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MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE OUTPERFORMS FOUR-YEAR INSTUTIONS WITH 17th GOLDWATER SCHOLAR

Small Massachusetts Community College Proves 2 Year Colleges Can Be Effective Pipeline to Success

(Wellesley Hills, MA) - When Massachusetts Bay Community College (MassBay) student Lynn M. Desmarais was announced as a 2010 recipient of the prestigious Barry Goldwater scholarship, she became the 17th MassBay student to earn one. MassBay is the only community college in America to produce more than two Goldwater scholars, and with its 17th Scholar, MassBay has surpassed elite four-year higher education institutions such as Tufts, Northeastern, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Boston University.

With more than 45% of American college attendees enrolled in community colleges, President Barack Obama recently singled out community colleges as a pipeline to employment, giving students of all ages new career options through education. By offering high value and a quality education at an affordable cost, community colleges are the foundation of an educational track to baccalaureate and advanced degrees, and a better trained, technologically sophisticated and global savvy American workforce. With its distinction as the only community college in America to have produced 17 Goldwater Scholars, MassBay Community College exemplifies the quality of education highlighted by President Obama.

Patrick W. Quinn, a 2008 Goldwater scholar, is another exemplar of a community college education. Quinn, who was a high school drop-out and worked as a pizza maker and property manager, decided to change his life at 39, and pursue his lifelong interest in science and mathematics. MassBay’s program gave him the confidence and impetus to pursue a degree in chemistry from the University of Massachusetts. He said, “My dream job...is to do DNA research for the Cairo (Egypt) Museum, but realistically, I can see myself researching the human genome to find a treatment for cancer and AIDS before they begin.” He credits MassBay with starting him down the academic road to pursue his dreams.

Receiving a Goldwater Scholarship is no small feat. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1996, Colleges across the country are allowed to submit four names to the scholarship program and only 300 are chosen. These students, who receive scholarships up to $15,000, are the best and the brightest, and are chosen based on their intention to make a difference in science, math and technology. MassBay’s 2010 Goldwater Scholar, Lynn M. Desmarais, plans to pursue a graduate program in Biomedical Engineering.

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Many of MassBay’s Goldwater Scholars have come from a highly innovative program, and the only associate degree program of its kind in the world – Forensic DNA Science. Students are trained by actually participating in real criminal cases, and program participants have interned with the FBI, Armed Forces DNA Identification Labs, and with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

“MassBay’s Goldwater scholars demonstrate the potential of two-year colleges,” said MassBay President Carole Berotte Joseph. “We are able to offer superb faculty, state-of-the-art laboratories and cutting-edge equipment equivalent to any four-year college or university, at a fraction of the cost. We are proud to be a steppingstone for some of our nation’s distinguished scholars and productive citizens.”

Examples abound of dedicated faculty at the two-year college level making profound impacts on their students and on the world. MassBay’s Dr. Bruce Jackson, widely credited with launching many of the Goldwater Scholars through his visionary Forensic DNA Science program, has been honored as a Fulbright Scholar in the recent past.

Last year, MassBay announced the discovery of a new bacteria made possible by another brilliant professor, Dr. Sarmad Saman, Chair of the Life Sciences Department, in conjunction with the work of a student utilizing MassBay’s high tech equipment and laboratory. The bacteria, submitted to the Gene Bank at the National Institutes of Health, is named Bacillus samanii in honor of Dr. Saman, who said, “Although bacteria are discovered every year, the fact that the discovery was made at a community college without a cadre of graduate research students makes this discovery all the more meaningful.”

Dr. Saman acknowledged how fortunate MassBay is to have its own DNA Sequencer, Gas Chromatography and other sophisticated equipment, purchased with President Joseph’s blessing. “Normally students would have to go to Harvard or MIT to have this equipment available to them,” he noted.

In addition to offering an excellent educational foundation with committed and talented faculty, community colleges can be a financial boon for career changers, people who are undecided about a career path, or people who want an excellent education at a lower price than a four-year institution.

Dr. Saman points out, “A student can complete an Associate Degree in two years at MassBay for approximately $11,000. If that student maintains a GPA of 2.5 or above, they will have direct acceptance into a state college or university along with an automatic one-third reduction in tuition costs. That means a student can complete four years of college for what it costs for one year at a private institution.”

For more information about MassBay, its Forensic DNA program, and all other Associate Degree and Certificate programs, please visit www.massbay.edu, or call (781) 239-3000.

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