

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability

NO.: AAC 10-31

COMMITTEE DATE: June 8, 2010

BOARD DATE: June 15, 2010

QUINSIGAMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BRANCH CAMPUS

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the Quinsigamond Community College proposal to establish a branch campus at 5 Optical Drive in Southbridge, Massachusetts.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9

Contact: Francesca B. Purcell, Ph.D., Associate Commissioner for Academic and P-16 Policy

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Quinsigamond Community College

Establishment of a Branch Campus

Background Statement

On June 16, 1998, the Board of Higher Education approved a Branch Campus Policy (ACA 98-21) that set forth a process for approval of new branch campuses and for the periodic review of existing branch campuses. A branch campus is defined as a permanent and identifiable location with permanently assigned staff, not contiguous to the main campus of the public institution that offers at least 50 percent of an educational degree program. The site may either be owned by the institution or leased. It may be space shared with other institutions or agencies.

The Board of Higher Education has four primary objectives with respect to off-campus educational activities:

- ◆ Centrality to the mission and priorities of the institution,
- ◆ Responsiveness to the demonstrated educational needs of Massachusetts students, communities, and industries,
- ◆ High-quality educational activities, and
- ◆ Reflection of the most effective and efficient use of the state's, students', and institution's resources.

Per review of materials submitted, the Quinsigamond Community College proposal to establish a branch campus at 5 Optical Drive in Southbridge, Massachusetts, has successfully met all four of the Board of Higher Education objectives with respect to off-campus educational activities.

INTENT, MISSION, and BACKGROUND

Intent

For over 47 years, Quinsigamond Community College has served the diverse educational and training needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible, and high-quality programs leading to transfer, career, or personal/professional enrichment. The vision of the College is to prepare a technologically literate and current workforce that is able not only to survive but to excel in a world that is changing at an unprecedented pace. One of the ways that QCC is planning to realize this vision is by expanding classroom capacity and access to learning opportunities for students. Specifically, the goal is to offer 50 percent or more of the following programs at 5 Optical Drive in Southbridge, MA, starting in the fall of 2010:

- Business Administration
 - Associate in Science – Business Administration Career Option
 - Associate in Science – Business Administration Transfer Option
 - Certificate – Business Administration Career

- Certificate – Accounting Assistant/Finance Assistant
- Criminal Justice
 - Associate in Science
 - Certificate – Law Enforcement
- General Studies
 - Associate in Arts

The programs referenced above were initially selected based substantially on research reflected in the Preliminary Selection of Academic Programs document. First published in July 2009, this document has been used as jumping-off point for campus-wide and community dialogue on the initial programs that should be offered in Southbridge at 5 Optical Drive for fall 2010. These selections were supported by the information contained in the South County Research Brief.

The intent of the soft opening in fall 2009 was to provide increased access to education for residents of South County and to ensure that all of the services are in place for the potential programmatic offerings for the fall of 2010. The 5 Optical Drive site now operates, having served an unduplicated headcount of 370 students during the fall of 2009 and 377 during the spring of 2010. This was accomplished by providing more than 40 courses running days, evenings and Saturdays during each semester.

The currency of the programs, including all materials and course offerings, will remain the same as if the program were offered at the QCC main campus. The learning outcomes will remain the same. The ultimate goal of all programs is to prepare a highly competent and capable professional and/or prepare students to continue their education.

Mission

Quinsigamond Community College's mission states: "As a regional leader in education and workforce development, Quinsigamond Community College serves the diverse educational needs of Central Massachusetts by providing affordable, accessible, and high-quality programming leading to transfer, career, or personal/professional enrichment."

The College mission is compatible with that of the state's higher education system. Specifically, the mission statement of the Massachusetts public higher education system states that these institutions shall "provide accessible, affordable, relevant and rigorous programs that adapt to meet changing individual and societal needs for education and employment."

In support of its mission, Quinsigamond Community College offers over 70 associate degree and certificate career options in business, health care, technology, liberal arts, and human services. In addition, QCC delivers non-credit courses in adult basic education and English as a second language, as well as career development and life enrichment through the Training and Education Center.

