THIS MONTH at MIDDLESEX

MCC Students Earn Grant to Launch Businesses
Everyday Entrepreneurs Venture Fund Awards $50K in seed funds

MCC Named Military-Friendly School
Designation by VIQTORY, a veteran-owned business.

Poet January Gill O’Neil
Visiting Writers Series Speaker
February 25 in Lowell.

David Hogg
Parkland Shooting survivor spoke
in Lowell on February 6

Bedford Campus
591 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730

Lowell Campus
33 Kearney Square
Lowell, MA 01852
Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg speaks to students, staff and guests in Lowell. SENTINEL AND ENTERPRISE / JULIA MALAKIE

Preventing gun violence doesn't mean taking guns away from responsible owners. It requires a multifaceted approach that includes gun-law reform and community-based interventions, David Hogg told students at Middlesex Community College in Lowell on Wednesday. Hogg, a gun-violence prevention activist and survivor of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Feb. 14, 2018, described the tragedy that took the lives of 17 people and how the harrowing incident led to his current path of activism. The March For Our Lives co-founder said the issue has "earmarked an entire generation." "Our generation has to be the one to stand up with the current generation in power because if we don't, there will be no future generation," said Hogg, 18. "I don't say this to scare you. I say this to inspire you to create this change, because we can, and we will."

Hogg, who will attend Harvard University in the fall, said Massachusetts has the lowest rate of gun violence in America, with about three firearm deaths per 100,000 people. He attributed that to the laws in place in the Bay State, including an extended permitting process that requires safety training and extreme risk-protection orders that allow judges to suspend gun licenses for anyone deemed to be at risk of harming themselves or others. Hogg said he hopes to spread the Massachusetts model to other areas of the country. He said the National Rifle Association has constantly lobbied for weaker gun laws to the point that toy guns are more regulated for safety than actual guns in some places. It perpetuates the idea that "the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun" in order to sell more guns, Hogg said. But young people can create change if they believe in it and organize, he said.

"The only thing that has changed the world is a small group of determined individuals that take on an issue -- to address it at every level, to address every person affected no matter where they come from, what they look like or who they are but simply because they are a human being that need not suffer in a country that claims to be the greatest country on Earth," Hogg said.

Ron Brevard, professor of Interpersonal Communications in Criminal Justice, introduces Hogg. SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE/JULIA MALAKIE
He called on MCC students to pressure Congress and run for political office themselves, because representation of every demographic matters. "We need to make sure that the mayors of our cities have a youth council that actually represents us and cares about the students within the city," Hogg said to applause and cheers from the audience.

Hogg said intervention programs in schools, hospitals and other institutions have proven to reduce violence and gun deaths and to keep young people out of the cycle of incarceration. In urban areas, especially, the vast majority of people who shoot somebody else have been shot before, and hospital-based interventions have played a big role in reducing retaliatory violence, he said.

Students listen as Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg speaks Wednesday at Middlesex Community College in Lowell

Hogg also called on the media to stop repeatedly sharing the faces and names of mass shooters and deny them the fame they seek. He said the media must understand and try to course-correct its role in perpetuating harmful stereotypes, about the perpetrators of shootings, the communities suffering from violence and those working to overcome it. "The importance of a shooting should not be determined by your ZIP code," Hogg said.

MCC Student Union Government Association President Morgan Mayo and Lowell Campus Vice President Sonna Agundu said they were moved by Hogg's speech and passion. Mayo, an 18-year-old Littleton resident, said she remembers sitting in high school last year when the Parkland shooting occurred and thinking, "it could have been any school." "I think what he's doing is incredible, and it's the voice we need for our generation and more to come," she said.

Agundu, an 18-year-old Lowell resident said youths should all stand up against gun violence. "If we feel compelled to stop something, we should get a group of people and start something," she said. "It's all about having our voices to be heard."

Earlier in the day, Hogg spoke with professor Ron Brevard's Interpersonal Communications in Criminal Justice class, where he brought up many of the same points in a more direct dialogue with students. The lively discussion included many challenges to Hogg's statements from students with different viewpoints about guns.

Luke Levesque, 20, of Nashua, N.H., spoke about his training with guns and their value in self-defense and the defense of others, and their usefulness in fighting back against a tyrannical government. Hogg said he used to hold similar views about violent revolution, but has found evidence that non-violent revolution is significantly more effective and longer-lasting.

Hogg is also scheduled to speak at The Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley on Sunday, March 3 at noon. That event, which was postponed from an earlier date due to weather, is sold out.
NACCE Observes National Entrepreneurship Week with Launch of New Book on Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

by B/W News Desk Feb. 19, 2019

New Book Unveiled at Entrepreneurship Week Observance with Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).

The National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), the nation's leading organization focused on promoting entrepreneurship through community colleges, celebrated National Entrepreneurship Week February 16-23, by launching its new book, Community Colleges as Incubators of Innovation: Unleashing Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Communities and Students. The launch took place during a VIP reception hosted by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) in Washington, D.C.

"This book addresses the urgent need for community colleges to prioritize entrepreneurship education both to remain relevant in a changing economy and to graduate students with the flexible and interdisciplinary mindsets needed for the future of society," said NACCE President and CEO Rebecca Corbin, Ed.D. "It defines the key constructs for achieving this objective and describes how to create entrepreneurial learning environments. It is fitting that we were able to debut the book during a national celebration of entrepreneurship."

"A recurrent theme, and now an imperative, is the reality that if we are to meet the challenges of the second century of the community college movement, we must begin to think and behave very differently," said ACCT President and CEO and former NACCE board member J. Noah Brown, who wrote the book's Afterword. "To meet the needs of students and communities, we must adopt an entrepreneurial mindset - letting our passion dictate our direction while exercising moral courage and risk-taking to shift the curve of decision making by rejecting the status quo. To meet and conquer our challenges we must infuse our leadership with entrepreneurial principles."

James Mabry, president of Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts and a NACCE board member, along with Jee Hang Lee, vice president for Public Policy & External Relations for ACCT and NACCE board member, also attended the book launch, which followed policy discussions with entrepreneurship leaders from throughout the country as part of National Entrepreneurship Week. In addition to Brown, community college administrators, faculty, foundation executives, and entrepreneurship thought leaders contributed to NACCE's new book.

Proceeds from book sales will be directed to a scholarship fund for professional development for community college faculty and staff for entrepreneurship training. To order, call 800 232-0223 or email: stylusmail@presswarehouse.com; or visit www.styluspub.com. Use code NACCE8 at checkout to receive a 20% pre-order discount until February 28, 2019.

About NACCE
NACCE is an organization of educators, administrators, presidents, and entrepreneurs focused on igniting entrepreneurship in their communities and on their campuses. Its mission is to provide leadership and sustainable, scalable resources to foster entrepreneurial thinking and action in one of the largest entrepreneurial ecosystems in North America. The association represents 300+ community and technical colleges and 2,000 faculty, staff, administrators, and presidents who serve more than 3.3 million students.

For more information, visit www.nacce.com

Contact: Rebecca Corbin
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Data breaches? Hacks? Gendron is on the case

NVTHS's nominee for top tech student in state eyes a future in cybersecurity

The Lowell Sun
Updated: 02/10/2019 06:35:55 AM EST

WESTFORD -- Jason Gendron may someday be one of the experts the country turns to when a data breach or hacker threatens classified information.

He is certainly one of the people Nashoba Valley Technical High School turns to help keep its computers safely up and running.

"The past few years, it's been a really pressing issue," he said of cybersecurity. "Data breaches are rife across the country and the world. I'd like to combat that kind of thing, and I think I'd be good at it."

There is no reason to doubt him.

Jason, a senior from Dracut, is Nashoba Tech's nominee for the Outstanding Vocational Technical Student Award, given by the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators. Each technical high school nominates one student who best represents the opportunity provided by a vocational-technical education. All of the nominees are recognized at a dinner in April at Mechanics Hall in Worcester.

Jason, son of Dan and Kat Gendron of Dracut, is a senior in the Electronics & Robotics program at Nashoba Tech. He has the highest grade-point average in the Class of 2019 and has been inducted into both the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society.

He also attends Middlesex Community College full time through the Dual Enrollment plan and is a Dean's List student in the Information Technology/Cybersecurity program. He is on target to graduate with an Associate Degree from MCC in May, then graduate from Nashoba Tech in June.
MCC president vows to address survey concerns

By Kori Tuit, ktuit@lowellsun.com  Updated: 02/11/2019 10:14:06 AM EST

Middlesex Community College President James Mabry, left, and Board of Trustees Chairman James Campbell meet with The Sun editorial board Friday. Mabry said he knows he has work to do. SUN / KORI TUITT

LOWELL -- While Middlesex Community College President James Mabry is working to address concerns about his leadership highlighted in a recent survey, he said communication is the first step. But with the changing education system and limited resources making for an uneasy environment, Mabry said it is a challenge he is willing to accept. When it came to the survey itself, Mabry said the criticisms were general and that the survey was "written in a way to bring out a lot of negative response."

Aside from lack of confidence in his leadership, survey results also revealed that many had concerns that the college was becoming a "top-down institution," where policy decisions are made regardless of input from faculty and staff. "Irregardless of how the survey was done, it's important what comes out of that," Mabry said during an editorial board meeting with The Sun Friday. "You take what comes out and then you have to deal with it. That's critical. That's the most important thing." There were about 170 Massachusetts Community College Council union member respondents to the survey. While Mabry said there are a total of about 900 union members, faculty union President Joanna DelMonaco said there are 593 total union members. When asked if more survey participants may have made for more favorable responses, Mabry said that was not a critical issue. "I think the issue is, we understand that there is a communications gap that we need to solve," he said.

"I have heard the results of this. I went to the meeting (Thursday) where there was a really strong group of faculty and staff there." Faced with challenges of decreased funding and declining enrollment, Mabry said it has become difficult to work with less. He said per-pupil funding has decreased by 31 percent since 2001. "So, that means we're trying to do more with less. And then we have less revenue from our students. That's an environment that makes everybody uncomfortable," he said. "You have to make more difficult choices when your enrollment's going down and your funding's going down and when the opposite is true."

Community college enrollment across the state is down about 21 percent, while MCC is down just below 17 percent. Mabry said it isn't great news, but the college is not "falling off the cliff." With fewer students to serve, the institution has also been reducing its workforce. "It's a challenging environment, a lot of stress in there that comes out in different ways," Mabry said. "They're not going to yell at the governor, they're going to yell at me."

Mabry and James Campbell, MCC Board of Trustees chairman, said one of the major issues raised was communication, but DelMonaco said that isn't the main concern. "The concern, to me, if you look at the responses and how people felt, is we don't feel we're being led as effectively as we could be," DelMonaco said.

In a packed meeting Thursday, Mabry met with faculty and staff to address faculty and staff concerns and plan for future discussions on the topic. "This is a great place. It's been a great place for the almost 50 years it's been around and that's from the community that works here," DelMonaco said. "So, it's everybody that makes this place great. I'm not worried about the college per se, but I think we'll find time to continue to talk. (Mabry) is receiving the criticisms as constructive criticisms. That's what he said to me."

Mabry said he has a lot of good work to do and initiatives to see through to make for a stronger institution.

"What I heard there is they want me to be more visionary and more passionate and talk about the big picture with them," he said. "That's on me. So that's going to be my goal."
Mass. Offers Free Dorms To Homeless College Students

A pilot program in Massachusetts aimed at assisting homeless college students is now providing free housing for up to 20 students in the state. The program partners community colleges with nearby state universities.

One beneficiary of the program is Sumail. He says his parents kicked him out when he was 15. For awhile, he says, he lived at a gas station under a tarp with a Styrofoam door. "My pillow was a bunch of dead grass, and every ... now and then I'd wake up to a little eight-legged friend on my face," he says. He showered at the school gym.

