

New Bedford Public Schools ESOL Book Club spreads joy of reading aloud

When Ms. Leta Phillips, an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher of Advanced English Levels 6-7, created the Adult Learning Center's "On the Go Book Club," she had no idea of just how popular it would become. Its purpose was simple: introduce some of the best children's literature to ESOL parents and encourage family engagement. As it turns out, it is also rewarding – even students without children are joining the club for the opportunity it provides to learn some English in a fun, engaging way. Consequently, all ESOL students are invited to join the afternoon club and share their love of reading at home.

The book club is organized into three stages. In the Pre-reading stage, Ms. Phillips concentrates on the new vocabulary words. At this time, the students are given a premade graphic organizer with the new word, a student-friendly definition, a picture, and a column where the student can write a translation into their own language. Students find this exercise a helpful resource when they are rereading the book later on at home. During the second stage, each student is given a book, so they can follow along as the teacher models engaging techniques to capture the listener's attention. During this time, Ms. Phillips asks questions to reinforce reading skills such as: prediction, drawing conclusions, retell, sequencing, etc. In the post-reading stage, students take their own book home to share with their family.

Ms. Phillips notes, "The books that we have read so far are: "Strega Nona" by Tomie dePaulo, "Yeh-Shen" (a Chinese Cinderella story) by Walt Disney, "The Fisherman and his Wife" by the Brothers Grimm, "The Velveteen Rabbit" by Margery

Williams, "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter, and "Skin Like Mine" by Latashia M. Perry. These books appeal to the students because they deal with authentic human emotions – love, loneliness, selfishness, respect, self-pride, etc. Moreover, they are multicultural, so the students appreciate that."

Ms. Phillips has expressed pleasant surprise with the genuine interest in the book club and its positive outcomes. Some students have shared their personal experiences in reading the books with their family. Jacqueline Guzman who has a 7-year-old daughter at the Gomes School said that her daughter looks forward to reading a new book with mommy each week. "She corrects my pronunciation of some of the English words. I don't mind because we are learning together," she said. Another ESOL student related that she reads the book with her husband, as it is a good way to improve their English together. Still another student prefers to rewrite the book in her notebook. She says that this helps her focus on the words and improves her spelling and writing skills. The Adult Learning Center's "On the Go Book Club" has been a very rewarding experience for both Ms. Phillips and her students. "The club will continue through the end of the year. Many more journeys into new worlds await us," she added.

The New Bedford Public Schools Division of Adult & Continuing Education offers classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) as well as classes to prepare for the HiSET/GED Exams, or to earn a high school diploma. Classes are offered mornings and evenings. For more information please contact the Adult Education Information Office at 508-997-4511 Extension 33550/33551, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or Monday or Wednesday evenings at 508-997-4511 Extension 21218 between 6:30 p.m. and 8:45 p.m. For more info online: adulthood.newbedfordschools.org.

New Bedford High School launches skills USA Chapter; earn several medals and recognition

New Bedford High School has launched a Skills USA chapter as part of its Career Vocational Technical Education Program, officials announced recently.

The emerging group has yielded several medals and recognitions in competitions over the last several months. Skills USA is a national organization that focuses on workforce skill training through facilitating learning opportunities and career technical skill competitions across multiple career pathway areas. The organization has over 350,000 student members representing 4,568 schools across the country.



SKILLFUL WHALERS – NBHS students participated in the Skills USA Fall State Leadership Conference, bringing home six medals for their chapter. Front row (L-R): Kimberly Tzoy-Morente, Rachelle DePina, Layla Torres, Claudia Dorvil, and Co-Advisor Amanda Leite Back row (L-R): Jonathan Vargas Martinez, Isiah Williams, D’Angelo Tejeda, Giovane Tavares, Jack Titla-Mora, and Advisor Colleen Hall. (Photo: NBHS)

“We are excited to offer a Skills USA chapter, as it provides our CVTE students with an additional opportunity to showcase their career skills” said Bernadette Coelho, Principal of New Bedford High School. “Extra-curricular activities are thriving across all areas, and adding Skills USA is a significant value-add to our wide-ranging club offerings. We are extremely proud of our students’ recent successes,” she added.

The new Skills USA chapter marks another milestone for New Bedford High School CVTE, a rapidly growing career and technical education program, which has resulted in the state’s approval of a new Chapter 74 program in Business Technology. Recent CVTE additions include approval of the National Academy Foundation Academy of Hospitality and capital construction of

state-of-the-art career laboratories funded with over \$1,000,000 in competitive grant awards since 2019.

