



QUINSIGAMOND
Community College

2025



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As I look back on Quinsigamond Community College's storied history, it is with a deep sense of gratitude for the amazing accomplishments and noteworthy progress made in the last few years to position QCC as a leader in the community.

Recently, community colleges statewide have experienced one of the most significant transformations, leading to a substantial increase in student enrollment on our campuses, thanks to the Commonwealth's MassEducate and MassReconnect programs. These transformative programs have given hundreds more students the opportunity for a better life through higher education. At QCC, we have seen an enrollment increase of 17.9% in Spring 2025 and we anticipate that trend continuing.

Some of the highlights in recent years include our academic achievements such as being one of the first community colleges in the Commonwealth to bring apprenticeship degrees to Massachusetts, which include Practical Nursing and Medical Assisting that began in 2025, and Early Childhood Education and Cybersecurity earmarked for 2026. Another exciting addition is the signing of an articulation agreement with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), which now ensures admission for QCC students into any of WPI's programs when they meet program requirements. And we have added Southbridge High School to our robust Early College program, which includes the Early College Worcester program and Marlborough High School.

Other positive updates include the swearing in of our new Police Chief Stephen D. DiGiovanni, as well as a new four-legged member of the QCC Police Department, "Siggy," QCC's community resource dog.

There are also some new faces at the College with the addition of Chief Advancement Officer and Executive Director of Development Deb



Spotts, and Executive Director of Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance, John Holloway, as well as a familiar face in a new role – Alum Jorgo Gushi who is now the QCC Foundation Board President as well as QCC's newest trustee.

New projects also abound with the renovation of the Hebert Auditorium and more in the pipeline with the upcoming Alden Library project and QCC Center.

I hope you enjoy reading about all the updates and accomplishments that have been happening. None of this would be possible without our faculty, staff, students, and alumni for their unwavering commitment to our institution. Their dedication and hard work are the cornerstone of our efforts to achieve 100% student success for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D." The signature is stylized and cursive.

Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.
President





TRANSFORMING ACCESS

QCC Embraces Change in Massachusetts' New Higher Education Landscape

Higher education in Massachusetts has been forever changed since the fall of 2023 when the state implemented MassReconnect and the following year, MassEducate. These two programs, in addition to the Community College Nursing Scholarship program, have enabled eligible Massachusetts residents who haven't received a bachelor's degree the chance to attend community colleges in the state for free.

These revolutionary programs have removed one of the largest barriers to obtaining a higher education, enabling more individuals to improve their lives and the lives of their families, while positively contributing to the economy of the Commonwealth.

Quinsigamond Community College has been a proud supporter of these programs and enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to serve more learners. The number of enrolled students and the number of credits pursued have increased by over 20% since 2022 and continue to rise.

In addition to the changing fiscal landscape of higher education, QCC has also seen a shift in demographics. The college is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). An HSI is a federal designation for colleges and universities that enroll at least 25% of students who identify as Hispanic/Latinx. Once officially designated, the college can utilize HSI funding for services and programming that will not only help Hispanic/Latino students, but also all who attend QCC.

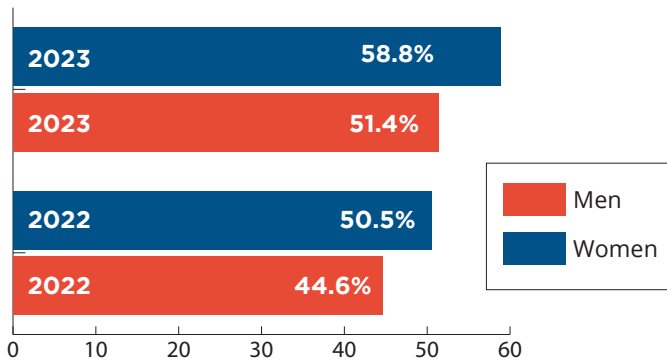
These developments are welcome but come with challenges such as the need for more support services and more faculty. QCC has pulled together and adapted, as it has done for decades, to meet the needs of its students, but will continue to advocate for investment in education. The more we invest in education, the more we invest in ourselves, our community, and our future.