Background

On March 16, 2009, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) submitted a letter to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) requesting the endorsement of a facility plan that QCC submitted to the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) for a new leased location to house day and evening classes in Southern Worcester County. On March 31, 2009, the DHE sent a letter to DCAM endorsing Quinsigamond Community College's pursuit of a South County location for the purpose of establishing an additional instructional location.

On February 1, 2010, QCC submitted a letter to DHE indicating that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) had accepted QCC's report regarding the establishment of an additional instructional location at 5 Optical Drive, Southbridge, Massachusetts, and that NEASC had included this location in the institution's accreditation. QCC requested and received an approval letter from the DHE, dated February 18, 2010, in order to complete QCC's application for federal financial aid.

As of fall 2009, all credit courses were moved from Southbridge High School to 5 Optical Drive per QCC's notices. Due to increased demand, the College offers more than 40 courses, running days and evenings, in Southbridge. The courses consist predominately of developmental English and math, career exploration, along with a small number of business, criminal justice, introductory computer, and history courses.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Quinsigamond Community College provided access to a maximum of fourteen courses per semester at Southbridge High School for more than 25 years. The expansion of offerings and the eventual addition of programs are based on an evolving relationship with the community and the elements of the mission that speak to accessibility and affordability. Survey data suggests that students are inhibited in accessing the main campus in Worcester by the high price of gas, the lack of available public transportation and, in some cases, the lack of a vehicle. In addition, the offerings at Southbridge High School were viewed as inhibiting access to educational programming because courses were held only in the evenings and because there was no programmatic intent.

The planning that has been completed regarding the location and the offering of programs is inclusive and consistent with the regular planning processes of the institution. The planning process started in December 2008 and included meetings with the South County Leadership Team comprising municipal leaders; elected officials; industry leaders in health care, manufacturing and business; members of the Chamber of Commerce; and non-profit entities. Meeting monthly from December 2008 to June 2009, the Leadership Team provided the College with advice, support and guidance on the need for the expansion of educational services to the region. In September 2009, the Team reviewed and endorsed the Preliminary Selection of Academic Programs document.

The Board of Trustees was involved with the leadership of the College for many months regarding the potential expansion of educational offerings in the South County area. At the Board of Trustees meeting on June 1, 2009, the Board was presented with a QCC Site Exploration document regarding the expansion of instructional services in

Southbridge to serve the western South County area. This document summarizes the market research that occurred over the previous eighteen months and contained projections for enrollment and alluded to the potential of offering programs more than 50 percent at the site in the 2010 timeframe.

In July 2009, the President and her Executive Leadership Team formed the Southbridge Operations Team, a cross-functional team consisting of leaders and subject matter experts from across the institution, including but not limited to facilities, administrative services, enrollment services, academic affairs, community relations, information technology, food services, student services, student life, marketing, and registrar. The President and her Executive Leadership Team charged the Southbridge Operations Team with opening the Southbridge site for the fall of 2009 by preparing for the delivery of credit and non-credit classes at the site while keeping in mind the goal of potentially offering programs more than 50 percent on site in the fall of 2010.

Locating a more robust course offering capability, along with high-demand programs and student support services, in South County (Southbridge) is seen as directly connected to the realization of QCC's mission of accessibility, affordability and leading students to career and transfer options as well as lifelong learning.

According to the South County Research Brief, the largest proportion (21%) of the high school students surveyed indicated they would major in business. Seventy-three percent of the guidance counselors surveyed indicated that students would major in business. The South County Enrolled by Program data (fall 2005, fall 2006, fall 2007, fall 2008 and spring 2009) indicate that the proportion of students from the South County region enrolled in business programs ranges from 11 to 13 percent. The Industry Overview Report for the South County region predicts a 7 percent job growth in professional and business services and a 13 percent growth in financial activities. The Occupation Overview Report indicates that 14 percent (5,891) of jobs in South County are in office and administrative support occupations, 13 percent (5,687) are in sales, and 11 percent (4,716) are in management, business, and financial occupations.

