

Massasoit Community College Receives Federal Grant Monies From The U.S. Department Of Education's Strengthening Institutions Program

Grant funding totaling \$2,098,460 over five years will enable the college to initiate Project STARS: Strengthening Teaching and Advising for the Retention of Student

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Brockton, MA - Dr. Charles Wall, President of Massasoit Community College, is pleased to announce that the College has been awarded a federal grant funded under the Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III) by the U.S. Department of Education. This highly competitive grant – one of thirty-three across the nation – is designed to help institutions of higher education better serve low-income students by supporting transformational activities that lead to measurable improvements in student outcomes. Massasoit's award, totaling \$2,098,460 over five years, will enable the college to initiate Project STARS: Strengthening Teaching and Advising for the Retention of Students.

Project STARS is intended to increase student engagement, retention, and achievement through a comprehensive plan that focuses on students' critical first year of enrollment. Project elements include:

- Establishment of a Center for Innovation, Collaboration, and Engagement (ICE) to coordinate and provide increased opportunities for faculty and staff professional development and collaboration across disciplines and divisions;
- Professional development activities focusing on proactive advising and curricular enhancements;
- Hiring of an ICE Center Director, instructional design and advising consultants, and increased advising and counseling staff, as well as providing faculty stipends to support curriculum redesign work; and
- Implementation of the Starfish Early Alert Student Retention system.

Developmental and first-year gatekeeper courses, required before advancing toward a degree, will be redesigned to include more active and collaborative learning in order to increase student engagement. New student success strategies will be embedded into gatekeeper courses to give students the skills they need to be academically successful. Advising enhancements will include ensuring that students are meeting and planning with an advisor early to map out an academic plan to degree or certificate completion and introducing an early warning system with appropriate advising interventions for students who may be at risk academically.

Anticipated outcomes for the project include an increase in fall-to-fall student retention and student engagement in learning; a decrease in academic deficiency; and improvements in all areas of the performance indicators for the Strengthening Institutions Program.

Founded in 1966, in the heart of southeastern Massachusetts, Massasoit Community College is a public two-year college in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System. It is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States. Many departments carry additional accreditations. The College offers a full spectrum of associate's degree programs in arts, sciences, and applied sciences as well as one year and short term certificates across a variety of occupations and interests. In addition the College offers corporate and job skills training courses.