QCC AT A GLANCE

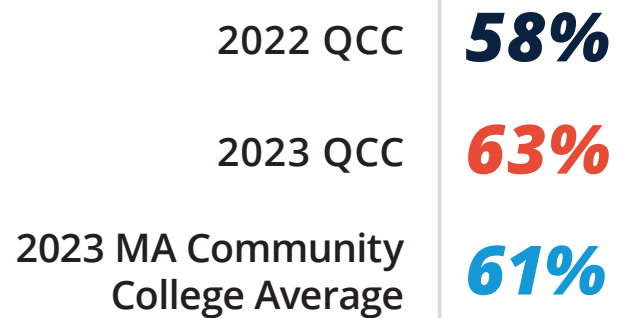
\$1

For every dollar spent on institutional support in FY23, **\$4.73** was spent on student support*

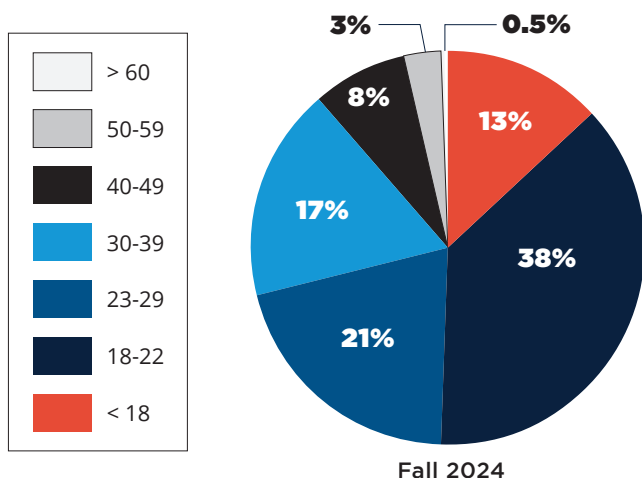
RATE OF STUDENTS EITHER GRADUATED, TRANSFERRED, OR STILL ENROLLED AFTER 3 YRS*



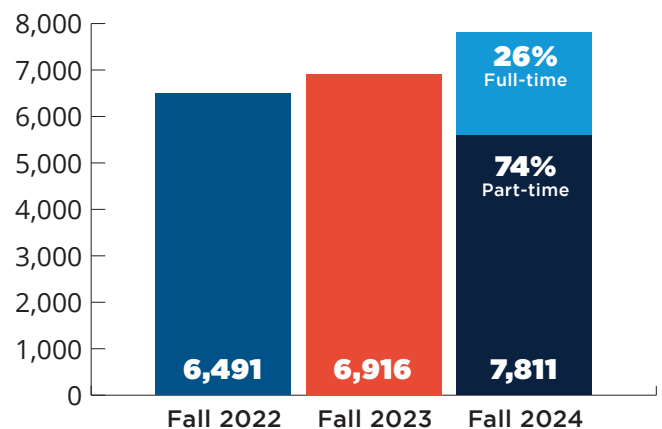
FULL-TIME, FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS WHO RETURNED**



AGE BREAKDOWN[§]



HEAD COUNT[§]



STRATEGIC EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION

Quinsigamond Community College has made considerable progress across the pillars of its strategic plan, which fuels its mission to serve as the gateway to advanced educational and employment opportunities in Central Massachusetts. QCC's commitment to providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality education continues to drive innovation and positive change throughout the institution.

Student Success and Support Initiatives

QCC's pursuit of 100% student success has led to enhanced support systems across multiple fronts. The admissions and financial aid teams have worked hard to ensure that higher education remains accessible and affordable, especially during the influx of students from the implementation of programs like MassReconnect and MassEducate which cover tuition and fees for eligible students. Tutoring, counseling, and mentoring departments continue to offer vital support, which has contributed to the college's increasing retention and completion rates.

The college strengthened its specialized support programs, such as TRIO Student Support Services, which provides holistic assistance to first-generation and low-income students, and the Parenting Student Services program which offers academic, professional, and personal support to parenting students, recognizing their unique needs and challenges. QCC also increased service at the HomePlate Food Pantry & Resource Center, where students receive food, personal hygiene products, and referrals to community resources. The number of students who use the food pantry rose over 23% from the 22/23 academic year to the 23/24 academic year and the number of visits to the food pantry increased 91% from 2022 to 2024.

Academic Excellence and Workforce Success

QCC's expert faculty are dedicated to creating engaging, civic-minded curricula that serve an expanding student population. The college has invested in professional development opportunities focusing on emerging trends and pedagogical innovations such as the integration of artificial intelligence in the classroom and culturally responsive teaching methods, ensuring educational offerings remain relevant and forward-thinking.

The implementation of a new advising platform, Navigate360, has strengthened communication with students, offering targeted and timely messaging and alerts that complement advisors' personalized and proactive approach. The college also introduced 24/7

access to tutoring through the ThinkingStorm platform, ensuring that academic support is available whenever students need it.

