MONTREAL – Friday, October 11, 2013 – As part of the Massachusetts-Canada Innovation Partnership Mission, Governor Deval Patrick today met with recent graduates, entrepreneurs and McGill University students to explore partnership opportunities between Massachusetts and Canada in the innovation economy and discuss ways in which the Commonwealth has created an atmosphere that cultivates entrepreneurship and supports students.

"Massachusetts is home to a strong innovation economy bolstered by our highly skilled workforce and world class education system," said Governor Patrick. "Working with our Canadian counterparts offers tremendous opportunities to and create jobs and opportunity for generations to come."

Along with a talented innovation economy workforce, Massachusetts is home to world-
class universities, research institutions, venture capital firms and financial services communities that help fund and mentor the state’s strong pipeline of entrepreneurs and attract students from around the world. In 2012, over 2,200 Canadian students attended Massachusetts colleges and universities, making it the fourth largest contingent of international students in the state.

Governor Patrick discussed the many programs based in the Commonwealth to support entrepreneurs, start-ups and students in every region of the Commonwealth, including the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative’s Innovation Mentorship Initiative, designed to engage and boost a broader base of participants in the state’s regional tech entrepreneurship communities. The initiative is targeted at regions outside of the Greater Boston area and staff are currently reviewing the first round of proposals now. Also available to local startups and entrepreneurs is the Massachusetts Tech Hub Collaborative’s 12x12 Initiative. Established in 2009, the Initiative brings some of the region’s most recognized and well-regarded tech executives and venture capitalists together to support new tech start-ups through mentoring and networking.

The roundtable discussion was hosted by Eli Turk, Director of International Relations for McGill University. Founded in 1906, the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University is ranked as one of the world’s top international business schools by BusinessWeek, Canadian Business, Forbes, The Economist and the Financial Times.

“In Massachusetts, our entrepreneurs, policymakers and researchers engage within a collaborative leadership model at the state level, led by Governor Patrick,” said Pamela Goldberg, CEO of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. “Together we work to nurture talent, take on initiatives that spur innovation, and support a culture where entrepreneurship can thrive. As technology innovation changes and disrupts the global economy in new ways every day, partnerships like those we are forming in Canada strengthen the long-standing economic and social ties between our regions, helping our economies thrive. We look forward to the opportunities ahead these partnerships can provide.”

Governor Patrick also discussed MassChallenge, the $1 million global startup competition and accelerator designed to catalyze the launch and success of high-growth, high-impact new businesses. President Barack Obama honored MassChallenge in January 2011 as one of the nation’s best organizations for supporting high-growth entrepreneurs, and MassChallenge was the youngest inaugural member of the Startup America Partnership. The 361 start-ups supported in the MassChallenge accelerator since 2010 have raised over $362 million in outside funding and created approximately 2,900 new jobs as of October 2012.

For the second consecutive year, Massachusetts was ranked first on the University of Nebraska’s 2012 State Entrepreneurship Index as the best state in the country for entrepreneurs.

“Massachusetts has been known for centuries for the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of its workforce and business community,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki. “By collaborating with global leaders and academia, we can ensure the Commonwealth remains a top destination for entrepreneurs for generations to come.”

“Today was a terrific opportunity to engage with McGill’s brightest young minds,” said Richard Elam, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of International Trade.
and Investment. “These students are the innovators of the future and we invite them to come explore Massachusetts to grow their ideas and be a part of our success. We look forward to continuing to fortify our already strong partnership with Canada in supporting a dynamic entrepreneurship ecosystem in both regions.”

From October 8-11, Governor Patrick is leading a delegation of the Commonwealth’s government leaders on the Massachusetts-Canada Innovation Partnership Mission to strengthen the state’s partnership with Canada and expand opportunities between the two for economic development and job creation in the clean-tech, innovation, digital health, financial services, digital gaming, life sciences and academic sectors. Canada is the Commonwealth’s largest export partner. Last year, Massachusetts exported approximately $3.5 billion in goods and services to Canada, and the two-way exchange was $11.1 billion in 2012.

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