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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BCC, MCLA RECEIVE GRANT FROM MASS DEPT. OF HIGHER ED FOR STEM SUMMER PROGRAM

NORTH ADAMS, MA—Berkshire Community College (BCC) and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) announce that the Mass Department of Higher Education (DHE) has awarded the institutions \$24,980 to establish a STEM Starter Academy: STEM Transfer Summer Bridge Program.

Part of BCC's STEM Starter Academy funding, this grant will make it possible for the institutions to work together to design a summer bridge program that combines in-person classes and online instruction. Classes will be held on MCLA's campus from July 21-26, 2019, and online instruction will take place July 29-Aug. 23, 2019.

Open to 10 transfer students, with five students from BCC as priority participants, this program will aim to provide a successful bridge for students from community colleges into the four-year university environment; create an on-campus community of peer students with activities designed to develop a supportive, collegial environment; enable students to build early relationships with STEM faculty members; introduce students to general campus support and STEM support resources; and enroll students in a three-credit course that will count toward a college degree.

BCC will identify and recruit their students to enroll in the program toward transferring to MCLA for enrollment in one of the STEM majors. This transfer program will also be promoted through the STEM Starter Academy pipeline as will all of the Commonwealth's 2-4 Year STEM Transfer Programs.

"STEM Starter Academy has been at BCC since 2014 and has been assisting incoming STEM students with the transition to college through our summer bridge program. It is very exciting that the Department of Higher Education has expanded the SSA community college grants to provide this same experience for students graduating or transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions," said Connie West, Coordinator of the STEM Starter Academy at BCC. "We are thrilled to partner with MCLA this summer in creating an outstanding bridge experience for transfer students."

"We at MCLA are looking forward to working with our BCC colleagues on the STEM Summer Transfer Bridge Program," said MCLA President James F. Birge. "We know that summer programs like these can increase retention rates and help transfer students acclimate to their new

academic institutions. With so many students at MCLA pursuing STEM-related degrees, it makes perfect sense to host this program on our campus.”

The STEM Starter Academy, managed by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, began in 2014 at all 15 community colleges across the Commonwealth. Championed by House Speaker Robert DeLeo, summer bridge programs allow students the opportunity to get a jump-start on their time at their college or university. For more information, visit <http://www.mass.edu/stem/initiatives/stemacademybridge.asp>.

For more information or to apply for the STEM Summer Transfer Bridge Program, contact MCLA Vice President of Academic Affairs Emily Williams at mcla-ssa@mcla.edu or visit <http://www.mcla.edu/Academics/academicaffairs/index> and click on the STEM Starter Academy tab.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) is the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college and a campus of the Massachusetts state university system. MCLA promotes excellence in learning and teaching, innovative scholarship, intellectual creativity, public service, applied knowledge, and active and responsible citizenship. MCLA graduates are prepared to be practical problem solvers and engaged, resilient global citizens.

For more information, go to www.mcla.edu