The Center for Workforce Development & Continuing Education is another driving force behind the success of QCC students. They offer relevant, responsive programming in a variety of industries such as healthcare and information technology, with many programs leading to lucrative positions with upward mobility. QCC also created the Workforce Advisory Council which includes over 35 regional industry leaders. The council met in the fall of 2024 to discuss topics such as micro-credentials and career pathways for multilingual speakers. These initiatives keep the college at the forefront of evolving workforce needs and empowering students.

Strengthening Organizational Processes and Building Community

The Manager's Academy program exemplifies QCC's efforts to foster an inclusive and engaged community. This initiative trains supervisors to create an environment of respect and collaboration, with positive effects expanding to both student-facing services and classroom experiences.

College governance is an important mechanism for institutional innovation and accountability. Under the leadership of QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja, the college governance structure underwent an extensive review process, which resulted in updates that enhanced communication and transparency. The creation of the Governance Roundtable group, a cross-departmental team that filters governance issues to appropriate groups, has increased efficiency and collaboration.

Looking Forward

These achievements represent significant strides toward QCC's strategic goals, but the work continues. As the college moves forward, it remains committed to the mission of providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality education that responds to the needs of the community.

The success of these initiatives reflects the dedication of the entire college community – faculty, staff, and administrators – who work to support QCC's students and advance the mission of the college. Together, QCC is building a stronger and more effective institution of higher learning for Central Massachusetts.





Dr. Pedraja Appointed to New England Board of Higher Education

QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja was appointed as a delegate to the New England Board of Higher Education by Governor Maura Healey in August of 2024. This appointment recognized Pedraja's leadership in higher education and commitment to advancing educational opportunities in the Central Massachusetts region.

"It is an honor and privilege to be asked to serve as a member of the New England Board of Higher Education. I am excited to represent our Commonwealth and help promote equitable access for all in higher education on a broader scale," Pedraja said.

The New England Board of Higher Education is a congressionally authorized organization that promotes equitable higher education opportunities and services for the residents of New England.



"We are thrilled to appoint Dr. Luis Pedraja to the New England Board of Higher Education," said Governor Maura Healey. "Dr. Pedraja has proven his dedication to equitable access to higher education over the course of his incredibly successful career. He was a key partner in the success of MassReconnect and is an important collaborator as we launch the most comprehensive free community college program in the country."



Changing of the Guard

The QCC community celebrated an exciting transition early in 2024 when former Chief of Police Kevin Ritacco, a part of Campus Police for 43 years, retired and current Chief of Police Steve DiGiovanni rose to the occasion after well over a decade of protecting the campus.

“Steve’s exemplary education, knowledge, and police work make him the perfect person to fill some big shoes and ensure the continued safety of our students, faculty, and staff,” said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja.

DiGiovanni has worked at QCC since 2008, becoming the college’s first full-time detective in 2014 and Deputy Chief of Police Operations in 2015, where he oversaw the Uniform Patrol Division, Communication Division (Dispatch), and QCC’s Security Department. DiGiovanni is also a certified instructor for the Municipal Police Training Committee and has completed extensive training at the FBI-LEEDA (Law Enforcement Executive Development Association) Command Leadership Institute.

Keeping up with the latest trends and training for campus police departments is a main priority for DiGiovanni, who is leading the continuous development of a student-oriented police department that is connected to its community.

“Becoming a police officer is a choice in life to help those who are in need. I’m more than lucky to take over a department that is professional, accredited, knowledgeable, and community-oriented. The folks who serve for the QCC police department are committed and loyal to the college,” DiGiovanni said.

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Becoming a police officer is a choice in life to help those who are in need.

– Chief of Police Steve DiGiovanni



QCC's First K-9 Officer

QCC's first community resource dog, *Siggy*, was sworn in as an official K-9 officer last December after completing a rigorous process that trained him to provide support and de-escalation during times of stress or crisis. *Siggy*, an English Cream Golden Retriever, became an instant fixture on campus when he arrived at the beginning of 2024.

"QCC was one of the first community colleges in the state to obtain a community resource dog and many are now following suit. Studies have shown that interacting with dogs can improve mood and decrease stress. The students, faculty, and staff have been overjoyed to have *Siggy's* presence on campus," said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja.

Community resource dogs have become a common practice for both educational institutions and police departments across the country.

"These dogs are exposed to many different situations and taught to show control and affection to anyone they encounter," Officer Nicholas Yacuzzi said, adding, "I cannot count the number of times when walking around with *Siggy* on campus that students have stopped to pet him and said, 'I needed this.'"

QCC's Chief of Police Stephen DiGiovanni supported Officer Yacuzzi during his research and initiative in bringing a community resource dog to QCC, as an additional way for the police to engage with the campus community.

