
HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

Bridgewater State College's journey from 1840, when the school was founded with 27 students in a single room in the basement of Town Hall, to the 2003–2004 academic year, when it serves more than 9,000 full-time and part-time students on a 235-acre campus with 34 major buildings, has had a profoundly positive impact on the citizens of this region and the commonwealth.

Today, under the leadership of Dr. Dana Mohler-Faria, the college's 11th president, Bridgewater has grown to become the largest state college in Massachusetts and the fifth largest of the state's 29 public colleges and universities.

Its location in the heart of Southeastern Massachusetts, midway between Boston and Cape Cod, makes BSC a key educational hub that serves the area's 51 cities and towns and more than a million nearby residents with a wide range of programs and services. Bridgewater's 43,000 alumni, more than 80 percent of who live and work in Massachusetts, are a vital part of every sector of the state's economy.

Having just completed a \$70 million new construction and building renovation program, the college's academic, administrative and student housing facilities feature a host of state-of-the-art teaching and learning resources, many of which are used on a regular basis by the businesses, school districts, community organizations and individuals located in this part of the state.

The college's expertise in the field of instructional technology – launched almost a decade ago with the opening of the \$10 million dollar J. Joseph Moakley Center for Technological Applications – is among Bridgewater's most important resources, given society's ever-increasing dependence on advances in this field.

The Moakley Center is the focal point for the college's growing network of technology services to the campus and the region, and continuing progress in the development of technology resources is a major priority. All college buildings are wired for high-speed voice, video and data transmission, and a host of computer-based training programs are offered throughout the year both for the campus community and for educators, business leaders and public service personnel from throughout the region.

Bridgewater's early years were very modest in comparison. One of the oldest public colleges in America, Bridgewater was exclusively a teacher-training institution from its founding well into the 20th

century (the school's name was Bridgewater State Teachers College until 1960).

Enrollment grew slowly through the 19th century but was still approximately 500 students into the late 1950s. A four-year program was first introduced after the Civil War, and in 1921, the college was authorized for the first time to grant a bachelor of education degree, and in 1937, the graduate school was established. For most of its first century-and-quarter, the college's physical plant was confined to the 33 acres surrounding the main administration building.

In the mid-1960s a new liberal arts curriculum was introduced in the state colleges of Massachusetts, and the "Bridgewater State College" was officially adopted in 1965. Under the leadership of Dr. Adrian Rondileau, who took office in 1962 and remained as president for 25 years, the college began experiencing dramatic growth in terms of students, academic programs and new buildings.

In 1989, Dr. Adrian Tinsley became the college's 10th – and first woman – president, and the college's expansion continued during her 13-year tenure. Academically, the college grew significantly. The Tinsley years saw the construction of six new buildings, the addition of a half-dozen new academic programs, and the completion of the college's first endowment campaign, which raised \$10 million for student scholarships and other worthwhile academic projects.

She developed the plans for the creation in 1992 of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education and Allied Studies, and in 1997 she opened the School of Management and Aviation Science. Further, she re-emphasized support for the college's historic commitment to teacher education, and today, as in the past, education is the field of choice for a large number of Bridgewater students.

Also during her tenure, the MBTA completed the construction of the Old Colony line, restoring commuter rail between this part of the state and Boston, with the Bridgewater station located in the heart of the campus, making Bridgewater the only college in New England outside of downtown Boston with a commuter rail station on its campus.

When Dr. Mohler-Faria succeeded Dr. Tinsley in the summer of 2002, he brought with him a full decade of experience at BSC, having spent the previous 11 years as her vice president for administration and finance. At his inaugural in October of that year, he said, "We have important plans for Bridgewater and its commitment to offering high quality, affordable education, and we have equally important plans for how we will repay the people and communities around us for all the gifts that we have been given."