



Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, MA 02108-1696

TEL (617) 994-6950
FAX (617) 727-0955
WEB www.mass.edu

Richard M. Freeland, *Commissioner*
Charles F. Desmond, *Chairman*
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katy Abel
MA Department of Higher Education
(617) 994-6932 office (617) 429-2026 cell
Email: kabel@bhe.mass.edu

DOCUMENTARY FILM PREMIERE RALLIES SCIENCE/TECH COMMUNITY TO ENHANCE STATE'S ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL FUTURE IN STEM EDUCATION

Congressman Joe Kennedy, Vertex
Pharmaceuticals CEO Jeff Leiden Host Capacity
Crowd at Boston Museum of Science Screening

Boston, MA – August 8, 2014 – Patrick Administration officials joined with nearly 300 business, policy and educational leaders last night for the Massachusetts premiere of [“Underwater Dreams,”](#) the true-life story of how a group of Hispanic high school students from a high-poverty school district in Arizona beat MIT and other world-class competitors in a NASA-sponsored underwater robotics competition. Photos of the events are available [here](#).

Last night's premiere, held at Boston's Museum of Science, was sponsored by the Governor Patrick's STEM Advisory Council, which is co-chaired by Congressman Joseph Kennedy and Vertex Pharmaceuticals CEO Jeff Leiden, in association with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. The screening was part of the STEM Advisory Council's ongoing public event series to create community discussions about the importance of science, technology, engineering and math education and workforce opportunities.

"This movie is a powerful testament to the impact STEM education can have on the life of a student, a family and a community," said Congressman Kennedy. "It's also a sharp reminder that we have much more work to do to ensure that every kid -- no matter who they are or what they start with -- gets access to the opportunities a STEM education can provide. That so many stakeholders from across the private and public sectors in Massachusetts came together last night to celebrate this film underscores what a compelling story it tells. I want to thank Mary Mazzio, Dr. Jeff Leiden, the entire STEM Council and all of the event sponsors for making last night possible."

Following the screening, members of the audience engaged with Congressman Kennedy, Colin Angle, Co-founder and CEO of iRobot, and the film's producers in Q&A about the film and Massachusetts' work to improve STEM educational opportunities for students at all grade levels, from Pre-K through college.

"It was wonderful to see business leaders turn out for this screening," said Mary Mazzio, director of "Underwater Dreams." "To be able to engage the likes of (iRobot CEO) Colin Angle, (executive producer and real estate executive) Jeb Bush Jr., and Congressman Kennedy was electrifying. We are seeing educators and students react dramatically to the film. If it can serve as a catalyst to excite the next generation of scientists and engineers who are in desperately short supply, then the film will have done its job."

In 2009, Governor Deval Patrick signed Executive Order No. 513 creating the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. Last year, Governor Patrick released a renewed strategic plan for tying economic development to educational enhancement in the fields of STEM. Massachusetts is recognized as a national leader in STEM education as a result of the Patrick Administration's strategic investments in programs and initiatives that are developing a highly skilled workforce, fostering economic development and ultimately positioning the Commonwealth as a leader in the 21st century innovation-based global economy.

The Council's screening was made possible with generous support from the Museum of Science, The Boston Foundation, the New England Council, iRobot, the Latino STEM Alliance, and individual donors. For more information on the work of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, please visit our new website at www.mass.edu/stem.

###