student from studying full-time if the

must take 9 credits or less each semester.

...due to family circumstances.
MWCC JOINS KEENE STATE COLLEGE TO LEAD AASCU’S NATIONAL ECONOMIC INEQUALITY INITIATIVE

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. All participants are members of AASCU’s American Democracy Project (ADP) or The Democracy Commitment (TDC).

Participating institutions will invite students and community members to confront the complex causes of economic inequality through the development of curriculum that will be applied to many areas of study and hands-on learning opportunities. Specifically, students are studying the relationship between public policy, economic inequality, economic opportunity, and social mobility. These strategies, including the introduction of a course in economic inequality for students at two- and four-year schools, are being designed for further adoption by campuses across the country.

“AASCU is excited to assemble this group of two- and four-year institutions that together will examine and address the growing economic inequality in this county, a trend that poses a serious threat to our democracy,” remarked George Mehaffy, AASCU’s vice president of academic leadership and change.

MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement and The American Democracy Project at Keene State College are spearheading national efforts, which also promote community outreach, civic pathways for student success, and prepare undergraduates for lives of informed civic engagement. Most activities are taking place on participating campuses, with the two lead institutions providing support and networking by hosting national conference calls and webinars.
“As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that our students...discover their own abilities to initiate change in areas of public policy, economic opportunity and inequality, and social mobility.”  

PRESIDENT DANIEL M. ASQUINO

“We are proud to partner with AASCU, Keene State College, and colleges and universities across the country on this timely initiative,” said MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino. “More than ever before, our students are graduating into a global society that is stratified across lines of economic class and political ideologies as much as they always have been across issues of gender, culture and religion. As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that our students have the opportunity to think critically and creatively about these issues—and discover their own abilities to initiate change in areas of public policy, economic opportunity and inequality, and social mobility,” he said.

MWCC faculty who participated in the first full year of the initiative include Julie Capozzi, Elmer Eubanks, Shane Martin, Yvonne Noyes-Stevens, Maureen Provost, Tom Montagno, Kate Smith, Dan Soucy and Michelle Valois. They joined Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement staff members Fagan Forhan and Shelley Errington Nicholson.

“MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement has been instrumental in organizing and leading a joint ADP/TDC national initiative focused on examining the impact of economic inequality on our democracy. Even more importantly, the Center is advancing civic learning and democratic engagement work at the local, state and national level. Its leadership is to be commended and looked to as an example of important civic and community engagement work in public higher education.”  

JENNIFER M. DOMAGAL-GOLDMAN, NATIONAL MANAGER, AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT
NATIONAL NETWORK OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

In addition to Keene State College, four-year institutions include Buffalo State (SUNY); California State University, Chico; California State University, Monterey Bay; Cleveland State University; Dalton State College (Ga.); Ferris State University (Mich.); Indiana University Northwest; Missouri State University; Northeastern Illinois University; Northern Kentucky University; Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; Salisbury University (Md.); Slippery Rock University (Penn.); St. Cloud State University (Minn.); SUNY Cortland; Texas A&M University-Central Texas; University of Houston Downtown; Weber State University (Utah); Western Carolina University (N.C.); and Wright State University (Ohio).

In addition to MWCC, participating two-year institutions include Allegany College of Maryland; De Anza College (Calif.); Kirkwood Community College (Iowa); Lone Star College, Kingwood (Texas); Manchester Community College (Conn.); Monroe Community College (N.Y.); Moraine Valley Community College (Ill.); Santa Fe College (Fla.); and Tarrant County College, Southeast Campus (Texas).

ADP and TDC, representing four- and two-year schools, respectively, created a variety of civic-engagement and academic-enrichment initiatives that encourage graduates to become informed, engaged participants in our democracy.
“Partnering with the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement on the ADP/TDC Economic Inequality Initiative has moved the project forward in both depth and breadth of the range of issues we are attempting to educate students on while providing expertise in programming and curriculum far beyond anything our campus has considered.

The experience and the network of connections that the MWCC staff have cultivated over a long tenure have jump started the KSC campus’ broader work on civic engagement and have provided pathways for our students to understand the positive impact civic engagement can have on the communities they return to upon graduation.”

KIM SCHMIDL-GAGNE
PROGRAM COORDINATOR, KEENE STATE COLLEGE
ADVANCING A MASSACHUSETTS CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

This year, AMCOA focused on helping to develop ways of assessing civic learning. Our faculty chair, Daniel Soucy, was part of this state-wide initiative. His aim was to share the collected knowledge of the Center and the college with other institutions across the state in the development of new student assessment models.

MASSACHUSETTS CIVIC LEARNING COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Civic Learning Council is comprised of representatives from all of the Community Colleges in Massachusetts. Fagan Forhan and Shelley Errington Nicholson served as members of this council and MWCC hosted the fall meeting with a focus of the Vision Project Civic Learning Outcomes. The spring meeting, held at North Shore Community College focused on the formalization of the committee, the creation of a mission and goals and planning for future projects. Shelley is currently working on a subcommittee in the creation of an official charter for the council.

“Mount Wachusett Community College has been engaged with Massachusetts Campus Compact since our founding in 1995. The leadership of President Dan Asquino both inspired and grounded the MACC membership in the power and relevance of civic engagement to community colleges. Dr. Asquino is widely recognized as a national and state leader in promoting civic engagement as an integral part of a community college education. His strong beliefs in access and social justice drives MWCC to be open to new and innovate collaborations that will move the needle in financial aid for first generation college students.”

BARBARA CANYES
MACC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE VISION PROJECT STUDY GROUP

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education is looking to the Community Engaged public colleges and universities to help move forward the Vision Project goal of Civic Learning. One of our goals in this objectives is to include data on student experiences (curricular, co-curricular and off campus) that promote civic learning at a State level. In an effort to take some time to create a system that can completely capture all such data from all public campuses in useable form, the DHE is working with the twelve public colleges and universities in Massachusetts that have achieved the Carnegie Foundation elective Community Engagement classification to identify currently offered courses that advance the goal of civic learning. Representing MWCC are Fagan Forhan, Center Director; Dan Soucy, Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement; and, Tiffany Parker, Senior Research Analyst.

COMMONWEALTH CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

This year, the staff of the Center were honored to be nominated by the College, and awarded by the State of Massachusetts Executive Office with the prestigious Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance. The Center staff were recognized for the multi-faceted and groundbreaking work as a national and state leader in the growing civic engagement movement taking place on college and university campuses throughout Massachusetts and the country. The award served as an acknowledgement of the initiatives developed and instituted by this dedicated team and achieving the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification.

