

Media Release

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### **Four Colleges Have Combined \$217 Million Impact**

WORCESTER – The four colleges comprising the newly formed Central Links Central Massachusetts Public Higher Education Alliance today released a study showing that the combined economic impact of the colleges on Massachusetts is \$217 million.

Fitchburg State College, Mount Wachusett Community College, Quinsigamond Community College and Worcester State College worked with a group of UMass Amherst students on the study, which was released during a legislative breakfast held at Worcester State College today.

Fitchburg State College President Robert Antonucci said the colleges and the region are closely linked.

“Without the community, the colleges wouldn’t exist; without the colleges the communities wouldn’t exist and without the students the state doesn’t succeed,” he said. According to Mount Wachusett Community College President Daniel M. Asquino, House 1 (the governor’s budget) falls short of the Board of Higher Education budget request.

“These are colleges are economic engines for the region and the state. It is in everyone’s interest to invest in the future of our Commonwealth,” he said.

Quinsigamond Community College Acting President Sheila Sykes said investment in public education pays great dividends. According to the study, 60 percent

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of alumni currently live in Worcester County and 85 percent live in Massachusetts.

“We enroll just under 40,000 students and our 90,000 alumni are working in Worcester County and Massachusetts,” she said. “Our alumni are contributing the local economy.”

There are other benefits, according to Worcester State College President Janelle Ashley. “Last year alone our students provided \$5.3 million worth of volunteer labor to local businesses, school systems, and non-profit organizations in central Massachusetts,” she said. “It’s clear that the state’s initial investment in our colleges reaps even greater dividends for our region.”

Major study highlights include:

- The four colleges have a combined economic output of \$155 million in the Worcester County region plus an additional \$62 million in output at the state level.
- Every \$1 invested by the Commonwealth generates \$2.76 in economic output.
- Fitchburg State College and Mount Wachusett Community College are two of the top 10 employers in North Central Massachusetts.
- Worcester State College and Quinsigamond Community College are two of the top 25 employers in the Worcester region.
- Central Links students provided \$5.3 million worth of volunteer labor in central Massachusetts this year.

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- Graduates can expect to earn an additional \$2.1 billion over the course of their work lives.
- Contrary to the idea of “brain drain,” of the 85,858 alumni for whom addresses are known, 60 percent currently reside in Worcester County and 85 percent reside in Massachusetts.
- Central Links alumni contribute approximately \$67 million per year in state income tax attributable to their higher education. This represents approximately one percent of the state’s annual income tax revenues.

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Caption: Dan Asquino, President of Mount Wachusett Community College; Janelle Ashley, President of Worcester State College; Sheila Sykes, Interim President of Quinsigamond Community College; and Robert V. Antonucci, President of Fitchburg State College; are shown at the Central Links legislative breakfast held Feb. 3 at Worcester State College.

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