Be civic-minded. Be impactful. Be engaged.
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June, 2014

This year marks the thirteenth year in a very focused and intentional evolution of civic learning and civic engagement at Mount Wachusett Community College. It has been a year of progress on many fronts, from student learning and faculty development to mutually beneficial impact for and with our partnering organizations. For the staff of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, it served as a confirmation that the work we do here for the benefit of our students and the greater community is the correct path for the college as a whole and the region we serve.

There is a disturbing trend among community colleges which are dropping the term ‘community’ from their titles; the fear is that prospective students see community college as a choice of last resort. In my view, it is more important than ever that community colleges wear the mantle of COMMUNITY proudly. We are institutions of hope, of support, and of challenge. Our faculty are some of the most dedicated and driven faculty in the field, who truly understand and value the connection between civic engagement and learning outcomes and understand that students who are connected with their communities are more successful, are better employees and are more prepared to turn the wheels of change.

Our students brave circumstances of difficulty and challenge just to walk through the doors of MWCC each day. These same students are leading change, both within our own institution and within the greater community by taking on responsibility that many would shirk. They balance full course loads with family, children, part-time jobs, and sometimes, more serious issues such as homelessness and food insecurity. The national rhetoric around the potential for success has largely been focused on an inherent ability to persevere, referred to as ‘grit’. Our students have it. But they also have demonstrated a very clear sense of responsibility to our community. They have invested in the needs of the immediate MWCC community and North Central Massachusetts with their heads, their hearts and their hands.

Over the past thirteen years, the Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement has evolved into a department that is strategically aligned with the college’s mission, goals and values. The work of the staff has shifted in focus to the development and support of our students, our faculty and the greater community in ways that are truly transformational in nature for all those involved. It has transformed the ways that students understand their roles as members of this community; it has transformed the ways that faculty teach course content; it has transformed the ways that the community works with and values student contributions; and, our work here at MWCC is informing the ways that the State of Massachusetts and the nation are understanding and focusing on civic learning as a movement and responsibility of higher education.

On May 6, 2014, a vote by the Board of Higher Education made Massachusetts the first state in the nation to require civic learning in public higher education through The Vision Project. Thanks to the visionary leadership of President Daniel M. Asquino, and the first distribution of funding from a generous $2 million endowment given to the College for the Center by an anonymous donor, MWCC is at the forefront of a moment in time where academic learning and community engagement are intrinsically intertwined; where community members serve as co-educators and students serve as peers to professionals. MWCC continues to be a national leader in the civic engagement movement, but more importantly, is allowing students to find their own voice, to learn their own agency, and to become leaders within our region and beyond.

Best,

Ms. Fagan R. Forhan
Director, Experiential Learning Opportunities & Civic Engagement
Director, Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement
The leadership of President Daniel M. Asquino in the field of civic learning and community engagement is visionary. This year, he chaired the Study Group commissioned by the Board of Higher Education to make recommendations on state-wide integration of civic learning outcomes for students in public higher education. Through his leadership and foresight, the college has made advancements in the field of civic engagement that set MWCC apart from not only other community colleges, but also four-year colleges and universities. President Asquino is a founding signatory of The Democracy Commitment, the community college sister project to the American Democracy Project aimed at ensuring that 100% of community college graduates have the opportunity to gain an education in civic engagement and democratic practice. Thanks to President Asquino's unwavering support and powerful leadership, MWCC is consistently noted as a leader in this work, both state-wide and nationally.

“We are a society confronted with a civic recession. It’s time to step up to the plate,” said President Asquino, who implemented civic engagement as a hallmark at Mount Wachusett Community College nearly two decades ago. Since emphasizing community engagement and learning in its academic programs, students are more excited about their learning. They’re actually going out into the community to apply that learning.”

- MWCC E-News, Civic Engagement Key Focus at State Board of Higher Education Meeting, November 1, 2013

The Director of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, Fagan Forhan, has served with MWCC for the past eight years, and with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the past fourteen. In her various roles at the College (all within the Center), she has had the opportunity to bring civic learning into the fabric of the college's infrastructure, and has not shied away from making difficult decisions and choices, such as letting a grant program come to an end, if it is not in alignment with the Center's and the College's mission and values. She also served on the Board of Higher Education's Study Group, focusing specifically on developing student civic learning outcomes appropriate to degree level. Forhan also serves on the steering committee of The Democracy Commitment alongside President Asquino. As a member of the steering committee, she collaborates with leaders in civic engagement from community colleges across the country to support the growth and development of the integration of civic learning at a national level into the education of every single student who attends a community college.

Civic engagement has been embedded within the college's mission and strategic plan, and faculty are currently reviewing a new set of core learning outcomes which include “social responsibility” as one defined area of focus. The Center, as the institutionalized entity of the college that supports community service, service learning and civic engagement, also receives external funding through a generous $2 million endowment provided to the college by an anonymous donor committed to civic and community engagement via the North Central Massachusetts Community Foundation. In addition, the Center and its programs are supported by grant funding from Massachusetts Campus Compact, the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, the MWCC Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.
THE VISION PROJECT

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) highlighted the work of MWCC and the Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement in their October 2013 report on The Vision Project, Within Our Sights. The Vision Project, an unprecedented move from the Department of Higher Education toward true accountability in higher education, includes six key outcomes for public institutions as a means of producing the ‘best educated workforce and citizenry in the nation’. Both President Asquino and Center Director Fagan Forhan served on the Study Group tasked with making recommendations to the BHE on a statewide civic learning strategy in support of the fifth key outcome, “Preparing Citizens”.

The Vision Project has seven key outcomes, one of which is to prepare individuals for effective democratic participation, which in turn promotes growth of healthy communities, global economic vitality, social and political well-being and democratic human interactions. The Study Group was charged with establishing and articulating the objectives of the civic learning and engagement outcome of the Vision Project in order to meet this goal. To achieve this end, the Study Group developed two documents, the Massachusetts Institutional Rubric for the Promotion and Development of Civic Learning and Engagement which articulates the capacities that institutions need to demonstrate in order to support students’ civic learning. The other document, the Massachusetts Civic Learning and Engagement Outcome Assessment Framework, articulates students’ civic learning outcomes by outlining the knowledge, skills and values students should demonstrate by graduation.

On May 6, 2014, the BHE voted in official policy, making Massachusetts the first state in the nation to require civic learning for students in public higher education. The policy includes civic learning and engagement within the metrics used to assess the performance of its public higher education system. MWCC Student Government Association President and Students Serving Our Students Peer Mentor Kathleen Matson served on the BHE as student representative, and was able to speak directly in support of the policy from the perspective of an engaged student. She spoke to the value that civic learning has on the overall educational experience.

The report showcases the work of MWCC in tying student success and retention as they relate to civic engagement. A model of best practice, the Center builds capacity throughout the community by matching existing needs defined by community partners with service learning students and volunteers.

THE PRESIDENT’S HIGHER EDUCATION HONOR ROLL

Each year since its inception in 2006, the college has been a recipient of the President’s Higher Education Honor Roll for Community Service. The designation highlights “the role colleges and universities play in solving community problems and placing more students on a lifelong path of civic engagement by recognizing institutions that achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes in the communities they serve.”