“The Center promotes a vibrant community-engagement platform that challenges our students, faculty, staff, and area partners to work together in addressing unmet needs in the community. The reciprocal relationships built over the years have become pivotal in our students’ educations, and our nonprofit community organizations serve as co-educators of our students. Students gain practical experience that sets them apart in a competitive job market and communities benefit tremendously by this engagement.

Through the coordinated, strategic work of the Center, our students share their skills, time and talents to assist peers as well as residents and organizations in our region. The center guides faculty and staff to integrate civic engagement into their programs. Our community partners embrace these mutually beneficial opportunities to enrich the lives of all residents in North Central Massachusetts.

The work of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement helps ensure MWCC students receive a high-quality, well-rounded education, which prepares them to be active citizens both locally and globally.”
BROUGHT TO LIFE

learning
BROUGHT TO LIFE
All reported hours accumulated through service learning, internships, and MWCC-sponsored volunteerism continue to be noted on student transcripts, providing students with an official documentation of their contributions to the greater community. These transcript notations provide an opportunity for students to open up a conversation with a potential employer or transfer advisor about their experiences within the community and what they learned from those experiences. Not only does our collaboration with the Records office allow for students to see their cumulative impact within our community on their official transcript, it also allows for a deep analysis of student success.

Current data shows a 23% higher retention rate for students who are involved with service learning over the last seven terms (Fall of 2011 – Fall of 2014) as compared to those who do not, across all areas of study.

Combined with the statistics from the previous analysis of service learning data from the six terms prior (26% retention), this demonstrates a 24.5% higher retention rate for students at MWCC who partake in service learning vs. those in the same courses who do not.
“The Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement is the hub for community partnerships at MWCC. By utilizing a MACC AmeriCorps*VISTA member thoughtfully and intentionally the Center has increased their capacity to serve a number of local organizations that meet critical needs in surrounding communities.

Through the many facets of our collaboration with the Center, the thing that strikes me the most is the student centered approach that they take in everything they do. They way the staff speak to and about their students is grounded in pride and potential. Collaborating with MWCC means that you believe in the transformative power of service and engagement to those serving and those being served.”

KAREN CHISOLM
DIRECTOR, MACC AMERICORPS*VISTA PROGRAM
Every year, the Center recognizes students for their outstanding service to our community. Students are recognized at a Service Learning Celebration where faculty, staff and students come together to honor those about to graduate who have provided thousands of hours of service.
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<td>100+ (within one academic year)</td>
<td>Eligibility for United States President’s Volunteer Service Award</td>
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MWCC student Aaron Trudeau was among a select group of VIPs invited to join President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, First Lady Michelle Obama and other national leaders in Boston for the March 30 dedication of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate.

The 23-year-old Liberal Arts Biological Sciences major and Marine Corps veteran was one of 50 college students selected to attend after winning a national essay contest on the importance of community service.

"Attending the event was a great honor," said Trudeau, who wore his dress military uniform and received a personal "challenge coin" from Vice President Biden.

Aaron Trudeau was also the recipient of the Sharyn Rice Community Leadership Award, given at the annual Evening of Excellence, for his significant civic engagement and volunteer efforts at MWCC.

"I wrote about how 9/11 impacted my life, and how it was the driving force behind me becoming a Marine. I then went on to talk about how I still felt I had much more to do for my country and community. I still feel and believe that I have a duty and an obligation to my community.

It is my belief that without community service, our societies and communities would fall apart. It gives you a different perspective, allows you to be more knowledgeable and aware of the community around us, as well as bring us closer together as a community.”

Aaron Trudeau

MWCC Student Trustee Phillip Stan was named a 2015 Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Bronze Scholar. This year, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation recognized 150 students out of 1,700 applicants. Stan was awarded a $1,000 scholarship and a medallion.

The competition required students to write an essay on what they view as their most significant contribution at their college. Stan’s award-winning essay focused on his work as a volunteer mentor to fellow students through the Students Serving Our Students (SOS) program.
MWCC STUDENT VOLUNTEERS “MAKE MAGIC” ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

“We make magic” every single day here at Mount Wachusett Community College and a big part of that magic is civic engagement,” President Daniel Asquino announced to an exuberant gathering of students, faculty and community members during the college’s annual Service Learning & Volunteer Celebration.

“Giving back to the community has been a cornerstone of a Mount Wachusett Community College education for nearly two decades,” he said.

The event, hosted May 19 by the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, recognized a wide range of campus and community service learning and volunteer initiatives throughout the academic year. Over the course of the year, MWCC students completed 25,777 hours of service to the community valued at more than $533,000 dollars, said Fagan Forhan, Director of Experiential Learning Opportunities and Civic Engagement, and the director of the Center.

Under the leadership of President Asquino, “MWCC is leading the charge of civic engagement and service learning,” locally, in the Commonwealth and nationally, Forhan said. More than 80 students were recognized this year with the President’s Service and Volunteerism Award.

State Representative Jon Zlotnik presented legislative citations to John Day, who received the national Newman Civic Fellow Award from Campus Compact, and Student Trustee Phillip Stan, who was named one of 150 Coca Cola Scholars in the country this year by the Coca Cola Foundation.

Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts received the Community Partner of the Year Award in recognition of many years of dedicated service to the community and to the college’s students. Habitat has served as a host site for the college’s alternative spring break, and summer leadership camp, and also has hosted service learning students, interns and student volunteers.

Service learning scholarships were presented to Julianne Hutchins, for her work teaching diabetic children how to snowboard, and to Lori Belliveau, who completed 161 hours of service during a January trip to Haiti with the nonprofit organization Forward in Health.

MWCC’s chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society received the Above and Beyond Award for setting a new record with its annual Project Graduation food drive. Between hosting a character breakfast for the community and other fundraising efforts this spring, PTK raised more than $3,400 to benefit the Gardner and Winchendon Community Action Councils, and the Students SOS office.

Graduating student Yasmine Kanaan & alumna Tiffianie LeBlanc presented the Civic Engagement Career Achievement Recognition to retiring professors Joel Anderson of the Media Arts & Technology Department, and John Reilly of the Business Department.

Lauren Mountain, Associate Director of United Way Youth Venture, presented MWCC Changemakers recognition to students participating in the community service program. This year, more than 60 MWCC student participated in community ventures.