"You have to deal with it," he says. "When you get tired, exhausted, you have to push through and get through life." He says no one in high school ever found out he was homeless because he had a bubbly personality. "You're happy," he says. "You portray yourself as being happy, but deep down inside, you know you're depressed. You're alone at the end of the day."

We are only identifying Sumail by his first name because he is concerned about the stigma of being homeless. When he turned 18, he got a job at a grocery store and a place to live. Then he lost that place. At Middlesex Community College, he found out about the state pilot program to house homeless college students. He's 23 now, in his first year. He wants to become a special-needs therapist.

Another student in the program, Jamie Waldron, had lost both parents when she was 14. She says she finished high school living with a cousin in Haverhill. At UMass Lowell, she paid for housing, but then came summer. "And that's when I really considered myself homeless, because I really didn't know where to live," she says. That's when she found out about the pilot program. It will allow her to live in a dorm year-round. She's 20 now and wants to become a lawyer.

Ten percent of state university students and 13 percent of community college students report they experienced homelessness in the past year. But state officials believe that number could be higher — many students are embarrassed about being homeless. Students who live on campus do better academically than students who live off campus. And even at a 98 percent occupancy rate, there are still enough available dorm rooms at state universities and UMass to house homeless students.

Four community colleges that don't have dorms are being paired with those campuses. Zac Bears, executive director of PHENOM, which advocates for more funding of public higher education in Massachusetts, welcomes the pilot program. He says the homelessness points to a bigger problem at public colleges and universities: the decades-long decline in state support for college tuition. "[It's] forcing students into choices of whether or not they can afford their rent or their tuition," he says.

In the short term, this new program takes away that worry from students such as Gabriel. He's 20. He became homeless when he was in sixth grade. Along with his mother and sister, he moved from shelter to shelter. He's now a student at Massachusetts Bay Community College. The pilot program has found him a dorm room at Framingham State. He says it beats trying to study in a homeless shelter with another family in the next room and no door between you. "And I can just focus on school," he says. "It's really great. It's awesome."

**Correction:** A previous version of the story incorrectly stated that students reported they were homeless, but the number referred to students who had experienced homelessness in the past year. We regret the error.

This segment aired on February 1, 2019.

03:26 Listen by copying the link below:

<iframe width="100%" height="124" scrolling="no" frameborder="no"
src="https://player.wbur.org/edify/2019/02/01/homeless-college-student-housing"></iframe>
Baker delivers $3.3 million in school grants

Shawsheen Tech, Greater Lowell, UML and MCC all beneficiaries

By Elizabeth Dobbins edobbins@lowellsun.com

Billerica — Gov. Charlie Baker took a bite out of a grilled peanut butter and jelly sandwich served out of the new Shawsheen Valley Technical High School food truck.

"I give that an 'A,'" he said. "Well done."

Then he headed inside and spoke to high school senior Alysia Gannon about a cribbage board she was making on of the school's new Computer Numeric Control (CNC) milling machines. Next door, students and instructor Tina Collins showed the governor the school's renovated robotics lab.

These updates at Shawsheen Tech are the products of tens of thousands in grant funding from the state in recent years. On Thursday, Baker, Education Secretary James Peyser and Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy visited the school to present the state's latest round of funding: $3.3 million in Skills Capital grants.

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The grants went to 31 high schools and educational institutions, including Shawsheen Tech, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Middlesex Community College and University of Massachusetts Lowell.

"This is a competitive procurement based on an interest that we have as an administration in providing the strategic tools that you all need to continue to meet the skill demands of the businesses and employers in your area," Baker said.

Shawsheen Tech received $125,000 to modernize and update the school's drafting program and introduce new engineering curriculum.

According to the announcement, this funding will allow the school to enroll more students and offer adult training programs.

Greater Lowell Tech in Tyngsboro received $68,504 to fund a new computer lab with training stations for computer networking, security and cyber operations. Both students at the school and adult learners will be able to use the lab to build skills in information technology, programming and web development.

The Lowell Campus of Middlesex Community College received $124,262 to upgrade its dental hygiene clinic. The funding will re-configure the clinic to meet accreditation standards and purchase 24 new work stations, allowing the clinic to apply for a special license to accept MassHealth and other insurance.

"We have a clinic that is over 25 years old that is in desperate need of improvement," said Katherine Gehly, dean of nursing and allied health.

Francis College at University of Massachusetts Lowell in partnership with Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School received $116,000 to purchase new CNC milling machines.

The purchase will offer new technical training programs for day and night students at both institutions.

Students will be able to earn college credit, an associate degree in mechanical engineering technology or a certificate in advanced manufacturing.

Follow Elizabeth Dobbins on Twitter @ElizaDobbins.
Future of city schools in their hands

By Elizabeth Dobbins, edobbins@lowellsun.com
Updated: 02/20/2019 06:35:03 AM EST

LOWELL -- A committee with the power to whittle down school superintendent applicants to a handful of finalists will start to take shape Wednesday. A subcommittee of the Lowell School Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Reception Room in City Hall to discuss the makeup of this "blue ribbon" committee, among other topics. "I'm hoping we'll walk away with that plan in place as well as the timeline," said School Committee member Connie Martin who chairs the Personnel Subcommittee.

She said the meeting will be a chance for School Committee members to discuss the make-up of this group of stakeholders before finalizing it at a full meeting. According to Martin, it will also act as another chance for members of the community to comment on the superintendent search process and build on feedback gathered during a sparsely attended meeting last month.

In the days leading up to the meeting, members of the School Committee have proposed different visions for this group, which will be tasked with narrowing applicants to a small number of superintendent finalists to the Lowell School Committee. Mayor William Samaras said he would like to see a 19-person committee. It would include three union representatives -- a teacher, clerk and administrator -- and two Lowell High School students. Additionally, it would include three parents and three teachers, one from each of the three levels, elementary middle and high school levels. The committee would also have representatives from the following: Project LEARN, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Middlesex Community College, the Cambodian community, the Latino community, the black community and possibly two other community leaders.

Samaras said the board would be of a similar size or larger than past committees. He believes this is necessary to get community input, particularly from minority communities, which have not had specific representation during past searches. School Committee member Gerry Nutter is advocating for a smaller group, between nine and 13 people, primarily made up of "new faces." He proposed four union representatives: two from the teacher's union, a clerk and an administrator. It would also include representatives from the Lowell High School Student Council, business community, health community, a nonprofit, a youth group or youth sports and at least three parents.

Nutter said he also plans to advocate for a non-voting chair appointed by the Lowell School Committee. He said he would like to leave organizations involved in past efforts, like the Lowell Education Justice Alliance and Project LEARN, off the committee. "I think we need to get new voices," he said.

Last month, School Committee member Robert Hoy Jr. suggested an even smaller committee, between seven and nine people, with an emphasis on representation for the city's minority groups. Martin said she doesn't have a specific proposal for the committee, but would like to see a "fairly tight" committee of less than 20 people with members who haven't participated in this type of process before. "I think the key to it will be populating it with a wide range of perspectives," she said.

The meeting on Wednesday will also include discussion of the contract with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to facilitate the process, including a visit from a representative from the organization.

Members are also expected to discuss the posting of the Human Resource Director position.

Read more: http://www.lowellsun.com/news/ci_2464088/future-city-schools-their-hands#ixzz5gAo62uYd
Bedford Eagle Scout candidate to build kiosk at Wilderness Park

John Giaquinto standing in the Wilderness Park Conservation Area, where he plans to build an information kiosk for his eagle scout project. [Wicked Local staff photo / Rob Carter]

By Rob Carter Posted Feb 20, 2019 at 1:50 PM Updated Feb 20, 2019 at 1:50 PM

Visitors to the Wilderness Park Conservation Area could soon have a new view when they enter the trails thanks to Bedford High School senior John Giaquinto’s Eagle Scout project. Giaquinto has gotten approval from the Bedford Conservation Committee to build a kiosk at the trailhead with information for hikers. “Right now I’m planning on a trail map and maybe some information about the trail’s history,” Giaquinto said, adding he also was considering putting information about local plant life on the display.

Giaquinto said there were a variety of factors playing into his choice of a project, but he always knew he wanted to do something nature oriented. “The reason I joined the scouts in the first place was to have more chances to go camping and hiking, so I wanted my project to reflect that,” Giaquinto said.

Currently the start of trail at Wilderness Park Conservation Area across from the overflow lot at Middlesex Community College could be easily missed by visitors. Only a small sign nailed to a tree trunk roughly 12 feet off the ground denotes the trail’s start. “My blueprints call for the kiosk to be about 9 feet tall, but after talking with some people, I’m probably going to make it a bit smaller,” Giaquinto said.

Giaquinto said that because Eagle Scout projects need to provide something for the community, he has been careful to get input from the town and other scouts to make sure his project will do that. He even changed the location of the kiosk, when a town official said trails in the Wilderness Park Conservation Area was in greater need. Eagle Scout projects are intended to be leadership projects, so Giaquinto said he had helped with other projects of other scouts in the past. But Giaquinto gained a new appreciation for the work involved when he began on his own project.

Having to petition local government boards Giaquinto said was the biggest change for him when actually leading the project. Giaquinto said it was a lot of work to gain the approvals, but it gave him a better appreciation of how his local government worked. Giaquinto said he hoped to begin construction by mid-March, but the specific start date would depend on when he got building supplies donated for the project and when other members of Troop 194 were available to help. “I expect to definitely begin building before April,” Giaquinto said.
MCC promotions questioned after critical report

By Rick Soby
rsoby@lowellsun.com

LOWELL — Two finance and human resources administrators at Middlesex Community College are set to become vice presidents, receiving pay bumps on top of their $130,000-plus salaries — new roles created at MCC in the wake of an outside consultant’s report stressing the college has numerous finance and HR deficiencies.

These promotions also come as there are fewer full-time faculty members at the community college, a decline since President James Mabry took over four years ago.

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years ago. Enrollment has dropped at MCC, a trend across all community colleges in Massachusetts because of demographic trends.

The optics of these promotions are less than ideal, according to union leadership, who also recently delivered a survey that was critical of Mabry’s leadership and performance, with more than half of respondents voting they do not have confidence in Mabry to effectively lead the college.

Joanna DelMonaco, the college’s faculty/staff union president, said it’s not an appropriate time for these salary hikes and vice president titles.

“When I became union president, President Mabry pledged to keep up the levels for full-time faculty,” she said. “That hasn’t been the case.”

Today there are 120 full-time faculty members at MCC. When Mabry took over four years ago, there were 135 full-time members.

The union vice president, David Kalvis, added that these promotions could be a problem “perceptually.”

Frank Nocella, executive director of finance and chief financial officer, is set to become a vice president. His base pay in 2018 was $140,490.

Mary Emerick, executive director of human resources, will also become a vice president. Her base pay last year was $132,462.

Their vice president salaries have not yet been determined, according to Mabry.

When asked about the optics of these promotions against the fewer full-time faculty members, Mabry addressed the declining enrollment of 17 percent over the last five years. As a result, the college’s funding has continued to decline, he said.

“We’re being very careful about this,” Mabry said, adding that he depends on Provost Phil Stinson to advise him where they need full-time faculty members.

The incremental salary increases for the two administrators will be small compared to the administrative positions they’ve removed over the last few years, he added. For instance, in the summer of 2016, Jay Linnahan’s executive vice president position was eliminated. He was making close to $180,000.

MCC also eliminated the assistant vice president for finance.

“They’re taking on additional responsibilities, and both are very capable of doing so,” Emerick said.

For instance, one of the observations in the Grant Thornton Business Process Analysis focused on the significant challenges related to collaboration and communication between the HR and payroll departments at MCC.

“As a result, there could be an increased risk of error and non-compliance, resulting in data integrity issues, the report states.

Grant Thornton recommended that MCC recognize and combine the HR and payroll functions to “enhance collaboration and better align strategies, culture, expectations and processes.”

