

CONNECT Colleges Announce One-Stop Access to Interns

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Brockton, Massachusetts – On January 7, 2013, the Presidents and Chancellor of the five CONNECT colleges and universities in Southeastern Massachusetts met with the Presidents of the region's thirteen Chambers of Commerce at Taunton Holiday Inn. The occasion was the announcement of the CONNECTLink internship portal. The portal will give the region's employers one-stop access to the student talent of the five colleges and universities.

"That's the role of public higher education," stated CONNECT Chair and Massasoit Community College President Charles Wall. "To meet the needs of our region, and to meet the needs of our students." Dr. Wall adds that CONNECTLink project has three goals: to increase the total number of internship listings at each of the five campuses, to expand the population of students who participate in internships while in college, and to build the number of students finding employment in their fields upon graduation.

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Chancellor Divina Grossman notes that nationally, 58.6 percent of student interns receive full-time jobs with the sites where they interned upon graduation. "Knowing how difficult it is for students these days to find employment upon graduation, colleges and universities need to do everything they can to give students a leg up in the job market."

Cape Cod Community College anticipates that CONNECTLink will help the college to grow the number of internship placements for students. States Cape Cod President John Cox, "This collaborative project has allowed Four C's to learn from the other institutions in the region. In addition, this project will increase the number of internship listings that each student is able to review. The portal will make it easier for employers to submit listings, so we hope to see a dramatic increase in the number of listings each college receives."

Bristol Community College has a well-developed Co-op program. BCC President John Sbrega notes, "Internships are a great opportunity, both for the students and for the employers. Students get hands-on professional experience in the workplace, and employers get the chance to try out prospective employees."

President Mohler-Faria of Bridgewater State University noted that the idea for the CONNECTLink Portal arose out of a November 2010 regional Economic Summit sponsored by CONNECT. "We heard the message loud and clear. Employers wanted to be able to recruit our students but found the system too difficult to navigate. We responded to that concern, and CONNECTLink is the result."

CONNECT Executive Director Kathleen Kirby notes that as a part of the process of planning the portal, all five campuses had to take a serious look at the way that they organized the internship, student employment, and career services offices on their campus to streamline access for employers. "CONNECTLink is focused on promoting internships, but the portal also gives employers a way to publicize part-time and full-time jobs."

Posting jobs is two-step process; employers first have to set up a profile, and then they can post individual job and internship listings. Approvals are determined by the individual policies at each of the campuses.

The CONNECTLink Internship Portal can be found on the CONNECT website: www.connectsemass.org.



CONNECT is a partnership of five public higher education institutions in Southeastern Massachusetts (Bridgewater State University, Bristol, Cape Cod, and Massasoit Community Colleges, and University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth). CONNECT's mission is to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of higher education, and to advance the economic, educational and cultural life of Southeastern Massachusetts.