Student Government Association member Cathy Teague, who will serve on campus next year as the 2015-2016 AmeriCorps*VISTA, congratulated her peers, and encouraged the graduating and continuing students to remain committed to serving others.

“Every one of you are here because you made a difference, no matter how big or how small. No act of kindness or generosity is ever wasted.”

This article was featured on Mount Wachusett Community College’s website on May 19, 2015.
“Helping people gives me so much energy, and I love doing it.”

JASSON ALVARADO GOMEZ
Capitalizing on its students’ eagerness to participate in community-engagement activities and a successful first year, Mount Wachusett Community College hosted its second annual United Way Day of Caring at its Gardner campus on Thursday, Sept. 18.

Through the leadership of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, more than 200 volunteers packaged 20,736 meals for food pantries and veterans centers in North Central Massachusetts. An additional 200 meals were made available to MWCC students struggling with food security through the college’s Students Serving Our Students (SOS) program.

MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino, whose educational philosophy and college curriculum have long stressed civic engagement, said, “As Americans, we have an obligation to give back, and we are thrilled that our students and faculty can confront the major issue of hunger by helping individuals in North Central Massachusetts.”

MWCC became a Day of Caring host site for the first time in 2013, following years of participation in the program and appeals from students wishing to donate their time. This year, the center organized 75-minute volunteer shifts from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. to accommodate students’ class schedules and maximize the number of meals distributed throughout the community.

Civic engagement has been the cornerstone of our college for the last two decades, and it is the cornerstone of our democracy.

President Daniel M. Asquino

“This is a very important undertaking because we are supporting food pantries throughout North Central Massachusetts, most of which have low stocks,” said Fagan Forhan, Director of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement. “Volunteer turnout this year has surpassed our expectations, so we made the decision to up the ante from 16,000 meals to 20,000 meals.”

The supplies were purchased from Outreach, Inc., an Iowa-based nonprofit that also operates in the Northeast, to create packages of meals consisting of macaroni and cheese and rice and beans.

Forhan credited the increased turnout to MWCC student and AmeriCorps VISTA John Day, who spearheaded the recruitment process. Among the many volunteers, MWCC student Jasson Alvarado Gomez arrived at 7 a.m. and unloaded an entire truck by himself.

“I get to school at 7 a.m. every day, so I was happy that I could help set up before the event started,” said Gomez, who, in his first year of volunteering, worked three shifts. “Helping people gives me so much energy, and I love doing it.”

MWCC participated along with numerous other organizations in North Central Massachusetts, recognizing the 19th Annual United Way Day of Caring.
For the ninth consecutive year, Mount Wachusett Community College’s Early Childhood Education Department, MOC Head Start, students, teachers and most importantly, preschool children, have adorned the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education with works of art in celebration of the annual Week of the Young Child.

MWCC students completed a combined 300 hours of service learning this year to make the event a success. Guests visited the Garrison Center throughout the day on April 14, and were amazed at the imagination, ingenuity and creativity that children’s art represents. In the afternoon and evening parents, grandparents, friends and important others joined the children for an open house with Early Childhood students supporting the teachers and offering guided tours of the artwork.

“At the end of the day, it is about the children, their families and their lives. I am thrilled to be part of their journey.”

MAUREEN PROVOST, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & GARRISON CENTER LIAISON

“It certainly is a tremendous amount of work for all those involved, but when we have the opportunity to see the joy on the faces of our youngest members and hear them explain complicated pieces in the simplest of terms to those around them, we know why we are passionate about our art show,” said ECE Associate Professor Maureen Provost.

This year’s event was sponsored by: the MWCC Early Childhood Education Department; children and teachers at the Garrison Center; MOC Childcare and Head Start Services; the Early Childcare Education Club; service learning students from Early Childhood and Elementary Education; the MWCC Humanities Project, funded through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; and MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement.
This spring, MWCC’s Phi Delta Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society inducted 85 new members, and presented sizeable donations to community organizations from funds raised through a variety of events.

During the chapter’s induction ceremony on May 4, chapter officers and members presented a $750 check to the Gardner Community Action Council, a $750 check to the Winchendon Community Action Council, and a $1,000 to the student-run Students Serving Our Students program at MWCC.

Hundreds of kindergarten and first grade students at Waterford Street School ended the school year with fun summertime reading, thanks to a donation from a group of Mount Wachusett Community College students.

Members of Otaku United, a club that celebrates Asian culture, including art, language and anime, raised more than $1,000 during the spring semester by conducting a silent auction of a wide range of gift cards and items donated to the club to support the cause. Proceeds from the auction were used to purchase age-appropriate books for the students from the Scholastic Reading Club.

The club donated an additional 50 books to the Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education at MWCC.
UNPLUG AND PLAY
Mount Wachusett Community College art students partnered with the city of Gardner to transform a graffiti-covered wall into public art at the newly refurbished Jackson Playground.

Since mid-May, five students have been working on their “Unplug and Play” mural conveying their message that children should put down the controllers and have fun at the playground. The 150-foot mural depicts Gardner scenes, ranging from the giant chair to the orange and black stripes of the Wildcats to the college’s turbines.

On June 8, President Daniel M. Asquino, Mayor Mark Hawke, and state Rep. Jonathan Zlotnik, Art Professor Thomas Matsuda, chair of the college’s art department, and other community and college officials visited the site and congratulated the artists on their accomplishment. The artists are Ben Mikels, Anthony Guerrero, Cyrus Ndolo, Margot Parrot, and Kabiligenfai Subramanian.

MWCC art students have participated in community art projects since 2008, beginning with a mural at the Goodnow Pearson building on Main Street that covered boarded windows at the former department store.

“I was so amazed at how quickly it all came together. The students worked very hard and are very dedicated.”

THOMAS MATSUDA, PROFESSOR OF ART

“Civic engagement has become a hallmark of Mount Wachusett Community College, and this is largely due to the enthusiasm and dedication of our students and faculty, who volunteered their time and talents in so many ways,” said MWCC president Daniel M. Asquino. “We’re very proud of the students who participated in this downtown beautification project.”

“This is a great project. It provides experience for the students and enhances the image of the city. It’s ideal,” he added.

Matsuda, chair of the college’s art department, explained that the students worked collaboratively to develop the theme. “I was so amazed at how quickly it all came together. The students worked very hard and are very dedicated.”

The project has received great support from the community said Joshua Cormier, the city’s Economic Development Coordinator, who has heard from many families who appreciate what the students have done.