This year, the application process was slowed as a direct result of the federal shutdown in the fall. Subsequently, the application was released this spring, and the Center submitted an application for recognition in April. Announcements are anticipated this fall.
CARNEGIE RE-CLASSIFICATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year, MWCC submitted a renewal application to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for consideration of renewal of the Community Engagement elective classification, essentially an accreditation of civic engagement at an institution. One of only twenty community colleges nationwide to have previously achieved this designation, Mount Wachusett Community College has been highlighted nationally for establishing a strong foundation and infrastructure at the college. Fagan Forhan was asked by John Saltmarsh of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) to co-facilitate both a webinar and an in-person workshop for other institutions interested in embarking on the substantial undertaking of collecting and providing evidence-based documentation of institutional practice of civic learning and community engagement.

The elective classification, which takes place on a five-year cycle, involves data collection and documentation of important aspects of institutional mission as well as institutional identity and commitments. It required the staff of the Center to facilitate a deep examination of the collaborations between the institution and the greater community; a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity in order to prepare educated and engaged citizens, strengthen democratic values, address critical societal issues, and contribute to the public good.

Findings from the process, which included interviews and roundtables with faculty, staff, students and community partners, affirmed that MWCC has an extremely solid foundation for civic learning and community engagement, which is truly reciprocal in nature and is transformative for many students engaged in the work. Of particular note was the progress we have made with institutionalization of the work across departments, as well as tracking outcomes and consideration of civic engagement in the faculty reward structure. The college’s Marketing and Communications department is quick to inform the local press of classes that involve a community component and the college also nominates faculty members for local, state, and national citations regarding their community engaged scholarship.

Looking ahead MWCC will examine more ways to recognize and reward faculty engagement in community activities. The college president, division deans, and faculty have started discussing a change of language of our present policies to more explicitly link rewards structures to an integrated faculty role teaching, research, and service.

The classification results will be announced in January, 2015.
This year, MWCC was highlighted at a national level by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), as an exemplary member institution of The Democracy Commitment. The Democracy Commitment (TDC) is a national initiative providing a platform for the development and expansion of community college programs, projects and curricula aimed at engaging students in civic learning and democratic practice across the country.

This year, MWCC engaged in a partnership with Keene State College at the invitation of George Mehaffy, founder of the American Democracy Project. Still in planning stages, MWCC will serve as a hub institution with Keene State, at the center of a national initiative to lead a small cohort of institutions to join us in a three-year initiative to understand the impact of economic inequality. This summer, a call for participation will go out to community colleges and four-year institutions across the country, inviting them to take part in this project. The initiative will allow opportunities for faculty, staff and students to work together in building curricular and co-curricular modules in an effort to understand how growing economic inequality is transforming our society, our economy and the manner in which citizens interact with others and with government.

At the national ADP/TDC meeting in Louisville, KY in June, Fagan Forhan was a featured speaker at the opening plenary session, speaking to an audience of nearly 700 about the work of MWCC through the Students Serving Our Students office, and inviting peer institutions to think deeply about how income inequality impacts them in preparation of the call for participation. Five additional MWCC faculty and staff also presented workshops at this conference, including: Shelley Errington Nicholson (Director of Community Learning); Lauren Mountain (Associate Director, United Way Youth Venture); Daniel Soucy (Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement); Shane Martin (Adjunct Faculty, Political Science); and Greg Clement (Associate Dean of Student Services).
Student engagement at MWCC is a carefully orchestrated plethora of activities and opportunities for students, allowing them to connect their interests and their skills with their area of study and existing community needs. The Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement works very closely with the Student Activities Office on program planning and implementation, a practice that is somewhat uncommon across higher education. The two departments working together can better engage students in deep civic learning, and provide opportunities for faculty to scaffold curricula with co-curricular activities supporting civic learning and engagement.

STUDENTS SERVING OUR STUDENTS

The Students Serving Our Students (SOS) peer-to-peer mentoring program was developed by MWCC student Bryan Sanderson, who upon returning to school from deployment in the Marines, was struck by the extraordinary challenges faced by community college students which frequently resulted in lack of retention. SOS is a service offered to help students succeed. There are many barriers students encounter that affect their ability to succeed in college, including health problems, financial concerns, childcare challenges, and the basic needs for food and or shelter. The program trains student volunteers to work with their fellow students to help connect them to external social and community services and internal supports at the college that will help ensure that they can remain in school.

In 2013-2014, the first full year of the program, the Students SOS Office served 174 MWCC individual students. They met with these students approximately 550 times for an average of over three visits per student seeking assistance. Requests include issues such as daycare, housing and transportation assistance. The SOS office, a student-staffed and student-run program, is structured such that student mentors guide the implementation of the program, which allows for mentors to have a truly empowering experience. The outreach materials and logo for the office were designed by students through a service learning project in one of MWCC professor Bob Mayer’s courses.

In the fall semester, 88 students were served by the office, 84 of whom were retained in the spring. (Spring to fall retention will be available in fall of 2014).

$1.5 Million
Retained Revenue over 6 terms

$252,000
Retained Revenue for Spring 2014
*Based on average 12-credit course load
This past spring, after exploring the viability of a food pantry and finding significant challenges with hosting one, the student mentors and interns implemented a soup voucher program for students facing food insecurity. Students in need receive a voucher from the Green Street Cafeteria for a bowl of soup or a slice of pizza, and a piece of fruit. They are 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 encouraging them in taking steps to address the problem in a fundamental way.

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. 100% of the mentors have excelled in their studies and will graduate or continue on; of those who graduated this year, 90% did so with honors.

**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 the Student Activities Office to welcome new students to campus through Leadership Camp. Specifically, the Center coordinated five service projects for 99 volunteers resulting in packaging over 200 meals for local children in need and nearly 90 new backpacks full of school supplies being donated to the MA Department of Children and Families for children in foster care in our region. Several other students participated in service off campus at sites including the House of Peace and Education and the Crystal House serving low-income women and children and disabled adults respectively.

The year was kicked off with a 9/11 Call to Service where students, faculty and staff wrote thank-you cards to local police stations, firehouses and other emergency responders. Over 100 people participated in the event which included the sharing of heroic stories by local first responders and a ‘Call to Service’ issued to students by student leaders.

Mount Wachusett Community College has long participated in the United Way Day of Caring, and this year, for the first time, the college community was delighted to serve as a host site. Through the Center, more than 100 students, faculty and staff packaged 16,000 meals of rice and beans for families in need as part of the Kylee's Kare Kits for Kids program. The meals were then distributed to area food pantries for families in need.

Kylee McCumber, a sixth grade student at Sky View Middle School in Leominster, started the food assistance program in September 2012 as part of the United Way Youth Venture program, a partnership between the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, MWCC, which administers the youth venture program, and Ashoka.
In the fall, officers of MWCC clubs and groups come together for the annual Leadership Retreat, a professional development opportunity for students coordinated by Student Activities. This year, for the first time, Center Director Forhan partnered with the House of Peace and Education in her presentation to students on ‘Creating Change’. The students were presented with a real challenge by HOPE, specifically, how to better engage area volunteers, and tasked with brainstorming ways for HOPE to address this issue. More than 60 students generated 34 ideas for the organization, and that day, four students committed to volunteer with HOPE for the year.

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, seven students and three staff volunteered with Habitat for Humanity at a build site in Fitchburg for the annual Alternative Spring Break. The volunteers worked collaboratively and performed basic construction tasks for over six hours in order to help provide shelter to those in need.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Faculty and staff at Mount Wachusett Community College are incredibly proud of our students’ commitment to community service. Each year, we recognize the outstanding efforts of our graduating students. The Service Learning and Volunteerism Recognition Celebration was created to recognize the valuable contributions of students who have devoted their time, energy, leadership and talents towards the betterment of our community.

