



CONNECT *Chronicle*

BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE, BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
CAPE COD COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS MARITIME ACADEMY,
MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH

CONNECT Newsletter - Volume 1 - Number 1 - Summer 2007



MMA Joins CONNECT

CONNECT is pleased to announce the addition of Massachusetts Maritime Academy to its partnership. The Academy joins Bridgewater State College, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Massasoit Community College, and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth as members.

The fundamental goals of CONNECT are to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of higher education; and to advance the economic, educational, and cultural life of southeastern Massachusetts. Currently completing its fourth year, CONNECT is a model of public higher education consortia for the state.

According to Admiral Gurnon, "The CONNECT partnership offers a wonderful opportunity for Massachusetts Maritime Academy to positively impact a greater number of students, as well as the community at large. While the Academy's history is long and impressive, our present and future have the potential to shine even brighter through this collaboration."

Jane Souza, executive director of the CONNECT Partnership says, "Mass Maritime joins CONNECT at a pivotal point in its evolution. Several key initiatives are being implemented that will expand the scope of CONNECT's impact in southeastern Massachusetts."

Read more about current CONNECT initiatives in the accompanying articles.

CONNECT Member Institutions

Bridgewater State College

Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria
President

Bristol Community College

Dr. John Sbrega
President

Cape Cod Community College

Dr. Kathleen Schatzberg
President

Massachusetts Maritime Academy

RADM Richard Gurnon
President

Massasoit Community College

Dr. Charles Wall
President

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Dr. Jean MacCormack
Chancellor

Contact Information

Jane M. Souza

Executive Director

139 South Main Street

Fall River, MA 02721

Jane.Souza@connectsemass.org

Telephone: 508.675.0793

Fax: 508.678.1765

www.connectsemass.org

BHE Funds Southcoast Region & Cape & Islands Network STEM Education

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) has awarded a three-year grant of \$226,788 from the Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Pipeline Fund to the Southcoast Regional PreK-16 Network, of which CONNECT is the lead partner.

In addition, the Cape & Islands Network, including CONNECT member institutions Cape Cod Community College and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, received \$275,058 from the STEM Pipeline Fund to advance science, technology, engineering and math initiatives in that region.

The Southcoast Pipeline Network received funding for the following two projects:

STEM Teacher Connections Learning Communities will work with cohorts of 15 to 20 teachers in four districts: Attleboro, Brockton, Fall River and Plymouth. Each teacher will receive graduate-level professional development in STEM areas. Four *STEM Teacher Connections Learning Communities* will be established in these geographic areas where the Southcoast STEM Network has access to excellent professional development facilities and resources. The Teacher Connections groups will be focused on middle school teachers and will be composed of a cohort of 15 to 20 teachers in each of the four sub-regions.

Each group will be led by a trained facilitator and by a STEM faculty member. The leaders will work together to build a supportive peer learning communities where teachers engage in collaborative learning and community building. New and experienced teachers participating in each Teacher Connections group will be enrolled in a graduate-level STEM education course, modified to best meet the needs of the Connections group.

STEM Connection to Teaching Success will provide MTEL test preparation assistance to recruit teachers into the region's alternative pathways to teacher licensure. The program seeks to increase the number of STEM-certified teachers through two routes. The first route is to recruit annually a cohort of prospective STEM area teachers into alternative pathways programs to STEM licensure. Project coordinators will work with school systems and industry through the Southcoast Education

Live & Online



CONNECT Skill Center

Prove your skills and show employers you have what it takes. [Click here.](#)



CONNECT Skill Center & Screening Center

CONNECT is excited to invite professionals, students, alumni, and employers to connectsemass.org/skillcenter and connectsemass.org/screeningcenter, to take advantage of two powerful online career advancement and worker recruitment resources: the CONNECT Skill Center for workers, and the CONNECT Screening Center for employers.

CONNECT Skill Center is an innovative and easy-to-use skill assessment, training, and career management tool that individuals will use to advance in their careers or chart new career paths. The Skill Center, among other features, allows motivated people to prove they have what it takes for the job role they want. "If you know you can do the job, the Skill Center lets you prove it!" according to CONNECT's executive director, Jane Souza. "CONNECT is very excited to provide this valuable resource to the students, alumni, and community professionals of southeastern Massachusetts."

Think you can do the job?

Now you can prove it. [Click here.](#)



CONNECT's web based system puts users through objective skill tests for their current or desired job, and, based on test performance, also offers precise training recommendations to fill skill gaps, if necessary. When users successfully pass assessments, they automatically earn Skill Certificates endorsed by CONNECT. The Certificates can be purchased for as little as \$25 and shown to employers as proof of ability, increasing employability and chances for advancement.