“It added a lot of character to the playground, Cormier said, noting it would likely gain the new nickname “Unplug and Play Playground.”
ISC220, the General Studies Capstone course, students dedicated over 1,326 hours of service to our community this academic year. Three sections were offered consisting of a total of 41 students.

Students performed their service in a variety of settings which aligned with the goals of the particular section. One section focused exclusively on the veteran population with 7 students providing 196 hours of service to the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center.

The other two sections focused on two distinct populations, children and the elderly. Students were deployed at the Leominster Senior Center at the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster for the remaining sections. In addition, for the first time students were encouraged to seek alternative sites based on their particular career goals and interests. In addition, this was the first year where General Studies Allied Health students participated in the course, leading to an even greater diversity in sites and experience as they explored among other things areas of complimentary health care.

Sites that hosted ISDC 220 Students in 2014-2015:
- Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster
- MVOC (Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center)
- Leominster Senior Center
- MWCC SOS Office
- Abby’s House
- A Better Place Message and Mediumship
- Habitat for Humanity
- House of Peace and Education (HOPE)

NobleHour is our online platform to publicize local volunteer service opportunities and to collect, verify, and approve timesheets for service learning, internships, externships, and MWCC-affiliated volunteer service.

HOURS OF TRAINING

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“A variety of barriers may inhibit or prevent community college students’ involvement on their campus and in their communities. Having civic engagement as an integral part of our leadership programs and group and club experience helps students overcome those barriers and achieve a more complete and meaningful educational experience.

Collaboration with the Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement has been key to sustaining and growing our programs. Our Student leaders have found true purpose to their involvement directly related to participation with the center and staff.”

GREGORY CLEMENT
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENTS
Over winter break, a group of MWCC nursing students, alumni and faculty members spent a week in Haiti to provide health care to impoverished children and adults served by the Gardner nonprofit Forward in Health.

Forward in Health, founded by Dr. John Mulqueen and MWCC alumna Paula Mulqueen, RN, is dedicated to providing health care to residents in a rural area just outside Les Cayes. The organization has organized more than 50 mission trips since 2001, and is now in the final stages of building a clinic to serve residents in one of the world’s poorest countries. On these trips, they bring with them medicine, supplies, volunteers from the community – and hope.

“It was a privilege to take my alma mater to the third world. Our MWCC nursing pin is engraved with the words ‘Service to Humanity and the World’, and this trip was a true testament to the Mount, and to Gardner, that we have produced the finest nurses who are willing to step outside their comfort zone to serve others.”

PAULA MULQUEEN, MWCC NURSING GRADUATE / FOUNDER, FORWARD IN HEALTH

Faculty members Katherine Pecorelli and Kathy Panagiotes, nursing students Diana Bronson, Lori Belliveau, Katelyn Halfrey and Dawn Fuller, and nursing program alumni Marquita Day and Donna Muse joined Paula on the mission trip Jan. 3 to 13. Forward in Health board member Debbie Orre, former director of MWCC’s nursing program, joined the healthcare team, along with several other volunteers from the community.

Days before they were set to leave from Boston, the trip was nearly canceled due to a new round of political unrest in Haiti. Once there, the country’s electricity was not working for much of the time. The volunteers were there for the country’s National Day of Mourning on Jan. 12, marking five years since a massive earthquake devastated the island.

Without access to health care, even the most common of ailments than can be cured with over the counter medicines in the U.S. can become full-blown health issues in Haiti when left untreated, such as respiratory illness and skin infections. The team of volunteers held a mountain clinic and assessed close to 100 patients. In addition to the time spent administering direct care to patients, volunteers visited an orphanage run by the Sisters of Charity, the order founded by Mother Teresa, and took in some local sites.
DAYS OF SERVICE

The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement provides opportunities for students, faculty and staff to be involved in the community as a cohort in addition to providing individual volunteer opportunities and service learning placements.

Every year the Center works closely with Student Activities to welcome new students to campus through Leadership Academy. This year, over 45 students participated in a day of service volunteering their time with on campus clean up, with assembling 77 backpacks of donated school items for children in foster care in North Central Massachusetts, at the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center readying the Center for the coming academic year, and at Many Hands Organic Farm in Barre.

Mount Wachusett Community College has long participated in the United Way Day of Caring, and this year we once again served as a host site. Through the Center, more than 100 students, faculty and staff packaged 20,736 meals of rice and beans for families in need. The meals were distributed within North Central Massachusetts.

Spring Break is traditionally a time for students to enjoy a week where they can catch up on school work, spend time with friends and family or put in extra hours at paying jobs. However, every year a group of students spend one day of their break in the service of others. This year, 7 students, 2 staff and 1 faculty member volunteered with the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store for Alternative Spring Break. The volunteers worked in various capacities from helping customers, to stocking shelves and from logging inventory to cleaning display areas.
SOS

STUDENTS SERVING OUR STUDENTS
“About one year ago, I found myself in a really rough patch. My personal life had gotten so out of hand, it was affecting my school work. One of my teachers began to notice a change in my attitude, attendance, and grades.

One day after class, she pulled me aside and asked what was going on. I began to tell her I was a recently single mom that had just been kicked out of my home and about to lose my job. She told me about the SOS program and introduced me to Fagan. Typically, I’m a very private person, but Fagan made me feel comfortable right away. She help me find programs that helped me get through my situation. Fagan also introduced me to Kat, who was a big help as well.

They both gave me hope and I regained the confidence I lost.

The SOS program helped me in so many ways. It was because of this program that I was able to find an apartment, provide food for my son, graduate, get full time plus a raise at work, and furnish my new apartment.

I feel like I am capable of anything, including furthering my education because of the support and guidance I received from the program.

Thank you for believing in me when I didn’t.”

ANONYMOUS MWCC STUDENT
The Students Serving Our Students (SOS) peer-to-peer mentoring program is a student created and student lead service offered within the Center. With the goal of helping MWCC students succeed in their education, this program offers a variety of services to help students overcome personal barriers. Students assist their peers by connecting them with external social and community services and internal supports at the college. These referrals aid the students in overcoming a variety of barriers such as financial concerns, childcare challenges, transportation issues, and the basic needs for food and or shelter.

In 2014-2015, the program consisted of two interns, four service learners, and twelve volunteers. Combined, these students served 78 MWCC individuals. They met with these students approximately 187 times for an average of three visits per student seeking assistance.