The 2014 MWCC Service Learning and Volunteerism Celebration event was attended by over 100 students, faculty and staff. During the Celebration, honorees received their service pins or medallions, and additional awards and forms of recognition such as the MWCC Presidents Volunteer Award given by President Asquino to students who have completed over 100 hours of service to the community. This year’s Celebration was held on Wednesday, May 20th and included the recognition of two service learning students who earned scholarships for their incredible efforts in the community.

Roxanna Figueroa was the recipient of a $100 scholarship for her incredible contributions to the North Central Massachusetts community through her service learning efforts with the Crocker Elementary School in Fitchburg. She supported special needs children and Spanish speaking families by providing translation services. Roxanna saw a need and sought to fill it above and beyond the service she was already performing for her Early Childhood Education course.

Bryan Nolan was the recipient of a $100 scholarship for his incredible contributions to the North Central Massachusetts community through his service learning efforts with the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster. Above and beyond the service learning requirement for his Java I and Java II courses, Bryan dedicated numerous hours working with the children at the club to develop computer games and teach them the fundamentals of software design.
This year, Center staff and MWCC faculty worked with staff and faculty from Fitchburg State University in the creation and piloting of a civic learning and engagement learning outcomes rubric. The rubric allows for the assessment of student learning both from in-class assignments as well as community activities. The goal of working to create civic pathways for students who are engaged was at the forefront of this project.

Transparency of processes was of the utmost importance and focus this year. NobleHour online community software was adopted this year as a means of providing students with the capability of being responsible for reporting their service hours; thus allowing site supervisors and faculty to approve their submissions in a more efficient manner. This level of confirmation of service hours allows the Center to access data for student transcript notations. NobleHour is a cloud-based software which creates an electronic “verification loop” for students service learning reports. A student files a web-based report of her or his service dates, hours, and activities; that report is immediately sent via email to the community site for verification; and upon community site verification, the report is made available electronically to the course instructor for review and approval. Students have access via NobleHour’s website to real-time updates on the status of their service reports.

Beginning in fall of 2013, courses with a service learning component have been designated in the registrar’s course database, as either “service learning required” or “service learning optional”, allowing students to determine whether a course contains a component of civic learning. This serves to improve our institutional research on the impacts of service learning moving forward as we will be able to disaggregate the data for students who self-selected into service learning as compared to those who did not.

All service learning and MWCC-sponsored volunteerism continue to be noted on student transcripts, providing students with an official documentation of their contributions to the greater community. This allows for students to see their cumulative impact within our community, and also provide an opportunity 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. This level of detail on the transcripts also allows for deep analysis of student success; current data shows a 26% higher retention rate for students who do service learning as compared to those who do not, across all areas of study.
“The Bridging Cultures Project has proven to be an enormous success. I sincerely feel that my students are better informed and prepared for our diverse world than they were previously. I am also pleased and surprised by the personal growth I’ve undertaken in this journey. I am more aware of my own social standing and place in our society. I am also more aware of my potential to impact the future.”
– Robert Mayer, Bridging Cultures Faculty Fellow
SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning provides students at MWCC with the opportunity to participate in experiential education related to their course work in an effort to contextualize their learning. Service fosters a sense of responsibility, civic mindedness and commitment to the local community. Students learn discipline, responsibility, teamwork and appreciation for the needs of others. Another benefit of service is that it helps students explore their own career interests. Some highlights for the 2013-2014 academic year are as follows:

Nursing students alone performed over 4,000 hours of service learning. These projects ranged from coordinating a health fair at a local middle school, to interacting with patients at the local hospital. Students volunteered with diverse populations of clients including children through projects with local schools and day cares, the elderly, the homeless, those suffering from drug or alcohol addiction, and work with therapeutic animals. By the time nursing students graduate from the program, they have completed a minimum of 30 hours of service learning all of which happens within the span of two academic years. At the conclusion of the service learning experience nursing students are surveyed and the assessment indicated that there was a strong positive correlation among the students who felt service was worth the effort, they understood their course better, and felt more of a connection with the community.

- The college supported the placement of 396 service learning students deployed in the community
- This year saw the completion of 12,566 hours of service learning by MWCC students
- 46 faculty utilized services provided by the Center to facilitate 136 sections of courses with a service learning component
- 90% of all the academic departments at MWCC integrate service learning in to one or more of the courses they offer

AMERICORPS*VISTA

AmeriCorps Massachusetts Campus Compact *VISTA, Kathleen Craigen, coordinated efforts between MWCC and local non-profit organizations, working directly with the faculty and students to ensure a quality service learning experience that meets the needs of the students. She provided individual support to the students and was instrumental in the launching of the ISC220 General Studies capstone course with a new partner, the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center.

Over the past ten years, MWCC has hosted a number of AmeriCorps *VISTAs, individuals who dedicate a year of their lives to national service. This past year, Kathleen not only worked with ISC220 students, faculty, and site partners, but she coordinated campus wide events such as the Service Learning and Volunteerism Celebration and aided in the implementation of a new online hour tracking system. Kat did all of this while serving on the Student Government Association, participating in a weekly leadership program, completing a 150 hour internship in the Center's Student's SOS office, and volunteering her free time as a Daisy Girl Scout troop leader. During her time as an AmeriCorps *VISTA, she simultaneously worked to earn her Associate's Degree in Human Services from MWCC in just three semesters. She graduated in May of 2014 with a 3.96 GPA to achieve high honors and she was one of just seventeen two-year college students in the entire state of Massachusetts to earn the Phi Theta Kappa Academic All-Star nomination. MWCC has also been awarded an AmeriCorps*VISTA position in FY15 by Massachusetts Campus Compact, which will be filled by recent MWCC graduate, John Day.
GENERAL STUDIES SERVICE LEARNING CAPSTONE – ISC220

In September of 2013 the very first General Studies capstone course was implemented at Mount Wachusett Community College. ISC220, an advanced and required version of the pilot course ISC120, provides an opportunity for MWCC students to engage in class discussion and service learning simultaneously throughout an entire semester. It is designed to engage students in the program within the greater community, while ensuring that the academic rigor of the course is relevant to their studies while at MWCC. In the fall of 2013 Julie Capozzi, Associate Professor, ran the first section of the course with five students who each conducted 30 service learning hours at the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster.

Kathleen Craigen, the AmeriCorps*VISTA for the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, spent the entire semester alongside the ISC220 students in their classroom and at the Boys and Girls Club to ensure that their service learning experience was mutually beneficial for everyone involved. These MWCC students were required to create and implement a weekly program known as Skillz for Success, every Thursday from 4pm-5pm, to help middle school children develop communication and life skills. With a focus on emotional and physical well-being, topics for activities included but were not limited to building empathy, eating healthy, teamwork, goal setting, communicating, peer pressure, bullying, and vocational exploration. In addition, these students volunteered in the afterschool homework help sessions on Thursdays from 3pm-4pm. Inside the classroom, MWCC students were taught the importance of understanding environmental and societal factors that contribute to at-risk youth and were encouraged to think critically about how their service would positively affect these youth in the future.

Throughout the 15 weeks the growth and development of the ISC220 students, evolution of the course itself, the capacity built at the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster as a whole, and the individual youth that were served through Skillz for Success was readily evident. There was a visible transformative change in each and every one of them as they developed their teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills while successfully teaching and empowering youth with confidence and optimism. These five students were able to impact the lives of approximately 15 at-risk youth through the Skillz for Success program. In addition, they influenced the entirety of the Boys and Girls Club by promoting and encouraging activism in their community. These types of successes continued as ISC220 moved forward and implemented the same program at the Club with new youth in the Spring of 2014.