In its inaugural year, the NBHS chapter participated in the Skills USA Fall State Leadership Conference and engaged in competition events covering essential career tech skills including community engagement, workplace skills and personal skills. Four students finished in first place in their respective competitions, yielding a total of six medals for the chapter. NBHS sent 10 students to participate in the leadership conference.

“The early successes at the state leadership conference demonstrate our students’ mastery of significant practices as it relates to employability skill development,” said Christopher Cummings, Manager of CVTE. “The 10-member delegation bringing back 6 First Place medals was a significant accomplishment and is fostering excitement as we continue to grow the chapter.”

Student award winners included:

- Isiah Williams (2025): Community Engagement Video, 1st place.
- Giovane Tavares (2025): Community Engagement Video, 1st place.
- Jack Titla-Mora (2025): Personal Skills – Content, 1st place; Personal Skills – Best Design, 1st place.
- Rachelle DaPina (2023): Workplace Skills – Content, 1st place; Workplace Skills – Best design – 1st place.

The Skills team recently competed in a regional competition and is planning to participate in a statewide competition in April.

New Bedford High School’s Skills USA program is part of the school’s offerings of Career Vocational Technical Education programming. For more information about Career and Technical Education at New Bedford High School, please contact

Christopher Cummings, Manager of CVTE at 508 997 4511, ext. 20799.

New Bedford Public Schools Accredited for Early College Credits

New Bedford Public Schools has earned the highly sought Early College Programs Designation in partnership with Bristol Community College, it was announced today by Superintendent Thomas Anderson. The designation was approved by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Early College Joint Committee and awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Early College Initiative on March 16.

Superintendent Anderson stated “This recognition demonstrates New Bedford Public Schools is highly qualified to provide its students with a comprehensive early-college education focused on STEM, the humanities, writing and critical thinking skills. It is a confirmation of our rigorous teaching and learning practice and our faculty and staff’s commitment to its continuous improvement.”

In commending the partnership between NBPS and BCC, Superintendent Anderson said, “With our Bristol CC partners in higher education we are able to include Early College as yet another pathway for students to obtain credentials at NBHS that already includes over 20 Advanced Placement courses, Dual Enrollment, National Academy Foundation certification, the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy, and the Academy of Honors, and the soon to be approved International Baccalaureate

Program.”

In August 2021, NBPS in partnership with BCC successfully submitted Part A of the application. On October 15, the DESE Early College Initiative approved advancement to the second phase – Part B – of the Designation Application, submitted jointed by Magaly Sanchez, NBPS Curriculum, Data and Assessment Manager for Enrichment and Accelerated Programs, and Carlos Avila, Bristol CC Associate Director of College Access. “I am incredibly excited for the opportunities that the Early College Pathway will provide our students at New Bedford High,” said Ms. Sanchez.

Benefits of Early College Designation at New Bedford High School:

- NBHS students will have the opportunity to attend college free of charge via a cohort model that allows them to earn a minimum of 12 college credits while simultaneously earning their high school diploma.
- NBHS students will be able to participate in flexible pathways including Business, Engineering, Health Sciences and Technology as well as opportunities to earn cybersecurity certifications allowing students to begin to earn a living while still pursuing their college degree.
- The NBPS/Bristol CC Early College Program is designed to eliminate barriers and provides access to college for student populations that otherwise would not have enrolled in college or engaged in obtaining a college degree.
- Provides a pathway and system of supports prioritizing students that are historically underserved in higher education.
- The Early College Program developed by New Bedford High School and Bristol Community College creates a sustainable partnership that will support personalized equitable access to higher educational learning opportunities for all students and in particular students of color and those that would otherwise not see college as an option for them.

In addition to BCC, partnerships to extend and support NBHS students' college and career opportunities have been formed with MassHire and OneGoal. The MassHire Department of Career Services oversees Massachusetts's network of Career Centers that assist businesses in finding qualified workers and provide job seekers with career guidance as well as referrals to jobs and training. OneGoal is a leading college access and success organization that works to close the degree divide and create a more equitable future for students.

Early College is an initiative to create and maintain partnerships connecting our state's districts and high schools with our state's colleges, to provide equitable opportunities for Massachusetts students, especially for those who will attend college as the first in their family.