One of Nocella’s new responsibilities in the finance division will be managing construction projects and capital planning for the college’s 18 buildings. Before, the facilities department had reported directly to Mabry.

It will be better to have this responsibility out of the president’s office. Mabry said, adding that he’ll be able to spend more time working on raising money for the college.

MCC paid Grant Thornton $150,000 over nine months for the report.

Mabry called it a very good investment, saying it will be a guiding document for the college.

The college administrators asked for the business process review from an independent third-party perspective because they had an inkling there were some things they could be doing better, the president said.

Now they have a roadmap of how to make improvements, becoming more efficient and effective in finance and HR, Mabry said. Suggestions in the report include process changes, organizational improvements and technology enhancements.

The report also notes that the college is doing some solid work in finance and HR. For example, one of MCC’s effective practices is developing multi-year financial reports and three-year trend projections, according to Grant Thornton.

MCC is putting together an action plan to address the deficiencies in the review.

“This will give us an opportunity to really improve and increase the quality of performance in these areas,” Mabry said.

Follow Rick Soby on Twitter @rsoby@lowellsun.
Is clock ticking on Mabry's time at MCC?

A Sun staff report

HAS THE James Mabry watch begun? Depends who's talking.

The MCC prez has his supporters, like James Campbell, Board of Trustees chairman.

On the flip side of the Mabry equation is Rep. David Nangle, who's had a target on Mabry's back for the most of the four years he's overseen the college.

Column intuition is the "watch" hasn't officially begun.

The Column

Inside political news and views from around The Sun circulation area.

But if Mabry wants to stay, he must convince faculty members who recently voted no-confidence in him that he'll be more receptive to their concerns.

As one season politico said, "If the faculty turns..."

In keeping with tradition, the political grapevine has already sprouted two names of potential replacements: former Sen. Steven Panagiotakos and former Rep. Niki Tsongas.

Of course, neither would confirm the speculation.

Panagiotakos said his lobbying business is firing on all cylinders and on those days he needs a rest, he can take it.

All Tsongas would say is that she admires Mabry's resolve to meet with rank-and-file to address its concerns.

But a few pols agree if the job opens up, it would be enticing to both.

Certainly Panagiotakos has passed on other major positions, such as UMass Lowell chancellor and city manager. Despite his successful lobbying business, the MCC job would give him his top three years for what would be a nifty state pension.

For Tsongas, it would be a homecoming of sorts. Before heading to Congress in 2007, she worked as MCC's dean of external affairs for several years.

Tsongas, some pols said, would be a Carole Cowan-type leader, in reference to the longtime president who preceded Mabry who hit all the right buttons.

MABRY TOOK a jab at the faculty/staff union leadership earlier this month, less than 24 hours after the two sides had a respectful public discussion about his performance and leadership.

The discussion between full-time faculty/staff members, Mabry and community college trustees came in the wake of the Campus Climate Survey, in which 56 percent of respondents voted they do not have confidence in Mabry to effectively lead the college.

But a day later, when the union wasn't in the room, Mabry blasted the survey, saying it was "written in a way to bring out a lot of negative response." He said the results were "skewed."

His comments during an interview at The Sun lit a fire under the union leaders, namely Joanna DelMonaco and David Kalivas.

"I take exception to that," DelMonaco, union president, said a few days after Mabry's comment.

She pointed out that they also asked the faculty/staff members about their confidence in Phil Sisson, provost and vice president of academic and student affairs.

More than 70 percent of respondents voted they are confident in Sisson's ability to effectively lead academic and student affairs.

Also, 76 percent of respondents voted they feel supported by their immediate supervisor.

Kalivas, union vice president, emphasized that the survey was impartial.

"He (Mabry) was maligning us after he said he wanted to work with us," Kalivas said. "We saw that as duplicitous, and not in the best interest of a positive working relationship."

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11
Bettencourt named assistant VP at Beverly Bank

Vanessa Bettencourt

Posted Feb 15, 2019 at 4:19 PM

Vanessa Bettencourt has been named assistant vice president of retail banking at Beverly Bank's Salem branch located at 73 Lafayette St. She will focus on business development in Salem and the surrounding communities.

Additionally, Bettencourt will manage all functions of retail banking, providing strategic and operational direction to the branch staff.

With more than 13 years of banking experience, Bettencourt most recently held the position of branch manager at Citizens Bank in Beverly. Previously, she was a senior financial services associate at People's United Bank, Peabody.

Bettencourt attended Middlesex Community College in Lowell.
MCC plans free info session on Workforce Training grants

The Lowell Sun
Updated: 02/17/2019 06:35:10 AM EST

BEDFORD -- Middlesex Community College will host a free information session for businesses seeking Workforce Training Fund grants Wednesday, March 6, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., in Trustees' House, Building 4, on the Bedford campus, 591 Springs Road. Registration deadline is Monday, March 4.

The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund, administered by Commonwealth Corporation, provides resources for businesses to train current and newly hired employees. The goal is to help improve employee skills and maintain the economic strength of the state's businesses.

At the info session, a WFTF representative will present an overview of the grant options and answer questions in an informational setting.

WFTF provides training grants to Massachusetts employers up to $250,000 per application. MCC's Corporate and Community Education & Training Program has helped many businesses secure and implement the grants.

For more information on specific Workforce Training Fund programs, visit www.commcorp.org/wtfp. To register, email medint@middlesex.mass.edu, or call 978-656-3009.

Enroll Now In MCC’s Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide Course

Enrollment is now open for Middlesex Community College’s Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide Certificate Training Program, which prepares students for an entry-level career as a nurse assistant. Upon successful completion of this noncredit program, students will be eligible to sit for the Massachusetts nurse assistant certification exam.

Offered through MCC’s Community Education and Career Training Program, this 100-hour program meets from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, March 25 through May 15, on the Lowell campus.

Students will learn the skills needed to care for residents in long-term care facilities and hospitals, including personal patient care, patient rights, how to lift and turn patients, safety, infection control, vital signs, record-keeping, mental health care of residents, and stress management.

To enroll, students must have a high school diploma or GED, give permission for a CORI/SORI background check, and be able to lift and move 50 pounds. Enrollment is open until all seats are filled.

To apply, email Ellen Wright at wrighte@middlesex.mass.edu or call 781-280-3570.

Visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining for more information about noncredit Community Education and Training courses at Middlesex.

Discover your path at Middlesex Community College. As one of the largest, most comprehensive community colleges in Massachusetts, we educate, engage and empower a diverse community of learners. MCC offers more than 80 degree and certificate programs – plus hundreds of noncredit courses – on our campuses in Bedford and Lowell, and online. Middlesex Community College: Student success starts here!
Peet to read at Middlesex Community College

As part of its Visiting Writers Series, Middlesex Community College will host award-winning poet January Gill O’Neill to read and discuss her work at 12:10 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Founders Building Assembly Room, 33 Barnaby Square, Lowell campus. The event is free and open to the public.

An assistant professor of English at Salem State University, O’Neill has published three books of poetry, including “Underlife,” “Molly Island,” winner of a Paterson Award for Literary Excellence, and the Massachusetts Book Award, and “Resilience,” her newest.


In addition, she was featured in Poets and Writers magazine’s 2010 Inspiration issue as a debut poet. The executive director of the Massachusetts Poetry Festival, O’Neill is also a board member of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs and poetry co-editor of the journal Soilscapes: A magazine of Diverse Voices. She has received fellowships from Cave Canem and the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund.

MCC’s Visiting Writers Series is sponsored by the creative writing program and the office of student engagement.

For information, call 978-650-3163 or email StudentEngagement@middlesex.mass.edu.

MCC named military friendly school

Middlesex Community College was recently designated a 2019 Silver-Level Military Friendly School by VIQTORY, a veteran-owned business. MCC supports veterans and their families through Veterans Resource Centers in Bedford and Lowell, a Veterans Advisory Board and other special veteran services.

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Middlesex has also received grant funding to provide Green Zone training to faculty and staff. Green Zones help create a highly visible network of college employees who better understand the needs of active military veterans and their family members, according to Flaherty.

Sign up for Middlesex C.C.'s Spring Mini-mester

Registration is open for Middlesex Community College’s Spring Mini-mester II, which runs March 25 through May 14. Financial aid is available for those who qualify. Accelerated courses in accounting, biology, English, entrepreneurship, history, management, math and psychology, among others, are available this session. Most Mini-mester courses are offered online. They cover the same content, maintain the same academic standards, and contain the same number of in-class instructional hours as courses scheduled during the traditional 15-week semester. For further information or a full list of Mini-mester course offerings, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/minimesters/ or call 800-818-3434.
A gator love story: James & Mari Mullen share, reflect on their relationship
Lauren Trimber, Features Editor | February 14, 2019

The Mullen family poses for a Christmas photograph in 2017. Photo contributed by James Mullen

When Allegheny College President James Mullen and Mari Mullen enrolled in the same college just a few years apart from each other, neither ever expected to get married, Mari said. Their minds changed while they were dating, and their 24 years of marriage have given James and Mari two children, numerous career opportunities and a competitive streak that spans from pickup basketball to board games. The couple said they have continued to teach and surprise one another even after nearly three decades together.

"Mari's made me a much better person," James said. "The way she's helped me to always see the world from another person's perspective before I judge, I think, has been a wonderful influence on my life."

Although James and Mari Mullen did not begin dating until after they graduated college, both grew up in Massachusetts and attended the College of the Holy Cross. Mari, who was a first-year when James was a senior, said she often spent time with her resident assistant, who was James' best friend. While she is not positive they met during their college years, Mari said she was sure they must have bumped into one another at some point. "I just have that charismatic way of making an impression on people, I guess," James joked.

When James was about 28 and Mari 25, both found themselves working in the same area in Massachusetts. Mari was hired as the education adviser to the former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, while James was working for Middlesex Community College, which had secured an appropriation for the construction of two new campuses, according to James. "As fate would have it, (Mari) came out the week before to talk through the event through which the governor would announce the appropriate, and I took great interest in the education adviser for the governor," James said. There was mutual attraction when the two met to discuss the event, according to Mari. "I enjoyed talking to you on the phone, and then when I walked in, I thought you were adorable," Mari said.

Although James said he liked Mari once he met her, he and his colleagues had originally decided to humor her since she was a state employee who may have tried to control the event too much. Once they met, however, James realized he should spend more time discussing the event with Mari. "I thought she was really smart, funny and fun to be around," James said. "We shared a lot of interests. We shared an interest in politics and an interest in sports." At the event, James asked Mari to accompany him to the reception, but Dukakis had already asked Mari to ride with him in his car, so they could review information on the way back to the Massachusetts State House. "(Dukakis) used to always say 'Oh, I got them together,' but I'm like no, 'You almost didn't. You almost wrecked it,'" Mari said.

At another event where Mari was working, she met the president of Middlesex Community College, who told her James had gone to the College of the Holy Cross, which, according to Mari, gave her an excuse to call him the next day. During their second date, Mari, who had played backyard and intramural football, made an impression on James, he said. "The second date, I took (Mari) for a picnic, and (she) had made a picnic basket and put it in the trunk of my little old beat-up car," James said. "When I opened the trunk to get the picnic basket, there was a football in my trunk. She picked it up and threw me a perfect spiral, and I thought that was pretty cool too." The dedication to sports and athletic competition has continued throughout their relationship, according to the couple's kids, Franki and James Mullen.

"My mom, if you ask her, she'll show you all of her football trophies and joke that my dad only has golf trophies," James Mullen said. "It's funny to watch them be competitive, whether it's basketball, golf or board games." When the two began dating, Mari said neither of them wanted to get married, a feeling that changed throughout their relationship. Mari moved to San Francisco for about a year and a half, and while she worked there, she realized that if she and James were to get
married, they needed to be in the same place to make the decision. About one year after Mari moved away from San Francisco, the couple married Aug. 5, 1994, after five years of dating. “I knew pretty early on that this was somebody very special,” James said.