KATHLEEN CRAIGEN
MACC AMERICORPS*VISTA

“AmeriCorps has taken me on an incredible two year journey filled with learning opportunities, experiences, networking, and skill building. My first year with AmeriCorps Job Ready went so well, I chose to stay with AmeriCorps and join MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement as a VISTA. Over the past year I have been able to simultaneously earn my Human Services Degree and gain valuable workplace experiences to help build my resume. I’ve been exposed to so many different opportunities that I wouldn’t have gotten elsewhere. I was working with students, faculty, staff, and community partners on a regular basis which really helped me to build and strengthen my communication and networking skills; I expanded my knowledge of software systems such as BlackBoard, Constant Contact, and Noblehour; I was exposed to professional development opportunities regularly; and I worked side by side student interns and staff members who shared an extraordinary passion for civic engagement, community learning, and selfless service.

What’s most important to me is recognizing how I’ve grown not only as a professional, but as an individual and an active member of my community. I have been surrounded by passionate people that helped me to foster a love and commitment to civic engagement, especially in the secondary and higher education sector. As I move forward and continue to study Human Services at Fitchburg State University, I take with me every piece of AmeriCorps and everything I’ve learned at MWCC, particularly in the Center. I’ve worked alongside an extraordinary group of women and men, who have supported and encouraged me in everything that I do. For this, I am most thankful.”
The four students who completed their service learning hours at the Boys and Girls Club in the Spring of 2014 as part of Julie Capozzi’s course went above and beyond the expectations of the course and represented Mount Wachusett Community College with the utmost dignity, respect, and professionalism. For example, these four consistently met outside of the regularly scheduled class times to discuss, plan, and shop for that week’s Skillz for Success program, stayed at the club after their scheduled time to interact with the youth, and volunteered on their own time at the club’s annual Science Fair. In addition, when offered to be reimbursed up to $50.00 for supplies that they purchased, they opted to have that money donated back to the Boys and Girls Club.

The second ISC 220 course running in Spring of 2014 with Dan Soucy, Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement, was entitled “Global Issues and Veterans” and the service learning was completed at the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center (MVOC). Each of the 12 students was assigned to different tasks within the organization. Examples include food pantry organization, Zumba class participation, and nutritional class instruction. Some of the students completed multiple service learning hours through large events such as Hockey for Heroes and the first annual Earth Day Cleanup.

In the classroom, MVOC students were led through a 7 Revolutions curriculum, requiring them to explore issues related to population, technology, resource management, information and knowledge, economics, security and governance. They were tasked to critically assess these worldwide issues and compare them to the problems that veterans in the United States specifically face on a daily basis. In addition, students were required to project out the impact of public policy and current practices 30 years into the future. While bringing their service learning experiences to the classroom discussions, the students also used their class lessons to implement activities at MVOC. For example, a topic that was often discussed in the classroom was the lack of healthy eating opportunities for homeless veterans. One student took this lesson and executed a workshop at MVOC that taught veterans how to add flavor to otherwise flavorless, healthy meals.

“It was an absolute pleasure to work with the students, faculty, staff, and community partners involved with ISC220 over the past year. I can only hope that future MWCC students will bring the same level of enthusiasm to the courses each and every semester. Since September of 2013, I have witnessed firsthand how the power of service learning has positively transformed 21 Mount Wachusett Community College students to more active members of our community and society as a whole. I am confident that this past year has paved the way for many more General Studies students to have affirmative and eye-opening experiences with their participation in ISC220.” -Kathleen Craigen, AmeriCorps *VISTA

Collaboratively, these students have directly impacted two community organizations, approximately 35 at-risk youth, and 40 veterans in a positive and confident manner. Overall, ISC220 students have dedicated over 630 hours of service to our community in just 30 weeks. The unwavering commitment and dedication of the students, staff, faculty, and community partners to civic engagement and service learning for the ISC 220 General Studies capstone course over this past year has provided a solid foundation for future success of the program.
INTERNSHIPS/EXTERNSHIPS/CO-OPS

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Center supported the placement of 63 interns, externs and co-op students deployed in the community. Students in the Human Services, Medical Office Certificate, Criminal Justice and Energy Management all performed intensive one-semester internships/externships or co-ops at area non-profits. The recipients of this service included such diverse locations as the Montachusett Opportunity Council, the Gardner Police Department, Heywood Hospital, Twin Cities Community Development Center, Beacon Hospice, and the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster. Offices within MWCC such as the Student’s S.O.S., United Way Youth Venture, and Access and Transition with Fitchburg High School also benefited with service from these students.

The Center, which provides orientation, processes paperwork such as site contracts and liability forms, and tracks the hours of the interns and co-op students also works closely with community partners to guarantee quality experience that is mutually beneficial to the students and the site. This year students performed 7,584 hours of service to the community through internships, externships and co-ops. When surveyed, 90% of our site partners indicated that they were able to expand the number of clients served and/or their service area because of hosting a MWCC intern. 16% of student interns/externs/co-ops received offers of employment from their service site.

“I teach a course on veterans and global issues. I’ve found that through incorporating service learning into my class this year that students have become increasingly interested in the subject matter. First-hand knowledge of the injustices already faced by our veterans motivates students and gives their research a sense of purpose. Their work has become better crafted and more students complete the class than before I introduced the service learning component.”

– Daniel Soucy, Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement
The Office of Career Planning & Placement is under the umbrella of the Center in an effort to intentionally align civic engagement learning outcomes with job preparedness for our students. The Office is committed to meeting the challenges of a stubborn economy and job market by equipping our students with the job search skills needed to land a job in their field of study. For many students, job search skill development begins their very first semester in their First Year Experience class where they are introduced to Career Coach, a software program linking our college majors to job availability in the area as well as to linking our programs to transfer opportunities at four year institutions.

Our students are provided in-class resume workshops to identify gaps in the resume and gaps in experience in their chosen field. Over 40 such workshops are offered throughout the year at all three campuses whereby strategies are developed with the assistance of faculty and the Coordinator of Coordinator of Career Planning & Placement to identify these skill gaps and to develop a plan to incorporate part-time jobs, cooperative education experiences, internships, volunteer work and service learning throughout their college career.

Students are trained to critically evaluate how their choice of major directly impacts their employability. Many times, landing a job upon graduation is the result of a well planned and executed individualized strategy combining the application of classroom theory to practical experience thereby enhancing student marketability. Over 600 one-on-one sessions were conducted with individual students to develop these individualized strategies.

Close to 300 students attended the annual Job Fair putting their job search skills to practice securing interviews with over 30 participating employers which many times leads to landing a job in their field. Faculty take an active role in encouraging students to attend the Job Fair and these same faculty incorporate the Job Fair activity into their syllabi further emphasizing the link between classroom instruction and the outcome of landing a job upon graduation.

Students are encouraged to think ‘outside of the box’ when job searching. Many times their efforts land students positions with employers new to working with MWCC. Some students, with the assistance of the Coordinator of Career Planning and Placement, have landed cooperative education experiences with local STEM employers affiliated with the MassLifeScience initiative. Nursing students explored opportunities with the MA Corrections system resulting in the placement of over 10 nursing grads throughout the state. In some instances, the employers choose to join our Advisory Boards thereby assuring current curriculum is in line with the skills in demand in today’s market.

