

## *A Smarter Education for a Changing World*



**QUINSIGAMOND**  
Community College

 **COLLEGE.**  
MADE **SMARTER.**

# SMARTER BY THE NUMBERS



## Top 50

*President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.*

Dr. Pedraja was named to the Worcester Business Journal Power 50, Class of 2020.



## 1st

*Virtual Commencement*

1st Virtual Commencement in QCC's history.



## +4.9%

*Fall Freshmen, Enrollment Increase*

QCC is the only public college or university in the state to have an increase in first-year students for the Fall 2020 semester.



## +10%

*Increase in Respiratory Therapists*

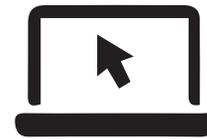
QCC received approval from its accrediting agency that allowed students to enter the Worcester Healthcare system and simultaneously work on their student licenses while earning credits.



## 2,000 lbs

*food distributed weekly*

2,000 pounds of food are picked up each week from the Worcester County Food Bank and distributed to students in need at the College's drive-thru Food Pantry.



## 399

*Health Professionals attend free course*

Health professionals attended a free course on infection control and barrier protection proficiency put on by QCC's Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education.



## \$116,454

*raised for students*

The QCC Foundation Student Emergency Fund was formed in response to the pandemic.



## #5

*in ROI for online programs*

QCC's online associate degree programs ranked #5 in the country for ROI by OnlineU.com.



## 35 years

*of H.A.C.E.*

35 years of hosting the Hispanics Achieving and Celebrating Excellence Youth Awards.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

What a year 2020 was! It started out full of promise, then in March we experienced one of the most challenging times in recent memory with the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet this pandemic did not deter our faculty, staff and students from their objectives.

In mere weeks, our College transitioned courses, support services and technologies to a remote format. The QCC Foundation and the College banded together and set up a Student Emergency Fund for students in significant need and hardship due to the pandemic. We worked to get students the technologies they needed to continue with their studies, and helped keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables. Our Food Pantry and Resource Center moved to a drive-thru weekly service early in the health crisis. Over 400 students have utilized the food pantry thanks to our tireless faculty and staff, who volunteer their time each week to distribute food.

We helped our community combat the spread of COVID-19 by hosting a drive-thru COVID-19 test site at the College's main campus. I am proud to say the person in charge of this was one of our own QCC students, **Lamar Brown-Noguera '20**, who is the community relations manager for AIDS Project Worcester, Inc., the organization that did the testing.

I would be remiss in not acknowledging our incredible students who are the frontline workers in our communities. As I write this, they are continuing to care for the sick and keeping our businesses running. They are doing all this while many are caring for their families, homeschooling their school-age children and keeping up with their own studies. Their resiliency in the face of adversity is admirable and inspiring.

Some of these frontline workers include our own respiratory care students. Respiratory Care Professor **Karen Kaletski Dufault** petitioned our accrediting agency at the onset of the pandemic and in the course of a few days, received approval to allow our students to work on their student licenses, while simultaneously earning credit. During a time when Worcester needed them most, our respiratory care students were there for our community.

In Fall 2020, new levels of supports and faculty training were added to reinforce remote instruction. New students were able to attend an eight-week, non-credit course to help them



acclimate to a remote learning environment. Tutoring was offered in small groups and one-on-one sessions, as well as several courses that had embedded tutors. Weekly Zoom yoga, Zumba and mindfulness workshops helped with stress. Student camaraderie continued as clubs transitioned to video conferencing and QCC's E-Sports team began its first season.

I'm happy to say everyone's hard work has not gone unnoticed. Our online Associate Degree programs were named the fifth best return on investment (ROI) in the country by OnlineU, an unbiased rankings organization that compares all online colleges and universities in the country. This speaks volumes to the education that students receive at QCC.

I realize 2020 has brought some of the worst of times, yet I am also proud to say it has also bought out the very best in our College community. Regardless of what the future holds, we must remember that together our goal of 100 percent student success is still within reach and together we can accomplish that goal.

Sincerely,

**Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.**  
*President*

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# EDUCATION WITHOUT BARRIERS

Imagine a place where the divisions of race, gender, and ethnicity are non-existent, a place where an equitable education and support is a right of all. QCC student **Zuheiry Encarnacion '20** knows that place. Thanks to QCC's Mentoring Program and her mentor, **Dr. Natalie Anumba**, a forensic psychologist and assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, **Ms. Encarnacion** found the support she needed to help her succeed.

"Having someone in your corner, no matter what, is amazing. Not a lot of people can say they have emotional and academic support," she said.

It is programs such as QCC's Mentoring Program that are making a difference for students by offering them the support, understanding and resources to help remove the many barriers encountered by underrepresented minorities and low-income students.

In addition to supportive programs, QCC offers a community environment where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to be open and accepting of one another. The College has embraced this mindset and to help facilitate a deeper understanding of equity, the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, co-chaired by staff member **Selina Boria** and Professor **Brenda Safford**, began holding voluntary, remote conversational talks, "Your Voice Matters: Community Conversations," for faculty and staff to engage in open dialogue, share concerns and learn about racial injustices and systemic racism. These conversations go hand-in-hand with staff workshops centered on diversity, equity and inclusion, and unconscious bias training.

"We need to connect with each other more than ever, especially in light of the systemic racial

injustice facing our community and our country," Dr. Pedraja said.

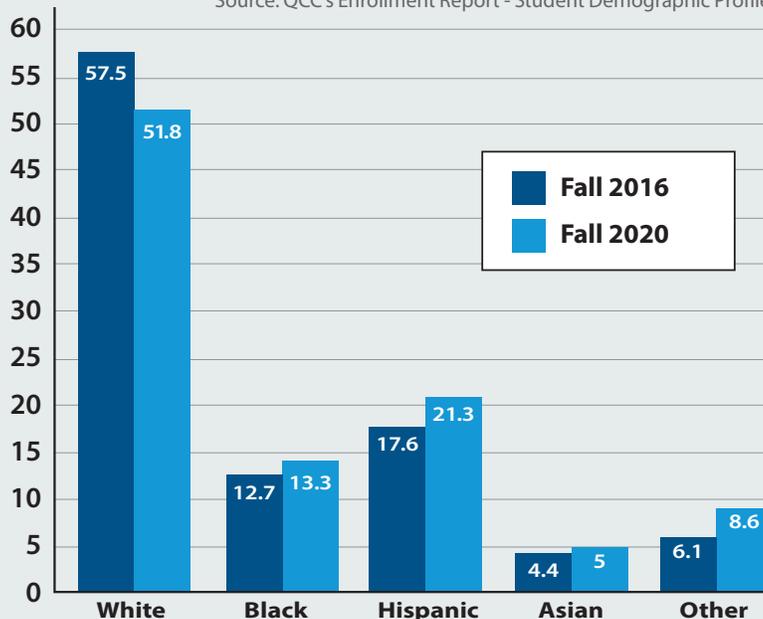
Student sessions, "Brave Space/Courageous Conversations," are also being held regularly for students to speak openly, honestly and respectfully on topics of race, racism, gender, sexism, ableism and ageism. Additional monthly lecture series sponsored by the College's Diversity Caucus are helping to promote cultural awareness.

Recognizing there are many barriers that have propagated inequity in education, the College has been working on ways to remove some of the barriers students face. In 2020, placement testing, which has historically been a barrier to many underrepresented students, was reassessed. Using multiple measures that include students' overall high school GPA, higher education is now attainable for more students.



## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE/ETHNICITY, FALL 2016 - FALL 2020

Source: QCC's Enrollment Report - Student Demographic Profile



Left: Co-Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Brenda Safford (L) and Film director A.B. Webster (R) who presented her film, "Respect and LOVE," to the College community in late 2019. Right: QCC mentee Zuheyry Encarnacion '20 (L) and her mentor, Dr. Natalie Anumba (R).



## PARTNERSHIPS WITH A PURPOSE

The QCC Mentoring Program has become a critical component of the College's efforts to provide students with deeper community and career connections. The program matches students with staff, faculty, and professionals from the Greater Worcester Community to build one-on-one mentoring relationships that focus on academic encouragement, professional skill building, and social connections.

To date, QCC Mentoring has 141 mentor-mentee matches, with mentors coming from over 20 organizations throughout the Worcester community. The program also has core partners, which are organizations or companies that

commit to sending 10 or more mentors to participate in the program. This year, in addition to core partners, AbbVie, the City of Worcester, UMass Memorial Medical Center and the Hanover Insurance Group, the mentoring program has added two additional core partners, Cityblock Health and the Worcester County Bar Association.

