



NEACAC

NEW ENGLAND'S HIDDEN TREASURES

"THE MAINE IDEA"

This year's theme, "The Maine Idea", will set the tone for an Annual Meeting & Conference focused on getting back to basics and re-discovering the real purpose of our profession. Planning is well underway, but we still need your help. We will continue to accept program proposals for workshops, and encourage all members to consider contributing their time and expertise to this important professional development event. We are happy to help develop ideas and find additional presenters to assist, so please don't hesitate to bring your ideas forward.



At the time of printing, a chair-elect still has not been identified to lead next year's conference. It is ideal if the chair-elect shadows this year's planning efforts, so we are actively searching for a willing member. Please contact Laura Brink or Heather Dudek with suggestions. We appreciate your help and look forward to an exciting conference in 2003!

Heather Dudek
University of Connecticut (CT)

Laura Brink
Endicott College (MA)

NEW ENGLAND'S HIDDEN TREASURES

The words "New England" bring to mind any number of images to those who hear or read them. From the early history of European settlement, to the vivid and varied seasons of the year, to sports traditions and summer vacations, the phrase reminds us of the cultural richness of the Northeast. Near the top of impressions is New England's renown as an education hub, where scholarship, research, and professional training are all reflected in the region's large number of higher education institutions. Students are drawn to New England's many colleges and universities from across the nation, the hemisphere and, indeed, around the globe.

Within this deep well of learning, often overlooked, is a layer of educational opportunity that progressively and steadily serves as a resource to New England's diverse communities. Two-year/Community/Junior colleges represent a microcosm of the world of higher education, with an array of technical, career, liberal arts and professional preparation programs. While two-year colleges parallel four-year schools in a

number of ways, two-year colleges have traditionally taken on the role of educating the region's local residents, from urban cities to rural towns, seacoast to farmlands and mountains. In one sense this is appropriate, since the mission of most two-year colleges is to do exactly that: provide educational access and support to those who live close by and seek practical and useful training. One might add that this is in keeping with celebrated "Yankee" pragmatism. But on a larger level, two-year colleges serve to reinforce the distinctly American belief in and deep commitment to improved quality of life through learning.

Unfortunately, the notable history of two-year colleges includes "baggage" that many of these schools exist for individuals who cannot get into other, presumably more challenging and prestigious institutions, and therefore the education received is equally inferior. This could not be further from the truth. The same authority that accredits four-year institutions certifies two-year colleges, and courses offered are the same as those that can be found at private and public

continued on page 4

2002-2003 GOVERNING BOARD

Executive Board

President	Linda Shapiro	Independent Counselor, MA	lshapiro@post.harvard.edu	617-969-2027
President-Elect	Kimberly Johnston	University of Maine, ME	kim_johnston@umit.maine.edu	207-581-1561
Past President	Peter Caruso	Boston College, MA	carusop@bc.edu	617-552-3100
Vice President	Bradford MacGowan	Newton North HS, MA	bmacgowan@attbi.com	617-552-7470
Secretary	Jill DeCrosta	Southern New Hampshire Univ, NH	j.decrosta@snhu.edu	603-645-9611
Treasurer	Chizu Shiono	Phillips Exeter Academy, NH	cshiono@exeter.edu	603-777-3415
Executive Administrator	Jennifer Dionne	PO Box 306, Newmarket, NH 03857	admin@neacac.org	603-659-9897

Individual committee chairs are busy working on behalf of members to make our association the best professional exchange it can be. A complete listing of committee chairs and their contact information can be found online at www.neacac.org or in the Summer 2002 issue of the NEACAC newsletter.

NEACAC COLLEGE FAIRS

On behalf of the NEACAC On-Site College Fair Coordinators, I would like to extend my gratitude to Craig Dionne for his numerous years of service to our organization as NEACAC College Fair Chair. I now have a greater appreciation for the time and effort that goes into organizing these events.

NEACAC is now fortunate to have a full-time Executive Administrator, Jennifer Dionne. I will be working closely with Jennifer on the college fair registration and mailing process. Jennifer has been a tremendous addition to NEACAC.

The Spring 2003 NEACAC College Fair schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, May 13	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	University of Maine at Presque Isle
Wednesday, May 14	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	University of Maine at Machias
Thursday, May 15	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	University of Maine at Augusta
Friday, May 16	9:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Franklin Pierce College

The Fall 2002 NEACAC College Fairs were reported as a success! And planning for Fall 2003 has begun.