The Skill Center deploys technology

from its collaborator, the National Business Services Alliance, including the NBSA's vast skill assessment library which covers hundreds of required skills for over 60 percent of all jobs in the U.S, from Accounting & Financial, Retail & Hospitality, to Project Management, IT Programming and more.

Interested participants can learn more and register at connectsemass.org/skillcenter, and login immediately to begin assessing their skills.

Don't get lost in countless resumes.

Assess them objectively instead. [Click here.](#)



CONNECT Screening Center

The CONNECT Screening Center
www.connectsemass.org/screeningcenter

Employers have a powerful and easy-to-use candidate screening tool in the CONNECT Screening Center. The Screening Center is an innovative platform that businesses can leverage to assess prospective candidates using web-based tests for required skills, thus facilitating difficult hiring decisions with objectively measured skill data.

CONNECT uses the NBSA's online library of hundreds of skill assessments for in-demand positions covering over 60 percent of the U.S. workforce. Applicants are put through several multiple-choice tests, covering job-specific and general professional skill requirements, for any of over 80 of the most demanded roles—from Customer Service Representative to IT Programmer, Technical Writer to Medical Biller, and more.

A Customer Service Representative, for example, would be assessed for the following skills: Customer Service Fundamentals, Effective Business Communications, Interpersonal Communication, Professional Telephone Skills, Time and

Priority Management, Workplace Computer Skills and Workplace Math.

The Screening Center uses efficient computer-adaptive testing (CAT) technology that adjusts to test-takers' proficiency as they proceed, reducing the number of

"CONNECT is very excited to provide this valuable resource to the students, alumni, and community professionals of southeastern Massachusetts." Jane Souza

needed questions, thus allowing applicants to quickly complete multiple skill assessments after logging in with a personalized code e-mailed to them by employers. Employers as well as test-takers can receive assessment results immediately, which include a detailed skill transcript that highlights applicant strengths and weaknesses.

With this quantified and qualified skill analysis, which can pinpoint individuals with outstanding skills, the Screening Center will help companies sort applicants resumes from the pile, says Dave Pedro, UMASS Dartmouth PCE Advisor / Online Program Coordinator, and resident expert on the CONNECT Skill & Screening Centers.

"For companies lost in countless CVs for critical vacancies, the CONNECT Screening Center is a valuable tool to add to the HR arsenal."

In addition, with CAT technology, each Screening assessment is absolutely unique, so no test-taker has the same set of questions as any other, which increases security and even allows for test retakes. Assessments can also be interrupted and later resumed at the same spot in the event of a power outage or connection failure.

Interested employers can learn more by visiting connectsemass.org/screeningcenter and then contacting Jane Souza at (508) 675.0793 or e-mail CONNECT@connectsemass.org to see how to implement the Screening Center for their business needs.

Faculty Collaborate through CONNECT Mini-Grants

THE FIRST ROUND OF CONNECTING FACULTY MINI-GRANTS YIELD RESULTS • LOOK FOR 2007 APPLICATIONS SOON

Service Learning Grant • Director, Dr. Mary Zahm, BCC

Funding was awarded for the 2006-2007 academic year for faculty involved in service-learning at the CONNECT Colleges to interact at two meetings and via e-mail to discuss issues concerning service-learning and the development of student leadership courses and program models. The Service Learning Group Faculty Members were: Dr. Mary Zahm (BCC), Kevin J. Garganta (BCC), Lisa Heller Borgaine (CCCC), Nancy Willets (CCCC), Matthew Roy (UMD), Shannon Jenkins (UMD), Teresa King (BSC), Lisa Battaglino (BSC) and Nancy Moses (BSC).

The group shared information about the differing organizational structures of the service-learning programs at their colleges.

Members reviewed models of successful student leadership courses and shared information about programs at their institutions that are in the development stages. Subsequently, a UMASS-D course model was adapted for a BCC Commonwealth Honors Seminar that successfully enrolled as a pilot course in the Spring of 2007. The group discussed the need for their colleges to continue to work together to develop standardized course and program objectives that would ensure the transferability of credits for student leadership courses and programs offered at the community colleges to the 4-year CONNECT colleges.

ESL Grant • Project Director, Dr. Betsy Smith, CCCC

The ESL CONNECT group shared information about placement instruments and procedures on each of our campuses. As a direct result, one institution was able to make the case for using ESL materials instead of the same test that native speakers take. The group also investigated the best way of incorporating an oral interview and a writing sample, two tools used by many of the CONNECT institutions to help place our students as accurately as possible.

The ESL grant participants shared course evaluations that their non-native speakers use to critique courses and faculty at the end of the semester. They also evaluated handouts from a workshop on learning communities. They also discussed the hope of finding more accurate means of assessing students' progress and readiness to advance to the next level.

