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MHIC News

Elms College in Chicopee formally dedicates New Center for Natural and Health Sciences

The Center will provide modern facilities to prepare students for careers in nursing, science and technology

The College of Our Lady of the Elms, a small liberal arts college with a strong focus on health care, formally dedicated its new Center for Natural and Health Sciences (CNHS) on Friday, October 18th. The 3:30 p.m. dedication ceremony was held outside in the Keating Quadrangle on the college campus and attended by approximately 250 people.



The new facility was financed with \$12 million in New Markets Tax Credit financing from MHIC, with **PeoplesBank** and **United Bank** as investors. Financing for the project also came from a capital campaign and from tax-exempt bond proceeds lent to Elms College by a consortium of local banks, led by Chicopee Savings Bank.

MHIC Director of Capital Development Peter Sargent said, "We want to recognize that financing for the new Center would not have been possible without the use of the New Markets Tax Credit Program." MHIC committed a large allocation of its New Markets Tax Credit authority to this project and sold the tax credits to two local banks with a strong community commitment that wanted to participate in the success of this project – PeoplesBank and United Bank.

"Completion of the Center for Natural and Health Sciences realizes a longstanding need for state-of-the-art facilities to support our growing programs in nursing, health and physical sciences and computer information technology," expressed President Mary Reap, IHM, Ph.D. "We are truly grateful to our board of trustees and the many donors who've made this possible."

The dedication ceremony featured remarks from President Reap, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, Paul Stelzer, CNHS Campaign Committee Co-chairs and Board of Trustee member, Cynthia and William Lyons III, Student Government Association President Thomas Engel '15, and the Bishop of Springfield, Most Rev. Timothy J. McDonnell, D.D. who also bestowed blessings upon the new facility.

Located in the heart of the campus, which is in a residential area near downtown Chicopee, the CNHS will provide resources for students studying science, technology, mathematics and nursing, allowing for interdisciplinary opportunities in the classroom, in research and in operating modern analytical instrumentation. The 22,000-square-foot facility features state-of-the-art lecture halls, computer information technology laboratories, biology and chemistry laboratories, and a nursing skills and simulation laboratory that will create an innovative environment simulating clinical and hospital settings.

“At this exciting time of convergence in all areas of science and health, this new facility will provide an environment that fosters cross-discipline collaborations and synergies between nursing, science and technology faculty,” said Vice President of Academic Affairs, Walter Breau, Ph.D.

Elms College broke ground for the CNHS in June of 2012. Classes in the new building will commence with the January 2014 semester.

Elms College is a co-educational, Catholic college offering a liberal arts curriculum, founded in 1928 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, MA. The College grants associate, bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Thirty-seven percent of its undergraduates, most of whom are from the immediate area and have economically- or educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds, are in the nursing program. With the new CNHS, Elms College plans to expand its programs and increase enrollment in the natural and health sciences fields of study by up to 40% within five years.

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