



ATTLEBORO  
FALL RIVER  
NEW BEDFORD  
TAUNTON  
ONLINE

January 29, 2024

Dear Bristol Colleagues,

Subject: Heartfelt Gratitude

Today, with a grateful heart, I informed the Board of Trustees of my decision to retire and begin my next adventure. I have been very fortunate to have had a fulfilling higher education career with the most rewarding period being my seven years as the President of Bristol Community College. In the year ahead, I am excited to continue to fulfill the objectives outlined in our strategic plan as the college begins the search for a new president. My retirement will be effective January 2025.

I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve as Bristol's 4th president. Fall River is the place where my maternal great-grandparents landed as immigrants. They worked in the cotton mills and my grandfather was the first in the family to complete high school—right here in Fall River, the Scholarship City. This connection to the South Coast has fueled my passion for creating a college-going culture and solidified our focus on bringing new industries and jobs to the region, such as offshore wind.

When I joined the college, we embarked on a journey to make a college education attainable and affordable in our community. In the years to follow, the college has made incredible strides and set forth a clear direction with the creation of our strategic priorities, equity initiatives and overall commitment to reducing barriers. Our efforts have opened doors for our community and the minds of generations who may have never imagined earning a college degree. Our strategic preparation and efforts related to Early College, Dual Enrollment and MassReconnect have resulted in a significant increase in enrollment, moving us to become the fourth largest among the 15 community colleges.

In Fall 2023, admissions applications increased, with an overall increase of 14.9%. This includes a 10.9% rise in applications from new students, a substantial 26.2% increase in returning students and a remarkable 40% spike in high school applications from the graduating class of 2023. Additionally, there was a 14.4% uptick in applications from students identifying as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and a substantial 36.3% increase in applications from adult learners, with a 200% surge in the month of August 2023. Overall enrollment from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 has increased 4.5% with an increase of 3.6% of students who identify as BIPOC and a 5% increase in the overall percentage of adult learners.

Our unwavering commitment to students has been truly commendable, especially considering the challenges faced in recent years due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Through our efforts, the college has become a haven for students navigating the complexities of these unprecedented times. Social justice initiatives and strong community partnerships have played a pivotal role in fostering an environment that is both welcoming and diverse. We have created a college experience that goes beyond academics, embracing inclusivity and support, which is a testament to the values of our college community.

Bristol Community College is well respected in our community and has taken the international stage with the launch of the National Offshore Wind Institute (NOWI). The NOWI has positioned us as a leader in providing relevant and required training solutions designed to meet the growing workforce demands of the offshore wind industry and related sectors. We are an economic driver in the region and recently received the Brayton Community Service Award and the 2023 APEX Business of the Year award for these efforts from One SouthCoast Chamber.

Over the years, we have collectively pursued excellence and innovation. We have remarkable achievements and transformative initiatives that have shaped our journey together during my tenure as president. I never imagined the leadership I would need to provide during a pandemic. We prioritized the health and safety of our employees, and our community college played a pivotal role in keeping the community safe through testing, vaccination clinics and the donation of personal protective equipment (PPE).

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire Bristol Community College community—students, faculty, staff, alumni, the Foundation, donors, legislators, elected officials and community members—for your unwavering support. It is your dedication that has propelled us forward, and I am immensely thankful for the opportunity to serve as your president.

As we continue to build on our achievements, let us look toward the future with optimism and a shared commitment to furthering the mission and vision of Bristol Community College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna L. Douglas". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name "President".

President