According to the South County Research Brief, criminal justice was the third most popular major among students, 12 percent of whom indicated they would major in this field. Seventy-three percent of the guidance counselors surveyed indicated that students would major in Criminal Justice. The proportion of criminal justice students at QCC from the South County region ranges from 5.7 to 7.7 percent (South County Enrollment by Program: fall 2005, fall 2006, fall 2007, fall 2008 and spring 2009). Jobs in law enforcement are expected to grow 3 percent in the next ten years (EMSI, 2009 2nd quarter, v.2); however, 28 percent of jobs in law enforcement will be new and replacement jobs.

General Studies is often recommended to students who are undecided about their major. According to the Research Brief, 13 percent of the students and 73 percent of the guidance counselors surveyed indicated that students are unsure about which career path to take. The proportion of students from the South County region enrolled in General Studies, Undeclared, or the Twelfth-Year Option programs at QCC ranges from 50 to 53 percent (fall 2005, fall 2006, fall 2007, fall 2008, and spring 2009). Elementary education, which is offered as a concentration within General Studies at QCC, is also popular among South County students. Eleven percent of the students and 73 percent of the guidance counselors surveyed indicate that students would major in

education/teacher preparation. Although the field of education is predicted to grow only 1 percent over the next ten years in South County, 23 percent of primary, secondary, and special education jobs are expected to be new and replacement jobs.

General Studies is recommended for students who must develop their academic skills before qualifying for admission into some academic programs of study. The Massachusetts School-to-College Report 2005 indicates that a significant percentage of graduates from high schools within the South County region enroll in developmental courses at QCC.

Projected Enrollments By Program at QCC Southbridge			
PROGRAM	2010	2011	2012
Associate Degree: Criminal Justice	15	25	40
Associate Degree: Business Administration-Transfer	10	20	30
Associate Degree: Business Administration-Career	15	25	35
Associate Degree: General Studies-General	20	30	45
Certificate: Business Administration-Career	15	20	25
Certificate: Accounting/Finance Assistant Option	10	15	20
Totals	85	135	195

Other Institutions

There are two institutions in the same geographic area as QCC Southbridge. Nichols College located at 124 Center Road in Dudley, and a branch campus of Bay Path College located at a 232 Sturbridge Road in Charlton.

Bay Path College launched the Central Mass. Campus in 2003 and is currently located in Charlton at 232 Sturbridge Rd. on Route 20, 7.4 miles north and west of QCC Southbridge, a 12-minute drive. The Bay Path College Charlton facility provides for a Saturday one day a week adult learning experience for women. This One-Day-A-Week Saturday College is designed for adult learners and women only. QCC Southbridge offers options for all potential students for days, evenings and Saturdays. In addition, the cost of attending Bay Path in Charlton is significantly higher than that of QCC Southbridge. Bay Path College per-credit cost is \$455.00 vs. \$152.00 per-credit at QCC.

Nichols College and QCC have an articulation agreement and jointly market the “A to B” (associate to bachelor) program. This partnership signed in 2007 has already resulted in students graduating with an associate’s degree from QCC and a bachelor’s degree from Nichols College. The Nichols College main campus is located in Dudley at 124 Center Rd., 6.9 miles east of QCC Southbridge, a 16-minute drive. Nichols College offers a full-time day college experience at a commuter student tuition cost of \$28,190 per year for two semesters based on 12 to 18 credits (19 credits with approval) per semester, or \$925 per credit (\$152 at QCC) for students taking fewer than 12 credits per semester during the day. In addition to the degrees above, Nichols College’s Department of

Graduate and Professional Studies offers an associate's degree in business administration and a master's degree in business administration. These degrees are offered in a variety of formats including fifteen-week traditional classes, a seven-week accelerated option that includes online components, and through 100% online courses that are self-paced. Courses offered through this department cost \$275 per credit vs. \$152 per credit at QCC.