Individuals from local agencies in our community, such as House of Peace and Education in Gardner, are invited to attend job search workshops and to attend the annual Job Fair. Introducing our community members to avenues for success despite their barriers brings optimism and skills needed to succeed.

This academic year proved to be a year of positive outcomes for students as they developed tangible job search skills and experiences to complement their education.

“The knowledge, skills, values and competencies of a civically minded person are things that employers speak to as desirable qualities in a worker. I’ve had some of our local employers tell me that they’re happy to teach our students how to build the widget, but that they need them to come in already knowing how to speak to people who are different than them, and how to understand the impact of the work within the context of a larger community”.

– Fagan Forhan, Center Director
NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOWS

The Newman Civic Fellows Award recognizes inspiring college student leaders who have demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for challenges facing communities throughout the country. College and University presidents nominate student leaders representing the next generation of civic leaders. Last year, the first-ever MWCC student to become a recipient of the award was Bryan Sanderson, one of 181 students from across the nation to be awarded. This year, Kathleen Matson also received the award, one of 197 students to receive the national award. Both students were active student leaders in the Center, and both have left a lasting imprint on civic engagement efforts within the college and beyond. Both Newman Civic Fellows were also recipients of the Dean’s Key at this year’s graduation, awarded annually for outstanding contributions to the college community; there is typically only one recipient each year.

KATHLEEN MATSON
2014 NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOWS AWARD

A Business Administration major, Matson represented college students across Massachusetts in her role as the student member on the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, and as a liaison between the board and the state-wide Student Advisory Council, on which she also served. As a member of the Board of Higher Education, she advocated on behalf of students across the Commonwealth for public policy changes that will impact the ability of students to succeed in higher education. Two policy issues she helped champion include the restructuring of the math sequence and the integration of civic education at all 29 public colleges and universities across Massachusetts. It was in this role that Kathy was able to advocate on behalf of students for the passage of The Vision Project’s Key Learning Outcome of “Preparing Citizens”, a requirement for institutions of public higher education in Massachusetts to incorporate and demonstrate civic learning outcomes.

In addition to working two jobs and consistently making the President’s List and Dean’s List, the Baldwinville resident provided over 400 volunteer hours to various organizations and student groups during this academic year alone. She served as president of MWCC’s Student Government Association, as an officer in the Phi Theta Kappa and Alpha Beta Gamma honor societies, as a Student Ambassador in the Admissions office, as a SALT Ambassador in the Financial Aid office, as a mentor with the Students Serving Our Students office, on the MWCC Alumni Association, and was an active volunteer with numerous Student Life events. She was a second time MWCC student, having first earned an associate degree in Criminal Justice in 1985.

“Being named a Newman Civic Fellow is an amazing honor,” Matson said. “I received this recognition for my civic engagement and volunteerism, but being civically engaged and volunteering is a way of life for me and not something that I do for recognition. I am appreciative to the president, staff and peers at the college who submitted my nomination. They have all been an inspiration to me during my time at MWCC.”

Outside MWCC, Matson is an active volunteer within her community, including serving on the Templeton Community Emergency Response Team as administrative assistant to the Emergency Management Director. In addition, she also volunteers her time to maintain a database of over 4,500 families and volunteers for MassHOPE, the Massachusetts Home School organization.
BRYAN SANDERSON
2013 NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOWS AWARD

After learning that many community college students struggle to stay in school for one reason or another, Sanderson crafted a success plan for himself, and then made it his mission to establish MWCC’s Students Serving Our Students office (Students SOS), located within the Center.

During its first semester, nearly 450 students tapped into the available resources and support. Student mentors in the SOS office provide peers with information, referrals, and hands-on assistance with life issues that are posing barriers to their academic success, such as childcare, transportation issues, financial assistance, food assistance, housing and heating oil assistance, as well as guidance for on-campus tutoring and other support services. In the first three semesters of the program, students who sought assistance were retained (or completed their degree) at a rate of 88%.

“In the military, you’re always looking out for the person next to you,” says Sanderson, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in the 1990-1991 Gulf War. “You’re always taught to have your battle buddy. You had to trust the guy next to you to look out for you and you had to look out for him. And that’s what we do in the SOS office. Students come to us with an issue or several issues. We’re not counselors, but we put on a counselor hat because we want to help them figure out the root problem that is keeping them from being successful.”

He made the President’s List and Dean’s List for his academic achievements and has also served as a member of the Commonwealth Corps, as a student ambassador on campus, as a peer mentor for fellow veterans, and as an officer in the Veterans Group, which is a chapter of the Student Veterans of America organization. After earning his associate degree, he plans to pursue his bachelor’s at Clark University in the fall.
The staff at the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement spent a great deal of time and energy ensuring that the greater community and our community partners were supported, engaged and understood their value and contributions as co-educators of our students. Unique to MWCC, Center staff focuses on building capacity with community partners, working to triage students into existing community needs as opposed to sending students to an organization without first assessing the best fit for that organization. This process can be intensive, but leads to mutually beneficial placements for students and ‘outside the box’ thinking when it comes to which students serve at what organization.

In addition, the Center sponsored a number of community events and trainings aimed at ensuring that the greater region felt supported, heard and prepared to work with our students.

“Watching students grow and thrive through the process of volunteering is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. It has been a pleasure to work with such talented and dedicated students. We look forward to further expanding our already flourishing programs and partnership with MWCC in the upcoming semesters.”

- Rebecca Cyganiewicz, Volunteer Coordinator
  Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster

**POLITICAL DEBATES**

In partnership with The Gardner News and the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, the Center coordinated debates for elected positions within the City of Gardner. Gardner’s two mayoral candidates squared off in a debate on Oct. 16 at MWCC’s Gardner campus in advance of the Nov. 5 election.

Incumbent Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke and Ward 2 Councilor Christine Wilson shared their views on economic development, the municipal budget, taxes and other priority topics during the 90 minute debate.

The following week, the debates continued at the Gardner Campus with candidates for At-Large City Council seats on October 22nd, and Ward Councilor Debates on October 23rd.

In total, the three debates had more than 185 people in attendance, and were publicly aired on Gardner Access Television.
THE NONPROFIT COLLABORATIVE – A PARTNERSHIP WITH ENTERPRISE BANK

Through a partnership with Enterprise Bank, the Center sponsored two professional development opportunities for nonprofit leadership and staff. Events were held at MWCC’s Gardner Campus.

On November 1, 2013, MWCC and Enterprise Bank held the Non-Profit Collaborative Fundraising Mini-Conference, with 106 individuals in attendance. The mini-conference, a half-day program of networking, workshops and discussion, encouraged attendees to think about building the sustainability of their organizations in the current economic landscape. Ken Ansin, Regional Community Banking Director and Senior Vice President of Enterprise Bank served as keynote speakers, followed by a panel presentation by Winn Brown, President and CEO of Heywood Healthcare; Linda Mack, Director of Gift Planning for the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts; and, Joseph Stiso, Associate Vice President for Development, Planning and Institutional Research at MWCC. Breakout workshops followed, allowing attendees to focus on individual interests, addressing such areas as planning, social media for fundraising, fiduciary investments and investment policy and positioning a board for fundraising success.