"I cannot say enough about Officer Yacuzzi's commitment and loyalty to QCC," Chief DiGiovanni said. "These types of K-9s are an exciting development in police work, providing a valuable resource to the public."



the Funding Future

QCC's Hebert Auditorium update ▶

QCC's Grant Development Office Secures \$11 Million

During fiscal year 2024, QCC's Grants Development office secured over \$11 million in grant funding, demonstrating its continued excellence in supporting QCC students, faculty, and staff. These grants have funded critical initiatives across campus, from program operations to equipment modernization, which gives students opportunities to gain hands-on experience, increase existing skills and advance in their careers, or simply remove barriers to access a quality education and a better life.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2024 FUNDING CYCLE

Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

\$1.9M

Career Pathways Renewal

\$598K

Strengthening Career and Technical Education

\$561K

Workforce Success Grants for Training and Placement

\$500K

Nursing Pathways Expansion Grant

\$300K

Capital Nursing Pathway Expansion Grant

\$300K

Skills Capital: Nursing Assistant & Surgical Tech

\$171K

STEM Start Academy

\$171K

MA Childcare Stabilization Grant

\$114K



At QCC, state-of-the-art physical and virtual spaces are key factors in student success. This is why the college has been investing in updates to its infrastructure.

The college's website is a key marketing tool for recruiting new students, connecting with alumni, and conveying college information. After analyzing feedback from the QCC community college administration formed a cross-departmental team to create an entirely new QCC.edu experience. The new site organizes information in an easier format by targeting specific audiences, highlighting the large offering of programs and services, and demonstrating clear pathways to higher education.

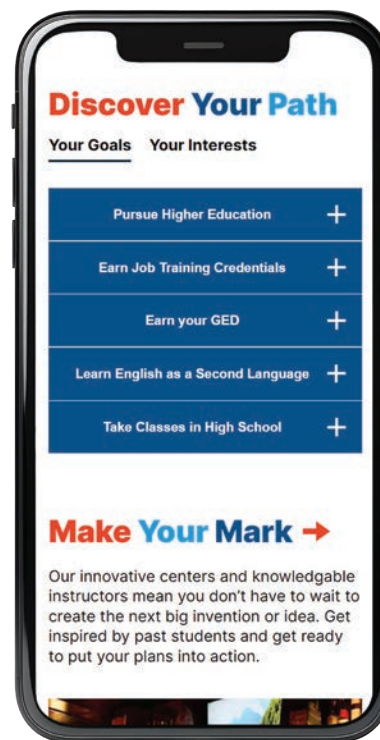
Another significant improvement was updating the Hebert Auditorium to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These upgrades ensure that all members of QCC's community can participate in performances and events without barriers. New features include wheelchair-accessible seating in the front and rear

of the auditorium, as well as wheelchair accessibility in the projection booth and stage. New dressing rooms and three dedicated practice spaces for individual and group rehearsals were also created to support academic arts programs and college events.

Additionally, thanks in part to funding from the QCC Foundation, the student cafeteria in the Administration building was repainted and outfitted with comfortable seating for students to utilize while they dine, study, or simply relax.

In 2025, QCC began renovation of the Athletic Center thanks to \$33.7 million in funding from the Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management and

Maintenance (DCAMM). The building is being transformed into a multiuse facility, with upgraded and expanded spaces for student services, robotics laboratories, advanced manufacturing and hospitality programs, the QCC Police Department, a fitness center, and more.



Enhancing the Student Experience Through Physical and Digital Upgrades

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND PASSION

Elias Martinez can't help but inspire. His life wasn't always easy, but he has become a rising star at Quinsigamond Community College and wants to bring everyone with him.

"I want to educate myself as much as I can and breathe life into others who are struggling. People deal with a lot of different stuff, but you have to work hard and see the opportunities around you," said Elias.

While Elias loved learning as a child, he encountered several obstacles during high school and the years that followed. School wasn't prioritized or encouraged in his family and role models were few and far between. He attempted higher education, but nothing seemed to click so he found work in landscaping and construction.

Having his first child changed everything.

"Becoming a father helped me grow as a person," said Elias, who decided not to dwell on his past and instead look toward the future.

At the age of 33, Elias heard about the MassReconnect program offering free community college to Massachusetts residents aged 25 and older. This motivated him to enroll in QCC, and he has been hitting the ground running ever since.

"Education is a means to build yourself up and provide for your loved ones. My kids will see I worked for it because they're watching and learning from you. Yes, it's hard to go to school as a parent, but kids are the motivation, not the anchor," he said.

Thanks to online courses, Elias has the flexibility he needs to raise his children while enrolled at QCC. He praised faculty members such as Professor of Developmental English Timothy

LaFontaine, for providing thoughtful feedback and creating an engaging environment that has the feel of an in-person class.