Despite the move to remote instruction and services in Spring 2020, mentors and mentees maintained strong connections. During the Fall 2020 remote kick-off session, over 160 mentees and mentors attended the event that focused on the power of mentoring.

While QCC's Mentoring Program moved to remote meetings due to the pandemic, mentor/mentee partnerships continued to flourish. Recent graduate **Bobby Kapel '20'** and Mentor **Kevin Campbell** transitioned to phone calls and Zoom meetings. The two men have a collaborative working relationship as well as a friendship. While the two are generations apart, from different countries, cultural backgrounds and career fields, they share a deep admiration and affinity for one another.

"I saw this as a big opportunity and way to keep on track," Mr. Kapel said.

## 35 Years of Advocacy

Promoting equity in the community is an important part of education without barriers. QCC has helped to promote and celebrate the amazing accomplishments of Hispanic high school students through the Hispanics Celebrating and Achieving Excellence (HACE) Program. Each year for the past 35 years the College has hosted the HACE awards ceremony. For over half of its existence, QCC has played a significant role in this special event that to date has honored 754 Hispanic students with scholarships totaling \$186,950. The annual event pays homage to the achievements of public and private

Worcester and Southbridge Hispanic high school students in the areas of Academics, Leadership, Arts and Athletics and helps bolster the message of equity in education. While the 2020 award ceremony was the first held virtually, the homage paid to the award winners by civic and community leaders seemed extra special this year.

The number 35 also had special significance as the College hosted the 35th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast. The Worcester County MLK Community Breakfast Committee puts together the breakfast each year to honor

the birth of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his ideals. Each year, federal state and local officials from across the Commonwealth attend this annual event.

"I also want to thank President Pedraja for his leadership on so many important issues in the City. We are proud of him," said Jim McGovern, U.S. Congressman.



Coordinator of the Future Focus Program, Gilmarie Vongphakdy and Director of Community Bridges, Déborah L. González, Ph.D.



I also want to thank President Pedraja for his leadership on so many important issues in the City. We are proud of him.

- Jim McGovern,  
U.S. Congressman



The 2020 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast.

## EQUITY IN EDUCATION

The message of equity and education for all goes beyond QCC's walls. New graduate **Jorgo Gushi '20**, who came to Worcester from Albania right after high school, has been evangelizing that message far and wide. As the President for the Class of 2020, he reminded his classmates of the College's unconditional acceptance of all students in his commencement speech.

"At QCC our perspectives, our talents, our histories and our voices were accepted, fostered and supported. We found our true selves," he said.

As the Chair of the Student Advisory Council to the MA Board of Higher Education, Mr. Gushi spoke on racial equity for students at a September 2020 webinar held by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

"We ought to recognize that individual students are not responsible for the unequal outcomes of groups that have historically experienced discrimination and marginalization in the United States. Respect for the aspirations and struggles of students who are not well-served by the current educational system, is essential," he said.



## PASSION AND PURPOSE

Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D. has continued to promote the message of equity in education on a local, state and national stage in 2020. This year Dr. Pedraja

- joined the 2020-2021 inaugural class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship, a new Aspen Institute initiative designed to support community college presidents in the early years of their tenure, to accelerate transformational change on behalf of students,
- spoke at the Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology Barton Lectureship, where he gave the keynote address on racism through the lens of education,
- was appointed to the Association of Community College Trustees Presidents' Advisory Council,
- continued to serve on the American Association of Community Colleges' Commission on Infrastructure and Technology,
- serves as co-chair of the Communication Task Force for the MA Association of Community Colleges and is a member of the Advocacy Committee,
- continued to co-chair the Mayoral Commission on Latino Advancement and Education with Mary Jo Marion, Assistant Vice President for Urban Affairs and the Latino Education Institute,
- joined the Board of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, while continuing to serve on the Board of the United Way, Worcester Regional Research Bureau (WRRB), the Latino Education Institute (LEI) Advisory Board, and the Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts (HECCMA) Board,
- facilitated a Latino Community Virtual Town Hall on behalf of the Latino Empowerment Organizing Network (LEON), a coalition of Latino community leaders. This unofficial group is addressing issues within the Latino community by offering city officials and other community leaders an opportunity to learn more about the Latino community, in order to affect change within Worcester, particularly as it relates to education.



**“It is vitally important that our students know we are with them every step of the way on their journey for a better future,” Dr. Pedraja said.**

# ALIGNING WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Two peas in a pod...that's what most people think of when they meet South High School students **Milexie Evri** and **Shannen Jimenez**. The seniors, who have been virtually inseparable since high school have been preparing for their future through QCC's Early College Program. The program gives high school students the ability to take college courses for college credit at no cost, while simultaneously attending high school.

"Being able to experience college, the classes, and the college environment for credit, and for free, has been great," Ms. Evri said.

In September 2020, the College was awarded a Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership (CDEP) Grant of \$32,400 that will be used to offer college credit courses to more underserved students in the Worcester County Early College Programs. Data collected by QCC found that the largest Worcester Public School student populations who participated in the 2018-2019 academic year were Latinx (29.2%) and Black (28.8%).



Left: Shannen Jimenez (L) and Milexie Evri (R). Right: Early College Roundtable participants Doherty Memorial High School student Kwaku Nyarko (L) and Worcester Technical High School student Zachary Le.

Currently high school students in seven Worcester public high schools, as well as 22 additional area Central Massachusetts high schools are taking advantage of the program. QCC has seen 42% of its Early College students enroll at the College within one year of taking early college courses during the program's early beginnings. In late November 2020, the College received a one-year \$20,000 grant from the George W. Wells Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee to support an Early College Program in Southbridge High School.





QCC's HVAC program at Worcester Technical High School has many older students looking to change or enhance their current careers.

## Education across all platforms

Delivering education to all, means meeting the needs of many unique student populations. Student **Brian Mele '21**, of Rutland, is a married father of three who is taking part in the College's Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) program in order to advance his career. He is just one of many older students who are coming back to college to advance or change their careers.

"I am a U.S. Army veteran and pursuing QCC's HVAC certification through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' vocational rehabilitation program. I have been in the HVAC field for over 15 years, and my plan is to make

my transition towards becoming an instructor after earning my bachelor's degree for vocational education," he said.

In early February 2020, President Pedraja was part of a roundtable discussion with Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and other state and local legislators to discuss the Governor's new Career Technical Initiative. The Career Technical Initiative is designed to train 20,000 skilled trades workers over the next four years and the Governor has included \$15 million in his fiscal 2021 budget for this initiative.

QCC's adult vocational learning is already one step ahead of the game in

meeting this important need for many adult learners. The College's HVAC program currently has a partnership with Worcester Technical High School (WTHS) and a similar one with Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School.

"We are very excited about this partnership with WTHS," President Pedraja told Governor Baker, noting the partnership QCC has with other schools such as Burncoat High School, which hosts the College's automotive technology program.

"There are a lot of people who would like to have the opportunity to expand their career options," President Pedraja added.



## Increasing Higher Education Access

Amid a pandemic, QCC began increasing its presence in the communities it serves with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Southbridge Public Schools in the summer of 2020.

“The Town Council is very excited that Quinsigamond Community College has entered into an agreement with the Town of Southbridge Public Schools and will remain as a fixture in the Town of Southbridge,” said Jack Jovan, chairman of the Southbridge Town Council.

The partnership has enabled the College to expand its presence by



moving to Southbridge High School to enable closer relationships to high school students and their families. QCC Southbridge offers access to higher education not only to Southbridge residents, but also to communities across the South County region through academic and workforce development offerings and professional career training.

“We believe this partnership will be beneficial to our students and the community,” Mr. Jovan said.



Top: Southbridge High School. Bottom: President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.



QCC's Respiratory Care students became invaluable during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am grateful for the Quinsigamond Respiratory Care program. ...We are the Class of 2020 and we are ready!”

- Kiara Still '20,  
QCC Respiratory Care student who joined the Respiratory Therapy team at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester

## Breathing Life Into Our Communities

In mid-March 2020, as the nation dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, QCC's faculty, staff, students and alumni came together to assist area hospitals and healthcare facilities, putting aside their fears to help those in need.

“I don't think any of us could have predicted what is happening now; it's surreal. I have to say that I am in awe of my coworkers. Under stress and uncertainty, they are still taking the time to teach me,” said Respiratory Care student **Allison Foskett '20**, who is working at UMass Memorial's University campus in Worcester.

“I am doing the best I can through this; trying to balance working through a pandemic, completing school work, studying for the boards, and raising my four children.”