On June 19, the Center and Enterprise Bank hosted “5 Generations in the Workplace”, a professional development workshop with more than 60 people in attendance. The topic was preparing organizations to support and develop five generations of workers, volunteers and philanthropists including Traditionalists, Boomers, Generation X’ers, Millennials and Linksters. Amanda Demarco (Leadership Development Program), Rob Lawlor (Senior Financial Consultant, VP), and Sophy Theam (Learning and Development Manager, AVP), all from Enterprise Bank, provided an interactive presentation for attendees on understanding the different styles, assumptions and experiences of each generation.

POVERTY AT HOME / REASONS FOR HOPE

On June 13, nearly 200 local and state leaders, students, educators and community members gathered in Leominster for the symposium “Poverty at Home/Reasons for Hope.” The event, sponsored by the Montachusett Opportunity Council in partnership with MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, Fitchburg State University and the North Central Massachusetts Minority Coalition, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Economic Opportunity Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In North Central Massachusetts, 26,889 people are living in poverty and an additional 35,204 people are classified as “low income,” according to information provided by MOC.

With more than 50 million Americans living in poverty, including nearly 27,000 residents of North Central Massachusetts, the 50-year War on Poverty remains a critical national and local issue.

Guest speakers included Congressman Jim McGovern and Ronald G. Marlow, Massachusetts Assistant Secretary for Access and Opportunity. Panelists and participants discussed current economic trends in the region, explored the causes of poverty, and provided inspiration to change the patterns that lead to poverty.
Presenters emphasized that overcoming poverty in the region, state and nationally will require a concerted effort among public agencies, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.

MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino, who served on the panel “Creating Hopeful Communities,” spoke on the importance of education in lifting families out of poverty, beginning with early childhood education, a strong foundation in K-12 schools and higher education. President Asquino emphasized the national need for a paradigm shift in how education is viewed and access to higher education for all, and that instead of being treated as a private benefit for individuals, education should be recognized for the public benefits it provides.

“We need to get back to treating education as an investment, and not an expense,” he said.

COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILES


The Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster (BGCFL) has had a long partnership with MWCC. Volunteers, service learning students and community based interns have spent countless hours with the at-risk youth who frequent the Club. Activities performed by volunteer students have ranged from robotics labs to art classes from sports workshops to life skill activities and from career exploration to computer programming. This year alone, MWCC students gave 732 hours of service to the BGCFL. Some examples of the service are as follows:

• Students in a marketing class were tasked with developing a newsletter for the Club;
• Java 1 and Java 11 students tutored youth on computer programming and game design giving over 161 hours of service over the course of the academic year;
• Students in two other computer courses tutored in computer programing at the Club for Computer Technologies and Introduction to Security;
• Several math courses also tutored at the Club including sections of Pre-Calculus and College Algebra;
• A 150 hours Human Services internship focused on at-risk youth development and a second student did 56 hours of her Human Services internship with the Club;
• A series of MWCC student designed and delivered life skills workshops for at-risk youth were implemented as a part of a General Studies capstone course offered in the fall and the spring giving a total of 344 hours of service; and
• Finally, the Club shared partnership with the Mount in hosting an AmeriCorps *VISTA to increase the capacity at BGCFL to continue hosting MWCC service learning students.
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, (MVOC), is located in Gardner, and provides services to thirty cities and towns in North Central Massachusetts. The center helps military veterans and their families in need, and empowers their clients to develop a resilient, self-sufficient lifestyle essential to succeed in today’s environment. Some of the particular services MVOC provides veterans include; low-income housing alternatives, counseling, case management, job training, personal development, veterans' benefits resource assistance, medical transportation and food assistance.

This year, MVOC partnered with the Center to provide our students with a unique service learning opportunity. As part of their capstone course “Global Issues and Veterans,” taught by Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement Daniel Soucy, students blended in course lessons with experiential learning while serving at the veteran’s center. Consequently, students came to understand social justice through the intellect and intuition, through the understanding of texts and activities with the veterans.

Through this partnership, MVOC was able to offer their veterans new experiences and ideas provided by the students. Some student created nutrition, yoga, and Zumba classes, while others provided deep conversation and a listening ear. Students also worked shoulder to shoulder with veterans; stocking food pantries, cleaning up on Earth-Day, and providing for the homeless. MVOC reported that all of these interactions were well received by the veterans.

The House of Peace and Education (HOPE) has provided MWCC students in service learning, volunteer and internship experiences with deeply meaningful experiences tailored around their individual learning styles and professional development goals. This year, as HOPE opened its first social enterprise, the HOPEful Boutique in downtown Gardner, MWCC students from Stephanie Page’s Introduction to Sociology course were welcomed in with open arms to run a professional clothing drive to benefit women in transition.

"HOPE values our collaborative relationship with MWCC faculty, staff and students. The interns are an asset to our school year programming and provide a stable and consistent mentor/tutor role for our participants. The consistency of their interaction is the component that impacts the success of the HOPE participants."

-Fran Longton, HOPE
UNITED WAY YOUTH VENTURE

“Today’s young people are our future.” This phrase epitomizes the core belief inspiring the nine year partnership between MWCC, the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture. Young people involved in United Way Youth Venture (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. Youth, ages 10-22, are supported in this opportunity through intensive skill-building workshops, hands-on learning, consistent mentorship, and seed funding to help them launch their Venture from idea to reality. These valuable life lessons are delivered through close collaboration with our partnering school districts, resulting in development of leadership skills, confidence, a sense of empowerment, and experience as changemakers.

“UWYV means...helping your community by choice, not by being forced.”
- Venturer, Ayer Shirley Regional High School

UWYV BY THE NUMBERS

- 12 partnering middle and high schools, and MWCC
- Nearly 10,000 area youth exposed this year
- Over 1,800 youth actively engaged in workshops, Venture team development or Venture volunteering
- 29 teams launched across 9 schools, with an additional 10 teams in the pipeline well on their way to becoming launched Ventures
- 111 sustained teams at a rate of 80% active since the program started
- 14 Champions, over 125 Allies, and more than 250 adult volunteers are working with UWYV youth on a weekly basis
PROGRAM EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

UWYV hosted several events meant to engage and inform the community of the power of our local youth including an invigorating Fall Kick Off event with more than 400 middle and high school students in attendance. The Center organized a United Way Day of Caring, galvanizing over 100 volunteers to package 16,000 packets of rice and beans for families in need as part of the Kylee’s Kare Kits for Kids Venture program. Staff facilitated a Champion Training, Roundtable, and Strategic Discussion to educate and support our partnering school staff. MWCC supported the first annual Administration Dinner for school superintendents and principals with Senators Brewer and Flanagan as keynote speakers, passionately sharing their own experiences with UWYV and the impact it has on young people and their communities. Finally, UWYV worked closely with Ashoka’s Youth Venture to facilitate the international UWYV Training program, sponsored by SimplexGrinnell to help the spread of the program to new communities—over $70,000 in grant funding was awarded to United Way organizations throughout the United States.

COLLEGE AND WORKFORCE-READY SKILLS

Since becoming involved in UWYV:

- 63% report that UWYV has helped them feel more confident
- 63% are better prepared to speak and present in front of an audience
- 63% have a better understanding of how to develop a budget
- 81% report a better understanding of how to problem solve
- 77% understand how to research
- 82% believe that people their age can influence decisions and policies

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year, UWYV made tremendous strides toward the goal of integrating the program more deeply into K-12 Common Core curriculum. Through a close partnership with the Leominster School District, UWYV staff was able to pilot a school-based delivery model involving co-teaching throughout an eighth grade English class unit, “How Can I Make a Difference?” The result was higher than ever interest in the program at Sky View Middle School where the curriculum was piloted, with seven teams launching just from this group of students, about 25% of the total for launched teams this year. In total, across all of the sites, UWYV delivered more than 75 skill-building workshops to youth, on topics such as budgeting, marketing, fundraising, and presenting.