Elias has a passion for writing, but also wants to build on his experience in management and sales. As a business major, he's learning how to combine his creativity and passion for helping people with an entrepreneurial spirit.

"I have a lot of confidence in myself now," he commented. "Every course I've done is a new skill on my resume. I'm not going to just pursue a mediocre job anymore."

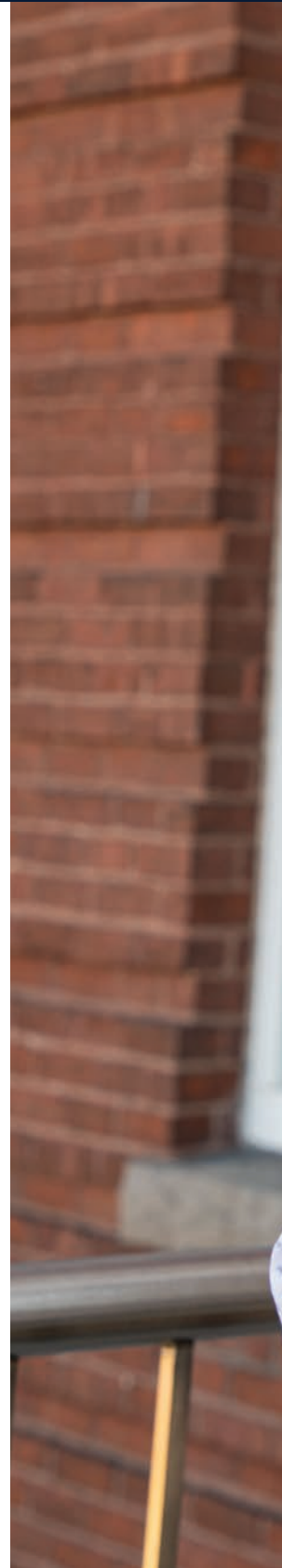
Elias has picked up other skills along the way, noting that being a QCC student is more than getting a degree- it's about the journey. He has already improved his communication and time management skills and his academic performance has earned him invitations to two honor societies: Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) and Alpha Beta Gamma (ABG).

"Being invited to PTK and ABG gave me so much more hope," he shared. "These groups make you want to go to school and contribute."

The welcoming environment of staff and faculty who care has been crucial to Elias's success. Services such as the Counseling & Wellness Center and the HomePlate Food Pantry & Resource Center have been helpful resources throughout his time at the college.

"Utilize what's around you," Elias advised. "Part of the process is reaching in yourself and within the community."

In the true spirit of Quinsigamond Community College, each day that Elias improves himself, he also builds up his capacity to empower and inspire others.



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I have a lot of confidence in myself now. Every course I've done is a new skill on my resume.

– Elias Martinez



New Leadership at QCC

Deb Spotts Joins as Chief Advancement Officer with 20+ Years of Higher Education Experience

In January of 2025, Deb Spotts started as the new Chief Advancement Officer and Executive Director of Development, overseeing the Institutional Advancement Department, comprised of Alumni & Development, Community Engagement, and the Grants Office.

“The passion of the students, faculty and staff, and the connectedness of the community are what drew me to Quinsigamond Community College. QCC plays a vital role in sustaining a robust and resilient workforce, and I am excited to cultivate valuable relationships and advocate the importance of the college’s impact in the community,” Spotts said.

Deb has worked in higher education for over 20 years and is a passionate former student and community college advocate. She previously served as the Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Phoenix College, the flagship of the Maricopa Community College District in Arizona. She also served in various roles at Rio Salado College, Mohave Community College, and the University of Maryland.

Deb understands the value and importance of a community college, having earned an Associate of Arts from Mohave Community College, before going on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Northern Arizona University, and a Master of Science in Marketing Management from the University of Maryland.

Working with the College and the QCC Foundation, she serves as the primary strategist and leader in developing and implementing advancement strategies to engender support for QCC students, projects, and programs. In collaboration with the QCC Foundation, Deb plays a pivotal role in securing major, capital, annual, and planned gifts, and building lasting relationships with donors, alumni, community leaders, and other stakeholders to support the College’s growth and initiatives.

While Deb has lived and worked in Arizona for many years, she is a New Englander at heart having grown up in Keene, New Hampshire, and is excited to be back in New England.





New Leadership at QCC

John Holloway Brings Student-Centered Approach to Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance

John Holloway joined QCC in February of 2025 as the Executive Director of Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance. John brings more than two decades of experience in higher education, with a strong focus on student affairs.