After they married, Mari worked in public relations and public affairs when James was given the opportunity to move into a higher position of college administration. Even though the opportunity meant she would have to pause her own career, Mari immediately told him to take the job, James said. “When I became a college president with two small kids, I was travelling a lot and had a lot of long days,” James said. “Mari committed herself to raising two small kids. I owe her a lot for that.” James often had to travel for work, but both he and Mari were present as their kids grew up, according to James Mullen.

“My dad was always present as much as he could be, but obviously he had to travel a lot,” James Mullen said. “But my mom was always there for us. She was the one who always coached us as kids, was always up early making pancakes (when we had sleepovers), making our lunch for school. But my dad also did a great job with balancing. He was always at everything he could be at. He and I would go golfing, and we'd just take a couple hours just the two of us. He finds it really important just to find those times to spend with us.”

Franki agreed James balanced his work obligations with his home life well, as one of her favorite memories is when she and her family took a vacation to Disney World. “My dad is a child at heart, and he loves tourist things, so when we lived in North Carolina, we went to Florida a lot,” Franki said. “We got to go to Disney a few times, and definitely going to Disney was peak childhood. My parents were so into it.” The number of dinners and events James had to attend only succeeded in bringing the family closer together, even when Franki and James Mullen were young children, Franki said.

“It was a different childhood than most have,” Franki said. “As far as I can remember, I've been going to the dinners and stuff. I got to meet a lot of people, and my parents are really cool about it. They always made James (Mullen) and me feel very involved in whatever they were doing. It was different, but it was also very cool.” Mari said she never considered it a sacrifice to tell James to pursue a career in college administration — instead, it gave her the opportunity to work with more groups of people. Her current work includes a position on the management team for Special Olympics and the board for Women's Services in Crawford County, where she helps fundraise for the organization and write a grant for a new shelter.

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— James Mullen, President, Allegheny College

“What we do has afforded me a lot of things that I wouldn't be able to do,” Mari said. “The connection with Allegheny has given me an opportunity to work in Women's Services. I coach kids all the way up through middle school. It has been a real joy for me, and I never would have been able to make that connection.” James' relationship with Mari has allowed him to share in someone else's experiences, to feel the magic of their marriage, James said. “I'm tremendously proud of what Mari does for Special Olympics, for what she's done for Women's Services,” James said. “She gets great joy out of being part of the campus and interacting with students. I know the first phone call I make, whether it's good news or bad news, is to Mari, and when I need advice, the advice I trust the most is Mari's.”

By watching his parents as he grew up, James Mullen learned what loving someone really means, and he said their love is shown through their actions. “My mom has always been going to all these Allegheny events that she doesn't individually get paid for, but she knows how much it means for my dad to be there,” James Mullen said. “She'll go on trips across country when it's not of the easiest convenience for her, and then my dad will back it up by going to my mom's basketball games. He'll go to her practices. They're so busy, but they always find time to show up and represent their other half.” Both Franki and James Mullen said their parents are best friends, and while their relationship is not perfect, they show enduring support and love for each other. “What my parents have taught me through any kind of love is that it's not always what you see in the movies,” Franki said. “My parents are very different ... but they love each other anyway. Whatever differences people may have, you can still love each other. That's definitely something they've taught me.”

To James Mullen, his parents have not only found help in each other over the past decade. Allegheny, he said, has given his family great support. “Allegheny has meant so much to (my parents),” James Mullen said. “They love all the students. You're great to them, and I want to say thank you to the Allegheny community for always being there for them and embracing us all these years.”

As James prepares to retire at the end of Allegheny’s 2018-19 academic year, he and Mari are looking forward to the next step in their lives, especially since they will be taking that step together. “Love is about all the time you're together,” James said. “Love's going to mean the most when times are challenging. Who's the person you want to be with in the happiest moment of your life, and who's the person you want to put your arm around in the toughest time of your life. And that's what this is all about.”
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Middlesex has also received grant funding to provide Green Zone training to faculty and staff. Green Zones help create a highly visible network of college employees who better understand the unique needs of active military veterans and their family members, Flaherty said.

For more information about veteran services at Middlesex, contact Jessica A. Frost, VRC director, at frostj@middlesex.mass.edu or 978-656-3282; or Timothy Quinn, VRC coordinator, at quinnt@middlesex.mass.edu or 781-280-3510.
Critics quickly targeted Mabry

The Lowell Sun Updated: 02/10/2019 06:34:55 AM EST

James Campbell, Middlesex Community College Board of Trustees chairman, right, is Sun Enterprise Editor Christopher Scott's guest on the most recent edition of Sun Spot, The Sun's contribution to the Lowell Telecommunication Corp.'s biweekly news magazine, "LTC News." Campbell discussed the recent MCC faculty vote of no-confidence in President James Mabry. Campbell, the former Lowell city manager, also discussed his views of Mabry while emphasizing several times that he takes the union's concerns seriously while figuring out where the "disconnect" is. The show next airs Thursday at 6 p.m. on LTC Channels 8 and 99. Check the LTC website for additional showings and times.

Sun Staff Report

JAMES MABRY wasn't a year into his job as Middlesex Community College president and his critics were in full throttle, looking to send him back to Arizona, according to Board of Trustees Chairman James Campbell. Following a controversial search process to replace Carole Cowan, Mabry was hired away from Mesa Community College in December 2014. He officially took over MCC the following February. In December 2015, Campbell was appointed chairman, joined by new trustees Annie O'Connor of Lowell and Bopha Malone of Bedford. Soon after, Campbell told The Column, he was being squeezed by Mabry's critics.

Campbell listened to the complaints and concerns, but the former city manager wasn't swayed one way or the other. "No one was going to do that for me," said Campbell. "I would formulate my own opinion." Campbell said he found Mabry to be "the real deal" who has been a solid fit to replace Cowan. Campbell declined to identify who contacted him. When pressed, he said "more than one member" of the city's Statehouse delegation.

Rep. David Nangle said he did speak with Campbell, and told him Mabry's communication with the delegation "needs improvement." "I wasn't critical, because Mabry had only been there for a year," said Nangle. "Plus, it's not my job to get involved in the day-to-day running of the college." The other legislator who expressed communications concerns about Mabry to Campbell was Rep. Tom Golden. "I don't recall the exact circumstances of our conversations, but, yes, I did talk to Mr. Campbell about communication," Golden said Friday. When pressed, Golden said communication was non-existent then and it remains that way today.

Both reps highlighted their relationships with UML Chancellor Jacquie Moloney and other top university officials, including UMass President Marty Meehan. That partnership, Golden and Nangle said, has never been stronger. Asked if emotions are still raw that heir-apparent/in-house candidate Jay Linnehan wasn't picked to succeed Cowan, Golden said: "Those are yesterday's headlines." A RECENT survey filled out by full-time MCC faculty and staff members revealed that more than 50 percent of respondents do not have confidence in Mabry to effectively lead the college.

That Campus Climate Survey and Mabry's leadership at the college were front-and-center at Thursday's meeting between union leaders, Mabry and the trustees. It appeared from the get-go that Campbell did not want to dive too far into the complaints from the union at a public meeting. The chairman continued to say that he, Mabry and the union leadership should sit down over coffee and work on the issues in an informal setting, far away from the press and any voice recorders.

The survey's results became public at the last Board of Trustees meeting when Union President Joanna DelMonaco delivered an eye-opening presentation. She told Campbell last week she had no idea the press would be at the meeting. "Our membership adamantly said to not call the press," she told Campbell. In response, Campbell said the survey results would ultimately end up in the newspaper. "They do their job," he said. "It's what freedom of the press is all about."

After an airing of grievances in public the sides decided they would in the near future sit down for that coffee. The Sun will find out when and where that informal meeting takes place, so make sure you get a table tucked far away in the corner at Coffee and Cotton or The Java Room.
MCC Honors program

Middlesex Community College’s Commonwealth Honors Program offers unique learning opportunities for students who elect to study at a more challenging, advanced level.

Honors graduates transfer to top schools, including UMass Amherst, Boston University, Chapman University, Columbia University, UMass Lowell, Salem State University, Skidmore College and University of Virginia, among others.

For more information about MCC’s Commonwealth Honors Program, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/honors or call 781-280-3553.
New owners at Designs by Don share his passion
By Lizzy Hill News Correspondent Feb 9, 2019

Happy Valentine's Day from the new owners of Designs by Don, Megan Godding and Kathleen Strazzere. photo: BruceHilliard.com

WILMINGTON — Wilmington florist Designs by Don welcomes new owners Megan Godding and Kathleen Strazzere, taking over for previous owner Don Hill. Godding has worked with Hill at the shop since she was a teenager, and is also his daughter-in-law, and Strazzere is her best friend. The two grew up together in Wilmington schools and played different sports together through high school before they graduated in 2006.

Don Hill started Designs by Don in 1989, shortly after teaching at Rittners School of Floral Design. He first graduated from Rittners in 1963. Besides run-n-ing his own business, he helped open and support several other local floral shops, including one in Nashua, NH. "Don has a wealth of knowledge and we love having him," said Kathleen Strazzere.

He'll continue to help Godding and Strazzere through their transition into ownership, telling the dynamic duo everything about the business that they'll need for success. Hill's daughter-in-law, Megan Godding, has turned the job of her dreams into a reality 15 years later. "I remember coming in here as a little girl and being captivated," she told the Town Crier. "I couldn't think of doing anything else."

Working for Hill over the years has started to prepare her to take over and everything fell into place as her father-in-law decided to retire. She also earned her associate’s degree from Middlesex Community College in the meantime. To make her dream job even better, Godding brought her best friend as co-owner. "Kat's good at the business side of things," she shared.

Kathleen 'Kat' Strazzere got her undergraduate degree from UMass Lowell in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. She worked at Lucci's Supermarket on and off through college before she held a managerial role at a day spa in North Reading. Following in Hill's footsteps, Strazzere and Godding only want to fine-tune the business he started and ran so well for years. Changes they've made so far include a new POS system to keep track of all activity, new flooring, an update to their website, and a social media presence. "We're just giving it a facelift," Strazzere said.

The intent behind everything that they do is to make someone happy and provide them service that they can count on. These two new owners will try any kind of request and always guarantee the quality of their product. "We get our flowers every day in fresh from the flow-er market... we take pride in making sure that they're clean," said Godding. While they are sometimes limited by the flowers that are in season, they'll look in every avenue to find a particular flower or plant that someone needs. They love to try out new arrangements and challenge themselves in new ways when it comes to customization. Godding boa-s-ted that she recently made a German Shepard out of flowers.

They love being a local, Wilmington and family-owned shop both because of their love for the town and for the benefits to their own families. Strazzere and Godding ag-reed that Wilmington is the best town to live and to work in. Strazzere is married with two young children — 5-year-old Amera and 2-year-old Ali — and Godding is married with a baby boy on the way. "My daughter loves the flowers," Strazzere shared. "She's going to grow up here." It's their joy to raise their children and share their passion with them.

Going forward, they're excited to lead under the same principles of giving back to the community and to the people of Wilmington that Hill did. "Anybody who needs help, we help them," Godding continued.
Award-Winning Poet
January Gill O’Neil
To Read At MCC

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EDITORIAL: From too-common tragedy, extraordinary drive

The Lowell Sun
Updated: 02/08/2019 10:50:30 AM EST

David Hogg, a survivor of last year's Valentine's Day mass murder at his Florida high school, decided then that the 17 lives taken that day wouldn't be remembered as just another in a senseless string of lethal violence facilitated by this country's unwillingness to enact comprehensive gun control. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School senior and soon-to-be Harvard freshman decided to use the national attention to motivate his peers everywhere to urge those with political power -- but not will -- to advocate for common-sense firearms legislation.

