GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIPS TO 800 MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS PURSUING HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

Aid Supports Students Entering Health Care, STEM, Business/Finance Fields

BOSTON – Tuesday, March 26, 2013 – Governor Deval Patrick today joined Education Secretary Matthew Malone, Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland, UMass Boston Chancellor J. Keith Motley and 100 students to announce the Commonwealth’s new High-Demand scholarships, awarded to students pursuing careers for which the state has an urgent need for skilled talent. The Commonwealth’s knowledge-based economy relies on a high-knowledge, well-skilled workforce for continued growth, and these scholarships will help ensure that Massachusetts has the talent needed to remain competitive in the 21st century.

“These scholarships encourage students to pursue studies in the high-needs fields where we have thousands of job openings,” said Governor Patrick. “Step by step, we
are better aligning our public colleges and universities to meet the workforce needs of our growing economy.”

High-Demand scholarships will assist students majoring in the Commonwealth’s growing health care, science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), business and finance sectors, and those planning careers in fields like computer science, engineering, nursing and the life sciences. Of the available scholarships, 52 percent were awarded to UMass students, qualifying them for spring semester scholarships of $3,250 each. Twenty-eight percent of the scholarships were awarded to state university students, eligible to receive $2,750 each and 20 percent of the awards went to community college students, who will receive $2,000 each this semester. The average GPA for a High-Demand Scholarship recipient is 3.76, and more than half the recipients have demonstrated high financial need. In order to qualify, students must attend one of the state's public institutions.

“We must do all we can to break down the existing barriers that currently prevent our college students from gaining the knowledge and expertise necessary to compete in today’s business world,” said Secretary Malone. “This scholarship does that and more. Not only does it help students gain access to relevant programs, it also will help build a more efficient and skilled workforce in Massachusetts.”

These scholarships will help the Commonwealth meet an urgent need for mid and high-level skilled talent in key industries where we know employers are actively seeking qualified candidates for positions that too often go unfilled.

“Within five years, 70 percent of Massachusetts jobs will require a college education,” said Commissioner Freeland. “With two-thirds of all high school graduates who attend college in state now choosing a community college, state university or UMass campus, we know that the bulk of our future workforce will be educated by our public campuses. It’s essential that we nurture students’ ambitions while also supporting business and industry need for skilled employees.”

“We all understand the need to invest in developing homegrown talent here in the Commonwealth, and I am so pleased that Governor Patrick has made this a priority,” said Chancellor Motley. “It is our hard-working students who fuel the economy. It is our students at UMass Boston who keep us at the forefront of innovation in the nation. It is our students at all the public colleges and universities who truly position Massachusetts to thrive.”

“I am so very grateful for receiving the Massachusetts High Demand Scholarship,” said Nicholas Krause, 33, a UMass Boston student who transferred from Holyoke Community College to pursue a nursing degree. “It’s often a struggle to stay afloat financially and scholarships like these enable me to remain in school and fulfill my dream of pursuing a long and meaningful career in healthcare.”

The High-Demand scholarships are being funded through a $2 million appropriation in the FY13 budget.

ATTACHED: High-Demand Scholarship fact sheet

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