Our committee is trying to organize the programs in an efficient sequence, but please understand that there may be circumstances beyond our control (ie: other campus events already scheduled for the date requested).

Dee Gardner
NEACAC College Fair Chair
Associate Director of Admission, University of Southern Maine

www.neacac.org

NEACAC NEWSLETTER

Published five times per year, the newsletter strives to keep members informed and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas. All members are welcome to submit news or commentary for an upcoming issue of the newsletter. Submissions should be no longer than 500 words and should include your name and current position. They can be submitted to the Communication Services chair, Judy Dobai (link available on the NEACAC web site).

Issue	Deadline
Spring 2003	March 15
Summer 2003	June 15
Early Fall 2003	August 1

BEAL COLLEGE AND SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY HAVE SPONSORED A SECONDARY SCHOOL(S) FOR MEMBERSHIP IN NEACAC. PLEASE SEE THE NEACAC WEB SITE FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



When I started writing these messages, I worried about whether I would run out of things to say. Now I realize that worry was needless. Between my endless store of words and the many issues in our field, I could probably keep writing into the next decade. (Don't panic. My term ends in May.)

This month my focus is on the newest round in the MCAS battles. For those of you who live outside Massachusetts, the MCAS is the state mandated test given to 10th graders that they must pass in order to graduate from high school. The class of 2003 is the first to be bound by this rule. While these students have been given five chances to retake and pass the test, the results of the December test still pending, there are still 12,000 students who have not been able to pass both the math and English portions of the test. Some towns in Massachusetts are considering giving local diplomas to students who have successfully completed all local graduation requirements but have not passed MCAS. Some colleges both in and out of state have announced that they will consider students with local diplomas as candidates for admission. The State is displeased. They are threatening cities and towns that give local diplomas with loss of state aid, and they have asked for a ruling from the federal government that such students will not be eligible for federal aid because their diplomas are "illegal". The response from the federal Department of Education has been confusing with no clear answer. At the same time the state is asking the federal government to give aid to students who have failed MCAS so they can attend community college, but whether they

will be eligible is still in doubt.

I believe that it is the responsibility of each college to use its judgment as to a student's "ability to benefit" in granting financial aid. Students who are home schooled, students from other countries, and students from private schools don't have Massachusetts MCAS diplomas, nor do students from other states who apply to our colleges and universities, yet colleges have been allowed to decide if these students would benefit from higher education. If this new interpretation is accepted, the state, through its testing program, is the arbiter, closing the door to college for Massachusetts students who were not able to afford private school and cannot attend college without federal student aid. I am concerned that this latest threat will hurt the very students that education reform was supposed to help, creating a permanent underclass of young people with no high school diploma, no chance for further training, and no hope. I am also concerned about the intrusion of the state and federal government into the admission process. Colleges use multiple criteria to determine if a student has the training and ability to succeed at their schools. It is in their interest to accurately predict which students can make it at their institutions, and they generally do a very creditable job. Using one test to replace this system just doesn't make sense.

I hope that colleges and universities both in and out of Massachusetts will protest this attempted usurpation of their responsibility. This ruling would affect both public and private schools since all of them administer federal aid programs. In addition to the inherent injustice of this interpretation, it could be a first step toward government intrusion into the admission process. High school counselors outside Massachusetts, your state may also be contemplating the use of high stakes testing. I hope you learn from our experience and keep in mind the serious implications it may have for your students. This issue is not

going to go away. Let's keep thinking and talking about it. I would very much like to hear from Massachusetts counselors who are working with the class of 2003. Please email me or write to the newsletter so we know more specifically about how MCAS is affecting your students, whether the effect is positive or negative. I look forward to hearing from you.

Linda Shapiro
President

SAVE THE DATE!
NEACAC SUMMER INSTITUTE
AUGUST 3 - 7

**SOUTHERN MAINE
EXTENDS INVITATION
TO SECONDARY
SCHOOL AND
INDEPENDENT
COUNSELORS**

Please join us to learn more about postsecondary options in Southern Maine. The Southern Maine Admission Consortium will be hosting its annual spring tour for guidance counselors Monday, April 7 - Thursday, April 10, 2003. The Southern Maine Admission Consortium is comprised of Bridgton Academy, Colby College, Maine College of Art, Saint Joseph's College of Maine, Southern Maine Technical College, University of Maine at Farmington, University of New England and University of Southern Maine. For more information contact Dee Gardner at the University of Southern Maine, 207-780-5732 or dgardner@usm.maine.edu.