The March For Our Lives co-founder told Middlesex Community College students in Lowell on Wednesday standing up to powerful interests like the National Rifle Association starts with the current generation of young adults. They can influence public policy by advocacy, electing agents-for-change, and becoming candidates at both the state and national level.

Noting that Massachusetts has achieved the lowest rate of gun violence in America, Hogg's purpose wasn't to convince a skeptical audience of the need for gun reform, but to inspire students to remain committed to that goal until it's the law of the land.

Hogg said he hopes to spread the Massachusetts gun-control model -- which includes an extended permitting process that requires safety training and extreme risk protection orders that remove guns from anyone deemed a physical risk to themselves or others -- across the country, especially to areas resistant to change.

We assume the vast majority of students shared the opinion of Hogg's presentation expressed by MCC Student Union Government Association President Morgan Mayo and Lowell Campus Vice President Sonma Agundu. "I think what he's doing is incredible, and it's the voice we need for our generation and more to come," Agundu, 18, of Lowell, told the newspaper.

Defining moments in history can elevate ordinary individuals to extraordinary levels of commitment and purpose.

David Hogg is such a person.
Union, MCC president clear air after negative survey

Mabry admits 'disconnect,' vows to work collaboratively on declining-enrollment issue

By Rick Sobey
rsobey@lowellsun.com

Billerica — Middlesex Community College President James Mabry admitted there are things he needs to work on, and recognized the "disconnect" between his administration and faculty/staff members during Thursday's standing-room only meeting that addressed a recent survey critical of him.

The respectful public discussion between full-time faculty/staff members, Mabry and community college trustees on Thursday came in the wake of the Campus Climate Survey, in which 58 percent of respondents voted they do not have confidence in Mabry to effectively lead the college.

Union leaders at the Board of Trustees Ad-hoc Committee meeting elaborated on the results of the survey, emphasizing that Mabry must work harder to mitigate declining enrollment, a major problem statewide because of demographic trends.

"I feel like we have to tell President Mabry how to be a leader," the college's faculty union president, Joanna Del-Monaco, said as Mabry listened at the other end of the table in the The Meeting House in Billerica.

The faculty union vice president, David Kalivas, who has been at MCC for three decades under four presidents, added that this level of concern in leadership confidence at MCC is "unprecedented."

Please see MCC/B

"We are not a college of whiners," Kalivas said.

MCC has fared much better than the rest of the state when it comes to enrollment over the past five years, posting one of the lowest declines in the state, Mabry later responded at the meeting.

The five-year enrollment decline average at MCC is 16.9 percent, compared to the state average of 21 percent. Northern Essex and North Shore community colleges have faced decreases of about 27 percent.

"We're all struggling with this, but we've been extremely active and worked extremely hard to mitigate that decline," Mabry said.

He later said he will take the input from Thursday's meeting, and work on communicating better with faculty and staff. It's important to solve the issues together, Mabry said.

"I have the most respect for the faculty and staff here," he said. "We are here to really work with our faculty and staff."

All of their input is extremely valuable, Mabry added.

In the near future, Mabry, Board of Trustees Chairman Jim Campbell and faculty/staff members will have an informal gathering to further discuss the issues privately.

At Thursday's public meeting, Del-Monaco presented a timeline of the concerns from faculty and staff members, going back to February 2017 when a Faculty Staff Association survey showed low morale at the college.

Back then, two years ago, the union met with Mabry privately in the hopes of helping him understand the emerging problems at the college. Later, in the spring of 2018, Mabry attended a union meeting, which became "boisterous," Del-Monaco said. Many people spoke up about the negative direction of the college, she added.

Mabry wasn't totally getting it at that meeting, science professor Sally Quast recalled on Thursday.

"He acknowledged the concerns, but wasn't in our shoes," she said.

Mabry is well-intentioned, but there's a disconnect, Quast added.

"I was trying to listen and understand, and not pass over the issues," Mabry said. "We were trying to really listen to what people asked and respond to that."

The faculty union vice president, Kalivas, addressed the declining enrollment issue. No one will solve it, 100 percent, he admitted.

But the community college needs to fight harder to mitigate it, Kalivas stressed.

"It's essential to get the word out about the good work at the college, bucking the negative imagery of a community college," he said.

When MCC got a recent biotechnology grant, where was the big press conference in Lowell, Kalivas asked.

"There wasn't one. That's a missed opportunity," he said.

"Be passionate about selling us," he added.

Campbell, chair of the trustees, pointed out that the college has been ranked very high by the U.S. Department of Education — the top community college in the state.

Mabry has also received positive evaluations from trustees and the state, Campbell added. The president has formed close partnerships across the greater community, he said.

"This has been a healthy conversation," Campbell said at Thursday's meeting. "I say let's have a cup of coffee and further discuss this."

"I feel more confident after this discussion that this is a resolvable problem," he added.

Follow Rick Sobey on Twitter @rsobeyLSun.
Should students have a say on educational policy?

By Eli Sherman

e@wickedlocal.com

Carla Duran Capellan, a student at Middlesex Community College, graduated from the Generation Citizen program in which high school students learn how to be better citizens. The program provides civic education and encourages participation in the political process. While in high school, Capellan helped lead research into xenophobia.

The experience, she said, helped build confidence she felt was lacking since she immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic.

"When I first arrived, I didn't think I could have a voice in my school or community because I was an immigrant," she said. "That all changed."

"The story, albeit specific to Capellan, is indicative of a bigger problem," she added.

See STUDENTS, B4

STUDENTS

From Page A1

discussion happening within society is an issue about the need to give students a more meaningful voice in the educational policy-making process in Massachusetts.

"If we're going to do this right, students need to be an active voice in the vision we're creating," said Chad O'Entzman, executive director of the Roomer Center for Education Research and Policy. "We need to recognize that students have an active voice in demonstrating to adults what learning should look like and what they need."

The Roomer Center, a Boston-based nonprofit, released its annual Condition of Education in the Commonwealth report on Jan. 24, focusing this year on how young people can help shape the future of education.

The report highlights young people becoming more engaged in civics, politics and demonstrations, citing specifically the 2018 deadly shooting in Parkland, Florida, which left 17 people dead and sparked a student-led demonstration against gun violence called March for Our Lives.

"Young people exercising their voice in national policy debates vividly illustrate that students hold impassioned opinions about issues that affect their lives," according to the report. "And states, including Massachusetts, are increasingly recognizing the need for schools to prepare students to be engaged and active citizens."

Last year, Massachusetts lawmakers passed a new law requiring all eighth-grade students to complete a student-led, nonpartisan civics project aimed at helping students develop critical-thinking, analytical and policy-making skills at an early age.

The Roomer Center isn't the first organization to advocate for more student voices, but its report cites long-standing barriers that have discouraged student engagement in the past, including "views among educators and reformers that students are clients rather than participants in decision-making."

"The challenges are exacerbated across socioeconomic and racial and ethnic groups, achievement gaps persist in Massachusetts schools, creating divides among students."

"We have a race and class divide," said Adria Goodson, chief program officer at The Pahara Institute, a national education nonprofit.

"Indeed, while the Bay State education system leads the nation in most indicators of achievement, including graduation rates, reading levels, standardized testing, black, Hispanic and Latino students, along with students from low-income families, trail their Asian, white and middle- to high-income peers."

"And the opposite is true when examining chronic absenteeism, a measure of students absent from school 10 percent or more of the days enrolled."

"There have been some improvements, but we're still not closing those gaps," said Education Secretary Jim Peyser, referencing a years-long gap in reading levels between white, black and Hispanic fourth-graders.

Gov. Charlie Baker, a Republican, in January proposed increasing K-12 spending by $1.1 billion as part of his fiscal 2020 budget, which Peyser said could help.

"We are seeing persistent and troubling gaps in opportunities across communities and student subgroups," Peyser said. "Money is part of the answer."

The Roomer Center argues integrating more student voices in policy-making will also help close achievement gaps, and some Massachusetts school districts have already started.

BEDFORD

A state-mandated middle and high school school council invites students to join parents, faculty and community members in making recommendations for the annual student improvement plan, Superintendent Jon Sills said.

"I've interviewed 10 superintendents around the country, so we changed the start time," Sills said. "It was such a big issue and he leveraged change."

Change over time

The disparate efforts in districts across the state are still far cry from any kind of widespread student influence in policy decision-making, but Duran is hopeful that could change over time, especially if adults are willing to listen to their students and let them engage.

"If I had any advice for all the teachers out there it would be to believe in your students," she said. "Ask them to share their ideas on how to make change in your schools and communities, and then trust them. Trust that they have the ability to actually make that change and then let them lead."

Eli Sherman is an investigative and in-depth reporter at Wicked Local and capehousemedia.com, or follow him on Twitter @Eli_Sherman.

Melissa Russello contributed to this story. She can be reached at mrsuollo@wickedlocal.com

Bedford High School.
‘Our generation has to be the one to stand up’

Florida mass school shooting survivor pushes gun-law reform in MCC talk

Syaraya Huyn of Lowell, second from right, asks a question during the Q&A as Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg speaks to a group of students, staff and guests at Middlesex Community College in downtown Lowell on Wednesday. Hogg has been speaking around the country on gun law reform since the mass shooting. Watch video at lowellsun.com.

By Alana Melanson
amelanson@lowellsun.com

LOWELL — Preventing gun violence doesn’t mean taking guns away from responsible owners — it requires a multi-faceted approach that includes gun-law reform and community-based interventions, David Hogg told Middlesex Community College students Wednesday.

Hogg, a gun-violence prevention activist and survivor of the Feb. 14, 2018, shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, described the tragedy that took the lives of 17 people and how the harrowing incident led to his current path of activism.

“The March For Our Lives co-founder said the issue has “emarked an entire generation.”

“Our generation has to be the one to stand up with current generation in power because if we don’t, there will be no future generation,” Hogg, 18, said. “I don’t say this to scare you. I say this to inspire you to create this change, because we can, and we will.”

Hogg, who will attend Harvard University in the fall, said Massachusetts has the lowest rate of gun violence in America, with about three firearm deaths per 100,000 people.

He attributed this to the laws in place in the state, including an extended permitting process that requires safety training and extreme risk protection orders that allow judges to suspend gun licenses for anyone deemed to be at risk of harming themselves or others. Hogg said he hopes to spread these laws to other states.

Parkland shooting survivor David Hogg speaks to a gathering at Middlesex Community College Wednesday.

“Nothing. He attributed this to the laws in place in the state, including an extended permitting process that requires safety training and extreme risk protection orders that allow judges to suspend gun licenses for anyone deemed to be at risk of harming themselves or others. Hogg said he hopes to spread these laws to other states.

GUNS/From Page 1

this model to other areas of the country.

He said the National Rifle Association has constantly lobbied for weaker gun laws to the point that toy guns are more regulated for safety than actual guns in some places. It perpetuates the idea that “the only thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun” in order to sell more guns, according to the National Rifle Association.

But young people can create change if they believe in it and organize, he said.

“The only thing that has changed the world, is a small group of determined individuals that take on an issue — to address it at every level, to address every person affected no matter where they come from, what they look like or who they are, but simply because they are a human being that need not suffer in a country that claims to be the greatest country on Earth,” Hogg said.

He called on them to pressure Congress and run for political office themselves, because representation of every demographic matters.

“We need to make sure that the mayors of our cities have a youth council determined by your ZIP code,” Hogg said.

MCC Student Union Government Association President Morgan Mayo and Lowell Campus Vice President Sonja Agundu said they were moved by Hogg’s speech and passion.

Mayo, 19, of Littleton, said she remembers sitting in high school last year when the Parkland shooting occurred and thinking, “it could have been any school.”

‘Incredible’

“I think what he’s doing is incredible, and it’s the voice we need for our generation and more to come,” she said.

Agundu, 18, of Lowell, said the youth should stand up against gun violence.

“If we feel compelled to stay something, we should get a group of people and start something,” she said. “It’s all about having our voices to be heard.”