The SOS office is structured such that student mentors guide the implementation of the program, which allows for mentors to have a truly empowering experience. There are two meetings each month in place to ensure that the student mentors, volunteers, and interns are given the opportunity to collaborate. SOS mentors and interns acquire skills in critical thinking, communication and collaboration; increase their knowledge about resources and opportunities available in the North Central region; and are afforded the opportunity to develop both civic and professional experience. 93% of the mentors have excelled in their studies and graduated or transferred; of those who graduated this year, 100% did so with honors.

98% of students who received services from the SOS Office completed the semester; 68% of students who came to SOS for help re-enrolled in the following semester, graduated or transferred.
ADDRESSING HUNGER

THIS YEAR, THE CENTER FOR CIVIC LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOCUSED ON THE ISSUES OF HUNGER, AS PART OF THE ECONOMIC INEQUALITY INITIATIVE.

HUNGER BANQUET

The first Annual MWCC Hunger Banquet November 20th was held in an effort to expose students to hunger issues throughout the world. Based on the Oxfam model, this event brought faculty, staff and students together to experience a meal which was determined by random seating assignments.

Upon entry to the event, participants were given an identity which indicated their name, country of residence and other identifying factors such as age, family status and job. 60% of participants were designated as low-income and received a meal of white rice and water – which they ate on the floor with their hands. Middle-income individuals made up another 30% of participants and were seated at a table, had a bowl of rice and beans, water and plastic utensils. Finally, high-income individuals made up just 10% of the population and were seated at a table with linen, china and were served a plated three course meal.

During the event itself, Dan Soucy (faculty chair of civic engagement and assistant professor of philosophy) and Julie Capozzi (associate professor of sociology and Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow) provided an interactive discussion on issues of poverty worldwide and at home. As entrance to the event, people either donated $1 or a canned good. All donations were divided between two local CAC food pantries and the SOS Food Voucher program.

SOS SOUP VOUCHERS

This year marked the first full year of the Students SOS Food Voucher Program. Students in need received a voucher from the Green Street Cafeteria for a bowl of soup or a slice of pizza, and a piece of fruit. They were also provided with a re-usable water bottle. Each time a student is provided with a voucher, they go through an intake process, helping to address the root of the food insecurity and take steps to addressing the problem in a more fundamental way. 161 Vouchers were given to 25 students.

PHI THETA KAPPA CHARACTER BREAKFAST

Every year, Phi Theta Kappa holds a food drive at graduation to help alleviate some food insecurities at through local food pantries. This year PTK and SOS hosted a Character Breakfast and sold over 250 tickets to the event while also holding multiple raffles which brought in over $3,400. With the funds raised, we donated to three local programs, the Gardner Community Action Committee the Winchendon Community Action Committee and the Students SOS office here on campus. Because of the money raised we were able to provide 188 meals to both Winchendon & Gardner CAC. We also donated $1,000 to Students SOS which purchased 572 vouchers for the soup voucher program, which provides lunch for students on campus who might otherwise go hungry.

93% of students who received a voucher completed the semester in which they sought assistance.

82% of those who received a voucher re-enrolled for the following semester, transferred, or graduated.
TEACHING AND LEARNING

transformative
The Center continued to provide The New York Times to faculty, staff, and students on the Gardner, Leominster, Burbank, and Devens campuses. An MWCC student, compensated directly by The New York Times, delivered sets of newspapers directly to classrooms in the Gardner campus for 14 different courses in the fall 2014 semester and 9 courses in the spring 2015 semester. The student deliveryperson also stocked racks throughout the Gardner campus each morning for public access to free copies throughout the day. There were also daily editions delivered directly to offices of deans, assistant deans, and faculty members by request. Our Leominster, Devens, and Burbank campuses also received free editions of The Times on days of the week requested by interested faculty teaching on those campuses. This year, 14,306 papers were distributed to MWCC staff, faculty, and students through the Center's partnership with the New York Times in Education program. The following programs integrated The New York Times regularly: Advertising, Biology, Counseling Methods & Interviewing Techniques, Critical Thinking, First Year Experience, Journalism, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Marketing, Reading, Sociology, and Strategic Management.
TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING

The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement brings learning to life in the classroom with presentations and workshops aimed at getting students engaged with the community and engaged in their own career planning. Every year Center staff present to students in Dual Enrollment courses as well as MWCC First Year Experience (FYE) students about the importance of service as the basis of which to begin thinking about and planning for a career. These workshops are interactive and meant to engage students in discussion about their futures. The Hiring Manager workshop provides students with an actual MWCC job description and over twenty fictionalized resumes and cover letters, complete with a scoring rubric. Students break up into small groups and they are the hiring committee charged with the task of deciding who merits an interview for the position. This activity serves as a catalyst for discussion about everything from constructing a resume and cover letter to what they can do now to gain valuable experience to enhance their own career prospects upon graduation.

In addition to the career focused sessions, the Center provides a workshop which challenges students to identify a community problem or need and brainstorm ways this need can be addressed via the power of service and volunteerism. Global and local issues are examined as students struggle with the limitations they feel regarding their ability to make an impact in the world. Students leave these workshops feeling empowered and inspired to make lasting change in their community.

Finally, Center Director, Fagan Forhan, conducts a Myers Briggs type personality test with students in an effort to help them identify their strengths and to better understand how they approach the world.
Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education holds a B.A. from Trinity College in Early Childhood & Elementary Education and a M.S. Ed. from the University of New England. Maureen has been involved in The Democracy Commitment for the past five years and as an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow she engaged students in activities regarding poverty and early education with a focus on service learning and advocacy.

12 students in 1 section of ECE 103

Associate Professor of Psychology and Sociology holds a B.A. from Rhode Island College and a M.Ed. in counseling psychology from Boston University. As an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow, Julie engaged students enrolled in Introduction to Sociology in the fall and spring through service learning opportunities, attendance at the Hunger Banquet and through a final project in this spring with a focus on 100 Photos that Changed the World where students were asked to select a photo and explaining how that one picture impacted social policy.

78 students in 2 sections of SOC 103 – Introduction to Sociology

Assistant Professor of Business holds an M.B.A. from Anna Maria College, A B.A. and A.S. from Walla Walla University. Elmer has spearheaded the new certificate program in non-profit management to launch this fall. As an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow, Elmer engaged students in his Economics 102 courses with discussions and activities on labor markets, fair wages and the impact of poverty on children in families. In addition, he also focused on topics including trade, economic inequality and wages in his ISC205 Honors course.