NEW ENGLAND'S HIDDEN TREASURE
continued from page 1

four-year schools. Two-year colleges require incoming students to provide documentation of secondary education completion, whether through a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma. In Massachusetts, moreover, two-year colleges have agreements with four-year schools that guarantee acceptance into programs where direct high school applicants find acceptance a challenge.

But some of the misinformation is starting to wear off. A recent article in the *New York Times* points to the chang-

ing perception of two-year institutions, including the development of Honors Programs that are attracting high-achieving 12th graders. These same high school students (and their parents) are also beginning to realize the advantages of two-year colleges that many non-traditional students have known for years: smaller classes taught by caring faculty whose primary function is teaching, not research or publishing; comprehensive academic support in a nurturing environment; flexible program offerings leading to practical and well-paying careers; and affordable cost. At a time when the cost of college threatens to cast a "class struggle" mentality on the pursuit of

higher education, economic impact cannot be dismissed.

Most importantly, New England's two-year colleges reinforce the region's belief in progress. As with the other traditions of higher education, colorful autumns, and rich historic preservation, more and more New Englanders have come to recognize that two-year colleges belong among the region's treasures. The timing could not be better.

Daniel de la Torre, Jr.
Quinsigamond Community College (MA)
email: ddelatorre@qcc.mass.edu

TAKE A HOSPITAL FIELD TRIP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALTH CARE CAREERS!

Because career paths are so varied in health care, and the need for qualified caregivers is only expected to grow in coming years, UMass Memorial Health Care, based in Worcester, Massachusetts, invites members of NEACAC, along with interested educators, to join us for lunch to learn more.

From 11 am – 2 pm, Monday, March 10, 2003, UMass Memorial will host a Health Care Career Day for guidance and admissions counselors and school personnel at our university campus. Lunch

will be served, and through presentations, printed materials, and a hospital tour, attendees will gain a tangible sense of the varied opportunities that lie ahead for students considering a career in health care.

Please RSVP on or before February 28, 2003, to Matt Grindle, Human Resources, UMass Memorial Health Care, at 508-334-5850. See our website, www.umassmemorial.org, for directions.

CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE OFFER A PROMISING FUTURE FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS

One in every seven jobs in Massachusetts is in the health care industry. As our population ages, and strides in the field of medicine push the average life span, the need for quality health care grows. Not particularly subject to economic swings, it is a business of growth and stability.

The field of health care is broad enough to offer a career path for every interest. It is an arena of constant learning, exciting breakthroughs, and new technologies. Professional paths include pharmacy, radiology, respiratory care, emergency medicine, and a broad range of nursing specialties, such as anesthesia, oncology, or childbirth. The excitement of the emergency department may interest some, while quiet, studious research may appeal to others. There are also career paths in business, administration, even piloting a helicopter for Life Flight emergencies.

The popularity of television dramas in a hospital setting speaks to the draw of medicine. There are so many opportunities to be an intimate player in the critical moments of people's lives. And being a part of saving a life is always a thrill.

While the personal rewards can be great, the financial rewards

can be excellent as well. The average nursing or pharmacy salary at UMass Memorial Medical Center is nearing six figures. Caring for patients is an around the clock *and* calendar responsibility, but flexible hours can be a plus. Benefits tend to be very comprehensive as well.

A student seeking a variety of choices will be interested to learn that at an institution such as UMass Memorial, there are over 500 job titles that make up our community of care. Many healthcare careers only require a two-year degree and pay starting at \$40,000. Many state and community colleges offer affordable options for these programs.

Encouraging students to consider a career in medicine and health care services will both broaden their horizons and brighten the future, not only for those who pursue a career in the field, but for all of us who will benefit from it.

Kelly Barnhart
UMass Memorial Health Care
Worcester, MA

MORE ON MCAS

The following are both my thoughts and what I have been hearing from others about the implications for Massachusetts students of not passing the MCAS exam for college attendance and “ability to benefit” from federal financial aid. A lot of this is my understanding of the issues, or, in some cases, the issues have not been decided yet by the regulatory powers. I have not seen this written up anywhere, so please let me know where I am off-base (and on-base as well) and/or where others have made written attempts to make sense of and deal with this. I will compile responses of the people I hear back from and send them to you if you are interested.

