

UMass Dartmouth student named to Massachusetts Department of Higher Education “29 Who Shine”

Education champion, Maggie Sullivan '21, honored on May 13 in virtual State House ceremony.

Maggie Sullivan '21, of West Roxbury, Massachusetts was celebrated by Governor Charlie Baker at a virtual ceremony as a “29 Who Shine Award” recipient. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education award honors 29 outstanding students, one from each public institution, in the Class of 2021. Sullivan, who is majoring in Political Science and minoring in Leadership and Civic Engagement with a 4.0 GPA, was chosen for this prestigious student award for her work increasing the educational aspirations of students in SouthCoast communities.

“It’s an honor to win the “29 Who Shine” award. I am so thankful to UMass Dartmouth and all of the wonderful opportunities I have had as a student here. Working with the Leduc Center for Civic Engagement on campus allowed me to work in the community and gain invaluable leadership skills. I look forward to continuing to serve the Commonwealth, which has presented me so many opportunities to thrive, after my graduation,” said Sullivan.

As a College Positive Tour Coordinator, Sullivan worked with local school districts to provide tours of the UMass Dartmouth campus to all 7th graders in Fall River and New Bedford. During the tour, university students share their own stories about their paths to college helping to build a peer-to-peer connection with the students. UMassD students instill the importance of higher education and show that if they can

achieve their dreams, so can these young students.

When the pandemic struck, in-person tours were canceled, but Sullivan saw an opportunity to continue providing this crucial experience to students. She developed a module that included a virtual online tour with UMassD students that highlighted the possibilities that universities have to offer. The module can be delivered by 7th-grade teachers and includes a virtual Q & A with university students. The module has been shared with numerous schools on the SouthCoast, allowing more than 5,000 students to gain insight into life as a university student.

“It is so important to reach these students early and inform them that college is a possibility for everyone. There are great resources out there aimed at making college more accessible and affordable, but too often students and families don’t know about them. Not only that, but students often find themselves in a position by the time they finish high school where they have already decided that college is not for them. Bringing these students to campus at an early age allows them to visualize themselves as college students and plant the seeds in their minds that there are resources out there to help them get to college,” said Sullivan.

Sullivan is an Endeavor Scholar and 2020 Campus Compact Newman Fellow who has a passion for public service, education, and political science. Outside of her schoolwork and campus volunteering opportunities, she has served as a Stanley Miller Fellow with the Office of Congressman Stephen Lynch, an intern with Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu, and a Deitch Leadership Institute Fellow at the John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse in Boston.

“Maggie Sullivan is an incredible representative for UMass Dartmouth and is especially deserving of the “29 Who Shine” award,” said Mark A. Fuller, Interim Chancellor of UMass Dartmouth. “Maggie embodies so many of the traits that we as a public institution of higher education strive to instill in

our students: innovative leadership, academic excellence, and a dedication to helping her community. I look forward to hearing more about her accomplishments in the years to come.”

Sullivan plans to pursue a career in teaching and will continue her education at UMass Dartmouth to earn a master’s in teaching while working as a middle school teacher in either Fall River or New Bedford.