79 students in 1 section each of ISC205, Honors (17) and ECO 102 (62)

Professor of English holds an M.F.A and B.A. from the University of Massachusetts. Michelle attended the TDC/ADP Economic Inequality Institute in Washington, D.C. as a representative of the MWCC faculty in January. As an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow Michelle engaged students enrolled in two sections of HUM260, the Art of Being Human, in discussions and activities around how poverty is portrayed in art and in photography. With a focus on the depression area photographer, Dorothea Lange, students were encouraged to locate contemporary pieces of art which reflected poverty today.

37 students in 2 sections of HUM260 – The Art of Being Human
TOM MONTAGNO
Professor of Biology holds a Ph.D., M.S., M.A., and B.S. all from Ohio State University. Tom attended the ADP/TDC National Meeting in New Orleans this June as a MWCC faculty representative where he presented on economic inequality in the farming sector. As an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow, Tom focused on economic inequality in the farming sector, asking students to reflect on the role corporatization of farming has played in the economic and environmental wellbeing of our society.

7 students in 1 section of BIO 141 – Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture

SHANE MARTIN
Adjunct Faculty member in Political Science, Shane holds an M.S. in Professional Politic Studies from Suffolk University and a B.S. in Business from Fitchburg State University. After having attended the TDC/ADP National Meeting in June 2014, Shane became an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow and integrated the topic of economic inequality into his speech and Massachusetts and the Federal System courses. He engaged students in conversations and activities related to among other topics, wealth distribution.

26 students – 1 section each of Mass and the Federal System (10) and Speech (16)

KATE SMITH
Adjunct Faculty member in English and ELA, Kate holds a B.A from Clark University in English and an M.A. from Fitchburg State College in English. Kate, as an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow, engaged her students in English 101 in fiction and non-fiction texts which focused on issues pertaining to economic inequality. Students were prompted to construct essays in response to the readings addressing topics ranging from health care to labor markets to fair labor practices.

90 students in 5 sections of ENG 101

YVONNE NOYES-STEVEN
Adjunct Faculty member in Human Services. As an Economic Inequality Faculty Fellow, Yvonne brought in a feminist scholar to initiate a conversation on gender and economic inequality. This led to a semester long focus on issues of gender and economic inequality within the context of work in human services.

Yvonne – 24 students in 2 sections of PSY101
FROM SOUP TO NUTS: TEACHING AND LEARNING ROUNDTABLE was held on October 15 and was facilitated by Fagan Forhan, Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement Director. Faculty and staff in attendance discussed best practices for implementing service learning in a way that complements existing learning outcomes. Participants were able to brainstorm new strategies and ideas, and discuss how to design classroom assignments with a civic engagement focus.

IT TAKES A CAMPUS: TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE was held on April 10 at Bristol Community College. Fagan and Greg Clement, Associate Dean of Students, presented: “A Campus Culture of Civic Learning: Bridging Academic Affairs and Student Services.” The Keynote speaker, Dr. Sandy Shugart, President of Valencia College, said “The goal is to create conditions for student learning that improve success for all students and eliminate the predictability of success or failure based on demographic factors.”

INNOVATIONS 2015 a program of the League for Innovation, was held March 8-12 at Copley Place in Boston. This international conference provides a forum for collaboration among academic experts and leading community college professionals, while granting participants exclusive access to the most inventive and thought-provoking programs from around the world. Fagan Forhan presented a civic engagement session, with Greg Clement as co-presenter. Fagan and Greg presented “Creating a Culture of Civic Learning,” an interactive workshop in which participants learned ways to infuse civic learning and engagement into curricular and co-curricular opportunities in ways that promote student success.
THE 2015 ADP/TDC/NASPA CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT MEETING was held June 3-7, in New Orleans, LA. The theme of the meeting was “Stewardship of Place”: A Civic Mission of Higher Education. Colleges and universities can help bridge the divides of today's paradoxical social landscape, spaces in which technology can make us more connected than ever, but social relations in many dimensions are fractured, contested, disconnected, and polarized. For higher education institutions to have a responsible relationship to place, our next generation and our democracy, we must embrace our role as anchor institutions in our communities and learn how to dialogue across difference, fully reward our faculty, and value engaged education for democracy. This annual conference helped to provide faculty, staff and student attendees from around the country with the tools to excel in these roles.

MWCC sent a team of eight individuals, including three students, to represent the college this year, and co-led the Economic Inequality Initiative programming in partnership with Keene State College. The 35 campuses participating in the project met multiple times throughout the conference, and had the opportunity to discuss curricular and co-curricular integration, as well as themes to focus on in the coming year. MWCC students and Keene State students collaborated to present one of the most popular sessions at the conference, in which participating students had the opportunity to debate the free community college proposal.

Some of the sessions led by MWCC were:

Living Wage vs. Minimum Wage Timeline, a Poster Session presented by John Day, in which he demonstrated the lack of congruence between the living wage and minimum wage over the past century, which has contributed to widespread economic inequality in the United States.

Students as Social Entrepreneurs: A Practical Process for Student-Led Community Change, a mini-institute facilitated by Fagan Forhan, and co-facilitated by students John Day, Kathleen Craigen and Cathy Teague, in which participants learned one model for designing and leading their own change projects, infusing passion and purpose to lead community change.

Economic Inequality in the Farming Sector, in which Professor Tom Montagno asked participants to look at economic inequality in the farming sector, as it was introduced in a recently developed course titled “Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture”. Using documentary film clips from “Food, Inc.” and tables/charts from “Foodopoly” by Wenonah Hauter, students gained a deeper understanding of the financial underpinnings our industrial food supply, especially those contract-growers, who take on enormous debt and earn below-poverty wages.

A Model of Campus Wide Civic Engagement: Stereoscopic Vision, a Poster Session by Dan Soucy and Shelley Errington Nicholson, in which the presenters demonstrated a spectrum of civic engagement that transcends classroom learning.
DOCTORAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Shelley Errington Nicholson presented on her recent research pertaining to the SOS Peer Mentoring Program. She conducted a qualitative research project where she examined the impact of peer mentoring on the peer mentors themselves. This poster session, at Rivier University in March, engaged other doctoral students in conversations about her qualitative research project.

THE LYNTON COLLOQUIUM

This year, Daniel Soucy represented the college at the Lynton Colloquium. The Colloquium focused on engaged scholarship, and celebrated the successful application of scholarly work to the betterment of communities.