UMass Dartmouth awarded grant for creation of Transformative Justice Center

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education awarded the University and partners Massasoit Community College and UMass Law \$150,000 to establish a Transformative Justice Program and Center.

UMass Dartmouth was recently awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Massachusetts Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) to create a Transformative Justice Practitioner's Certificate Program to serve students from UMass Dartmouth, Massasoit Community College, and UMass Law. The grant also funds the process to begin establishing a Transformative Justice Center at UMass Dartmouth. This award follows an initial \$150,000

grant in spring 2021 that funded research and data collection toward creating the inter-campus Transformative Justice Practitioner's curriculum.

Principal Investigators Dr. Viviane Saleh-Hanna, Dr. Tammi Arford, and Dr. Erin K. Krafft, all Crime and Justice Studies faculty members, are leading a multi-campus team to build the infrastructure needed for a new Certificate Program while laying the groundwork to build a Transformative Justice Center on the UMass Dartmouth Main Campus.

"The data we gathered last year through Campus Justice Climate surveys and intensive focus groups at the three campuses with students, faculty, staff, and administrators showed a strong need and desire for Transformative Justice Programming and Services," said Drs. Saleh-Hanna, Arford, and Krafft.

The Transformative Justice Practitioner Certificate Program, run through UMass Dartmouth's Crime and Justice Studies Department, will be instrumental to the region's health and growth by giving students a background in the histories and theories of Transformative Justice and instruction in the applied practices of Transformative Justice, including conflict mediation, trauma-informed facilitation skills, and envisioning and building Transformative Justice responses to both individual and structural harms and violence.

"Massasoit constantly seeks out opportunities for our students to apply all that they have learned. Doing so within a framework of transformative justice provides not only a unique and valuable learning opportunity but potentially one that means a good deal to our students and community," said Pamela Witcher, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs at Massasoit.

The Center will serve as a research hub for Transformative Justice scholars and practitioners, coordinate with the Certificate Program, and be a resource for implementing Transformative Justice practices through collaborative models

of responding to harm and building community. Creating a replicable model of the Center and its curriculum will allow graduates of the Certificate Program to build Transformative Justice Centers and services within their respective campuses and communities.

“The Transformative Justice Practitioner program provides a valuable opportunity for our law students to make a very real impact in the social wellbeing of their communities,” said Eric Mitnick, Dean at UMass Law. “UMass Law is excited to participate in this vital initiative.”

New Bedford's Whaling City students learn technical end of the audiovisual and music world

In an effort to establish real-world connections between the academic setting and local industry, Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School has partnered with Mike Monteiro, President and CEO of Abstrakt Music NB to provide students with an off-campus classroom as a way to learn about music production, editing, podcasting, and the visual/media arts. John Tweedie, Whaling City Principal stated, “This endeavor and partnership could not have been possible without the financial contributions of Massachusetts State Senator Mark Montigny. He has always been a staunch advocate of incorporating a hands-on educational experience as a pathway for students to attain a better grasp of academic concepts and explore career options after high school.”

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "Partnerships like these illustrate the collective commitment to preparing the whole student to maximize their skills to take advantage of and create opportunities to positively impact those around them."

The partnership with Abstrakt Music NB will allow students to achieve academic credit towards graduation over a 13-week period until the end of the school year. Students will participate in 20 one-hour sessions with Mr. Monteiro's audiovisual engineers at the Abstrakt Studio, located at 7 N. Sixth Street in Downtown New Bedford. Students will be creating and developing a capstone project throughout the semester. The project will be shared on social media platforms and other means of public access.

"Without the collaboration of local government, local business, and the public schools in New Bedford, initiatives like this would not be possible. The investment in our children is valuable and is required. This deliberate and acute experience will help develop New Bedford's local workforce and allow our high school students to identify a possible career path," said Principal Tweedie.

Abstrakt Music NB is a vertically integrated music and entertainment company specializing in audio production, recording, mixing/mastering, live show production & programming, artist development and management, marketing and promotion, photography, video production and editing.

Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School provides a safe, positive, and consistent learning environment designed to support the most at-risk student population by addressing the whole child. Students are provided with a rigorous education that is aligned with state standards and aided with acute support to develop self-regulation skills. These skills are embedded in the school's design to provide students with the tools necessary to transition back to the comprehensive middle/high

schools, in advance of college, military and career pathways

Bristol Community College named to 2022-2023 Military Friendly® School's list

Bristol Community College is proud to be awarded the silver designation as a military friendly school in the 2022-2023 Military Friendly® School's list included in the upcoming May 2022 issue of G.I Jobs Magazine.