Before joining QCC, John served in a senior leadership position at Emory & Henry University and previously held positions at Lehman College and the University of California.

While Holloway's time at Lehman College was spent working with many commuting students on an urban campus, QCC is his first employment at a community college. He said he was particularly drawn to QCC's community college setting and the opportunity to make a direct impact.

"I'm excited about serving our students here and working with faculty and staff, Holloway said. "There are so many communities that I can help feel welcomed and valued at the college. By providing opportunities for these folks, we can continue to build a supportive campus culture and realize students' success."

John will collaborate with all departments at the college through policy work, training, and relationship building to ensure the environment at QCC is respectful, nondiscriminatory, and accessible. QCC strives for this culture to enable students to achieve their highest academic goals and contribute to our economy and community.





▲ Top: Jorgo Gushi speaks at the QCC Foundation Scholarship Reception. Right: Mr. Gushi at his commencement. ►

Alum Elected as New QCC Foundation President

In September of 2024, the Quinsigamond Community College Foundation elected its new president, Jorgo Gushi, a QCC alum and technical account manager at MathWorks, a global company specializing in technical computing software. Gushi replaced former president Matthew Wally, vice president of Audit, Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and Fair Lending at UniBank, who led the Foundation for two years, the standard term for QCC Foundation presidents.

“I am eager to raise awareness about the vital role community

colleges play, particularly QCC,” Gushi stated. “Returning to where my educational journey began is thrilling, and I am committed to supporting the college in providing equitable education and preparing the local workforce.”

Gushi’s journey with QCC began in 2018 after he moved to the U.S. from Albania. In 2019, he was elected as president of the QCC Student Government Association and Chair of the statewide Student Advisory Council to the Mass. Board of Higher Education. During his tenure, he worked to advance

open educational resources and championed a successful campaign that changed a state law, which now allows part-time students to run for student trustee positions. He earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

In 2022, Gushi received official citations from the Office of the Governor, the Mass. State Senate, and the Mass. House of Representatives for his contribution to advancing public higher education.

Expanding Access to Higher Ed Through QCC's Early College Program

In the Spring of 2024, QCC was given designation as an Early College site for Southbridge Public Schools, building on a longstanding partnership with Southbridge High School. The program started at Southbridge High School in the fall of 2024 and included 40 high school students.

"This is an important designation that will have positive, far-reaching implications for Southbridge High School students and the Southbridge community as a whole," said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja. "Early College offers students an attainable pathway to higher education."

Funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education means that there is no cost for students in the Early College program. The college-level credits students earn in the program are part of the MassTransfer program, which guarantees students can earn transferrable credits toward a certificate, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree at a Massachusetts community college or state university.

"Early College has always been designed to provide underrepresented students equitable access to higher education combined with robust support services and hands-

on career learning. The goal is for Early College students to graduate from high school with 12 college credits and extensive knowledge about college processes which will aid their pursuit of a degree or certificate," said Veronica Guay, Executive Director, High School Dual Enrollment Programs and Partnerships.

Along with Worcester State University, QCC is also part of Early College Worcester, which includes all seven Worcester public high schools. QCC is also a designated Early College site for Marlborough High School.



Early College Worcester Students at Polar Park

QCC Honors Local Change-Makers with Community Impact Award

As part of QCC's mission principles, the college is deeply ingrained in the community of Central Massachusetts. As such, Director of Community Engagement Sean Harris, created the Community Impact Award in 2023 to recognize and uplift community organizers. The award is designed to spotlight local individuals and/or organizations who do impactful work with young people from underserved communities.

"It is so important to acknowledge and honor those people who are working every day to make our communities better," Harris commented.

2023-2025 Community Impact Awardees:

- Kwame Appiah and the Appiah Family
- Anthony Barbosa of BOSA Sports
- Jessica Horton of Worcester Challenger Baseball
- Aymon Abdelgadir of African Community Education (ACE)
- Ryan Brown of Go Hard or Stay Home
- Matthew Vaccaro, President of the Worcester Bravehearts & Masis Staffing

QCC and WPI Expand Educational Access With New Agreement

In April of 2024, Quinsigamond Community College and Worcester Polytechnic Institute signed an institutional articulation agreement for QCC students transferring into WPI. The agreement guarantees admission for students into any of WPI's programs when they meet program requirements.

"WPI has always been a strategic partner with QCC and this agreement demonstrates that there can be access for community college students, particularly those from first-generation and minority backgrounds, to selective institutions like WPI," said QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, Ph.D.

Since 1989, over 400 QCC students have transferred to WPI after completing their associate degree. The new agreement expands pathways for students, ensuring more individuals have access to the education and training needed to contribute to today's labor needs.