RETIRING FACULTY

Retiring faculty members Joel Anderson and John Reilly were honored this year for their career commitments to civic engagement. Joel’s classes ran the annual Gardner Rotary Auction for many years and coordinated a community concert each spring; John’s classes provided tax services to low-income families and strategic analysis of economic development efforts locally.
“The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement consistently provides students with excellent opportunities to connect with and serve local communities through carefully cultivated partnerships with various nonprofits.”

WANDA POTHIER-HILL
MWCC ADJUNCT FACULTY
Enterprise Bank, in partnership with the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, has been hosting a series of free workshops for non-profit organizations in North Central Massachusetts for the past several years through the Non-Profit Collaborative.

This fall, the focus addressed a growing concern in the non-profit sector, the generational transfer of knowledge. As the baby boomer generation begins to transition out of the work force and the millennials are transferring in, we are encountering unprecedented generational diversity in the workforce. On November 19, State Senator Jennifer Flanagan and the Center’s own Director of Community Learning, Shelley Errington Nicholson, both spoke about the unique challenges and potential rewards associated with this phenomenon. Representatives from various sectors of the non-profit community engaged in a lively discussion with the speakers and with one another about this exciting topic.
“It has been my great pleasure to collaborate with the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement of Mount Wachusetts Community College and the college faculty during the past nine years. In my former position as HOPE for Kids Program Director at the House of Peace & Education, the Center and HOPE established a highly effective partnership that mutually benefited the MWCC students and the HOPE for Kids participants. HOPE became a site for Human Service interns and for service learning students.

The collaboration proved to be a valuable one that filled many of the volunteer needs of the HOPE for Kids program and the student requirements. The Service Learning students and the interns provided mentoring and tutoring services to the participants in grades K-8. As well, I was invited annually to speak to service learning classes about volunteering at HOPE and successfully engaged many students from the classes as volunteers.

Recent communications with the HOPE for Kids staff confirms this long-term connection continues to be an important one. The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement staff and I met earlier this year and discussed continuing our collaboration within the context of my new position as Volunteer Coordinator at the United Way of North Central Massachusetts. I look forward to our ongoing connection and I am excited about the future possibilities for our partnership.”

FRAN LONGTON
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, UNITED WAY OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
SITE PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts has been building simple, decent, affordable homes in Fitchburg and the 24 surrounding towns and cities since 1988. The Habitat Re-Store, located in Leominster has been serving the community since 2011 through providing low cost affordable building supplies and gently used furniture to area residents at discount prices while raising funds to continue funding new construction for families in need. Habitat served as a service site for the 2014 Alternative Spring Break and the Re-Store served as a site for the 2015 Alternative Spring Break. Habitat of North Central Massachusetts hosts MWCC interns, service learning students, and volunteers in addition to providing day of service opportunities. For their dedication to the local community and their commitment to providing a quality service experience for MWCC students, they were recognized as Site Partner of the Year for 2015.

COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

At the Annual Fall Student Leadership Retreat, James Bellina, President of the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, joined over 65 student leaders to discuss economic development in the City of Gardner. The students brainstormed proposals for the Chamber, focusing on underutilized space, youth engagement and abandoned buildings.

POLITICAL DEBATES

The two candidates for state representative for the 2nd Worcester District shared their views on gun control, a natural gas pipeline, medical marijuana, casinos and other issues at a debate held on October 15th. Incumbent State Rep. Jonathan Zlotnik and challenger Garret Shetrawski articulated their stances on these issues at the debate, with over 125 attendees.
“Over the last several years, we have received a tremendous amount of additional support from the volunteers MWCC has provided for us. We are pleased with the continued support we gain from our collaboration with the college. We also pride ourselves in being able to offer student volunteers a valuable learning experience to assist them in their career paths. Volunteers from MWCC have positively impacted our Club by assisting our staff and youth Club members with a wide variety of educational and recreational activities and programs, homework tutoring, and in helping with special events. Several volunteers assisted at our 5K Race fundraiser this year. Student volunteers also helped out at our Central MA Science Festival, offering hands-on activities and workshops for attendees. The variety of help that we receive from both student and faculty volunteers from MWCC gives us the opportunity to provide more programming and helps us to run our events more smoothly and efficiently. ”

REBECCA CYGANIEWICZ
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF FITCHBURG AND LEOMINSTER
The Office of Career Planning & Placement had a successful year as it continued its efforts to align itself with, and support, civic engagement learning outcomes. The Office provides job preparedness skills for our students in the classroom, one-on-one and in conjunction with on-campus activities.

In order to position students favorably in an economy showing signs of optimism, the Office of Career Planning & Placement increased its efforts in providing targeted services to the Gardner, Leominster and Devens campuses. These efforts included job search workshops, one-on-one student sessions as well as employer visits on all three campuses. Included in these efforts was support of the college’s advanced manufacturing program housed on the Devens campus. Job postings, employer visits, and site tours assisted in bringing job opportunities to these students.

To best prepare students for a targeted job search, the Coordinator of Career Planning & Placement, Patricia Brewerton, developed in-class presentations and workshops beginning with First Year Experience classes through capstone courses for those students soon-to-graduate. These workshops begin with a discussion of ‘in-demand’ majors, how to explore labor market trends, followed by discussions and development of resume building experiences, with a focus on utilizing civic engagement experiences to build the resume. Students learn how to apply their education at the college to real world experiences including volunteer experiences, service learning and cooperative education experiences and eventually paid part-time and full-time jobs.

The annual job fair attracted a record number of students this year. Students applied their dress for success skills and their resume building skills in order to land full-time, part-time and internship opportunities. Employers arrived at the college equipped to share job opportunities in the fields of human services, business, STEM, advanced manufacturing, computer information systems, and criminal justice to name a few. Both employers and students were impressed resulting in the opportunity for students to put their education to work!

Training students on job search strategies, participation in our job fair, and exposure to local job opportunities is also shared with our community, through a partnership with the House of Peace and Education in Gardner. These hands-on trainings and job opportunities bring a ‘can do’ attitude to HOPE clients, equipping them with skills necessary to compete in today’s market.
United Way Youth Venture Youth are a vibrant, yet often underutilized, source of power for creating and leading positive community change—but that is not necessarily the case in North Central Massachusetts. Young people involved in United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) through one of 14 partnering schools develop leadership skills, build confidence, provide countless services to their communities and most importantly, are given the chance to make lasting positive change in others as well as themselves.

During the UWYV process, youth learn how to identify and confront problems, and find creative solutions. A consistent presence in the region over the past 13 years, UWYV has changed the perception of how adults view youth in the communities served by the program. Youth are invited to share perspective, help make decisions, and lead change. They are a driving and inspirational force of creative, problem-solving energy, who are empowered with the skills and encouragement needed to improve their communities.

