

College Town: WPI launches Great Minds Scholars Program

By Bonnie Russell

Posted Aug 29, 2018 at 6:56 PM Updated at 8:14 AM

Worcester Polytechnic Institute's new scholarship opportunity, Great Minds Scholars Program, which is for high-achieving, Pell-eligible students from low- to moderate-income families who graduate from the Worcester public schools, is about more than just the money.

By launching the Great Minds Scholars Program, WPI is hoping to create "an ecosystem of support" for the recipients that will not only help fund their education, but see them through the challenges of academic life and beyond, according to Kristin Tichenor, senior vice president of enrollment & institutional strategy at WPI.

And who better to help them, than WPI alumni who have already successfully walked that path.

"WPI has a long and proud tradition of enrolling (and graduating) students of modest financial backgrounds, often the first in their family to attend college. We hope and expect those alumni will be eager to engage as mentors with these students who are following in their illustrious footprints," Ms. Tichenor said.

Along with devoting \$850,000 already on hand - provided by alumni - to launch the program, WPI has developed the Great Minds Scholars Program to provide more holistic support structures for students, including mentoring, academic advising, financial literacy, and on-campus research opportunities. Supplemental programs will be offered to families to help them support their students' success.

The scholarship is designed to help up to 10 selected Pell-eligible students close any financial gap that may be left after other merit-and need-based scholarships and aid are awarded from state and federal sources, and ensures the student's full tuition costs are covered. It also provides a housing stipend to encourage scholars to live on campus and to participate in the residential campus experience.

Pell grants, which are outright grants, not loans, can be for up to \$6,095 (July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019), according to the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid office.

In addition to providing financial help, alumni can provide inspiration for students through the sharing of stories, something that WPI plans to arrange, Ms. Tichenor said, adding that hearing about the success of those who started from a similar place and succeeded can be a great source of encouragement.

While the program is being launched in Worcester, WPI plans to expand it to other areas across the country as more money is raised, with an ultimate goal of providing scholarships for up to 50 students per year.

The current scholarships are open to first-year applicants from the seven Worcester high schools: Burncoat High School, Claremont Academy, Doherty Memorial High School, North High School, South High School, University Park Campus School, and Worcester Technical High School. The program will be open to high school seniors applying to attend WPI beginning in fall 2019. Application information is available at www.wpi.edu/+greatmindsscholars.

MWCC gets \$3.2M grant for health care careers

WORCESTER – Mount Wachusett Community College has received a \$3.2 million federal grant to train local high school students as well as its own students for careers in health care.

The new program, which is funded for five years by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will enroll 85 students each year, according to the college. Some of those participants will be from Mount Wachusett's partner high schools – Athol High School, Ralph C. Mahar Regional, and Gardner High School – while the rest will be current students enrolled in health profession degree programs at the community college.

Those students will be able to participate in a new program funded by the grant called the Ambassador Academy that will offer a curriculum designed to put them on a track toward going into health care. The federal award will also help the college roll out a pre-matriculation program for incoming Mount Wachusett students that will give them specialized training for and exposure to health care-related careers.

Part of the objective of those programs, according to the college, is to bolster the local health care workforce.

“This grant benefits not only the students who will be given additional opportunities, but our communities that need additional healthcare workers,” Mount Wachusett President James Vander Hooven said in a statement.

Mount Wachusett, which will begin offering its new programs this coming academic year, was one of 21 higher education institutions to receive the grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, and one of just two community colleges in that group.

QCC registration is open through Friday

Quinsigamond Community College is holding one-stop registration. Students can still stop by from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. Students should go to the Welcome Center, located in the Harrington Learning Center, 670 West Boylston St., Worcester. Classes begin Sept. 5.

Engineering inspired art at QVCC show

In early summer, artist Amy Hannum paid a visit to the Quinebaug Valley Community College SPIROL Gallery to prepare for her fall show, “Migration.” While on campus, she met Jakob Spjut, associate professor of engineering, and learned about the capabilities of the QVCC Engineering Lab. This conversation evolved into a piece of art that is included in the September art show. The opening reception will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Sept. 13 at QVCC, 742 Upper Maple St., Danielson, Connecticut. The show runs through Sept. 30.