"By establishing pathways that reduce barriers, we make obtaining a four-year degree more accessible. Moreover, the strategic partnership between QCC and WPI helps meet today's workforce demands and foster regional economic growth," said WPI President Dr. Grace Wang.

QCC Recognized Nationally for Parenting Student Initiatives with \$30K Grant

In May of 2024, Quinsigamond Community College secured a \$30,000 grant from New America to expand its support of parenting students. QCC was one of five community colleges chosen from across the United States to be part of New America's Supporting Child Care for Student Parents at Community Colleges cohort.

"New America said they selected QCC because we've accomplished a lot for parenting students and they want to learn from us. This is a real testament to the college that we recognize the needs of our student population and find ways to address these needs, so they can be successful in their academic journey," said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja.

QCC has over 1,400 students who have been identified as parents and Parenting Student Navigator Michelle Brennan estimates that there are even more.

"Parenting students are some of the busiest and most driven students because not only are they trying to change their life, but also the lives of their children," said Brennan. "Research has shown that when parenting students are given targeted support, they will graduate faster and with a higher GPA."

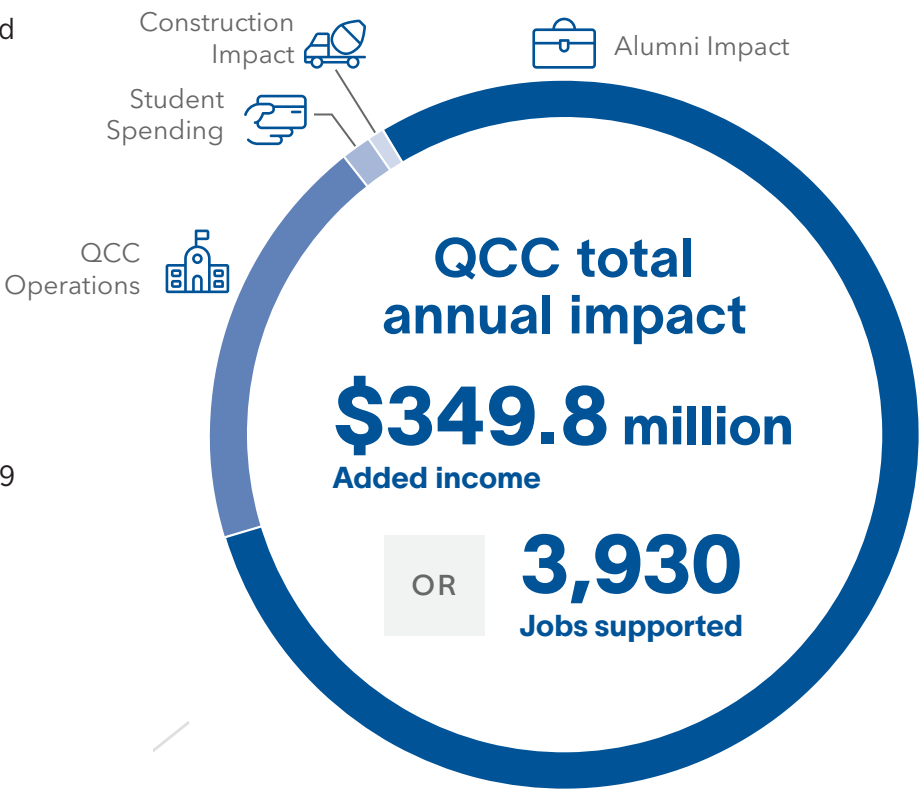
In 2023, the college opened a Parenting Student Support Services office, which connects these students with services.

QCC generates \$349.8 million in annual economic impact

A recent economic impact study revealed that Quinsigamond Community College contributed \$349.8 million to the region's economy in fiscal year 2022-23. The study, conducted by Lightcast, demonstrates QCC's role in supporting local jobs, boosting student earnings and providing a strong return on investment for students, taxpayers and society.

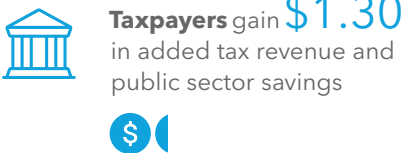
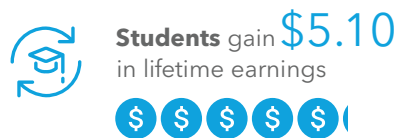
According to the study, former QCC students generated \$276.9 million in added income for the regional economy, QCC's day-to-day operations and construction spending added \$69.3 million, while student spending contributed an additional \$3.6 million.