Earlier in the day, Hogg spoke with Professor Ron Breed’s Interpersonal Communications in Criminal Justice class, where he brought up many of the same points in a more direct dialogue with students. The lively discussion included many challenges to Hogg’s statements from students with different viewpoints about guns.

Luke Lesesne, 20, of Nashua, spoke about his training with guns and their value in self-defense, defense of others and usefulness in fighting back against a tyrannical government.

Hogg said he used to hold similar views about violent revolution, but has found evidence that nonviolent revolution is significantly more effective and longer lasting.

Hogg is also scheduled to speak at the Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley on Sunday, March 3 at noon. The event is sold out.

Follow Alana Melanson at facebook.com/alana.lowellsun or on Twitter @alamanadisan.
Tom Zuppa, a veteran newspaper editor and 24-year company employee, has been named senior editor of the Sentinel & Enterprise. He succeeds Jim Campanini, who retired on Nov. 30 after a 30-year career with the company. Zuppa was named senior editor of The Sun of Lowell, the Sentinel's sister paper, on Dec. 7.

Zuppa will be responsible for the day-to-day operations and initiatives within the newspaper group. He will report to Joe Sciaccia, regional editor in chief for Digital First Media's Northeast Cluster. "There is no one more dedicated to local journalism than Tom," Sciaccia said. "His decades of experience and proven newsroom leadership have him well-positioned to move the Sentinel & Enterprise forward. He understands our readers, and of the vital role newspapers play in our communities."

Zuppa said the Sentinel & Enterprise has a long tradition of being an advocate for North Central Massachusetts, and a fierce watchdog of its institutions. That will not change, he said.

Readers can expect a new emphasis on public-service journalism, he said. Zuppa pointed to a recent collaboration with DFM colleagues at the Boston Herald and The Sun, which tackled the issues of teen suicide and bullying in schools. The series "Anna's Story" included a profile of a teen who decided to take her life, stories about the rise of suicide, and a roundtable discussion with experts.

Zuppa, a graduate of Boston University, started in journalism as a correspondent for the Patriot Ledger of Quincy. He worked as a reporter, copy editor and bureau chief for the Middlesex News (now MetroWest Daily News) in Framingham. He joined The Sun in 1995 as suburban editor, and has worked as a regional and managing editor. As managing editor/days, he was responsible for the paper's Sunday edition, its First Amendment and open-records efforts, and its digital initiatives.

He also served as an adjunct professor at Middlesex Community College, teaching courses in newswriting, media ethics and business ethics. A native of Watertown, Zuppa has lived in Billerica for 30 years. He has two grown sons and one grandson.
EDITORIAL

Middlesex CC staff, faculty need open communications

If a recent Middlesex Community College survey is correct, its president, James Mabry, faces a major bridge-building process if he’s to regain the confidence of his disaffected faculty and staff.

About half of full-time faculty and staff members, 95 of 183, took part in a poll. A majority of responders indicated they don’t have confidence in his ability to effectively lead the institution.

We don’t know the genesis of this apparent rift, though factors may have influenced the unsettling atmosphere at the Lowell and Bedford campuses.

All colleges are facing the challenges that come with declining enrollment, and MCC is no exception. That could mean a reduction in people or programs, which obviously could contribute to the staff’s unease.

A lingering resentment towards Mabry, a former vice president of academic affairs at Mesa Community College in Arizona hired as president in December 2014, could also be a contributing factor.

Many expected Jay Linnehan, a longtime MCC administrator, to be a finalist. Instead, he was ousted as executive vice president a year later.

Board of Trustees Chairman James Campbell noted that MCC was recently ranked the top community college in the state. “There’s a real disconnect here,” Campbell said in response to the negative survey.

That’s the obvious conclusion. Now what to do about it?

Mabry indicated after a recent trustees meeting that he will sit down with union leadership soon to evaluate these concerns.

At some point, it seems, communication broke down between administration and faculty. Perhaps a dose of transparency is all that’s required. If not, maybe those critical observations raised by that survey need answers.
New MCC scholarship aids Cambodian females

The Lowell Sun
Updated: 02/03/2019 06:36:18 AM EST

The Middlesex Community College Foundation, in partnership with the Chelly Foundation, has established a new scholarship to provide educational assistance for female students of Cambodian heritage.

The Chelly Foundation Scholarship will help cover tuition, fees, books, materials and other eligible costs for up to three students during the 2018-19 academic year.

"Middlesex is deeply grateful to the Chelly Foundation for establishing this unique scholarship," said Virak Uy, director of MCC's Program for Asian American Student Advancement. "Receiving such financial assistance can really make a difference to Asian and Asian-American women who want to stay in school, complete their degree and continue their education."

Through the Asian American Connections Center on the Lowell campus, PAASA provides Asian-American students a range of support services and co-curricular activities designed to improve their college-going experience, as well as their completion and transfer outcomes.

The Chelly Foundation has a mission to support positive changes in people's lives, especially children's, through literacy, education and other means. Since 2015, the foundation has provided educational opportunities, primarily to young women from villages in the Chumkuri District of Kampot Province in Cambodia.

Pharmacy Tech offered at MCC

Middlesex Community College's Corporate and Community Education & Training program is offering a Pharmacy Technician course. Classes are held Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., and run Feb. 19 through May 16 on the Lowell campus.

This noncredit course consists of 60 hours of instructor-led classroom time, followed by an 80-hour externship in a pharmacy setting to prepare students to sit for the national Pharmacy Technician Certification Board exam. Topics covered in the classroom include, pharmacy operations, pharmacy law, pharmaceutical calculations, medication dosage forms, and interpreting drug orders.

To apply, email Ellen at wright@middlesex.mass.edu. To learn more about MCC's Pharmacy Technician course, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining.

MCC offers February vacation programs

MCC's Corporate and Community Education & Training program is offering a variety of fun, noncredit courses designed for youths ages 10-15 during February school vacation, Feb. 19-22. To enroll or learn more about, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining or call 800-818-3434. Following are some of the courses available.

**Scratch Programming:** Use Scratch programming language and build a variety of games, art, design, planning, Raspberry Pi and Arduino. (9 hours) Cost: $200.

**Everything But the Kitchen Sink:** Make "everything but the kitchen sink" art projects! This class will be an open studio for a multitude of art exploration. You will be exposed to different art media, water color and acrylic painting, and a variety of techniques to perfect your artistic talents. (28 hours) Cost: $235.

**Automation & IOT w/ Raspberry:** How to use the data they gather and present it using professional visualization tools and software. Concepts of electronics, basics of Python programming, home automation, and IOT concepts will also be introduced. For ages 13-15. (9 hours) Cost: $225.

**American Red Cross Babysitter's Training:** Youth ages 11-15 will gain the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly give care for children and infants. This training will help participants develop leadership skills, learn how to develop a babysitting business, and learn about basic childcare and first aid. (7 hours) Cost: $100.
Rough sailing may be ahead for President Mabry at MCC

IT SEEMED inevitable that turbulent days would arrive for Middlesex Community College President James Mabry, as his hiring four years ago was rocky and his allegiance to the region questioned from the day he arrived.

The writing was on the wall in December 2014 when the outside candidate blew in and surprised locals to win the MCC sweeps. Many in the community favored the inside candidate, Jay Linnehan.

However, the Board of Trustees named Mabry as its next president to fill the shoes of the popular Carol Cowan.

For years after the rocky hiring process, it was smooth sailing for Mabry. But then came Thursday, when the faculty unions delivered a eye-opening report about his performance.

More than half (56 percent) of full-time faculty and staff respondents to the Campus Climate Survey voted that they do not have confidence in Mabry to effectively lead the institution.

Also, 70 percent of respondents voted that MCC is a top-down institution where policy decisions are made by the executive leadership regardless of professional staff or faculty concerns and input.

Under the previous Cowan administration, there were grassroots efforts starting from the bottom at the college, according to faculty union president, Joanna Del Monaco, who presented this survey to the Board of Trustees.

"Now things are being pushed down from the administration," she said.

At the meeting, the Board of Trustees created an ad-hoc committee to meet with union leadership and work on these concerns.

The subcommittee is expected to probe the matter during the next several months before delivering a report to the full board.

"That would be filtered," Elliott said. "I'd rather have at least three people there."

Campbell ended up naming O'Connor along with Linda Banks-Santilli and Cheryl Howard. The chairman pointed to the latter two’s years of educational experience at Wheelock and Simmons, respectively.

The ad-hoc committee is expected to meet with the union leadership in the next few weeks and deliver a report at the next Board of Trustees meeting on Feb. 28.

Gov. Charlie Baker appointed O'Connor, Campbell, plus Bepha Malone, to the trustees several years ago at the request Rep. David Nangle, who is not a fan of MCC operations under Mabry. In the connecting-the-dots department, O’Connor is a lawyer who is married to Terry Downs, the former Lowell District Court assistant clerk magistrate who has a sweet deal overseeing MCC’s Program On Homeland Security. She’s also Nangle’s cousin.
MCC survey shows lack of confidence in president

By Rick Soby
Robby@sun.com

LOWELL — A recent survey from Middlesex Community College faculty and staff members President James Mabry, with a majority siding in the survey they do not have confidence in his ability to effectively lead the institution.

Mabry, among faculty and staff, is at all-time low, according to some respondents, who also overwhelmingly stated that the college has become a top-down institution where decisions are made by executive leaders regardless of concerns from faculty and staff.

The college's faculty union president, Joanna DiMauro, presented the Campus Climate Survey in the Board of Trustees meeting in Lowell Thursday morning.

About half of full-time faculty and staff members, 55 of 183, responded to the survey.

"There is a need for bold leadership that is proactive and forward thinking, and not only for the future but to act in the present," DiMauro, president of MCC’s Professional Association, reported from the survey during Thursday’s meeting.

Mabry was hired as president in December 2014 amid some discord.

In response to the critical report, he said after the Board of Trustees meeting that he and trustees will sit down with union leadership in the near future to evaluate those concerns and "see if we can bridge the gaps they expressed today.

The board during the meeting approved an ad-hoc committee to address this situation.

"We are always available to work with our faculty," Mabry said. "We value their input. They do tremendous work here.

He stressed that he wants to find a positive way to work together with the union to solve these issues.

As the college faces declining enrollment, like every community college in the state, leaders need to come up with innovative out-of-the-box strategies to address this issue, according to respondents.

"He (Mabry) is not an effective leader," one comment from the survey reads.

"He claimed he believed in transparency and an inclusive environment, but he actually does the opposite," reads another comment.

Other survey respondents pointed to divisiveness, poor communication, inflexibility and a lack of leadership at the college — affecting morale in a significant way.

There must be an immediate, overwhelming change in the top "in order for MCC to survive," states another respondent.

Board of Trustee Chairman James Campbell mentioned several times during the meeting that Mabry was recently ranked the top community college in the state, based on the US Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics.

"There’s a real disconnect here," Campbell said in response to the critical survey.

He said trustees on the ad-hoc committee and Mabry must meet soon with the faculty union to "get a better handle on this.

"Highlights from survey"

Here are some of the questions and results from the faculty-survey:

- Do you have confidence in President Mabry's ability to effectively lead the college? 44 percent, yes; 56 percent, no.
- Is the college becoming a top-down institution where critical decisions are made by the executive leadership regardless of professional staff or faculty concerns and input? 79 percent, yes; 21 percent, no.
- Do you feel supported by your immediate superiors? 78 percent, yes; 22 percent, no.
- Should there be a process where college employees can provide input on the performance of administrators? 94 percent, yes; 5 percent, no.

Many respondents cited UMass Lowell's rebranding efforts, creating a dynamic marketing campaign around its core programs. They pointed to the university's increase in enrollment, while MCC faces declining enrollment.

"MCC needs to revitalize itself with a powerful vision," DiMauro said.