Respiratory Care Professor **Karen Kaletski Dufault** recognized the stress area hospitals were under with a shortage of respiratory therapists and jumped into action. In the span of a weekend, she received approval from the Respiratory Care

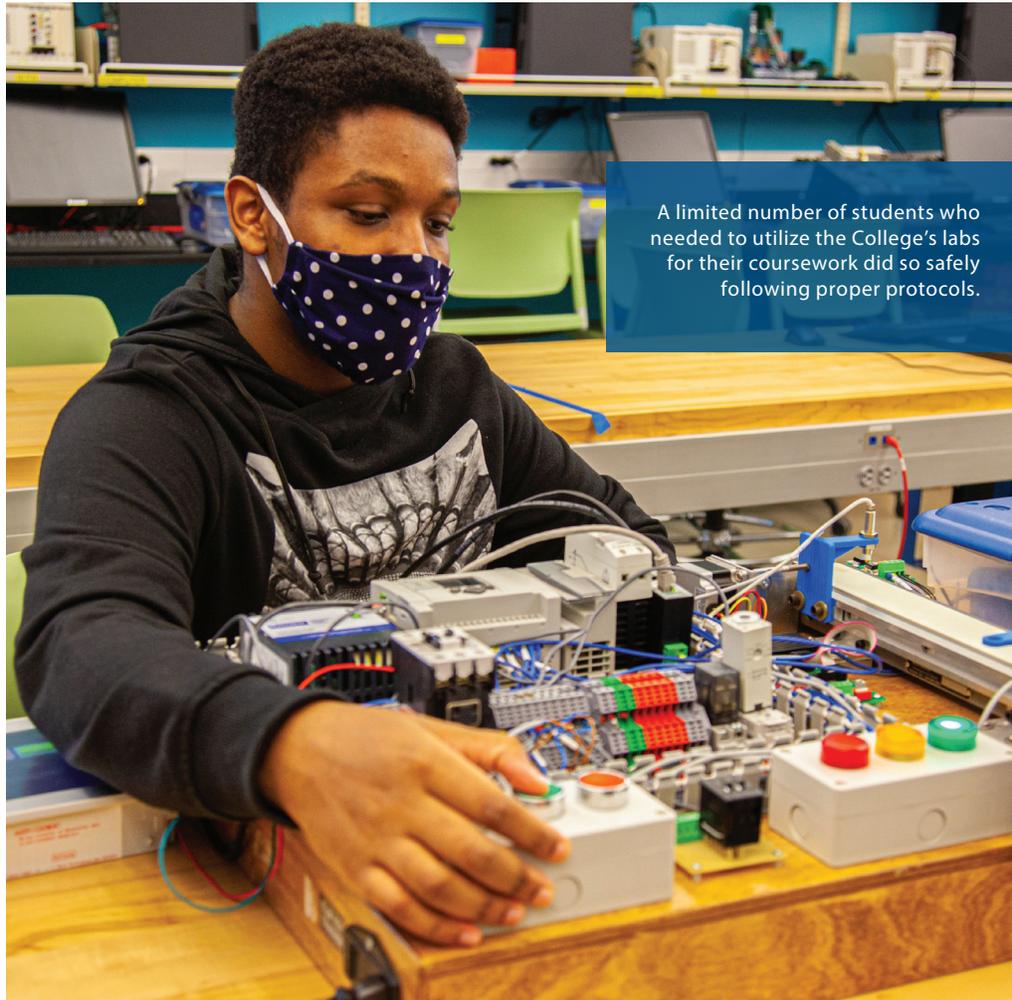
accrediting agency to allow QCC's respiratory care students to work on a student license, while earning credit simultaneously. This added a dozen students to the workforce, increased the Respiratory Therapists in Worcester by 10 percent and brought much needed medical resources to an extremely stressed healthcare system.

“The therapists from the QCC program are always well prepared to work in all areas including the emergency room, intensive care unit and the nursery. Their knowledge, skills and work ethic are outstanding. We know we can count on them to deliver the very best care to our patients,” said Director of Pulmonary Medicine Dr. Richard Rosiello, of St. Vincent Hospital at Worcester Medical Center.

“I am grateful for the Quinsigamond Respiratory Care program. As scary as it is to enter the workforce during the pandemic, I am ready! We are the Quinsigamond Community College Class of 2020, and we are ready,” said Respiratory Care student **Kiara Still '20**, who joined the Respiratory Therapy team at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester.

The College’s science department also stepped up to help out during the national health crisis and donated 45 cases (45,000 gloves) to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The College’s healthcare programs donated gowns, N95 masks, surgical masks and gloves to UMass Medical School, Harrington Hospital, Salmon Healthcare and Knollwood Nursing Home.

“Our entire QCC community stepped up to help our communities,” President Pedraja said.



A limited number of students who needed to utilize the College’s labs for their coursework did so safely following proper protocols.

## QCC IN ACTION

Other ways in which the College helped in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic included a project spearheaded by Professor **Lee Duerden**, associate professor of Manufacturing Technology. Mr. Duerden utilized QCC’s Fab Lab and its form lab resin printers to make respirator masks with removable HEPA filters, capable of filtration rates to 0.01 microns. He printed prototypes that were tested and utilized by close to a dozen area nurses who worked at the Worcester county jail.

“While we clearly are not a production line these masks helped, and the nurses were very grateful to QCC,” Professor Duerden said.

QCC students also had a hand in making masks for the community. Phi Theta Kappa student **Iliana Ivanova '20** put the pedal to the metal...the sewing machine pedal that is, sewing masks for healthcare workers in need.

“I have made about 25 masks so far and I plan on making as many as I can,” she said.

## ADVOCATING FOR THE FUTURE

QCC students sent powerful messages to the Worcester community through the College's United States Census and Voting outreach video campaigns. Each campaign featured students and alumni sharing the importance of participating in the census, registering, and getting out to vote.

"Your vote matters and your vote counts. By registering to vote, you are contributing to the change you want to see in your community," said student **Luceily Ortiz '20**.

The videos were filmed in multiple languages such as English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ga, Vietnamese, English and Albanian, to represent and engage the diverse communities that make up the City of Worcester.

"QCC used its voice and the voice of its students to engage the community in an effort that will benefit all of Worcester," said Associate Vice President for External Affairs, **Viviana Abreu-Hernandez**.



Student Krystle "Mixhe" Bedrick '20

## Students Inspire Legislative Leadership

The College has continued to maintain a proactive approach to staying engaged with state and local legislators. Recognizing the importance of getting the word out about the incredible need many QCC students face, early in February 2020 an in-person Legislative Breakfast was held, followed by two student-led Virtual Legislative Town Halls in May and September. These events gave dozens of legislators and their representatives' insight into the College and the needs of its students, particularly since the pandemic.

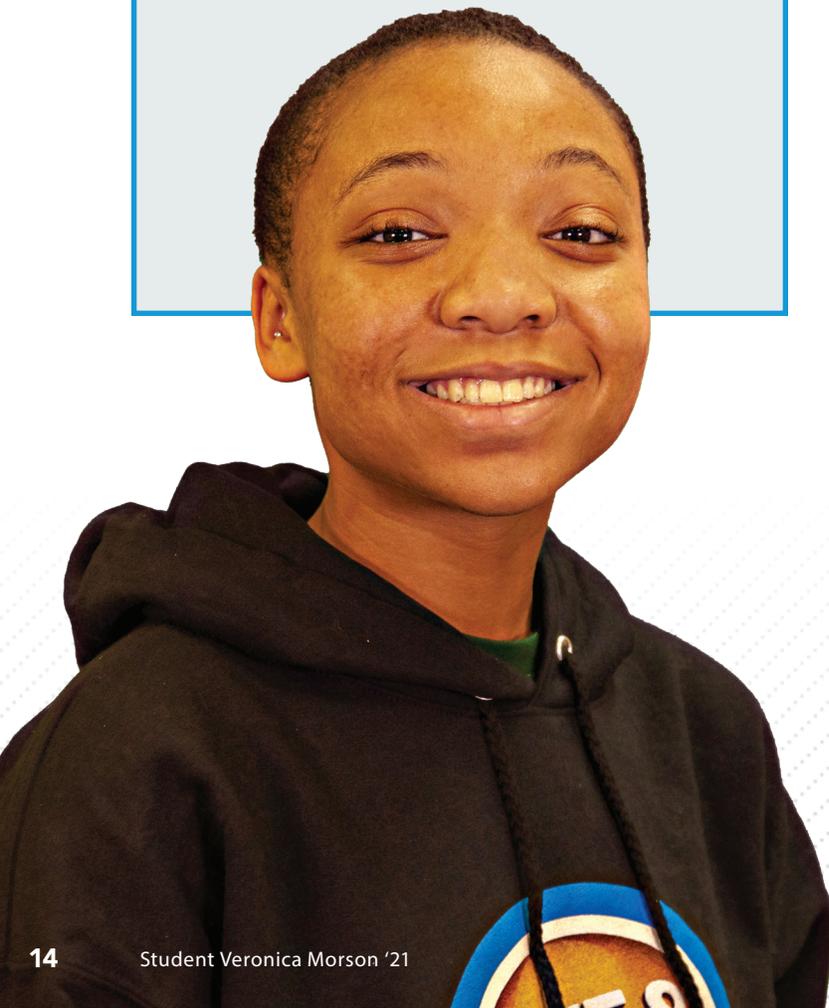
First generation college student, **Krystle "Mixhe" Bedrick '20** described an upbringing of intergenerational poverty during the Legislative Breakfast.