Alignment was the focus of other projects including revisions to the student surveys to pair student learning outcomes to those of A Crucible Moment and the Vision Project, as well as revisions to the UWYV Action Plan, reports, partner contracts, and financial processes. Financial sustainability increased significantly in FY14 with the implementation of revolving accounts within partnering schools. Unused seed funds, as well as a new 10% Pay It Forward fund from all new funds raised, funded the launch of many new Ventures. In addition, a UWYV store was launched to provide branded merchandise to Venturers at reasonable pricing and a 10% commission back to UWYV.
VENTURE TEAM SPOTLIGHT

SATELLITE GARDEN
NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

On a community service trip to New Orleans, members of the North Middlesex Service Club witnessed a local community's effective and cost-efficient composting system and decided to create one of their own. Through United Way Youth Venture they were able to transform a long-neglected school courtyard into a functional garden with raised beds, potted vegetables and composting facilities. The Venturers even took this garden a step further and were awarded a $20,000 grant to build a state of the art hydroponics facility and greenhouse, the first of its kind in the entire state.

With the community garden in place, the satellite garden has already collected over 1,150 pounds of fresh, organic produce, all of which is donated to a local food pantry on a weekly basis. These students have not only learned many new skills, but they have helped transform a community by raising awareness to the need for nutritious food options to those most in need.

This is a model Venture of students who have gone above and beyond to not just improve their school, but to help the greater community as well. Their hard year-round work will help countless families across the region and inspire generations of students to follow in their footsteps.

INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT

• More than 84% of Venturers self-report that they earn primarily As and Bs in school

• Over 89% of participating youth reported that they were involved in sports, clubs and other activities

• Students who actively participated in UWYV had a lower rate of detentions, 1% vs 13%, and lower suspension rate, 1% vs 14%

• Venturers raised more than $11,400 in matching funding to support their Ventures
Daniel Soucy was hired this year as the Endowed Chair of Civic Engagement and as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at MWCC. He completed his M.A. in Philosophy and Logic at SUNY Albany, and holds dual baccalaureate degrees in American History, and Political Science from Westfield State University. His interests include logic, the philosophy of logic, ethics, the American Pragmatism (especially the respective works of C.S. Peirce and John Dewey), and the many intersections of philosophical learning, civic learning, and civic engagement. Mr. Soucy also serves as a member of the Medical Ethics Board for Heywood Hospital.

As the Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement, Daniel has labored to infuse civic learning and engagement into the curricula. His work has included; facilitating faculty roundtables and focus groups, helping to establish a service learning Blackboard site for the faculty, serving as both a Civic Engagement Assessment Scholar and a Civic Engagement Curriculum Scholar in the Quality Collaborative with Fitchburg State University, co-chairing the NEH humanities grant and giving a presentation on civic engagement at the faculty academy, working as a faculty fellow on the Bridging Cultures grant and bringing the themes associated with this grant to over 150 students, being a member of the General Competencies Committee to ensure that the college will have civic engagement specific learning outcomes, and teaching two community capstone courses, (one entitled Global Issues and Veterans, the other Ethics and Social Responsibility).

Dan also delivered presentations at the Massachusetts Community College Teaching and Learning Conference at Northern Essex Community College, and the American Democracy Project & The Democracy Commitment AASCU National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. He was in attendance at NERCHE’s Lynton Colloquium, the Engaged Scholarship: Service and the Future of Learning Conference, AASCU’s Economic Inequality Initiative meeting in Washington D.C., and the Poverty at Home/ Reasons for Hope Symposium.

Lastly, Daniel worked in conjunction with Fagan Forhan, the Director of the Center, in completing the 2014 Carnegie Re-Classification Self Study in Community Engagement.

“...while we live, while we are among human beings, let us cultivate our humanity.”

– Seneca, On Anger
Several MWCC faculty and staff shared best practices with colleagues throughout the state during the 2014 Massachusetts Community College Conference on Teaching, Learning and Student Development. The March 28 event, held at Northern Essex Community College, focused on the theme of Social Justice.

Veterans Center Advisor and adjunct professor Robert Mayer presented “Soldiering On: Helping Soldiers Become Students and Active Citizens.” Soldiering On is a program for veterans transitioning to college and creates a cohort of students enrolled in a specialized First Year Experience course and English Composition I. Examination of social, economic and environmental issues are integral parts of the curriculum to teach critical thinking, time management, writing, oral presentation and study skills.

Daniel Soucy, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Chair of Civic Engagement, discussed the new General Studies capstone course, “Global Issues and Veterans.” This unique course teaches social justice through the intellect and intuition, using the classroom and community veteran sites as learning spaces.

Fagan Forhan, Director of the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, and Associate Dean of Students Greg Clement presented “Strategies for the Institutionalization of Civic Learning.” The session explored successful ways in which MWCC integrates social justice and civic learning into the student experience. The model begins with a foundation that supports collaboration among faculty, co-curricular programming and community partners; a unique approach among both community college and four-year institutions.

Shelley Errington Nicholson, Director of Community Learning, and Human Services student Bryan Sanderson, founder of the Students Serving Our Service (SOS) program, described the launch of this successful new peer support program. Sanderson, who viewed his classmates’ struggles as a social justice issue, worked with the Center of Civic Learning and Community Engagement to develop the program. The program is aimed at increasing student retention and services by facilitating access to basic needs such as housing, transportation, child care, which can become obstacles to students’ success.

“I am extremely proud of the Mount Wachusett Community College faculty and staff who presented five unique workshops that were well attended and spoke to the conference theme of social justice. I enjoy attending a conference where best practices in teaching are shared among the community college educators.”

– Dr. Melissa Fama, Vice President of Academic Affairs
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

This year, Center staff continued to work to support faculty and staff in the development and implementation of civic learning and engagement in curricula. Fagan Forhan served as a member of the Academic Professional Development Committee, working to ensure that civic learning was infused into professional development activities throughout the year. In addition, Center staff provided in-class workshops for faculty, focusing on such subjects as civic learning, service learning, civic engagement as experience, tracking and documentation of service hours, 7 Revolutions, and others.

Center staff also provided more than 375 hours of technical assistance to faculty this year, both through workshops and by working with full-time and adjunct faculty on the integration of civic learning into curricula in a way that supports existing learning outcomes rather than compromising the purpose and intent of the course. Tracking and documentation of service was automated through the implementation of NobleHour, allowing faculty to see clearly whether a community host site had approved the hours reported by a student prior to verifying service records for input onto a student transcript or incorporation into a grade.

The Center continued to provide The New York Times to faculty at both the Gardner and the Leominster campuses. An MWCC student compensated directly by the New York Times, delivered direct to classrooms sets of newspapers for 17 different courses in the fall 2013 semester and 12 courses in the spring 2014 semester. The student deliveryperson also stocked racks throughout the Gardner campus each morning for faculty and students from other courses to pickup a free copy of the Times before the start of the first class period; and he delivered a daily edition directly to offices of deans, assistant deans, and faculty members who requested a daily edition to help inform their instruction each week. Our Leominster, Devens, and Burbank campuses also received free editions of the Times on days of the week requested by interested faculty teaching at those campuses. This year, 13,721 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: Art, Broadcasting and Electronic Media, Computer Information Systems, English, First Year Experience, Management, Marketing, Nursing, Reading and Sociology.