Thursday's report comes as the state's committee on the Department of Higher Education, under Governor Daniel Biss, recently recommended Mabry for his work promoting and retaining students that persist on public institutions.

In a letter to Campbell, Biss wrote that he's concerned about the maximum allowable salary increase for Mabry, based on the president’s performance.

The Dec. 12 letter was presented to the board at Thursday's meeting.

The Board of Trustees ad-hoc committee will be made up of members Linda Barre-Bichroft, Cheryl Howard and Anne O'Connor.

During discussion of the survey on Thursday, Trustee Stephanie Cio can said she simply doesn't agree with some of the survey's comments.

"There are some really ingenious things happening here to bring students in," Cio said. "Even though there are many challenges and obstacles to deal with, MCC Professor Jon Hollar said at the meeting that they can't take the time to talk about the good things that are going on at the college.

Follow Rick Soby on Twitter @robbysoby.

February 1, 2019 Lowell, Massachusetts lowellsun.com
For gateway cities to thrive, partnerships matter

Gateway cities face challenges unique to their roles as welcoming communities for new arrivals in this country from all over the world.

At the same time, these old mill towns strive to reinvent themselves into economic engines of the 21st century.

And while success in accomplishing these daunting tasks may vary, Fitchburg and Lowell have been able to forge working relationships with the higher education community, to the benefit of both parties.

The phase-one ribbon-cutting earlier this week of Fitchburg State University's renovation of Main Street's Theater Block serves as the latest example of that town-gown partnership.

After sitting virtually vacant for nearly two decades, the Theater Block initially will house FSU's video game design studio and entrepreneurship lab.

When the university purchased the Theater Block in November 2016, it announced plans to rehab the structure in three stages, to bring students and foot traffic downtown.

Construction for the $2.8 million project's first phase, funded by the university's operational resources, began in the fall of 2017. That entailed stripping the roughly 6,000-square-foot space to the studs.

FSU President Richard Lapidus said the Idea Center will provide support and planning for students and community members interested in entrepreneurship. For example, game design students will get real-world experience through internships.

With the second floor completed, first-floor renovations will commence, rehabilitating the theater and providing storefront space.

Mayor Stephen DiNatale praised FSU for its role in spurring economic development downtown.

Fitchburg's experience with FSU mirrors Middlesex Community College's effort to transform an historic building in downtown Lowell into a home for its theater, music and dance program. The 1876 Rialto Building, once a Boston & Maine railroad depot, debuted as the Richard and Nancy Donahue Family Academic Arts Center last September.

The multi-purpose structure, which once housed theaters and bowling alleys, dodged demolition in 1989 thanks to the Lowell Historic Preservation Commission. The Lowell National Historical Park renovated the exterior. MCC took ownership in 2008.

The renovated center features a large, egg-shaped structure with a 190-seat proscenium theater, 103-seat music recital hall and 900-square-foot dance studio.

Of the $21 million spent, about $13 million came from the state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance and about $8 million came through the college.

That funding couldn't have occurred without the city's Statehouse delegation and other stakeholders. As City Manager — and former state senator — Eileen Donoghue said at the unveiling of this inviting new gateway, "it really does take a village" to move something of this scope from concept to fruition.

And now Fitchburg State University, like MCC and UMass Lowell, have experienced the concrete results that come from being a partner in its city's urban revitalization.
Bank of America, state announce funding to help homeless

By MARIE SZANISZLO | marie.szaniszlo@bostonherald.com | Boston Herald
January 31, 2019 at 7:42 pm

Bank of America is adding $750,000 to the $250,000 it donated last year to help build permanent housing for Boston’s chronically homeless.

“We believe that everyone deserves the comfort, safety and dignity of a home, and it’s incumbent upon all of us to make that a reality in Boston, especially for the most vulnerable among us,” said Michael Chamberlain, Massachusetts president of Bank of America.

The donation – coupled with major donations from Liberty Mutual, Partners HealthCare and Suffolk Construction – brings the city halfway to meeting the goal Mayor Martin J. Walsh set only one year ago of raising $10 million in four years to create 200 new units of long-term, supportive housing for chronically homeless men and women.

“Given that Boston has one of the highest housing costs in the country, a lot of people who can’t afford housing in this city are working people,” said Barbara Trevisan, a spokeswoman for the Pine Street Inn, the city’s largest homeless shelter and partner in the Way Home Fund Walsh announced last year. “This kind of housing is really critical to helping people get stable and stay stable.”

Bank of America’s donation came one day after the city’s annual census of the homeless – the results of which will be ready in the coming months – and on the same day that Gov. Charlie Baker announced a pilot program to provide state university dorm rooms to homeless students attending Massachusetts Community College, MassBay Community College, Middlesex Community College or Quinsigamond Community College.

Bridgewater State University, Framingham State University, UMass Lowell and Worcester State University each will make up to five beds available to those students, who must be 25 or younger, enrolled full time, seeking a degree and in good academic standing.

The Baker-Polito Administration also announced $3 million in funding to help 10 agencies give youngsters the support they need to avoid or end homelessness, something at least 1,800 Massachusetts young adults experience each year, the administration said.

“We can’t treat them like they’re adults,” said Elisabeth Jackson, executive director of Bridge Over Troubled Waters in Boston, which is sharing a $325,000 grant with seven other agencies to pay for housing and education for youngsters they serve. “Their whole life is ahead of them. So let’s not put them in a situation where they stay poor and it’s hard to get out. Instead of saying, ‘Here’s housing for the rest of your life,’ and not expecting anything back, paying for college is the best investment we can make in young people.”
The Bard in your backyard

MCC's Donahue Family Academic Arts Center opens with Shakespeare's classic tragedy, 'Romeo and Juliet.'

An Evening in Verona" took place Nov. 30, in celebration of Middlesex Community College's inaugural theatrical production and premier performance of the legendary William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." The event was held at the newly renovated Richard & Nancy Donahue Family Academic Arts Center, 240 Central St., at the corner of Green Street in downtown Lowell.

More than 120 theater buffs enjoyed an elegant evening reception with an attractive presentation of hearty hors d'oeuvres, wine and hors d'oeuvres before the performance, and during intermission, buffet of decadent desserts and coffee, all provided by Bisson's Catering. The audience also had the opportunity to view the magnificent Verona as a backdrop.

Another treat was special guest Joyce Kuhlman, who mingled and was energetic advocate for Diastar Joyce, best known as the Emmy Award-winning artist and entertainment critic for CBS Boston WEEZ TV. She has hosted locally and nationally events from Boston and Broadway to Hollywood, and has co-hosted nationally syndicated movie-reviews programs with Roger Ebert and Leonard Maltin. A three-time cancer survivor, she testified before Congress on the 20th anniversary of the National Cancer Act, and helped launch the American Cancer Society's first Hope Lodge, which provides free lodging for cancer patients in treatment. Needless to say, "Romeo and Juliet" was a huge success, and MCC students did an outstanding job acting, singing, dancing, fighting, remaining, and even their costumes and props were as spectacular, including the decorative stage.

Special thanks to the director, Karen O'Conner, chair of MCC's Performing Arts, and her production staff. Kuhlman as a guest performer.

For more information, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/academicartscenter.
Romeo? Who needs Romeo?

Leaning over the balcony with a mural of Tuscany, no
need to look any farther for Romeo! Sometimes a
girl is so blessed with a super dad that she doesn’t
need just any Romeo! My look is inspired by Juliet’s
wardrobe of peasant dresses. I’m wearing a vintage,
ankle-length, pale-gray, velvet cocktail dress. Juliet
sometimes wore a headpiece, so I tried
to match, wearing a rhinestone tiara!

Dacey Zouzas is host and producer of Dacey’s
Divas. Check out the highlight reel at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dKsC7E8yv8.
Follow her on Twitter @daceyzouzas and on
Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/daceyzouzas.
Also, check out divas.us and www.massachusetts
Women.org and follow @MassWomen on Twitter.

From left, Mary and Joe Pyne, and
Nancy Conahue, all of Lowell

Beautiful bartenders Kelsey Griffith
and Sara Maleski

From left, Bill and Paula Gendron, and
MCC’s Colleen Cox, all of Tyngsboro

From left, Ellen Wright of Chelmsford,
Sherri McCormack of Tyngsboro and
Amy Lee of Concord
Middlesex Community College Partners with HelioCampus to Improve Student Success

WASHINGTON (PRWEB) JANUARY 29, 2019

HelioCampus, a technology-enabled services company dedicated to higher education, has partnered with Middlesex Community College (MCC), located in Bedford and Lowell, MA, on a data warehouse, reporting, and predictive analytics initiative. MCC plans to use a Title III grant to fund their MCC360: Success from the Start project, geared toward increasing persistence, retention, and graduation of its students.

As part of MCC 360, and relevant to their partnership with HelioCampus, MCC hopes to increase student success by democratizing access to data and creating a culture of evidence based decision making. This will include building a digital “360 degree view of student progress” for assessing student progress, and informing and empowering both the students and the institution. Faculty and staff will have access to predictive analytics to guide timely interventions to promote student success.

“Investing in HelioCampus will help us reach our goals for Success from the Start, a critical initiative for the college. We are excited to be making valuable data available and being able to use it to drive data-informed decision making and student success,” said Dr. James Mabry, President, Middlesex Community College.

“We are thrilled to be helping Middlesex Community College use their data to work toward something as critical as improving persistence, retention and, ultimately, student success,” said HelioCampus CEO, Darren Catalano.

For more information about HelioCampus, visit http://www.heliocampus.com. To see the HelioCampus platform in action schedule a demo here: https://www.heliocampus.com/heliocampus-demo-request

About HelioCampus
HelioCampus is a fast-growing data company exclusively working with the higher education community. HelioCampus offers not only an extensible data platform, but also ongoing data science services, and provides client institutions with actionable solutions through comprehensive integration and analysis of key data across the student lifecycle, institutional financials, and more.

By helping colleges and universities use analytics to increase enrollment, improve student success, ensure financial sustainability and accelerate gift giving, we enable them to ask and answer their most pressing questions through data analytics, data storytelling and data science. Originated within the University System of Maryland, HelioCampus offers a unique perspective on using data to facilitate meaningful conversations that fuel higher value analyses and spur action, leading to greater institutional performance and financial sustainability.

For more information about HelioCampus, visit http://www.heliocampus.com or follow them on Twitter.
Middlesex Community College To Host Free FAFSA Day

Middlesex Community College will host FAFSA Day, a free community workshop to help students and families fill out the 2019-2020 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the federally required application for financial aid.

The workshop will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday Feb. 9, in the Cowan Center on the Lowell campus, 33 Kearney Square.

FAFSA Day at Middlesex offers different options for families seeking assistance including:
- Computer support for families to complete the FAFSA online
- One-on-one assistance from financial-aid experts

To prepare for the event and to allow FAFSA Day volunteers to provide you with email updates prior to the event, all participants are encouraged to register in advance. To register, visit www.FAFSADay.org.

Students and parents should EACH bring the following (students born before Jan. 1, 1996, do not need to bring parental information):
- FSA ID (please sign up and bring both your Student FSA ID and Parent FSA ID, available at https://fsaid.ed.gov)
- Social Security number
- Driver’s license number (if any)
- 2017 federal tax return
- 2017 W-2 or year-end pay stub (if didn’t file tax return)
- Current bank statement(s)
- Current business and investment records
- Alien Registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)

To learn more about FAFSA Day at MCC, contact Deborah Marsella, Associate Director of Financial Aid, at marsellad@middlesex.mass.edu or 978-656-3242.

Discover your path at Middlesex Community College. As one of the largest, most comprehensive community colleges in Massachusetts, we educate, engage and empower a diverse community of learners. MCC offers more than 70 degree and certificate programs – plus hundreds of noncredit courses – on our campuses in Bedford and Lowell, and online. Middlesex Community College: Student success starts here!
MCC NEWS

Middlesex Community College offering teacher education

Middlesex Community College offers education programs to prepare students interested in teaching as a career.

