

Governor Patrick Announces Major Life Sciences Investment in Western Massachusetts

Grants to fund lab renovations, equipment and planning for community colleges and vocational schools, and expansion of life sciences capacity at MGHPCC

HOLYOKE – Thursday, February 28, 2013 – Governor Deval Patrick and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) today announced more than \$9 million in grants for life-sciences-related capital projects in Western Massachusetts, including \$3.8 million to support the creation of a Center for Life Sciences at Holyoke Community College (HCC), and \$4.54 million that will allow the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) in Holyoke to expand its capacity for life sciences-related research and data analysis. Through the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, Massachusetts is investing \$1 billion over 10 years in the growth of the state's life sciences supercluster. These investments are being made under Governor Patrick's Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative.

"Supporting innovation propels our economy forward and prepares our citizens for the 21st century global marketplace," said Governor Patrick. "Our innovation economy relies on a well-educated, well-skilled workforce, and these grants will expand opportunity and grow jobs in communities throughout the Commonwealth."

"Our Administration is committed to investing in innovation across the state, including the life sciences industry in Western Massachusetts," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "These capital project investments will enhance research, workforce training and job creation, expand opportunities to develop improved medicine and support the region's long-term economic growth."

"Schools like Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Community College play major roles in training the next generation of our state's life sciences workforce, and they ensure that training for innovation economy jobs is inclusive and available all across the state," said Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister, President & CEO of the MLSC. "Our grants help ensure that these schools can provide students in Western Massachusetts with first-rate training facilities. Our grant to the MGHPCC leverages prior investments by the state and five of our top universities by expanding the MGHPCC's capacity to make advanced computing available to the life sciences community."

The largest grant awarded today went to the MGHPCC. This investment will build on an infrastructure for large-scale data analysis that is already in place in Holyoke and was created by a strong partnership among academia, industry and the Commonwealth. Boston University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts have teamed with Astra-Zeneca, Pfizer, Merck, Merrimack Pharmaceuticals, EMC and IBM, among others, to create this computing resource. The MLSC funding of \$4.54 million will allow the MGHPCC to create a cloud-based resource for data-driven biology.

“As with other scientific disciplines, discovery and innovation in the life sciences are dependent on high-performance computing,” said John Goodhue, Executive Director of the MGHPCC. “This investment will leverage the capabilities of the MGHPCC and its university partners to strengthen the state's position as a leader in life sciences research, an important driver of the Massachusetts economy. The MLSC's investment will also add a new dimension to the ongoing partnership between the MGHPCC and western Massachusetts business and educational institutions.”

“Biomedical sciences are in the midst of a revolution where many of the challenges are becoming large-scale data problems,” said Manuel Garber, Associate Professor in the Program in Bioinformatics and Integrative Biology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. “The investment in this computer system will poise the state of Massachusetts as a leader in the development of computational methods to understand and a catalytic force in applying these discoveries to improve health care.”

HCC was granted \$3.8 million to support the renovation of 13,000 square feet of lab space and the creation of a Center for Life Sciences. This will include a clean room for the biological sciences, which will be the only clean room in Western Massachusetts to support training for students, faculty and industry partners.

“The importance of community colleges in providing access to life sciences education for minority, low-income and first-generation students cannot be overstated,” said HCC President William F. Messner. “This grant will enable us to expand our partnerships and establish a solid pipeline from high school, to college, to the workforce. It will allow HCC to strengthen articulations with Mount Holyoke and Smith College and increase the number of women in life sciences fields. It will provide the college with the resources necessary to support our industry partners, and ensure our curriculum aligns with their needs and equips our graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to pursue further education or enter the workforce.”

“This project at Holyoke Community College is absolutely essential for regional life science economic development,” said Steve Richter, President & Scientific Director of Microtest Labs in Agawam. “The caliber of this project adds to the force required for real change and job development. The focus on microbiology and clean room technology creates value for students and industry. The medical device, biotech and compounding pharmacies will benefit from future graduates.”

The MLSC also awarded two planning grants to academic institutions in the region. These grants allow institutions to propose and develop studies in order to further identify what types of life sciences resources would be most useful to them:

- Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) was awarded \$150,000, which will be used to update its equipment and labs to align with the needs of life sciences companies. MLSC funding will allow STCC to conduct a study to identify the most appropriate equipment that will best deliver a life sciences education leading to employment in the field.
- Bay Path College in Longmeadow recently received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education aimed at improving undergraduate student retention, supporting curricular redesign, faculty professional development, and student academic and career support services. The MLSC planning grant

of \$50,000 will enable Bay Path College to engage key stakeholders from the life sciences industry, workforce development, and educational institutions to identify the capital needs and other resources needed to fully implement this initiative in the sciences at Bay Path College.

“STCC applauds Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for their investment in life sciences education,” said Dr. Lisa Rapp, Chair of STCC's Biotechnology Department. “STCC's planning grant will allow the college to determine which capital resources we most need to create and furnish up-to-date, industry-aligned, teaching laboratories to educate and train a skilled life sciences workforce for the Commonwealth.”

“We have always been responsive to the workforce development needs of our region. As Bay Path continues to invest and grow our programs in the life sciences, our planning must be conducted in collaboration with the life sciences industry in Massachusetts where our students are most likely to pursue careers, thereby ensuring their success and also enabling the industry as a whole to flourish,” said Dr. Melissa Morriss-Olson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of Bay Path College.

In December, 2012, Lieutenant Governor Murray and the MLSC announced a round of equipment and supply grants for vocational and technical high schools and public high schools in gateway cities, with the idea of furthering STEM education. High schools in Western Massachusetts received more than \$500,000 toward lab renovation and equipment. The six schools in Western Massachusetts, the city or town in which they are located, and the amount of their respective grants are as follows:

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tasked with implementing the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, a 10-year, \$1-billion initiative that was signed into law in June of 2008. The MLSC's mission is to create jobs in the life sciences and support vital scientific research that will improve the human condition. This work includes making financial investments in public and private institutions that are advancing life sciences research, development and commercialization as well as building ties among sectors of the Massachusetts life sciences community. For more information, visit www.masslifesciences.com.