On September 30, 2013 Daniel Soucy and Shelley Errington Nicholson represented MWCC at NERCHE’s Annual Lynton Colloquium on the Scholarship of Engagement at UMASS Boston. This colloquium featured presentations, panel discussions, and facilitated dialogue, all of which focused on framing faculty scholarly activity on collaborative work in which academics and community partners share knowledge and expertise in the process of public problem solving.

In October, Shelley Errington Nicholson and Daniel Soucy facilitated a roundtable with faculty, entitled Preparing Citizens: A Key Learning Outcome, with 17 faculty members in attendance. The roundtable afforded faculty the opportunity to discuss the recommendations of the Study Group for The Vision Project’s Key Outcome of Preparing Citizens, and work to identify ways they were already meeting these objectives in classes and assignments. In addition, participants brainstormed ways to begin to fold civic learning into existing curricula and leverage existing resources to support it.
This year, a **New Faculty Orientation** was developed and delivered by Fagan Forhan and Shelley Errington Nicholson on civic learning and community engagement. The orientation provided new MWCC faculty with an overview of the work at MWCC as well as the resources, tools and support services available through the Center. The orientation served as an opportunity for staff to engage new faculty in thinking about the integration of service learning and civic engagement in their own courses, and a platform from which three new faculty became deeply involved this year.

In partnership with Fitchburg State University, a team of MWCC faculty and the Center Director worked as **Assessment Scholars on the Degree Qualifications Profile** project under the guidance of Assessment Director Ruth Slotnick. The project required the team to examine the LEAP civic engagement rubric and determine its feasibility for use in scoring student learning. After piloting with student work it was realized that the existing rubric adequately supported action-oriented civic engagement, but wasn’t as adaptable for civic learning that occurred within the classroom. The team then adapted the LEAP Value Rubric with the student learning outcomes recommended by the BHE Study Group for The Vision Project on Preparing Citizens. The outcome of the project allowed for the development of a Civic Pathway for students transferring from MWCC to Fitchburg State, with an institutional understanding of experiences at both institutions and how they are integrated into the education of a student and assessed by faculty.

In the Fall 2013 semester, the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement released a **Service Learning Blackboard site**. This site serves as an online faculty resource for civic engagement and service learning. It ensures all the necessary information, forms and assessment resources are readily available to our entire faculty. This includes sample syllabi and learning outcomes for faculty to survey. Additionally, the Center Director and Faculty Chair of Civic Engagement can use the site to discuss civic learning/engagement strategies and best practices with colleagues.

Looking ahead, the Center Director and the Chair of Civic Engagement also plan to create civic learning/engagement modules that can be adopted by the faculty at will. Each module will be topic specific, and have the purpose of providing supplementary material to pre-existing courses.

> “100% of the students are learning about civic engagement stemming from reading the news and active participation in the community. I have incorporated numerous active learning strategies, such as writing to learn, to help my students better understand civic engagement. My students that participate in service learning are performing better in the class and are engaging their fellow classmates in more discussion. Also, some students that did not participate in the service learning projects were impressed with the end of semester presentations by their classmates. These students mentioned how they would have picked the service-learning track if they could go back to the beginning of the semester.”

– Shane Martin,
Bridging Cultures Faculty Fellow
BRIDGING CULTURES TO FORM A NATION – THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

The Bridging Cultures Faculty Fellows completed the second of a three-year grant, and worked to deeply infuse questions about difference, community, and democratic thinking into courses. They utilized service learning, capstone courses, introductory level courses, new courses and first year experience courses as vehicles for delivery. Cumulatively, the faculty fellows revised 54 classes over the course of two years, and impacted 939 students. This year, all four Faculty Fellows integrated the 7 Revolutions (major trends that will shape our world to 2025 and beyond) as a means of developing globally competent students.

Some examples from this year include:

Adjunct Faculty Instructor Wanda Pothier-Hill’s Learning Community 102/103: This course targeted the MWCC veteran population, and was a learning community composed of Introduction to Literature and Introduction to Sociology, administered as a learning community with Professor Candace Shivers. This course implemented civic learning by way of connecting select readings to various sociological concepts that are important to our society. Some of the concepts integrated into assigned class reading discussions were as follows: governance and social conformity, race and ethnicity, social class and inequality, propaganda and mass media, conflict and social control, and gender identity.

Adjunct Faculty Instructor Robert Mayer’s Photography 115 class: Students were asked to visually interpret the meaning of the term “democracy”. Students submitted photographs ranging from general themes such as collective discussion and decision making, to specific images related to particular rights and freedoms.

Adjunct Faculty Instructor Shane Martin’s POL205 classes: Implemented service learning in three sections of POL205, Massachusetts and the Federal System, demonstrating an increase of student engagement of 408% over the previous year (49/12). Martin reported significant benefits to the utilization of service learning in curricula, and has also helped to articulate systematic challenges to adjunct incorporation of service learning which the team will work to address in the coming year.

Assistant Professor Daniel Soucy’s Critical Thinking 210 class: In this class both traditional & non-traditional students wrote final thesis papers on the 7 Revolutions. The issue of bias was studied including: racial, class, cultural, media, and socio-economic. Analytic definitions of democracy, freedom, and justice were constructed. In these constructions cultural pluralism was taken into account, and visual arguments concerning race, class, culture, and equality were translated and discussed.

In the final year of the grant, the Faculty Fellows will continue to incorporate Bridging Cultures themes across curricula and embed these themes within other initiatives across campus, specifically the NEH Endowment and the new ADP/TDC Initiative examining Economic Inequality. Fagan Forhan and Daniel Soucy will also travel to partnering community colleges, (Cape Cod Community College, Massasoit Community College, Roxbury Community College, and Springfield Technical Community College), to help adapt their courses and curricula and fulfill year three requirements of the grant.
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT / THE DEMOCRACY COMMITMENT
ANNUAL MEETING

This year’s annual meeting of AASCU’s American Democracy Project / The Democracy Commitment was a banner year for MWCC. In addition to the Director Fagan Forhan’s presentation at the opening Plenary Session, MWCC faculty and staff presented an astounding 11 workshops at the national conference.

Workshops provided public community colleges and four-year college and universities with best practices and innovative strategies focusing on the work currently underway at MWCC, such as engaging students in middle and high school in social entrepreneurship through United Way Youth Venture; incorporation of civic learning into curricula without re-writing a course; engaging student activities staff in curricular planning in support of civic engagement and civic learning efforts; high impact teaching practices for helping students to understand the role of public policy in their subject matter; assessment and evaluation of civic learning and civic engagement; and engaging students in solving the retention issue (the Students SOS office). Also highlighted at the conference was the new partnership between MWCC and Keene State College as the hub of a national ADP/TDC Civic Chronicles Economic Inequality initiative.

Photography Credit: David Knapp Photography
Lighting the Way for Change at MWCC
By the NUMBERS

Service Learning

- 396 Service learning students
- 12,566 Hours served to local community organizations
- $268,489 Economic impact for the North Central Massachusetts region

Volunteerism

- 609 Students who participated in volunteer
- 2,419 Hours making a difference
- $51,669 That can now be spent elsewhere

Internships, Externships & Co-ops

- 63 Placements at local
- 93% Internship site supervisor
- 7,584 Hours spent moving forward with
- 84% Internship site supervisor said their student was Job Ready
- $161,994 Saved by hosting a MWCC student

Inclusive of 917 Clinical and Practicum students who completed 115,040 service hours,