Spring courses began Jan. 22 but registration is still open.

Students may choose from the following degree or certificate programs:

- The early childhood education associate degree program provides the educational background and supervised training for students interested in working with young children. The program emphasizes developmentally appropriate practice and has a child-centered focus. Students learn and apply theory with hands-on experience in a required practicum.

- The early childhood education transfer concentration degree program is also designed to prepare students to transfer into a bachelor's degree program leading to teacher licensure. Careful planning with an academic advisor will ensure career goals and state requirements for licensure are met. Future teachers are encouraged to gain practical classroom experience through student teaching and/or service-learning opportunities. This program is eligible for MassTransfer.

MCC's early childhood education certificate program is a one-year intensive program of study that provides the educational background and supervised training for students interested in working with young children. It emphasizes developmentally appropriate practice and has a child-centered focus. Students learn and apply theory with hands-on experience in a required practicum in early care and education programs for children.

A complete listing of spring course offerings at Middlesex can be found in the spring academic advising schedule at https://middlesex.mass.edu/registration.

For information, call 800-818-3434 or visit https://middlesex.mass.edu/education.

MCC to offer English language learning program

Registration is now open for Middlesex Community College's Prepare to Attend College program, a free English-language program, which will run Jan. 28 through March 22.

PAC is designed for students who have never been to college and want to continue their education but find that English is a barrier.

This noncredit program is geared for beginning-through intermediate-level English-language students. Classes are offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings on MCC's Lowell campus.

For information or to register for Prepare to Attend College, call 978-656-3104.
Finding her voice — and her passion

At MCC, budding nurse came ‘out of my bubble’

Rhaisa Rhoden enrolled at Middlesex Community College for economic reasons. However, in addition to saving money as she launched her college career, the Chelmsford resident also found her voice and embarked on a future career in health care.

“I became comfortable with myself because Middlesex is a judgment-free zone, and it made me come out of my bubble,” said Rhoden, 22. “Now, I am not afraid of making my voice heard.”

Rhoden, who is studying Nursing and Psychology, credits Academic Counselor Ivette Calez and Advising Coordinator Winny Oyamo-Twombly with encouraging her to enroll in the Health Academic Pathway. That decision allowed Rhoden to begin taking courses that fulfilled graduation requirements in a variety of degree programs within the health field, while she narrowed down her choice of a major program of study.

“Not only were my advisers receptive to my decisions and goals, they both took the time to really listen to what I had to say,” she said. “I wanted to do something in my career that is challenging, interesting, and makes a difference in people’s lives.”

“I believe nursing is one of the most interesting and growing careers available today, and I enjoy the difference I can make in any patient’s experience.”

But it has not been an easy road for Rhoden, who did not pass Anatomy and Physiology the first time she took it.

“I felt I had failed as a science major,” she said, adding that she considered changing majors and scrapping her plans. But Rhoden did not run in the face of adversity. She repeated the course, taking advantage of academic-support programs available on campus.

“With help from tutors in the Tutoring Center, I passed the course and overcame my challenge,” she said.

If all goes as planned, after graduating with an Associate Degree in Nursing this spring, Rhoden hopes to transfer to UMass Lowell to earn a Bachelor’s Degree — and possibly a Master’s Degree — in Nursing and Psychology.

Beyond academics at Middlesex, Rhoden has been active in clubs and activities, and has become a campus leader. As a work-study student in the Multicultural Center, she enjoyed helping students with homework and participating in such clubs as Multicultural Achievement Peer Program and Latinos Unidos.

Rhoden also served as a First-year Experience champion, a peer mentor, and a Pathways to Success leader. She was also a student leader at orientation. That position allowed her to give incoming students tours of campus, as well as firsthand advice about how to be successful at MCC.

“These experiences have changed my life because they have given me the potential to become a leader and open doors for new opportunities,” Rhoden said.

To learn more about MCC’s Nursing Program, or other programs of study in the Health Pathway, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/admission-requirements/health.aspx or call 800-818-3434.

The spring semester begins today.
There is much work to be done to fulfill Dr. King’s dream

By Alana Melanson
almelanson@lowellhpon.com

LOWELL — Among the soulful gospel voices and energetic dancers, a celebration honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was held Monday at UMass Lowell's Tsongas Center.

"As we all know, today's headlines, sadly enough, remind us that there is much work to be done to fulfill Dr. King's dream that all people on this earth are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve," Middx College President James Mahony said at the "Moving The Dream Forward Together" event, held Monday at the Tsongas Center.

"Dr. King recognized that change does not come easily, and that trying to change people's hearts and minds can often seem threatening," Mahony said. "But, keep peace and love in their hearts everyday, because "without all of us pushing this agenda forward, it will never get done, so we need to work together."

The annual event to celebrate King's life and lasting impact, now carried on by the Middx Community College Foundation and Living The Dream Partners, was started by Laura Smith, former longtime assistant to the MCC president, and her husband Robert, in 1991.

Last year, Smith turned the reins over to a diverse coalition of community organizations, including MCC, UMass Lowell, the African Community Center of Lowell, the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, the Cambodian Mutual Help Association, and the MA Black and Hispanic Heritage Association.

The UMass Lowell Gospa Choir, led by alumna Vynelle White, left, performs Monday at the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at the Tsongas Center.

Members of The Ace Girls perform at the Middx Community College Foundation and Living The Dream Partners' annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration held at UMass Lowell's Tsongas Center Monday afternoon. This year's theme was "Moving The Dream Forward Together."

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrated, reminders that dream not yet fulfilled

DREAM From Page 1

Assistance Association, the Coalition for a Better Area, and Community Teamwork Inc. Youth Build Culinary Program.

"We're so happy today that after our 20 years of this, that there's a group of young people who want to see change and influence change based on Dr. King's philosophy to continue in the world," Smith said. "We're very hopeful, in spite of what you read in the papers or see on the news, that all those things that we know are not appropriate in our world — even when led by the highest office in the land — we know that all of that is built on shaky ground."

She said the strong sense of justice is in young people who know the difference between right and wrong, and because of that, she doesn't worry about the future.

"We know it's in good hands, and we know that which is not true will turn to ashes and be crushed," Smith said. "It's all a matter of time."

"I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land," event co-creator Bobby Tugbyele said, quoting a portion of King's final speech, "I've been to the mountaintop."

To him, Tugbyele said, one of the most important parts of the sermon was the word "we."

"He knew that it wasn't just about him," Tugbyele said. "It was about those who came before him, who passed the baton, and it was about those who knew they were going to come after him to continue the legacy of fighting this fight."

Mayor Bill Samaras said he saw King's legacy "alive and well" in Lowell High School and that it "serves well for the future."

He spoke of how the School Committee recently voted unanimously to remove a restriction on head wraps and scarves from the school dress code thanks to the efforts of a group of students of color.

"I saw the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. in these students," Samaras said. "They fought for change. They achieved a common understanding without sacrificing their desire for justice."

U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan said she recently saw social justice activist Bryan Stevenson speak, and was heartened by the reminder that "the solutions never happen at a distance from the problem."

"You have to be willing to put yourself in close proximity to the people you want to help," she said. "Sometimes that's uncomfortable, and sometimes that's inconvenient, but that's exactly what defines us as leaders."

Lowell's cultural diversity shines through in the event, which included speakers in Khmer and Portuguese, and performances honoring black and Hispanic heritage.

The event also marked the annual Living the Dream Awards, presented each year to an individual, organization or community event that have in some way lived up to King's legacy.

This year's recipients were:

- Lt. Marisol Nobrega, the Lowell Police Department's first Latina lieutenant, for her commitment to making the department more diverse and inclusive;
- Lowell Votes, a nonpartisan effort to remove barriers and encourage Lowell residents to shape their community by voting;
- The Southeast Asian Water Festival, an annual celebration of southeast Asian heritage.

Follow Alana Melanson on Facebook.com/alana.lowell or on Twitter @alamelanason.
MCC students earn grants to launch their businesses

Middlesex Community College students enrolled in the Launch Your Business Now program, an innovative applied-entrepreneurship certificate program designed to encourage students to start or grow a business, recently wrapped up an intensive semester, and had an opportunity to pitch for seed funding to the Everyday Entrepreneurs Venture Fund.

The EEVF committee gave out $50,000 in seed funding at a recent awards ceremony in Lowell.

Student businesses invested in include:
- $10,000 for Body Fuel Café, a nutritious snack and café concept founded by Jessica Salani of Burlington.
- $10,000 for The Sweet Spot, a sustainable clothing, jewelry, gifts and home goods store in downtown Lowell founded by Hilary Clark of Lowell.
- $9,000 for Beautiful Psalms, a spiritual-gifts e-commerce company founded by Dali Diaz of Lowell.
- $8,000 for Barber on the Run, a mobile barber service founded by Juan Cintron of Lowell.
- $8,000 for Natural Journey’s, a natural and kinky-hair boutique founded by Alison Njorge of Lowell.
- $5,000 for Good Wood Restoration, a restoration construction company founded by Dave Clark of Lowell.

MCC students enrolled in the Launch Your Business Now program who received seed funding from the Everyday Entrepreneurs Venture Fund include, front row, from left, Jessica Salani of Burlington, Deli Diaz of Lowell and Alison Njorge of Lowell; and, back row, Juan Cintron, Hilary Clark and Dave Clark, all of Lowell.

MCC students enrolled in the Launch Your Business Now program who received seed funding from the Everyday Entrepreneurs Venture Fund include, front row, from left, Jessica Salani of Burlington, Deli Diaz of Lowell and Alison Njorge of Lowell, and, back row, Juan Cintron, Hilary Clark and Dave Clark, all of Lowell.

Students receiving funding will also be paired with three mentors who will check in with them throughout the first year of operation.

MCC’s new 16-credit Launch Your Business Now certificate program was developed for entrepreneurs who have an idea for a business they want to launch, or scale up, within 4-12 months.

"Someone who is naturally entrepreneurial just wants to get started," said Stacie Hargis, MCC’s Entrepreneurship Program coordinator. "This is why we’ve designed the program to be completed in one intensive, action-oriented semester. It’s a great way for students to work solely on developing a business concept."

Students who complete the Launch Your Business Now course work are encouraged to pitch their business idea to the funding committee of the EEVF, which can award seed money in the form of competitive grants, ranging from $1,000 to $20,000, to support student businesses and help start-ups get off the ground.

For more information, visit www.launchchat.mcc.com or contact Stacie Hargis at hargiss@middlesex.mass.edu.
MCC NEWS

MCC earns digital marketing awards

Middlesex Community College’s Office of Marketing Communications recently earned three gold awards and three silver awards in the sixth annual Education Digital Marketing Awards competition. Sponsored by Higher Education Marketing Report, the Educational Digital Marketing Awards competition recognizes the best educational websites, digital content, electronic communications, mobile media and social media. This year, more than 1,000 entries were received from colleges, universities and secondary schools across the U.S. A national panel of industry specialists reviewed each piece, judging creativity, marketing execution, message impact, technology application and innovation content.

"It is rewarding to know that hard work, creativity and passion is recognized among our peers," said Jennifer Aradhya, dean of Marketing Communications. "We are proud to showcase educational excellence and innovation by sharing the stories of Middlesex through our digital marketing initiatives."

Middlesex earned three gold awards in the categories of course/content schedule, intranet site and online publication. Middlesex also earned three silver awards in digital video, online display ad and social media.

For the complete list of winners, visit http://bit.ly/2M7ls41.
Discover YOUR Path

Whatever your path, with more than 70 degree and certificate programs, MCC can help you earn a degree, begin a bachelor’s degree or upgrade your skills.

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- Small-class environment
- Flexible schedule
- A price you can afford

Share YOUR Path with us!

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