The 2022-2023 Military Friendly® School's list, by Viqtory, a media entity for military personnel transitioning into civilian life, honors schools throughout the country that are doing the most to embrace America's military service members, veterans and spouses as students and ensure their success on campus. The listing provides a comprehensive guide for veterans and their families.

Institutions earning the Military Friendly® School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey completed by the college. More than 1,800 schools participated in the 2022-2023 survey with 665 schools earning the prestigious designation.

The list's methodology, criteria and weightings were determined with input from the Military Friendly® Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community. Final ratings were determined by combining the institution's survey response set and government/agency public data sources, within a logic-based scoring assessment, to measure the institution's ability to

meet thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, persistence (degree advancement or transfer) and loan default rates for all students and, specifically, for student veterans.

Bristol Community College's Joseph A. Marshall Veterans Center serves as a single point of contact for all Bristol and Veterans Affairs materials, educational benefit certification, academic counseling, essential resources, opportunities for peer connections, and assistance with job preparation and placement services, including veteran-specific job fairs and recruitment activities.

For more information about the 2022-2023 Military Friendly® School's list, including Bristol Community College, please visit www.militaryfriendly.com/schools.

South Coast region trails Massachusetts in early education and child care

Newly published report commissioned by the SouthCoast Community Foundation illuminates pain points and opportunities.

Across the 41 cities and towns the SouthCoast Community Foundation serves, there are approximately 50,000 children under the age of five but only 20,000 childcare slots, translating roughly into 2.5 children for every slot. This lags the state, with two children for every slot. Scarcity is only one aspect of a multilayered issue plaguing the early education and child care system and only one example of how

the South Coast region is trailing the state.

To deepen the Community Foundation's understanding of the topic and take its first step toward making early education and child care a significant focus for the organization, it is rolling out a report this week produced in partnership with the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University. The Expanding Early Education and Child Care Opportunities (EECCO) report provides a rigorous assessment of the Community Foundation catchment area using the best available data and supplemented by 21 interviews with regional experts and thought leaders.

"The Community Foundation has always understood that high quality early education and child care enriches our children's lives, allows parents to work, and improves the long-term prospects of our entire region," stated Sarah Rose, Director of Engagement for the SouthCoast Community Foundation. "One of our strategic priorities for educational success is supporting foundational needs starting with early childhood. Our first step needed to be data-driven to inform this work and create a baseline understanding of the landscape."

Added Maria A. Rosario, Community Foundation board member and NorthStar Learning Centers' Executive Director, "If we don't start getting really serious about these early years, I don't know how we can fulfill the potential of our young people and address inequities in our communities."

The organization has distributed the report to local legislators, education leaders, and funders and is hosting convenings virtually and in person over the next several weeks to illuminate the opportunities surfaced in the report, gain a deeper understanding of the issues, and inspire philanthropic-minded individuals and institutions. The report is also available on the SouthCoast Community Foundation website in both English, Spanish, and in Portuguese shortly.

“People turn to the SouthCoast Community Foundation for leadership, and by focusing on this they’re showing the importance of early education as a priority for the community,” shared Michael O’Sullivan, Co-CEO of the One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce.

The EECCO report identifies several pain points including high-quality program access; challenges in measuring quality care; high cost of care; recruiting; offering competitive compensation; retaining the best teachers and caregivers; and the exacerbation of these pre-existing challenges by the pandemic. The report also outlines areas of opportunity for the Community Foundation centered around regional leadership and targeted funding to help address these discrepancies.

Rose commented, “Despite the excellent work organizations in this region are currently doing, there is still much more to be done. The report highlights opportunities for the Community Foundation to tackle the most pressing needs, many of which are underway. We are looking forward to partnering with community leaders, individuals, and community-based organizations to support our youngest residents.”

At the heart of the SouthCoast Community Foundation’s mission to improve the quality of life for citizens in the Southeastern Massachusetts region is supporting the creation of strong educational programs and opportunities. The need is extensive, from early literacy to college scholarships to ongoing professional development. The Community Foundation is one of the largest aggregators of scholarships in the area with more than \$540,000 awarded annually from a wide variety of permanent scholarship funds. Beginning in 2022, the Foundation is deepening and broadening its commitment to education by focusing on the foundational needs for educational success, by making early education and child care a more significant focus. The Foundation’s work on current and future opportunities will be based on thoughtful analysis of data and information to create a baseline understanding from

which to orient new and expanded initiatives.