RESOURCES

Governance and Faculty

Programming for the Southbridge site will be supported in the same manner and with the exact same governance structures as programming at the main Worcester campus. The Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs will be responsible for the oversight of all operational activities relating to the delivery of off-campus programming. In addition, day, evening and weekend administrators are on site providing real-time, constant oversight.

The instructional dean responsible for each program and the faculty coordinator for the work area in which each of the programs falls will maintain the same programmatic oversight responsibility as performed at the main campus within their current roles. Faculty will rotate assignments between the main campus and QCC Southbridge, including both full-time and adjunct faculty.

All faculty qualifications and expectations will remain consistent with those at the main campus for faculty teaching at QCC Southbridge. In addition, discussions have taken place in academic affairs to ensure quality of instruction by ensuring that the instructional deans closely monitor, anticipate, and address any significant increased demand on program coordinators in work areas as programs are implemented and become operational at QCC Southbridge.

In fall 2009 several full-time faculty members taught at QCC Southbridge. These faculty members taught courses as an additional load as defined by the Divisions of Continuing Education (DCE) contract. It is anticipated that members of full-time faculty in the programs to be offered will teach at QCC Southbridge as either part of their full-time workload as governed by the MCCC contract, or as part of their DCE workload.

Library

The assistant dean for library and academic support services has established procedures for library and tutoring service delivery. The computers at QCC Southbridge provide immediate electronic access to all the resources of the Alden Library in Worcester, exactly as if they were on the Worcester campus, through the Web address: <http://www.qcc.mass.edu/library>. From home, students may use their student ID numbers to access the databases.

Students may access the Alden Library books and all periodical and database resources, and catalogs, electronically over the internet. Books and materials may then be delivered to QCC Southbridge for the student. In addition, the College is encouraging students to get a C/WMARS public library card through which they may also order Alden Library books from any system library, in Southbridge or in any of the cities and towns in

which they may reside. The books will be delivered to any convenient public library in C/WMARS network. Book delivery is provided by the state-funded delivery program. In addition, as a result of the Alden Library's recently negotiated agreement with colleagues at the Jacob Edwards Library in Southbridge, any QCC student or faculty member who does not have a public library card may register for a free C/WMARS card at that library, regardless of their home address. The Jacobs Edwards Library is a short walk from the QCC Southbridge location, about the same distance as the walk to the Alden library from some locations on the main campus. This combination of direct library services from the Alden Library, the services of the C/WMARS system libraries, and the Jacob Edwards Library close by in Southbridge provides our students with a strong network of library services that will not only support their educational needs while attending QCC Southbridge but will also enhance their lifelong learning potential as QCC guides and supports their navigation of all the library services available to them, even when they leave the College.

In order to inform students about these services, an informative handout was prepared for the Southbridge faculty, and they were given a supply of student handouts describing library services at QCC Southbridge. Southbridge site administrators post these handouts and also have extra copies of the handout for students using the computer lab. In addition, this information is provided at student orientations and through site administration.

Facilities

The facility will occupy the first and third floors (8,322 square feet) of the building and consists of a total of six classrooms, two computer classrooms, one computer lab with open access for students, student lounge space, faculty and staff lounge space, office space for student services and administration, and private meeting space. Parking is shared with the conference center where there are over 400 spaces available. There are several handicapped parking spaces next to the building as well. Parking capacity and access were specified by the Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) based on space utilization projections.

The College provides a 10-megabit Internet connection to support two general purpose computerized classrooms and one open access computer lab. All classrooms at QCC Southbridge are equipped with Internet-connected instructor computers, DLP projectors, DVD, and VCR.

Student Services

QCC is committed to offering the same student services at QCC Southbridge as those offered at the main campus on West Boylston Street in Worcester. The services of academic advising, placement, counseling, and disability services are provided on a weekly schedule, both walk-in and by appointment, by staff assigned and located at the QCC Southbridge site on a rotating basis. All of these College resources are accessed through staff assigned to Southbridge on a published schedule. Appointments are made either in person at the site during all regularly scheduled classroom hours, or the students may call 1-877-QCC-for-me to make appointments at Southbridge or to be directed to the appropriate staff member at the main campus.

