

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 17-08

COMMITTEE DATE: October 4, 2016

BOARD DATE: October 11, 2016

**NAMING OF MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S SCIENCE
BUILDING IN HONOR OF DR. DANIEL M. ASQUINO**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the request of the Mt. Wachusett Community College (MWCC) Board of Trustees to name the college's new science building the "Daniel M. Asquino Science Center" in honor of outgoing Mt. Wachusett President Daniel Asquino.

Authority: Section 9(m) of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws

Contact: Sean P. Nelson, Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Finance

Background

Please see the attached letter from the Mt. Wachusett Community College Board of Trustees.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Mount Wachusett Community College



Gardner, Massachusetts 01440

Board of Trustees

Telephone (978) 632-0001

May 18, 2016

Carlos Santiago, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education for Massachusetts
Department of Higher Education, Room 1401
One Ashburton Place
Boston MA 02108

Dear Commissioner Santiago:

As I previously noted, the Trustees of Mount Wachusett Community College have voted to name the new building (to be opened in October 2016), the "Daniel M. Asquino, Science & Technology Center".

Dr. Asquino is retiring in January 2017 after a 50 year career in public service inclusive of his four years in the U.S. Navy. We have enclosed the rationale for our decision and we await an early response to our request as we need to make appropriate plans for a naming and retirement ceremony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tina M. Sbrega".

Tina M. Sbrega
Chairperson
Board of Trustees
Mount Wachusett Community College

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RATIONALE FOR NAMING THE BUILDING

IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT DANIEL M. ASQUINO

“Daniel M. Asquino, Science & Technology Center

Throughout the past three decades as President of Mount Wachusett Community College, Dr. Daniel M. Asquino has established a strong reputation for innovation on all fronts. Always student-centered and focused on excellence, Dr. Asquino has created a legacy that the entire community can be proud of.

Among his groundbreaking work, over the past 15 years, President Asquino has fervently worked to integrate civic engagement into the college culture as well as the greater community. After noticing a dearth of young people serving on community boards and organizations, he declared a “Decade of Civic Engagement” in 2001 and commissioned a team of faculty, staff and community leaders to integrate service learning into course objectives and community based programs. Now well into its second “Decade of Civic Engagement, Mount Wachusett has emerged under President Asquino’s leadership as a national and state leader in the growing civic engagement movement taking place on college and university campuses throughout the state and country.

The college served as a model institution for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s 2014 decision to incorporate civic learning as an expected outcome for undergraduate students, following the recommendations of a task force chaired by President Asquino.

Through MWCC’s innovative Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, students now collectively contribute approximately 157,000 hours of service learning, volunteerism, internships, co-ops, practicums and field experience each year, which carries a value of \$3.24 million to the North Central Massachusetts region.

The center, permanently endowed through a \$2 million donation from an anonymous business leader, promotes a vibrant community-engagement platform that challenges students, faculty, staff, and area partners to work together in addressing unmet needs in the community. The reciprocal relationships built over the years have become pivotal in our students’

educations, and our nonprofit community organizations serve as co-educators of our students. Students gain practical experience that sets them apart in a competitive job market and communities benefit tremendously by this engagement.

Through these efforts, MWCC has received the prestigious Civic Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and has been named to the national President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for six consecutive years, twice with distinction. This is the highest federal recognition an institution can receive for its commitment to community, service learning, and civic engagement.

President Asquino established Mount Wachusett Community College's pioneering and innovative Division of Access & Transition nearly two decades ago, which has expanded to now serve 4,000 middle and high school students annually. Predominantly funded through federal and state grants, the division's 18 distinct programs help students prepare for, access and transition into postsecondary education and career readiness. The vast majority of the teens and adolescents served are first-generation college students from low income families, and one third of these students are minorities.

Under the president's direction, the Division of Access & Transition has pursued and fostered partnerships with over a dozen school districts serving predominantly low-income and potential first-generation college-going students. These innovative programs incorporate the four categories of access, transition, remediation and summer to provide unique opportunities for students to succeed academically. Options include several dual-enrollment programs as well as programs that emphasize careers in science and technology and college readiness in math.

Most recently, the college was awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health to create a Workforce Diversity Pipeline program at high schools in two of our region's largest and most diverse cities, Fitchburg and Leominster. Through this five-year grant, administered by the Division of Access & Transition, the college will provide educational opportunity to diverse students interested in careers in healthcare. The goal of increasing the number of underrepresented minority and disadvantaged healthcare providers aligns with federal initiatives to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities, known as the HHS Disparities Action Plan.

A visionary leader with an "anything is possible" approach to education, Dr. Asquino has implemented numerous large-scale programs on campus and in

the community, yet is known to also seek tailored solutions for hard-working, determined individuals.

In a region challenged with having among the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the state, Dr. Asquino has leveraged his leadership in the community to build up the resources of the MWCC Foundation, including a \$1 million corporate donation to support student scholarships. The foundation now annually awards more than \$320,000 in scholarships to MWCC students.

Over the past three decades, he has built strong ties between the college and nonprofit community organizations in the region and has served in a leadership capacity for a number of these organizations. In the area of Student Life programming, President Asquino has fostered a college community that embraces diversity and promotes understanding. Campus activities include spring and fall film festivals that emphasize diversity, as well as yearly celebrations of Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month and Women's History Month. In 2013, Dr. Asquino established the annual President's Commitment to Diversity Scholastic Competition, which awards a free, three-credit course to three students. He is a charter member of the Massachusetts College Success Campaign, The Democracy Commitment, as well as the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC).

President Asquino currently chairs the Massachusetts Community College Council's Labor Relations Committee and Distance Education Committee. In addition, he is a member of the American Association of Community Colleges Commission on Communications and Marketing. He has twice chaired the Massachusetts Committee of Community College Presidents and is a past chair of the College Board's National Community College Advisory Panel. He is a member and past as two-term chair of the New England College Council, and a member of the Massachusetts Campus Compact Executive Board of Directors.

Locally, Dr. Asquino serves as an officer and past chair of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts Board of Directors, officer and past chair of the Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster and past chair of Greater Gardner and North Central Massachusetts Chambers of Commerce. He is a member and past chair of the Board of Trustees for Heywood Hospital, and the GFA Supervisory Board.

He is the recipient of many community and national awards, including the Community Leader Award from the UMass Memorial-HealthAlliance Hospital Foundation; the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Nashua Valley Council

Boy Scouts of America; the Dr. Robert H. Goldman Community Service Award; the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year and Community Service Awards; the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Award; the Governor's Pride in Performance Award; Enterprise Bank's Celebration of Excellence Community Service Award; and the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations Pacesetter Award.

Throughout his 47-year career in public higher education in Massachusetts, Dr. Asquino has been driven by the belief that education is society's great equalizer and recognizes the vital correlation between building healthy communities by preparing an educated workforce.

Based on President Asquino's anticipated retirement, his extraordinary contribution to Mount Wachusett Community College, the Massachusetts Community College mission and the Massachusetts Public Higher Education mission, it is right and fitting that the Mount Wachusett Community College STEM building, currently under construction, be named in President Daniel M. Asquino's honor.