THE MCAS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION EXAM AND “ABILITY TO BENEFIT”

Colleges are and will be offering acceptance to Massachusetts students who have satisfied all other graduation requirements at their high schools, but have not passed one or both parts (English and math) of the MCAS exam and therefore won't receive a diploma.

I believe that these students cannot be admitted to any of the four-year Massachusetts state colleges and universities. I also believe that they can attend a Massachusetts community college, but still have to pass both parts of the MCAS before they can matriculate to a four-year Massachusetts state college or university.

Private colleges, and possibly and ironically some out-of-state (non-Massachusetts) public colleges, can still admit these students if they choose, but I think that they can also choose to rescind admission. Some with stated policies against it may not be able to admit students without a diploma.

If a student who does not pass one or both parts of the MCAS but satisfies other graduation requirements is admitted to a college, then the problem of eligibility for federal financial aid then becomes an issue. The college can still award institutional aid but, depending on how the U. S. Department of Education interprets the regulations, the college may not be able to show “ability to benefit” and the student will not be able to get federal aid.

The U. S. Department of Education's regulations define “ability to benefit.” The criteria include high school diploma, GED, and scoring above a set cut score on one of eight tests (the SAT and ACT are not currently on this list of eight tests). Whether the criteria for “ability to benefit” will include a non-diploma certificate (e.g., “Certificate of Attainment”) awarded to students who pass all of the high school's graduation re-

quirements but do not pass one or both parts of the MCAS depends on how the U. S. Department of Education chooses to interpret the “ability to benefit” regulations.

Possible actions for dealing with Massachusetts students who are accepted to a college but do not pass the MCAS;

COLLEGE-LEVEL ACTIONS -

- 1.) Colleges can rescind admission to these students.
- 2.) Colleges can enroll these students, provide institutional financial aid, but be unable to award federal or state aid. In this case, colleges, if willing and able, could use institutional money to make up for the unavailable federal aid.
- 3.) Colleges (and high schools) can encourage students to take, and help them pass, the GED or exceed the cut score on one of the other eight exams that can demonstrate “ability to benefit.”

STATE-LEVEL ACTIONS -

- 4.) Massachusetts legislators and/or regulators can decide to allow admission of non-diploma students to a four-year Massachusetts state college or university if they earn a certificate and meet other admissions criteria.

FEDERAL-LEVEL ACTIONS -

- 5.) The U. S. Department of Education can make a non-diploma certificate one of the criteria that shows “ability to benefit.”
- 6.) Federal legislation can be passed that would include non-diploma certificates in the “ability to benefit” criteria.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY US, OUR, INSTITUTIONS, AND OUR ORGANIZATIONS-

In my opinion, #5 above would be the best for everybody, and if #5 does not occur then #6 is the next best alternative. (#4 is also a good response at the Massachusetts state level.)

Please let me know what you think of the above, and what we can do to deal with the inevitable problems that the MCAS test will cause for our students. I think that the more we can act in concert as institutions, as an organization, and as individuals the more effective we can be.

Brad MacGowan
Newton North High School (MA)
email: bmacgowan@attbi.com

WHAT'S NEWS

SEND YOUR NEWS TO
communication@neacac.org
 FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

Benjamin Baumann to Staff Assistant/
 Admission Counselor at UMASS
 Dartmouth (MA).

Steve Boyd to Associate Director of
 Transfer Admission at University of
 Bridgeport (CT) from Admission Coun-
 selor.

Marcy Drasner to Assistant Director of
 Admission at Saint Leo University (FL)
 from University of Tampa (FL).

Tracy Duva to Admissions Counselor at
 University of Bridgeport (CT) from Yale
 University School of Medicine.

Lisa Ellrich to Assistant Director of Ad-
 mission at University of Maine at
 Farmington from Westbrook College.

Eleanor W. Kinsella to Guidance
 Counselor at Dover Sherborn Regional
 High School (MA) from Ursuline Acad-
 emy (MA).

Larry Rich to Guidance Director at Nor-
 wich Free Academy (CT) from Killingly
 High School (CT).

Michael Rosa to Guidance Counselor
 at Burlington High School from Intern.

Wesley Roy to Admissions Counselor at
 Johnson State College (VT).

John Vallante to Director of Guidance
 at Our Lady of Fatima High School (RI)
 from Saint Raphael Academy (RI).

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTGE
 PAID
 Reading, MA
 Permit No. 63

New England Association for College Admission Counseling
 P.O. Box 306, Newmarket, NH 03857

