

Media Release

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QCC Women in Technology Program Partners with Worcester

Public Schools

WORCESTER – As part of the hands-on learning component in Quinsigamond Community College's *Women in Technology* program 12 students from the Worcester Public School's Accelerated Learning Lab (ALL) School traveled to the Boston office of the Massachusetts Commissioner of Probation on December 13. Deputy Commissioner Paul Lucci hosted the students and demonstrated how global positioning satellite (GPS) systems affect today's society, including how they are used to track Level 3 sex offenders.

Through the *Women in Technology* program, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) teaches female students in the Worcester Public Schools the important role technology plays in our everyday lives. The year-long program offers three study tracks: global positioning satellite (GPS), radio and video technology. The students work with their high school teachers and QCC professors to learn how science, math, computer skills and engineering disciplines interact and collaborate with each other. In addition to the ALL School, the program has been implemented at North High's School of Technology and Business and Burncoat's Patriot Academy in Math and Science.

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“This is an opportunity to match classroom experience with real-life application. It shows the young women that it is not just theory, but real application that drives technology,” said Betty Lauer, assistant professor at QCC and coordinator of the *Women in Technology* program.

According to Dr. James A. Caradonio, Worcester Public Schools superintendent, this program is particularly beneficial in the academies, the result of transforming the city’s large high schools into small schools. “The transformation of our high schools focuses on the new three R’s – rigor, relevancy and relationships – that our students, citizens of the 21st century, will need to learn and master,” he said. “The course work used in this program is rigorous and the students see the relevancy through field trips and talking with engineers. The relationships between the QCC professors and the students help to motivate students to think about and begin to prepare to attend college.”

Kathy Rentsch, QCC Dean of Instruction, Business and Technology Division, pointed out that this program motivates young women to pursue careers in engineering and technology. Through their close interaction with college faculty, students learn what they need to do in order to prepare for entry into technical college programs or to obtain meaningful employment in the technology realm. “The associate degree is the new high school diploma. As entry-level jobs get more technical and demand higher skills, the associate degree is now your minimum ticket,” she said. This program helps students view engineering in a new light and also introduces them to the academic world beyond high school. The opportunity to spend time on the QCC campus may generate serious

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thought about furthering their educations.

Technology and pre-engineering teacher Mike Brennan explained that learning to calculate the speed of light may not excite students, but understanding how the formula applies in real-life situations can be a “motivating force.” He said, “This program weaves science, math, computer skills and engineering disciplines together and shows that it can actually be fun to learn. That will increase a student’s motivation. It also teaches that technical and scientific fields have wonderful opportunities to offer girls, and girls have a great deal to offer science and technology.”

Intel Massachusetts, Inc. has provided a grant in partial support of the *Women in Technology* program. Rob Richardson, East coast education manager, said that Intel hopes to encourage a diverse workforce. “Intel supports the *Women in Technology* program because it links Worcester Public Schools and Quinsigamonmd Community College to help high school girls explore how they fit into a career in a technology related field. It's a practical and challenging program where girls get a chance to take some risks and learn if they are interested in innovation and design,” he said. “Intel needs a diverse workforce with a growing number of top flight women and under-represented minority employees to lead us in product development and manufacturing. Programs like *Women in Technology* help build interest in these fields.”