Counseling services are available on campus and at QCC Southbridge for the short term needs of all students for personal and academic issues. Information about student services is clearly printed in the Student Handbook and that document is available on-line. Student services are also available through the portal, the College's web presence. The Code of Conduct is fairly administered at QCC Southbridge through a process outlined in the Student Handbook.

Program-specific, college-wide and QCC Southbridge-specific student orientations are held at appropriate times during the summer and winter to meet the needs of new students. The presentation is also available on-line for students who are not able to attend orientation. New faculty and staff orientations are also held and include information on QCC Southbridge.

All of the College's financial aid resources are accessed through a financial aid counselor assigned to QCC Southbridge on a published schedule. Appointments are made either in person at the site or the students may call 1-877-QCC-for-me to make appointments at Southbridge or be directed to a financial aid counselor at the main campus.

Financial Resources (Appendix A)

The attached Cost-Benefit Analysis was prepared to quantify the College's expected return on its investment in Southbridge. These data were presented to the College's Board of Trustees on June 1, 2009, where the initiative was unanimously approved.

The analysis suggests that the College will incur minor operating losses for the first three years of operation, FY2009 to FY2011. The plan anticipates an enrollment of 500 course enrollments in the current year, growing to 1,000 in FY2010 and 1,500 in FY2011. Each course section is proposed to enroll (on average) 10 students per class, with an estimated adjunct cost of \$3,200 per class. Staffing considerations are also reflected in the analysis, with the expectation being that a Site Administrator would be assigned to coordinate the activities of the Southbridge campus. This individual would be someone who was re-assigned from responsibilities at the main campus. Other staffing needs would be phased in as appropriate, including enrollment specialists, financial aid, advisors, and an evening administrator.

Finally, the pro-forma budget incorporates an investment in technology and infrastructure needs—\$230,000 in Year 1, and then ratcheting down as needs permit in the subsequent years.

It should be noted that the pro-forma Cost-Benefit Analysis reflects a one-time receipt of grant funding for this initiative (totaling \$230,000 in Year 1, i.e. FY2010). These funds were earmarked to assist the college in leveraging the technological infrastructure at the 5 Optical site, thereby offsetting some fixed start-up costs.

The analysis does not show other potential revenue sources that are contemplated: additional non-credit activity through the college's Technology and Education Center; anticipated grant funding for specific programmatic initiatives; and partnership agreements with local corporations.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Department staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by Quinsigamond Community College. Staff recommendation is for approval of the request by Quinsigamond Community College to establish a branch campus at 5 Optical Drive in Southbridge, Massachusetts.

Appendix A: Budget

Pro forma QCC Southbridge Budget				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Assumptions				
Credit \$	152	152	152	160
Average Instructor Cost	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,200
Students/Instructor	10	10	10	10
# Courses Offered	50	100	150	200
EXPENDITURES				
Staffing				
Site Administrator	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Recruiter	30,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Staff Assistant	0	0	0	0
Evening Administrator	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Enrollment Specialist	20,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Enrollment Specialist	20,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Advisor	0	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total	150,000	210,000	210,000	210,000
Other Expenditures				
Security	0	0	0	0
FF&E	80,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
Technology	<u>150,000</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>60,000</u>
Total	230,000	90,000	70,000	70,000

Lease Cost	48,500	48,500	111,000	111,000
Subtotal: Fixed Costs	428,500	348,500	391,000	391,000
Subtotal: Instructor Costs	160,000	320,000	480,000	640,000
Total Costs	588,500	668,500	871,000	1031,000
REVENUES				
Grant Revenue	230,000	0	0	0
Enrollment Income	228,000	456,000	684,000	960,000
Training & Education	25,000	30,000	40,000	50,000
Total Revenue	483,000	486,000	724,000	1,010,000
NET REVENUE	(45,500)	(122,500)	(87,000)	39,000