"I never believed in my entire life I could attend college. Education is a way to release those bonds so that our dreams can be a reality. This can't happen without legislative support. Without this institution I would not be the person I am today," Mixhe said.

At the student-led Virtual Town Halls students gave the legislators updates on the needs of students discussing the serious life concerns they are facing. Prior to the pandemic, close to 50 percent of QCC students were struggling with food insecurity and that need is only increasing as the health crisis continues.

"We need to continue to raise funds to provide emergency aid to our students during the COVID-19 pandemic. QCC is trying to make our lives and the lives of our families better," said student **Tabitha Leber '21**.

"Seeing the perseverance of QCC students is amazing," Representative Hannah Kane said.





Having this knowledge can not only help individual firefighters to remain safe, but also it allows for the community as a whole to be certain that they have a full fire force that is not handicapped by many illnesses.

- **James Sharry**, Worcester Firefighter Recruit



Student Andrea Ramos '22

## Forging New Pathways

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, programs and course offerings were adopted to meet the upskilling needs of both employers and individuals working in today's new digital workplace landscape. The Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education (CWDCE) met the challenges of the pandemic head-on by offering 20 free online courses to business owners and

their employees. One free course on infection control and barrier protection proficiency drew close to 400 allied health professionals that included over two dozen Worcester firefighter recruits.

"Being a firefighter in a time like this can be challenging because of the connection to the community and interactions that are required

daily. Having this knowledge can not only help individual firefighters to remain safe, but also it allows for the community as a whole to be certain that they have a full fire force that is not handicapped by many illnesses," said Worcester firefighter recruit **James Sharry**.

## SUBSCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

**SPRING 2021** Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Classes are filling **FAST!** Register Today!

Non-Credit Courses  
508.751.7900 • www.QCC.edu/WD  
25 Federal Street, Worcester, MA 01608

**QUINSIGAMOND COLLEGE**  
Community College MA's SMARTER.

In addition to free business courses, the Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education (CWDCE) launched an innovative way to deliver professional development training with a new, "all you can learn" subscription model. The CWDCE performed extensive research to discover the best way to respond to the needs of both employers and individuals working in today's digital age.

QCC's subscription-style model of learning contains over 500 unique online modules in 14 different areas of Advanced Manufacturing, as well as Microsoft 365 online software services suite. Participants can choose between 30, 60, 90, 180 or 365 days of unlimited access to all the training modules for a set rate. Since the pandemic began, companies have had to adopt more online practices into their current workplace practices to remain viable.



President Pedraja carries turkeys to students' cars. The College distributed 40 turkeys with all the fixings, to students in need for the Thanksgiving holiday.

## Caring for the Most Vulnerable

Working to meet an increased student need, the College's Food Pantry and Resource Center transitioned to a mobile, drive-thru operation, serving students once a week. At the start of the pandemic, the food pantry partnered with the Worcester County Food Bank (WCFB). Dean of Students **Terry Vecchio** and Phi Theta Kappa Advisor **Bonnie Coleman** trained with David Reed, agency relations coordinator for the WCFB. This enabled the College to utilize this valuable community resource.



**“**  
**I have never been to a food pantry before and didn't know what to expect. ...but now having healthy food that's energizing, I feel like I can get back on track.**  
**– Student Food Pantry Recipient**

“The students are so grateful for this food. It's gratifying to know we are able to help them,” Ms. Coleman said.

Already over 400 students have registered to use the food pantry and with the colder weather, it is anticipated that this number will increase. In addition to feeding QCC students, the food pantry is also helping feed hundreds of family members.

“I have never been to a food pantry before and didn't know what to expect. I fasted for a few days and it was horrible, making me unable to do work and get my responsibilities done, but now having healthy food that's energizing, I feel like I can get back on track,” according to one Student Food Pantry Recipient.

## SERVING CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

**“We are delighted to be working with such a compassionate and professional organization like Quinsigamond Community College.”**

**– Michelle Smith, Executive Director for AIDS Project Worcester**

QCC hosted a drive-thru COVID-19 test site at its main campus from mid-September through December 2020. Testing was conducted by AIDS Project Worcester, Inc., and was part of the Commonwealth's “Stop the Spread” program. QCC

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE



From left: Ingrid Murphy drops off donations to the QCC Food Pantry and Resource Center with the help of PTK students **Luceily Ortiz '20**, **Farah Mohamad '20** and **Alexander Paulino '21**.

Douglas resident Ingrid Murphy read about QCC's Food Pantry and resource center in a local paper and was shocked to learn about the profound food insecurity college students often face.

"This is just so sad that these students are going through this on top of all the other things they have to deal with," Ms. Murphy said.

As a member of the Blackstone Valley United Methodist Church in

Whitinsville, and active member of its women's group, she knew it was the perfect time to bring the needs of QCC students to the church's attention. Her idea of gathering donations for the food pantry was favorably met by the women's group. The project quickly snowballed as the entire church learned of the students' needs. For eight Sundays the entire church collected donations for the school's food pantry.

"We got a lot of donations. It was just wonderful and it spurred a lot of conversations," Ms. Murphy said.

In early 2020, Ms. Murphy celebrated a milestone birthday and her husband, Brian Murphy, planned a surprise party in her honor. He asked the invited guests to bring donations for the food pantry in lieu of a gift. Donations ranged from food to toiletries, and even included \$102 in cash

"The whole car was filled. It was just amazing," said Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Advisor **Bonnie Coleman**.

Between the two donations, Ms. Coleman estimates there was close to \$1,000 worth of food and toiletries donated. Ms. Murphy said she plans to keep making donations and bringing awareness to the needs of college students. Her philanthropy caught the attention of local CBS News Affiliate WBZ/Channel 4, and the College's food pantry was featured in a "4 Your Community" segment.

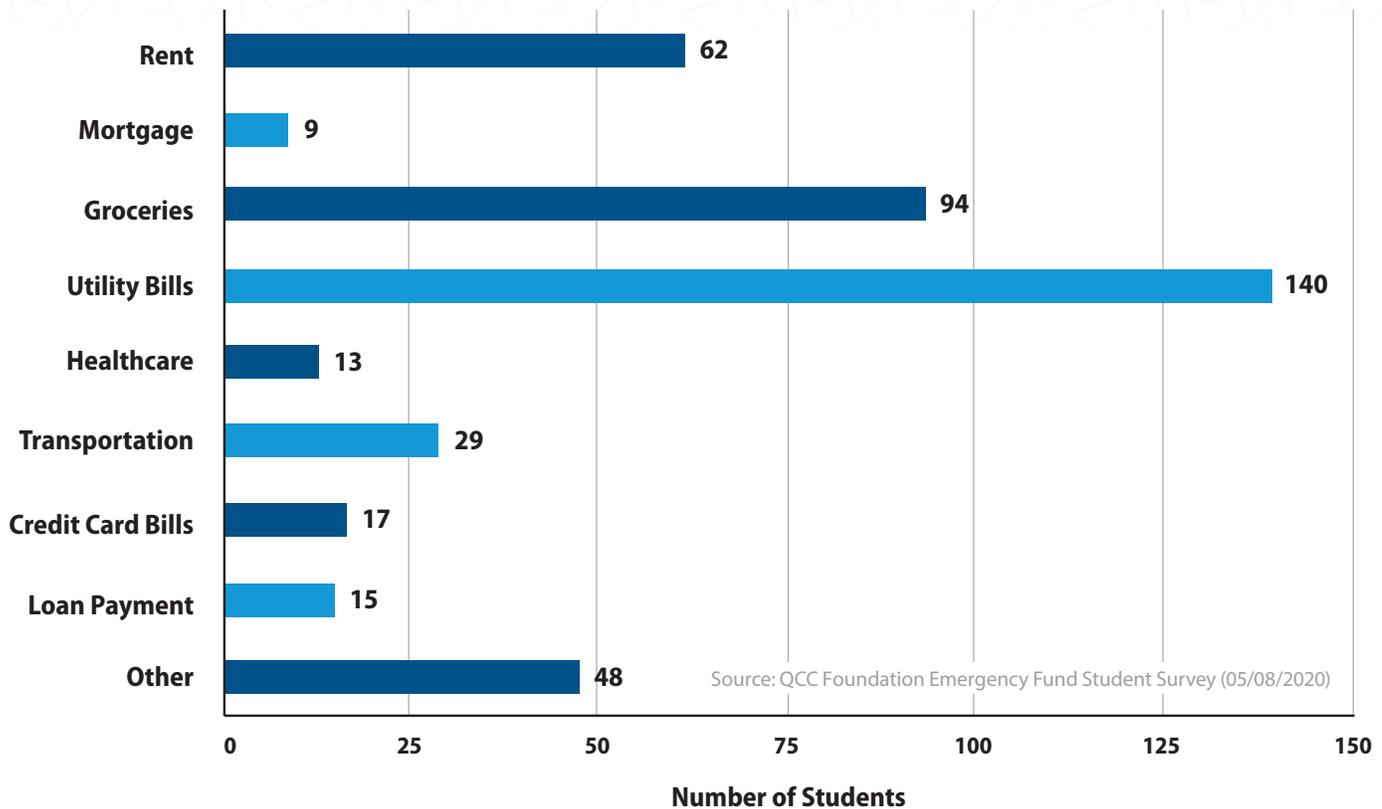
"Young people need a break and we need to help them more. They're our future," Ms. Murphy said, adding, "It takes a village doesn't it?"