BHE STEM Grant • continued from page 1

Compact (SEC), regional One Stop Career Centers, and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to identify people who are motivated to become STEM teachers. Two accelerated programs currently exist in the region: Bridgewater State College's Accelerated Post-Baccalaureate Program and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's federally funded Teach! Southcoast Program.

The second route is to provide MTEL preparation support to assist future teachers with passing the MTEL. This

testing support will be disseminated through the regions of the STEM Teacher Connections Learning Communities.

The Cape & Islands Network received funding for the following two projects:

A residential program at Mass. Maritime Academy will enrich 150 high achieving 7th and 8th grade students from the region, providing 3 weeks of academic STEM Projects. The program also will focus on team building and leadership skills centered around STEM-related

Biology Grant • Project Director, Dr. Linda Kollett, Massasoit Community College

A CONNECT group in biology began meeting in the fall of 2006. Issues of common concern on the 5 CONNECT campuses were course content for introductory courses, transferability of courses as allied health and majors courses at the 4-year schools, the direction of education in the biological sciences, and identification of courses necessary for a biology major at the transfer schools. At present several of the schools run 2-hour laboratory sessions, but the trend is toward the 3-hour lab, at least in majors courses. An emphasis on inquiry-based learning and scientific writing has been integrated into the Bridgewater State College curriculum and UMass Dartmouth is moving in the same direction. Several of the schools reported that their curriculum is in a state of flux as new ideas are integrated into existing courses. Strategies for initiating change were shared and problems common to all schools were discussed. While institutional missions are not identical, the biology departments in the CONNECT schools have much in common and all share an interest in providing students, and in this case transfer students in particular, with the best educational experience possible.

activities. In addition, three academic science credits for teachers in grades 4 - 8, are offered through this initiative.

Junior Tech is a suite of programs run by the Cape Cod Technology Council, targeted to grades 5 - 12. It aims to build interest and excitement in the STEM areas. Workshops on hands-on use of technology and support of STEM teaching are also offered to faculty.

More information about the awards may be found on the website: www.mass.edu/pipeline

An Invitation to Faculty

2007 CONNECT Service-Learning Workshop

August 15 & 16, 2007 • 9:00AM to 1:00PM • CCCC • Hyannis

The 2nd Annual CONNECT Service-Learning Workshop will be held this summer on Cape Cod to help faculty from BSC, BCC, CCCC, MMA, MCC and UMD develop service-learning components in their classes and help them learn more effective methods of reflection to enhance the service-learning experience. The workshop will take place in two half-days at Cape Cod Community College's Hyannis Center, 540 Main Street, Hyannis to combine an interesting faculty development program with optional recreation and vacation activities on the Cape.

We are pleased to announce that this summer's workshop will be facilitated by Dr. Michelle R. Dunlap, Associate Professor of Human Development and Chair of the Human Development Department at Connecticut College. The focus of this workshop will be on improving college student coping skills in community service-learning settings and multicultural issues and methods for increasing service provider cultural competency, which are two of the areas in which Dr. Dunlap specializes.

Workshop participants will be awarded a \$100 stipend by their institutions. Each CONNECT college is invited to send 8 faculty members to participate and will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. If there is room, we will open this event to staff that work in the areas of Community Service and Service-Learning initiatives. Breakfast and lunch will be provided each day. Please send your registration form to: blgeorge@bridgew.edu or fax the form to the Community Service Center at Bridgewater State College at (508) 531-4446.

Optional housing is available at the Holiday Inn Hyannis for the group rate of \$161 single/double; \$176 triple; and \$191 quad per night. Reservations must be made prior to July 14 to receive the workshop group rate. Please mention "CONNECT Service-Learning Workshop" to receive the special group rate. Reservations are limited at this peak time, so act soon by reserving at (508) 775-1153. Please visit www.holidayinn.com/hyannisma for more information. For further questions, please contact Nancy Moses or Diane Bell at (508) 531-2446 in the Community Service Center at Bridgewater State College.



A Note from the CONNECT Office ...

Welcome to the first edition of the CONNECT Chronicle. Our plan is to use this publication as a vehicle to update the six CONNECT campuses and the external community on our many ongoing initiatives. As you will see in this edition, the efforts of this model higher education partnership are very broad in scope. Our activities include promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math [STEM] education, supporting faculty collaborations in multiple disciplines, launching an on-line assessment tool for career advancement, and sponsoring a multi-campus summer service learning workshop.

CONNECT is involved in many activities beyond what can be mentioned in one publication. We invite you to visit our website at www.connectsemass.org and explore the information offered there. We will be soliciting updates from the various project working groups to write for this publication. We also invite you to write to us with your comments and suggestions. The general email address for CONNECT is connect@connectsemass.org.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer and a successful start to your fall semester.

*Jane M. Souza, Executive Director
Kim Williams, Staff Assistant*