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**GOVERNOR PATRICK APPOINTS DARLENE RODOWICZ AS CHAIR OF THE BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

BOSTON – Friday, October 19, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick today appointed Darlene Rodowicz as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Berkshire Community College. Ms. Rodowicz is the current Board Chair at Berkshire Community College and today's announcement is an affirmation of her appointment under the Governor's new authority to appoint the Board Chairs at each of the Commonwealth's fifteen community colleges.

The Governor's community college plan, supported by the Legislature and included in the FY13 budget, calls for the Governor to appoint the Chair of the Board of Trustees at each community college. This plan will create a more integrated, effective community college system that is responsive to both local and statewide employer needs by giving community colleges additional capacity to expand their efforts to provide students with high-quality, relevant educational and training programs. This plan will also help strengthen the connections between our campuses, our employers, and our workforce so that students of all ages have the opportunity to succeed.

"Our community colleges are at the center of our efforts to close the skills gap and help people get back to work in Massachusetts," said Governor Patrick. "I want to thank Ms. Rodowicz for her willingness to serve in this capacity and am confident that she will be a critical partner in our collective efforts to better serve our students and employers, building a stronger Commonwealth for generations to come."

Ms. Rodowicz is the Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance for Berkshire Health Systems where she is responsible for developing the organization's annual operating and capital budgets, oversees business development including new programs and services and has created a ten-year master facility plan for the Health System, among other responsibilities. Prior to joining Berkshire Health Systems, Ms. Rodowicz worked at Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts as a Medicare Auditor. Ms. Rodowicz earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an MBA from Western New England College. She has served as a member of the Board of Trustees at Berkshire Community College for over three years.

"These are exciting times for community colleges," said Ms. Rodowicz. "I am honored that the Governor has named me Chair of the Board of Trustees at Berkshire Community College. We will continue to meet the needs of the residents and the employers of Berkshire County and the Commonwealth."

"Darlene Rodowicz brings a wealth of experience in non-profit management, finance, workforce development and leadership. She also has extensive knowledge of the communities served by the college," said Berkshire Community College President Ellen Kennedy. "We are delighted with the Governor's decision."

Delivering on the goals of his community college plan, Governor Patrick recently awarded community colleges a total of \$4 million in grants to support increased skill training and workforce alignment, improved student learning outcomes and efficiency measures at campuses across the Commonwealth. These grants will give campuses the additional capacity they need to promote higher completion rates of degrees and certificates, be more responsive to the needs of local economies as well as of the state's fastest growing sectors and adopt a system-wide standard core of course offerings. Berkshire Community College was awarded \$88,000 to accelerate college readiness and developmental math pathways; and enhance student advising and civic engagement programming. Earlier this month, Berkshire Community College was also awarded \$21.1 million in capital funding for the renovation, including exterior masonry repairs, of the Hawthorne & Melville Halls on campus.

To learn more about the Governor's community college plan visit <http://www.mass.gov/governor/agenda/education/>.

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