student **Lamar Brown-Noguera '20**, community relations manager for AIDS Project Worcester, was in charge of the testing site. The testing was free and open to the general public, regardless of whether or not a person was symptomatic.

"We are delighted to be working with such a compassionate and professional organization like Quinsigamond Community College," said Michelle Smith, executive director for AIDS Project Worcester.

The College also hosted a walk-in flu clinic for the public in late September and early October 2020. This year the influenza immunization is required for all students attending Massachusetts colleges and universities.

## Student Emergency Fund - How the aid was used

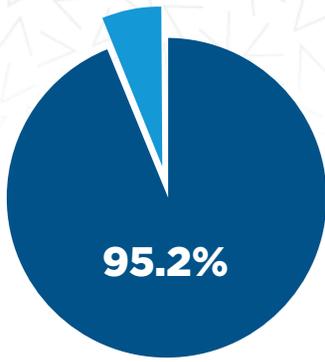


# FUNDING THAT ADVANCES STUDENT SUCCESS

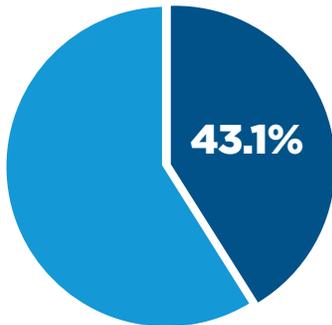
The ability to help all students succeed, especially for an underprivileged student population, is intimately tied to adequate funding. The College received a new five-year grant award from the U.S. Department of Education to continue and expand its TRiO Student Support Service program. The new grant award of \$1,309,440 will allow the program to serve 150 students each year. Through

the TRiO program, first generation students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities receive academic advising, academic tutoring in mathematics and English, financial aid counseling, financial literacy workshops, transfer counseling and much more. The new grant award represents a 3.5% funding increase over the previous award.

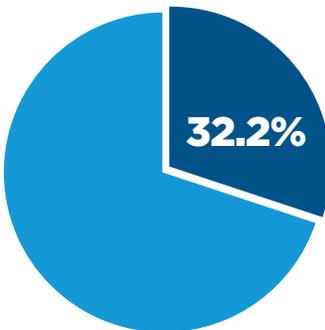
“Helping students achieve their goals and realize their dreams is what we are all about at QCC. By supporting those who have historically been disadvantaged and underserved, we are also helping our entire community,” Dr. Pedraja said.



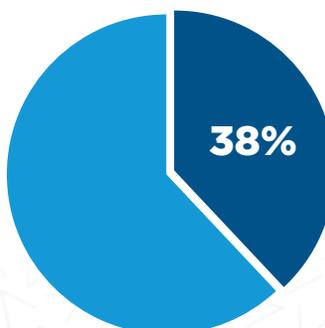
95.2% of QCC applicants had COVID-19 expenses



43.1% of QCC applicants suffered a job loss



32.2% of QCC applicants had emergency expenses



38% of QCC applicants had reduced wages

## QCC Receives CARES Act Funding

**2,277** applicants

**\$952** awarded to students (on average)

**\$2.6M+** CARES Act funding received

**1,622** students received laptop assistance through CARES Act funds

**\$2.8M+** Total Federal/State Emergency (Student Grant) Funding Awarded

**3,674** students awarded funding

## A World of Caring

As the impact of COVID-19 greatly challenged the higher education system, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law to help students in need. QCC received \$2,652,173 in CARES Act funding, to be used for student grants, and as of December 31, \$2,565,094 has been awarded.

To date there have been 3,067 applications for aid from 2,277 students (some apply for multiple semesters or multiple times in one semester). Based on application-based funding, the average award is \$952 per student.

## Focusing on the Future

Quinsigamond Community College's Future Focus program was awarded a \$450,000 Adult Education Transition to Community College Grant by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The \$450,000 grant is the maximum awarded and will be divided into three yearly allotments of \$150,000.

QCC's Future Focus program is designed specifically for adult learners from adult basic education programs and creates a direct pathway to degree and certificate programs. Since 2010, Future Focus has significantly increased its student enrollment, and to date, over 300 nontraditional students have been through the program.

Future Focus students are non-traditional students who have gone through the traditional U.S. education system, but did not complete their school requirements



A student operates a FANUC robot in the College's Mechatronics lab.

and instead earned their GED or HiSET high school equivalency. Future Focus students are also English as a Second Language (ESOL/ESL) participants, who already have their high school diploma, as well as students who graduated from high school years ago and went directly into the workforce. Participants receive comprehensive support in order to help them succeed as they transition into higher education. The program covers all tuition and fees, books, school supplies (and bus passes if needed), in addition to career and academic advising.

## Connecting Education

A \$298,108 National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant was awarded to QCC for a new Robotics Technician Certificate program. The program will be designed to offer a curriculum that supports technical communication, teaches problem-solving skills and offers a strong integration of industry-recognized certifications. Underrepresented QCC student populations that participate in the College's existing robotics community outreach programs will directly benefit from the program. Additionally, other beneficiaries targeted include 400 pre-college and undergraduate students, who have demonstrated interest in robotics technology.

Robotics education is not a new concept at QCC. It is already a part of the College's manufacturing

## STATE FUNDING FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT



QCC was awarded \$112,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to provide Medical Administration Career Preparation for underserved individuals including limited English speakers, long-term unemployed, and low-income individuals. The program was designed to provide 40 enrolled individuals with a comprehensive program leading to stable employment as medical administrative assistants, medical receptionists, medical secretaries,

medical office assistants, or patient access representatives.

In late 2019, QCC was named one of only four community colleges to receive a \$249,527 Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants. The grant is being used to advance current programs that train individuals for jobs in healthcare and social assistance.

The College was also awarded a \$476,807 Skills Capital Grant in late

The College's new state-of-the-art dental lab is equipped with the latest equipment and technology.



We want to be sensitive to industries' needs, how things are changing, and bring more of that interest and need to the program.

- **Jacob Longacre**, Associate Professor of Electronics Engineering Technology

and mechatronics programs. According to **Jacob Longacre**, associate professor of Electronics Engineering Technology, the new Robotics Technician Certificate will be based on input from industries within the region, as well as local high schools and four-year institution educators. The hope is for the new certificate program to act as a conduit between K-12 robotics outreach programs. The goal is to have the pilot program tested and in place within three years.

"We want to be sensitive to industries' needs, how things are changing, and bring more of that interest and need to the program," Professor Longacre said.



A student works in one of College's manufacturing labs.

2019. This was the third largest grant out of the 45 grants awarded to high schools, colleges and educational institutions in the Commonwealth. The grant was used to purchase state-of-the-art dental equipment used in today's dental materials labs. This grant funding also helped complete the College's new dental materials lab, and to create a hands-on teaching classroom to train future dental hygienists, dental assistants and new expanded function dental assistants.

"We've been told that there is only one other training lab at a college or university in the state with this level of equipment," said QCC Dental Clinic Operations and Facilities Manager **Sheryl Ficorilli**.



A dental hygiene student reviews an x-ray in the College's new dental lab.

# STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNOLOGY

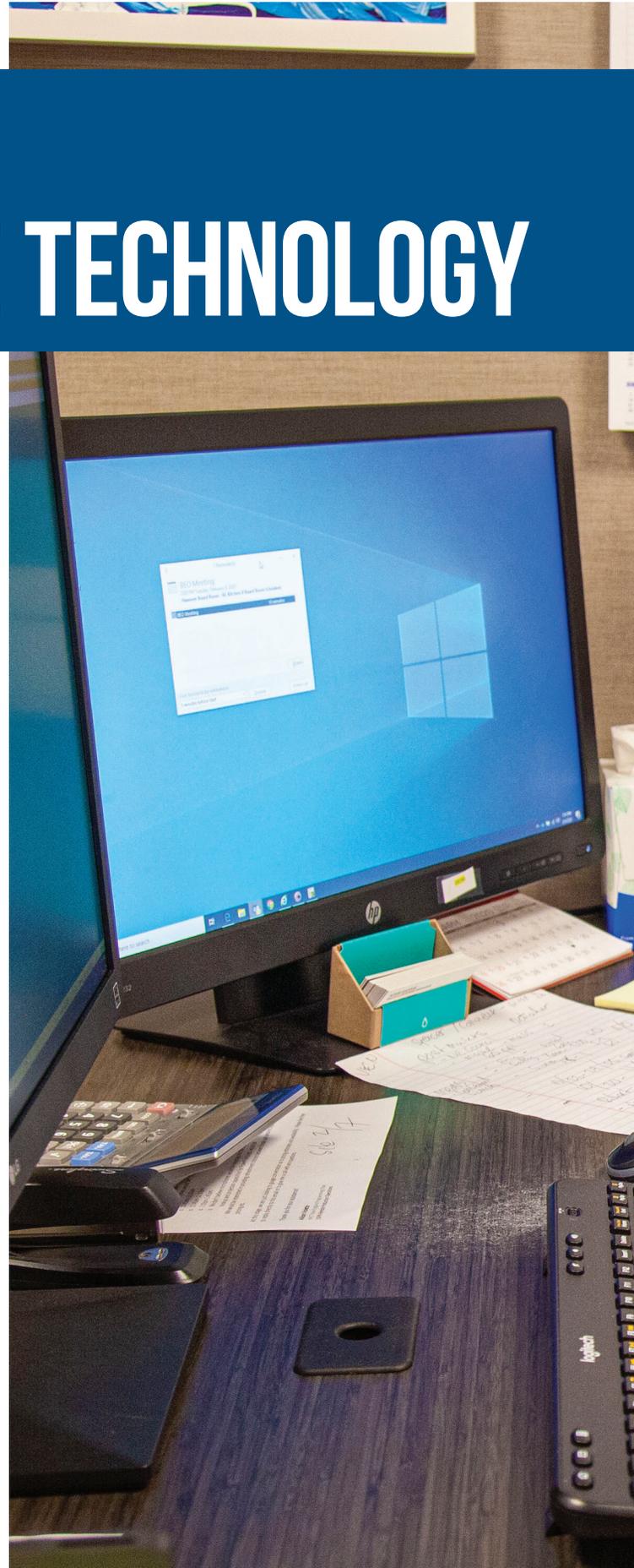
Advancing and strengthening the College infrastructure is vital to student success. In 2020, the College moved its Student Information System - Jenzabar, Starfish - an early intervention information system, and the MS Office 375 Information System to the Cloud. This increased up-time, improved efficiency and managed costs. Major server upgrades were also made to QCC's data center to provide replacements for slow and older servers. These upgrades will provide for the College's needs until at least 2025.

The College expanded its IT infrastructure successfully, in order to support the new remote modality of work, instruction, and student services. Close to 400 virtual private networks are now operating to provide remote working computer environments for staff. Additionally, numerous hotspots were made available for students needing Internet access.

IT worked with staff to implement the mirroring of campus phones to home phones and cell phones, using the recently upgraded phone system. A centralized communication call center, the "QCC Solution Station," was developed to manage inbound and outbound calls, especially during peak periods. Since the pandemic, the Solution Station has transitioned to a virtual call center of 15 people, in order to make and receive calls from students remotely.

"Increasing our technology enables us to better service our students," Dr. Pedraja said.

Additionally, QCC staff worked on a detailed analysis of all of its Information Technology through a CampusWorks assessment, to help determine any deficiencies, identify areas of improvement, and discover cost-saving opportunities.





QCC Alumna  
Robin Tasca '18.

# CULTIVATING STUDENT SUCCESS

In response to the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic, the College extended its annual March 2020 Spring break a week. When the students came back to finish out the semester, it was to a new remote mode of learning, as all courses transitioned to a virtual format for the safety of students, faculty, staff and the community.

“Each professor put all their coursework online in a way that worked for them and their students. They have been outstanding in understanding our situations and wanted to see us succeed,” Student **Tabitha Leber '21** said.

From the onset of the global health crisis, QCC transitioned all of its support services to an online format, such as its tutoring centers, which now offer virtual one-on one and small group tutoring sessions. At the onset of the Fall 2020 semester, the College also began a pilot program that embedded tutors in certain Blackboard courses. Hands on learning is also an integral part of student success and many of the College's programs developed in-home, hands-on learning modules for students to continue this important educational training.

“I am so grateful to attend QCC. Every day I have more experiences than I could have ever imagined. Without QCC, I would have never attended college and life would have looked a lot different. So many students like me came here to have a better life,” said student **Mary “Mason” Wheaton '21**, who is also a tutor in the College's Writing Center.

The College's Student Government Association has set up a Student Community Engagement Portal to help students stay connected with their peers. Student Life also transitioned its clubs, such as QCC's Phi Theta Kappa Alpha Zeta Theta Chapter Honor Society to online meetings, games and social service projects.

The transition to online learning stressed the limits of many low-income students, who did not have access to computers or Internet, in order to continue with their studies.

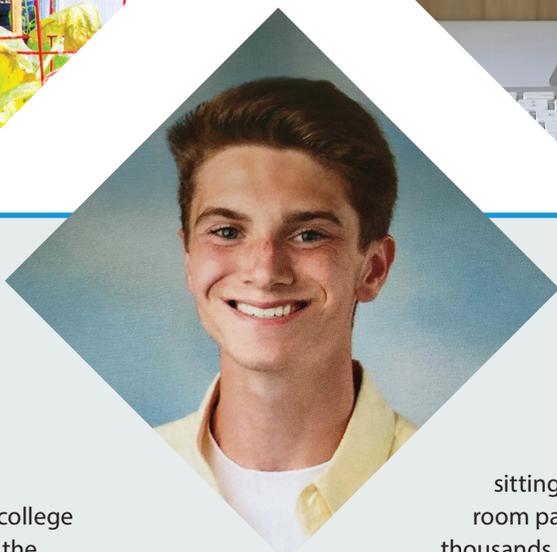


““”

I am so grateful to attend QCC. Every day I have more experiences than I could have ever imagined.

– **Mary “Mason” Wheaton '21**

Top: PTK student and QCC Greenhouse Manager Tabitha Leber '21. Right: Zoom meetings became the norm in 2020. Bottom: Freshman Andrew Stefanik '22.



## NEW WORLD FOR COLLEGE FRESHMAN

For many incoming college freshmen, the excitement of moving away from home into a dorm and starting a new chapter in their lives ended abruptly due to COVID-19. One student who found himself in this situation was recent Shepherd Hill Regional High School graduate and new QCC freshman, **Andrew Stefanik '22**, of Dudley.

After being accepted for the Fall Semester at Westfield State University, receiving his dorm assignment and roommate, he was set to start the 2020 Fall Semester.

"Then, the COVID-19 pandemic began to raise concerns for going back to college. I realized I would be

sitting in a dorm room paying multiple thousands of dollars to just sit there," he said.

It was a wake-up call for him.

"I decided to open up my options to Quinsigamond Community College. For the price difference alone, QCC seems to be the much smarter choice for this year," he said, adding that the biggest contributing factor was the price difference. "It makes more financial sense to stay at home and get the same education I would have gotten otherwise."

Mr. Stefanik said the Fall Semester may not have been what he was initially planning for, but he was looking forward to attending QCC

and taking classes in the comfort and safety of his own home.

"I believe Quinsigamond will also help me to get acclimated to the college workload, which I would have struggled with while living away from home at Westfield. If I were to give advice to anybody going to a four-year college that is going completely remote this upcoming semester, I would suggest to always have an open mind! Everybody wants the 'college experience,' but that doesn't exist if you are sitting in a dorm room for 15 hours/day, not being able to eat at the dining commons, and not being able to hang out with friends outside of your residence hall."

The QCC Foundation set up a Student Emergency Fund, which among its many uses, has been used to purchase laptops for students who cannot afford them.