United Way Youth Venture is a three way partnership among Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture, which serves as the international model for UWYV programming. Young people involved in UWYV combine their passions and skills to address a problem they see in their community through an entirely youth-led and youth-created social venture.
PROGRAM EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

UWYV hosted several events including an invigorating Fall Kick Off event with more than 350 middle and high school students in attendance. Staff facilitated a Champion Training, Roundtable, and Strategic Discussion to educate and support our partnering school staff. MWCC hosted a second annual Administration Dinner for school superintendents and principals where keynote speaker State Senator Jamie Eldridge, passionately spoke about the power of youth and the large impact they have in our communities.

UWYV and Venture Teams had the opportunity to present the program at the Massachusetts Conference on Service and Learning, MWCC Foundation Dinner, Ashoka Conference and The United Way Community Leaders Conference.

Finally, UWYV staff worked closely with Ashoka’s Youth Venture to facilitate the international UWYV Training program, sponsored by SimplexGrinnell to help spread the program to new communities—$30,000 grants were awarded to Pike Peaks United Way, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado and United Way of Greater New Bedford, serving southeastern Massachusetts.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year, UWYV continued to make strides integrating the program more deeply into K-12 Common Core curriculum. Through a close partnership with the Leominster School District and Ayer Shirley Regional School District, UWYV staff was able to implement a school-based delivery model involving co-teaching student in grades 6th – 8th. In addition, the program was able to pilot their curriculum model into a 10th grade English class at Murdock High School in coordination with a unit on Civic Engagement.
279
VENTURES LAUNCHED
SINCE PROGRAM INCEPTION IN 2002

14 SCHOOL PARTNERS
MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL AND MWCC INCLUDED

41 NEW VENTURES
LAUNCHED ACROSS 9 SCHOOLS

33 ADDITIONAL TEAMS
IN PIPELINE TO BECOME A LAUNCHED VENTURE

2,406.98
COST OF DELIVERING PROGRAM TO UWYV TEAMS, A 46% REDUCTION FROM FY14

4,200
YOUTH ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN WORKSHOPS, VENTURE TEAM DEVELOPMENT OR VENTURE VOLUNTEERING

$10,817
RAISED IN MATCHING FUNDS TO SUPPORT THEIR VENTURE, A 37% INCREASE FROM FY14

9,000
AREA YOUTH EXPOSED THIS YEAR

$20,435
IN SEED FUNDING AWARDED TO LAUNCH VENTURE EFFORTS

5 PARTNERS
IMPLEMENTING UWYV CURRICULUM

89%
FEEL THAT PEOPLE THEIR AGE CAN INFLUENCE DECISIONS AND POLICIES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY.

85%
FEEL THEIR VENTURE HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR COMMUNITY.

76%
BELIEVE THEY CAN LEAD CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

87%
PLAN TO CONTINUE DOING THINGS THAT WILL IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITY IN THE FUTURE.

83%
BELIEVE THAT UWYV HAS HELPED THEM LEARN HOW TO PROBLEM SOLVE.

VENTURERS SAY...
DEGREES OF SUCCESS

INTRODUCING THE NEW LACE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

This year, Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement Dan Soucy and Assistant Professor of Business, Elmer Eubanks, developed two educational pathways for students interested in pursuing civic and community engagement professionally. Beginning in fall of 2016, MWCC is launching two new programs for students who want to turn their passion for community service into a career. The programs were designed to balance theory and practice, the principled and the pragmatic, within each program and jointly. Both programs were approved by the division of Academic Affairs and have begun enrolling students for fall.

The new Liberal Arts & Sciences concentration in Civic Engagement and Community Leadership (LACE Degree) will focus students on current social, political, and economic issues. It is designed for students interested in social responsibility in the public or nonprofit sector. Through this degree concentration, students will acquire the skills, wisdom and knowledge needed to make a difference in the vibrancy of their communities and the world. In addition, the program was built to meet the transfer requirements of the MassTransfer agreement, which makes it a good fit for students planning to transfer to a four-year college or university. The program serves as a solid foundation for numerous bachelor programs, including economics, regional planning, business, philosophy, environmental science, history, political science, psychology, human services and government. The program heavily emphasizes developing students’ civic identities and ensuring that the lessons learned are applicable in both the workforce and everyday life.

As an alternative to the associate degree, students may pursue a Certificate in Nonprofit Management, which was designed by Assistant Professor Eubanks to be completed in as little as one academic year. This program consists of nine courses, including small business management, introduction to human services, introduction to grant writing, and elective courses, such as business ethics, communication for business and industry, or introduction to law. Professionals in nonprofit organizations often are responsible for a variety of roles. As a result, employees require a high degree of dexterity to successfully navigate today’s nonprofit environment. This credential may also be used to start a career as a community service manager, or be applied to an associate degree in Business Administration.

“OUR OWN EXPERIMENT IN DEMOCRACY HAS SEEMED TO PAYOFF, AS MOUNT WAChUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS THE FIRST COLLEGE IN THE COMMONWEALTH TO OFFER A LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE OPTION THAT BLENDS BOTH CIVIC KNOWLEDGE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. THE LACE DEGREE AND THE NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE HAVE BOTH BEEN PART OF OUR UNTIRING EFFORT TO HELP FOSTER A FUTURE WHERE INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE WISDOM, PASSION, AND KNOW HOW, TO CREATE AND CURATE A MORE DEMOCRATIC WORLD”.

DAN SOUCY, FACULTY CHAIR OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
$574,143 ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL MA REGION

24,887 HOURS OF SERVICE TO THE GREATER COMMUNITY

865 STUDENTS REPORTED SERVICE HOURS

111 COURSES OFFERED SERVICE LEARNING TO STUDENTS

$3,630,895 VALUE OF STUDENT TIME WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

157,386 HOURS OF SERVICE SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

Inclusive of 1,980 students who completed 132,499 hours within their community-based practicum, field experience or clinical placement.

100% OF STUDENTS WHO REPORTED SAID THAT THEY GAINED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OWN IDENTITY AND VALUES AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXPERIENCE.

100% OF STUDENTS WHO REPORTED INDICATED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF COURSE OBJECTIVES AND THAT THEY FEEL MORE PREPARED FOR THEIR CAREER.

81% OF ALL STUDENT CLUBS COMPLETED TWO OR MORE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS.