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Community College Scholars Honored at State House Ceremony

BOSTON – March 30, 2017 – Today, the Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office (MCCEO) hosted a ceremony at the Massachusetts State House to honor 33 of the highest academic achievers of the community college system. Student awardees, surrounded by family, college presidents, elected officials, and mentors, were presented with medallions and certificates for being named to Phi Theta Kappa’s All-Massachusetts Academic Team. Every year, MCCEO hosts this event at the State House in Boston to showcase the best and brightest of the 15-college system. The event is co-sponsored by the Phi Theta Kappa international honor society, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and MCCEO. Thursday’s event took place at noon and featured keynote remarks from Dr. Carlos Santiago, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Dr. John Cox, this year’s Chair of the Community Colleges Council of Presidents, served as the master of ceremonies. Dr. Cox is the current president of Cape Cod Community College.

“It’s important to recognize the initiative, dedication, and hard work of so many students at our community colleges,” said President Cox. “These students exemplify that commitment, and we’re truly honored to be able to celebrate their accomplishments.”

“This event highlights the community colleges’ commitment to access, opportunity, and excellence,” said Bill Hart, Executive Officer of MCCEO. “These students show that no matter their background, they can still attain outstanding academic achievement. We’re glad that each year we can showcase these exemplary students in front of their college presidents, families, and legislators in the General Court.”

In addition to membership on the All-Massachusetts Academic Team, four students earned additional recognition through scholarships from the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and the All-USA Academic Team. Aeffia Feuerstein of Roxbury Community College and Javier Garcia Bustos of Springfield Technical Community College both received \$1,000 scholarships for being named Coca-Cola Foundation Bronze Medal Scholars. As the top-scoring community college student in the Commonwealth through the Coca-Cola Scholars program, Quinsigamond Community College student Ethan O’Connell was this year’s New Century Scholar. The New Century Scholar is awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from the Coca-Cola Foundation. Finally, Samueal Lema of Bristol Community College was recognized for his academic achievement and service to the campus community as an All-USA Top 20 Scholar. He is one of just twenty students from across the country that is a member of this select group; he will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for this accomplishment.

The 2017 Phi Theta Kappa All-Massachusetts Academic Team members are:

- Berkshire Community College students Cheryl Bassett and Mary Mick;
- Bristol Community College students Samueal Lema and Daniel Rodrigues;
- Bunker Hill Community College students Nadine Borges and Linh Dang;
- Cape Cod Community College students Samantha Lamoureux and Brittany Packard;
- Greenfield Community College students Heather Hutchinson and Katherine Mitchell-Love;
- Holyoke Community College student Jessica Ruge;
- MassBay Community College students Sascha Demmerle and Inna Ustaoglu;
- Massasoit Community College students Bradford Besson and Autumn Silveri;
- Middlesex Community College students Cora Casteel, Keegan Eller, Mamita Magar, and Vebe Tewelde;
- Mt. Wachusett Community College students Michel Cocuzza and Eden Shaveet;
- North Shore Community College students Lordgod Danielson, Kyle Mailey, Carol Fonseca Hidalgo, and Emily Kinne;
- Northern Essex Community College students Daniela Chavez-Hernandez and Casimir Ntar;
- Quinsigamond Community College students Kimberly May and Ethan O'Connell;
- Roxbury Community College students Aeffia Feuerstein and Delores Manning; and
- Springfield Technical Community College students Javier Garcia Bustos and Opal Menz.

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is the international honor society of two-year colleges. PTK has recognized and encouraged scholarship among community college students for 98 years while promoting the academic integrity of the associate degree program. Students with grade point averages of 3.5 or higher are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa.

The Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office (MCCEO) works on behalf of presidents and trustees of the fifteen community colleges in Massachusetts, currently representing more than 184,000 students in every region of the Commonwealth.

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