

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.”