"This report clearly demonstrates the influence QCC has on our local economy, area industries, and the workforce," said QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja. "As one of Worcester's largest colleges, each day we facilitate student success, which translates into our region's success."



The college serves as a key source of employees for regional key industries, particularly in healthcare. The study found that QCC's impact supported 1,043 jobs in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector alone.

For every \$1...



Sources: Lightcast Economic Impact Study; www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2019/10/16/nats-could-face-yankees-or-astros-in-world-series.html; www.coxautoinc.com/market-insights/kbb-atp-february-2024/; fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Cost_Of_Food_Low_Moderate_Liberal_Food_Plans_February_2024.pdf



▲ Ashley Lester, Women's Soccer player

Athletics at Quinsigamond Community College

Quinsigamond Community College's athletic programs are an important part of the student experience at QCC. Athletic programs provide students with an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and form strong connections with the college community, which shares in both their challenges and successes.

The Wyverns 2023-2024 sports season was a successful one that included the Women's Soccer team earning the second seed in the NJCAA Region XXI semifinal tournament and the Men's Basketball securing 15 wins and advancing to the NJCAA semifinals for the second consecutive year.

The college also hosted the NJCAA Region 21 Baseball Tournament in 2024. While the Wyverns weren't in the tournament, they had a great season which included Paul Landry, a player in his fifties who proved that a prosthetic limb shouldn't stop anyone from achieving their dreams. His inspiring story was featured on Boston 25 News, CBS, and the Telegram & Gazette, showing our community what Wyvern spirit means.

QCC's Athletics department also includes Women's Basketball, Men's Soccer, Women's Volleyball, and E-sports.



Longtime QCC Collaborator Leads Board of Trustees

Since the summer of 2023, the QCC Board of Trustees has been led by Dr. Linda Maykel - an integral member of QCC for many years. She has served as a QCC board member since 2022; was the former QCC Foundation board president from 2018 to 2022 and previously served as a clinical instructor for QCC's Dental Hygiene Clinic.

After receiving her D.D.S. from Northwestern University, Maykel became the first female dentist in Worcester, eventually opening her own practice. Maykel noted that her dedication to the QCC community comes from a deep love of education.

"Education changes people's lives forever, especially at QCC where much of our population has an amazing number of responsibilities in addition to school, such as families and jobs," Maykel said. "It's important that we make education available to everybody."

Under Maykel's leadership, the QCC Foundation collaborated with QCC to set up the Student Emergency Aid Fund during the COVID-19 pandemic, contributed funds to the QCC HomePlate Food Pantry and Resource Center, and created the Innovative Fund, which provides grants to faculty and staff to develop initiatives that directly impact students' college experience and learning.

QCC Ahead of the Curve with Apprenticeships

Quinsigamond Community College is among the first to bring apprenticeship degrees to Massachusetts, with programs in Practical Nursing and Medical Assisting beginning in 2025 and Early Childhood Education and Cybersecurity on the horizon for 2026. These new programs are in part thanks to QCC's Center for Workforce Development & Continuing Education, which has been building the foundation for apprenticeships through their work with regional employers in healthcare, manufacturing, and Information Technology.

Higher education institutions that have been implementing apprenticeship degree programs have published completion rates that are 30% higher than students enrolled in traditional academic pathways. According to a study by the Urban Institute, employers see an average return of \$1.47 for every \$1.00 invested in apprenticeships.

Designed to address workforce shortages in key industries, apprenticeship degrees align with QCC's strategic goals of fostering economic mobility and addressing regional labor demands. This "earn while you learn" model reduces the time pressures and eliminates financial barriers to higher education, particularly for non-traditional students balancing work, family, and education.

Last summer, QCC hired Krista Piazza as a project manager for the Apprenticeship Degree Initiative, which is funded by Accelerate the Future and supported by the Smith Family Foundation and the National Council of Apprenticeship Degrees. These employer-driven apprenticeship degree programs integrate academic learning with full-time employment.

Supporting this emerging pathway, QCC hosted two major conferences in 2023 and 2022 for employers, government officials, advocates, and educators who came from across the state and beyond to learn about implementing apprenticeship programs, as well as current local and national employment trends. According to Kathleen Manning, the dean of QCC's Center for Workforce Development and Continuing Education, more employers are engaging in skills-based hiring, which means credentials received from apprenticeships are increasingly valuable.

QCC also held events for National Youth Apprenticeship Week in May of 2024, inviting students from Worcester Public Schools and QCC.

"You are already ahead of the curve by being here today," QCC President Dr. Luis Pedraja told the students. "QCC has a lot of new ventures in apprenticeships. The career landscape is shifting radically, and an apprenticeship can keep you on the forefront of any industry."



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



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