"I am grateful to Quinsigamond Community College for providing us with the resources we need such as our laptops. These laptops help us eliminate the worry of how to continue our programs," said a current student who received a laptop.

## A Foundation for Student Success

In March 2020, the QCC Foundation jumped in to help students and allocated \$25,000 to create the QCC Foundation Student Emergency Fund. Knowing there was a much greater student need to be met, the Foundation began an aggressive fundraising campaign with donations coming from QCC's faculty, staff, directors and trustees, alumni, foundations, banks, corporations, private donors and grants.

"I lost two jobs. The only one left was four hours a week. It was terrible," said a student aid recipient.

To date, the Fund has raised \$116,454 and assisted 571 students to help with rent, food, medical services, childcare and other basic life and educational necessities. Students typically received anywhere from \$100 to \$250. External Affairs also worked with organizations to re-purpose \$53,000

## Student Emergency Fund



**\$116,454**

funds raised



**571**

students assisted



**250**

laptops awarded



**\$25K**

allocated by the QCC Foundation to the Student Emergency Fund

— **““””** —

**I lost two jobs. The only one left was four hours a week. It was terrible.**

**– Anonymous student aid recipient**

in grant funds to establish the Computer Scholarship Fund to aid students with technology, and to date approximately 250 students have received computers and/or WiFi hotspot devices.

"Without my award I would have withdrawn from QCC this semester," said a student aid recipient.

While all colleges and universities nationwide received Federal CARES Act funding, many students were exempt from receiving this aid because of citizenship, residency or enrollment status.

"This Student Emergency Fund aid has been crucial for our students' success," Dr. Pedraja said. "Furthermore, 93% who received aid did not withdraw from college and 90% did not withdraw from any course. This is a testament to the impact the Student Emergency Fund is having on our students."

## QCC ATHLETICS GETS ITS GAME ON

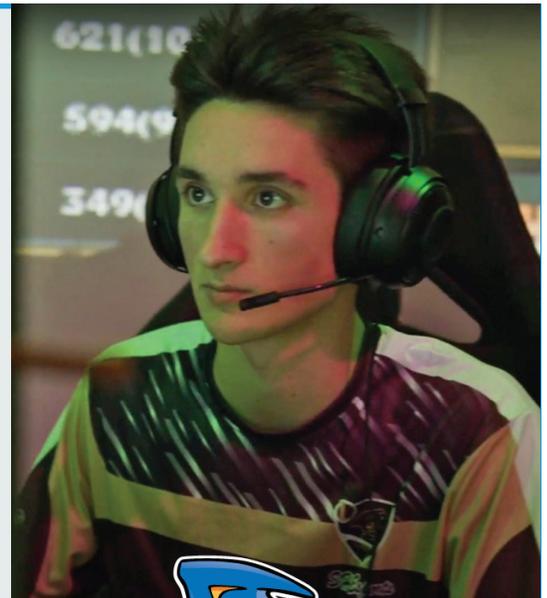
Physical and mental health are vital to student success. At QCC the transition to remote instruction meant the Athletic Department had to reevaluate its programs and services. Since the pandemic, students, faculty and staff are now able to take advantage of free weekly Zoom Yoga or Zumba classes.

An exciting addition to the College's sports teams is a new E-Sports team for the League of Legends, a highly competitive, fast-paced, action-strategy online game. Coaching the 2020 inaugural team is **Nate Mello**, QCC learning manager for Interactive Media Design and part-time faculty member. Team Captain is Freshman **Trevor Dodson '22**, a seasoned gamer who has been playing competitively since he was in high school.

"The best part of being on the college team for me during this time is meeting people and getting

to play my favorite game with them," he said.

The team formed in the summer, competing against other community colleges in the region. The inaugural team came away champions, defeating Bunker Hill Community College in the final E-Sports championship scrimmage game during Fall 2020. The official E-Sports season begins in Spring 2021.



E-Sports Team Captain Trevor Dodson '22.

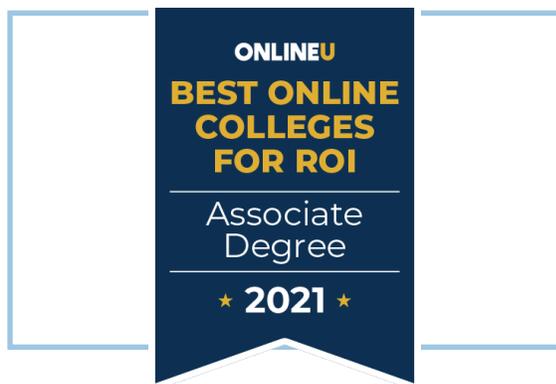


## FALL SEMESTER EQUALS INCREASED REMOTE SERVICES

When the Fall Semester began, new students were met with a brand-new eight-week, non-credit course, "QCC Seminar." The course was developed to help students acclimate to a remote learning environment. Groups of 15 students met each week in a virtual seminar with a faculty member. The new QCC Seminar is one of the ways the College has addressed potential problems before they arise.

The College also hired student assistants who speak five different languages to work in the Admissions Office. This service assists students who are from different cultures and who may not speak English as their first language.

Since the College went to remote learning, all library services have been remote as well. This includes one-on-one reference consultations, virtual information literacy instruction sessions, and the provision of library barcodes via a link in the College's learning management system. Students can access library resources (e-books, article databases, and streaming video) wherever there is an Internet connection. This Fall Semester, library staff took these services one-step further with a contactless, curbside pick-up program that enabled students, faculty and staff to request library books and DVDs that they could then safely drive-thru and pick up when notified.



QCC's Associate Degree programs were named the **fifth best return on investment (ROI)** in the country by **OnlineU.org**, an unbiased rankings organization that compares all online colleges and universities in the country. QCC was the only community college listed in the top five, and one of only two community colleges in the country to make the top 10 on the list.

The College's **Gateway to College** program received a **Program Excellence Award**, Gateway to College's highest national honor. This is the fifth time QCC's Gateway program earned this prestigious award. Nationally there are approximately 35 Gateway to College programs and QCC is always in the top 10 percent.

GATEWAY  
*to*  
COLLEGE



The College's **Veteran Affairs** department earned a **2020-2021 Military Friendly® School designation**. Institutions earning the Military Friendly® School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. More than 1,000 schools participated in the 2020-2021 survey with 695 earning the designation.

**"It is an honor to be designated as a military friendly institution. We try our best and do whatever it takes to help our student vets be successful,"** said Director of Veteran Affairs, Paula Ogden.

# STUDENT ACCOLADES

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) students **Krystle “Mixhe” Bedrick ‘20** and **Temsalet Molla ‘20** were inducted to the 2020 Phi Theta Kappa All-Massachusetts Academic Team. The QCC students were honored for their outstanding academic achievement and exemplary student service by the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC), through a virtual, “PTK Community College Excellence Week.”



Krystle “Mixhe” Bedrick was also named a Newman Civic Fellow, a one-year fellowship experience for community-minded students, which supports the student’s personal, professional and civic development. This is the first time a QCC student was recommended for this fellowship. Mixhe was also chosen as a semifinalist for the

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and was one of 456 finalists, chosen from over 1,500 applicant from across the nation.

Sophomore music major **Mary “Mason” Wheaton ‘21**, a first-generation college student, sang her way into the hearts of many, with her self-written and self-recorded video song, “We Can Fight the Virus,” sung to the tune of Bill Joel’s 1989 hit, “We Didn’t Start the Fire.” Ms. Wheaton’s song addressed the challenges of the pandemic, what to do to stay safe, as well as the support services available at QCC. She was interviewed on the local Worcester WCCA television show, “Daily Breaking,” and was featured on a WHDH Boston Channel 7 news broadcast.

“There is no shame in going to a community college. It’s the smarter way to go to school especially if you don’t have a lot of money, and you can easily transfer to a four-year school,” Ms. Wheaton said.



QCC’s Future Focus Coordinator **Gilmarie Vongphakdy** and QCC alumna **Kara Wiersma ‘03** (daughter of QCC staff member **Liz Hanlan**), were chosen as 2019 “40 Under 40” honorees by the Worcester Business Journal. This annual event honors an elite group of Central Massachusetts professionals under the age of 40.

