



Maine Community College System

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NEWS RELEASE

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MCCS President John Fitzsimmons Honored By Economic Development Council of Maine

AUGUSTA, ME — Dr. John Fitzsimmons, president of the Maine Community College System, has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Economic Development Council of Maine. The award was presented last night at the Council's annual meeting at the Lucerne Inn in Dedham, ME.

In presenting the award, William Armitage, the Council's president, praised Fitzsimmons' leadership and vision in the areas of higher education and workforce development. Citing Fitzsimmons' 18 years at the helm of the community colleges and three years as Maine's Commissioner of Labor, Armitage said of Fitzsimmons: "Few have had the impact he has had in this state in education, workforce development, and economic development. Maine and its economy are stronger because he has worked tirelessly to expand access to higher education and to provide individuals and businesses with the skills they need to compete and prosper."

Under Fitzsimmons' leadership, the institutions within the MCCS have transitioned from vocational technical institutes to technical colleges to community colleges, and enrollment has grown by over 200 percent to more than 13,800 credit students. In the past five years alone, since the establishment of the community colleges, enrollment of degree-seeking students has increased by 55 percent. As Armitage noted in presenting the award: "For a small state that has long struggled to increase its college going rate, the growth of our community colleges has major implications for Maine's ability to compete in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive environment."

The Council, with over 200 members, presents its Lifetime Achievement Award only periodically and to someone who has made significant, sustained, and statewide contributions in the area of economic development. Its members work in both the public and private sectors and include community and economic development professionals; leaders in real estate, banking, construction, and other industries; and elected officials.

For more information about the Economic Development Council of Maine, contact Richard Kelso at 207-582-5147.

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