The SouthCoast Community Foundation is a nonprofit serving the communities of Southeastern Massachusetts through philanthropy. The Community Foundation mission is to mobilize philanthropy by matching donors and resources with community needs for the benefit of our region. Since 1995, the organization has distributed over \$50 million from more than 200 funds to humanitarian, educational, and cultural organizations in the region. For more information, visit www.southcoastcf.org.

New Bedford Public Schools to make masks optional, March 7

New Bedford Public Schools will be updating its COVID-19 protocols including making masks optional starting Monday, March 7, 2022 for students and staff, as well as aligning COVID-19 testing procedures more closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Public Health, Superintendent Thomas Anderson announced today in a letter to parents, guardians and caregivers.

“In lieu of the current in-school Test and Stay program, we will be participating in an at-home testing program that will help maximize testing for participating students and staff, despite their vaccination status,” Superintendent Anderson noted, adding, “This at-home testing option will begin during the week of February 28, 2022 and we will continue with school symptomatic testing for students who become ill during the school day. We will no longer use the Test and Stay Program and will not conduct contact tracing for in-school close

contacts. This new at-home testing opportunity is voluntary and parents must sign-up to receive the tests.”

To receive the free antigen tests kits, parents/guardians must opt-in to the at-home testing program by completing an opt-in form for each child by Friday, February 25, 2022. Forms are available online at newbedfordschools.org. For additional information, please contact your school or the NBPS Health Services Department at 508-997-4511, extension 14432.

Of his decision to lift the mask requirement while also making optional their continued use, Superintendent Anderson stated, “Last week Governor Baker and education Commissioner Riley lifted the state-wide mask mandate for schools. In consideration of this change to current mask mandate, we have evaluated several factors, including virus transmission rates, vaccination information for eligible students and adults, and the impact on student social emotional well-being. We have several mitigation strategies in place that will mostly continue including the over 900 air exchange units in our buildings and cleaning and disinfecting processes.

“Over the last few days I have received consistent overwhelming feedback from parents, some students, and staff suggesting that we also lift the mask mandate. To allow us time to transition to our new testing program and provide some time after the February Break due to past increased positivity rates in the days immediately following holidays and/or vacations, the mask mandate for New Bedford Public Schools will end at the end of the school day on Friday, March 4 – except on school busses and in health offices. Federal guidelines still require all individuals to wear masks while on school busses and State guidelines still require all individuals to wear masks while in health offices.

“Beginning Monday, March 7, mask wearing will become optional for all New Bedford Public Schools students and staff. I do highly encourage those unvaccinated individuals with

compromised immune systems to continue wearing their masks. These 5-days after we return from February Break will provide us time to address any increase in positive COVID cases and gives us time to transition our health department team to the new testing process. Please know that there will be some students and staff who personally choose to continue wearing a mask. I request that we support one another and understand that some individuals are working through personal situations where COVID has impacted their family members, friends or themselves. Now is a time to be supportive and understanding – let's please be respectful of those who choose to continue wearing a mask during the school day."

UMass Dartmouth professor featured in upcoming Library of Congress Black History Month tribute

History Professor Timothy Walker will appear on a panel to discuss his research on the maritime aspects of the Underground Railroad.

Professor Timothy Walker, Ph.D. (History), will lead a panel titled, "The Maritime Underground Railroad" to be broadcasted Wednesday, Feb. 23 from 7 to 7:45 p.m. as part of a Black History Month tribute sponsored by the Library of Congress. The panel will discuss how enslaved people achieved their freedom by sea and what the waterborne journey looked like for many African Americans.

"Long distance, overland escapes from the deep south were

virtually impossible, and nearly all documented successful escapes from the far coastal south were achieved by water,” said Walker. “Seaborne escapes were faster, safer, and less logistically complicated than attempting to run away from enslavement by land.”

Walker, who edited, “Sailing to Freedom: Maritime Dimensions of the Underground Railroad” (University of Massachusetts Press, 2021), will be joined by two of the book’s nine contributors: Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, a lecturer in the Department of American Studies for the University of Maryland College Park, and Cassandra Newby-Alexander, dean at the College of Liberal Arts at Norfolk State University. Sailing to Freedom documents hundreds of seaborne flights from enslavement, including Mary Millburn’s successful 1858 escape of Norfolk, Virginia, to Philadelphia aboard an express steamship.