QCC’s Future Focus Coordinator  
Gilmarie Vongphakdy

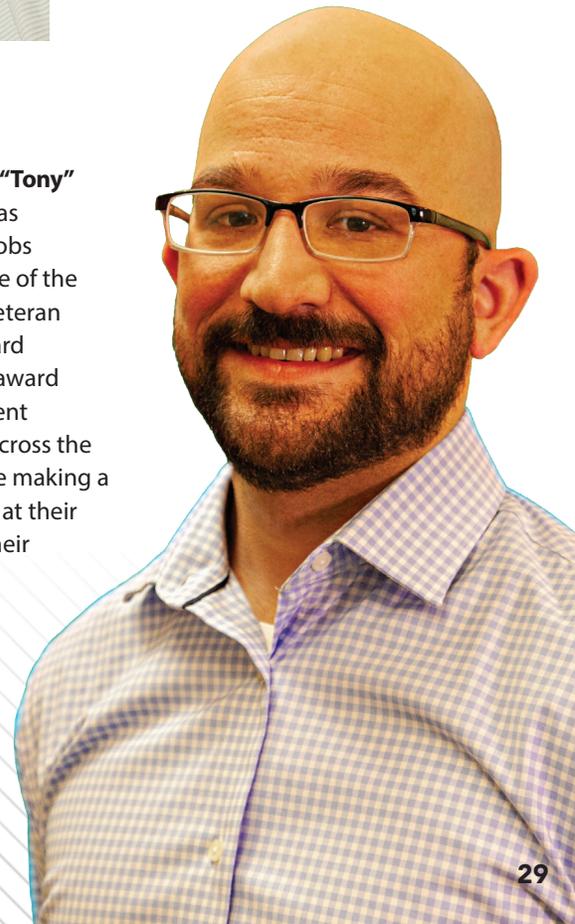
“There is no shame in going to a community college. It’s the smarter way to go to school especially if you don’t have a lot of money, and you can easily transfer to a four-year school.”

– Mary “Mason” Wheaton ‘21,  
QCC Student



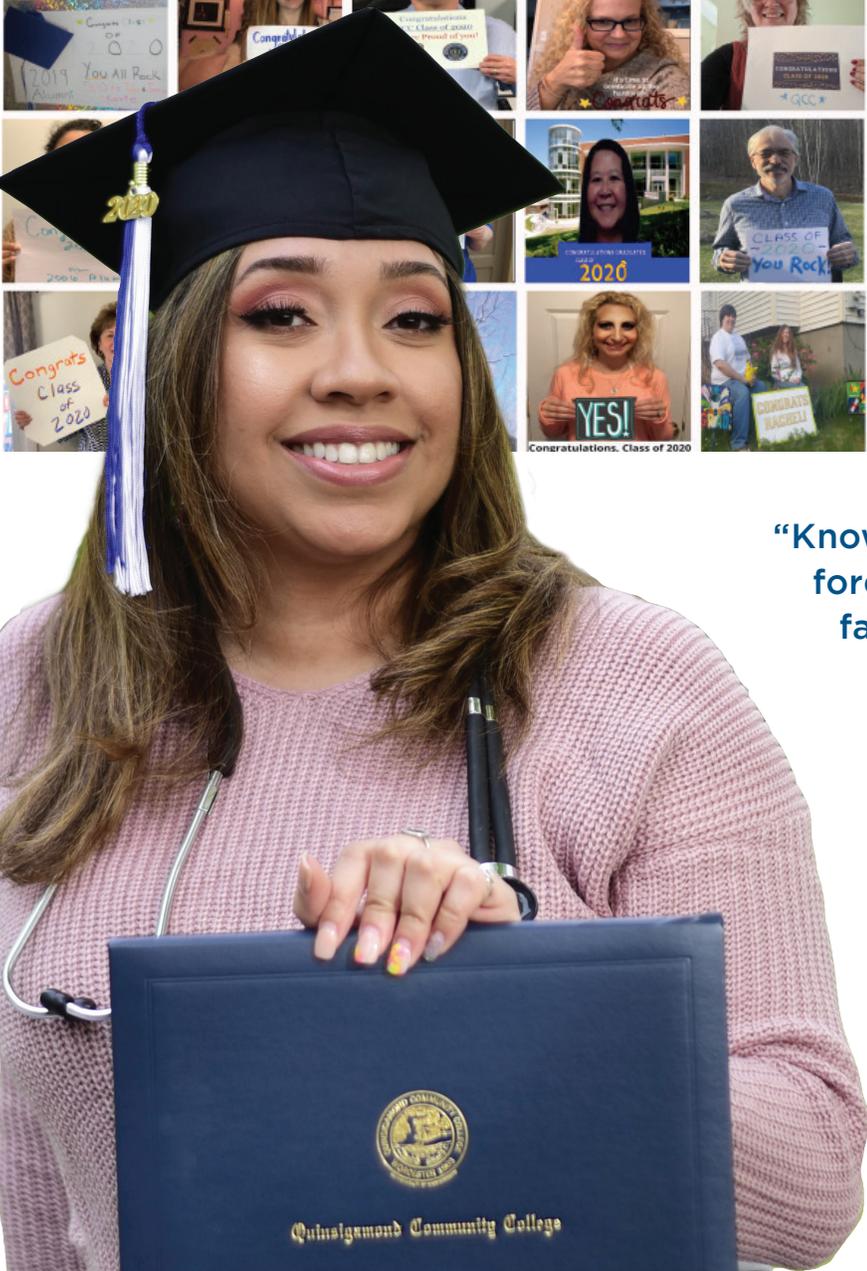
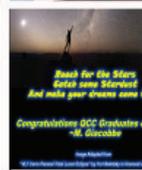
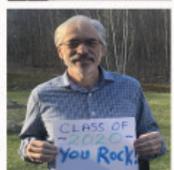
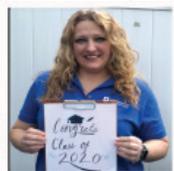
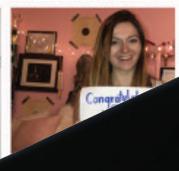
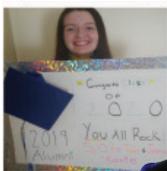
Top: Student Krystle “Mixhe” Bedrick ‘20.  
Middle: Student Mary “Mason” Wheaton ‘21.  
Bottom Right: Student Veteran Anthony “Tony” Barnardo ‘20.

Student veteran **“Tony” Barnardo ‘20** was honored in GI Jobs Magazine as one of the 2020 Student Veteran Leadership Award recipients. The award honors 48 student veterans from across the country who are making a positive impact at their school and in their communities.





# FIRST VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT IN QCC



Miriam Vanessa De Los Santos '20 - Practical Nursing Graduate

“Know this, the Class of 2020 will forever be an inspiration for faculty.”

This was the message conveyed by Psychology Professor **Judy Colson** to QCC’s 2020 graduates at the College’s first-ever virtual Commencement Ceremony held on May 21.

As the College rose to the challenges of a remote learning environment, its 2020 graduates were role models of strength and perseverance for their fellow classmates. Faculty and staff sent words of encouragement and inspiration to 1,543 graduates who watched their ceremony from the safety of their homes.

Commissioner of Higher Education for Massachusetts, Carlos Santiago, sent remote greetings to the graduates, acknowledging the unprecedented virtual commencement while focusing on their accomplishments and successes, particularly as they navigated remote learning in their last semester.

# HISTORY

“ ”

I can guarantee when you look back on this many years from now, this will be the most celebratory experience you will remember.

— Carlos Santiago,  
Commissioner of Higher Education for Massachusetts

“Now as graduates, you will go on to be guardians of our community and of our world. Today more than ever our world needs more Wyverns. Go and change the world,” President Pedraja said.

“I can guarantee when you look back on this many years from now, this will be the most celebratory experience you will remember,” said Commissioner of Higher Education for Massachusetts, Carlos Santiago.

[www.QCC.edu/comencement](http://www.QCC.edu/comencement)

5,401

Commencement Day Total Views

6,921

May - December Total Views

# VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE 2020 GRADUATE FACTS



1,543 Total Graduates



345 honors



336 high honors



329 highest honors



613 graduates from the city of Worcester

672 degrees/certificates to graduates living in the city of Worcester



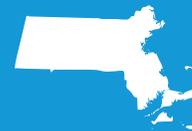
GENERAL STUDIES  
#1 degree



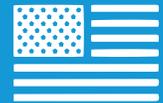
PRACTICAL NURSING  
#1 certificate



142 cities and towns represented



131 cities & towns in MA represented



10 states represented

## Quinsigamond Community College

For over 55 years, Quinsigamond Community College has been a gateway to advanced education and employment opportunities for a diverse and growing community in Central Massachusetts. The College provides thousands of men and women opportunities for a first-rate education and personal growth, whether preparing them for immediate entry into the workforce, transfer to bachelor level programs in four year colleges and universities, or for personal and cultural enrichment.

To learn more about the exciting opportunities QCC has to offer, visit us online at [www.QCC.edu](http://www.QCC.edu).

To support our mission of 100% student success for all, visit the QCC Foundation online at [www.QCC.edu/foundation](http://www.QCC.edu/foundation) and learn how you can help transform a student's life.