“This book aims to change the way people think about the Underground Railroad; to shift the dominant narrative to include the profoundly important maritime side of the story,” said Walker.

This event is moderated by former Kluge Center Director John Haskell, and will premiere live on the Library of Congress’ YouTube channel, where it will also be available for viewing afterward.

Walker is also guest-curating an exhibition on the same topic at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, which will open May 19, and run through November of this year.

UMass Dartmouth receives \$4.3M grant from U.S. Navy for marine technology development

The third award in as many years from the Office of Naval Research will further the University's research efforts in the blue economy and offshore wind sectors.

On February 8, 2022, UMass Dartmouth and Congressman William Keating announced a \$4.3M grant from the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to research projects through the Marine and UnderSea Technology research program (MUST) at UMass Dartmouth in collaboration with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT).

The \$4.3M grant will fund nine projects that focus on supporting the blue economy and offshore wind sectors through remote underwater sensing, battery performance for autonomous vehicles, oxidation mitigation for naval vessels, predictive modeling algorithms, and the use of autonomous vehicles to survey coastal environments. The project teams feature UMass Dartmouth researchers from academic disciplines and researchers from NUWCDIVNPT, industry partners Teledyne Benthos and Black & Veatch, and higher education institutions like UMass Amherst, the University of California, and the University of Virginia.

"Our collaborations with the Office of Naval Research and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport allow us to produce advanced technologies to harness the power of our waters and create an international hub for advanced marine technology," said UMass Dartmouth Chancellor Mark A. Fuller. "We want to educate students from the SouthCoast and the Commonwealth for

Blue Economy jobs and produce graduates who will contribute to the industry's success, and with this grant, that is what we will continue to do."

"We're in a period where investments into our workforce are critical," said Congressman Bill Keating. "UMass Dartmouth's Marine and UnderSea Technology program will create a new generation of a highly trained workforce, addressing the needs of the U.S. Navy as well as the emerging blue economy in our district. This is also the third time UMass Dartmouth has been awarded this coveted funding and I congratulate the Chancellor and his team on that. I will continue to work with UMass Dartmouth to push for additional grant funding to expand this important program for years to come."

This most recent award follows a \$4.6M grant in February 2020, the largest research award in the university's history, and a \$4.2M grant in October 2020 to address the U.S. Navy's short-term concerns of a skilled technical workforce and long-term goals of advanced technology development.

"As the public research university for the South Coast of Massachusetts, UMass Dartmouth is a key driver of the state's blue economy. This \$4.3M grant from the Office of Naval Research will fund critical research projects focused on supporting the blue economy and advancing technologies for autonomous vehicles, underwater sensing, and predictive modeling," said Senator Edward Markey. "This continued federal investment—now totaling more than \$13 million in awards since 2020—illustrates the MUST program's capacity for high caliber research as well as the impact of the continued partnership between UMass Dartmouth and the U.S. Navy."

"Congratulations to the dedicated researchers and students at UMass Dartmouth for receiving this grant from the Office of Naval Research. This investment in the Marine and UnderSea Technology program will continue to drive research and growth in the blue economy and offshore wind sectors so that

Massachusetts can continue to lead in building sustainable communities and economies,” said Senator Elizabeth Warren.

“Southeastern Massachusetts can and should be the center of the offshore wind revolution. This grant will spur innovation across the South Coast,” said Congressman Jake Auchincloss.

MUST has funded 29 research projects for a total of \$13.M, bringing together regional collaborators such as NUWCDIVNPT to strengthen the Navy’s access to cutting-edge research and build a pipeline for a highly trained workforce. These areas of study include autonomous underwater vehicles and increasing their battery life, biofouling, composite materials, machine learning with marine robotics, modeling ocean dynamics, and undersea acoustics for communications and sensing technologies.

“NUWCDIVNPT looks forward to continuing to foster our educational partnership with UMass Dartmouth through the MUST program,” said Ron Vien, Technical Director at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT).

“MUST’s success is the result of a very productive collaboration between the Office of Naval Research, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport, UMass Dartmouth faculty and industry in addressing the pressing needs of the US Navy. Training students in technologies of interest to the Navy is a critical focus of this program. We continue to strengthen our investments in these areas,” said UMass Dartmouth Interim Provost Ramprasad Balasubramanian, who leads the Marine and UnderSea Technology (MUST) research program.

You can view the recorded event [here](#).