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BHCC President Speaks for Community Colleges on National Public Radio

By Bunker Hill Community College
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BOSTON, Feb. 5, 2014 -- /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Bunker Hill Community College President Pam Y. Eddinger described the increasingly critical role played by community colleges today on WBUR's National Public Radio program On Point with host Tom Ashbrook. Noting that half of today's undergraduates are now enrolled in the nation's community colleges, Eddinger said community colleges have become "the anchor of the future." Community college presidents from California and Texas also took part in the discussion.

Listen to the replay of the show at www.bhcc.mass.edu/president/npr-2-5-14.

With so much depending on the success of community colleges in higher education today, Eddinger said that community colleges are broadening the role they play in the lives of students. "We're dealing with first generation or immigrant students," she said. "Some come to us without a lot of resources." Some come hungry. "We have a company that donates bread to us every morning, and that bread is gone by 10 a.m." Nationally known programs such as Single Stop USA and LifeMap are providing students at Bunker Hill Community College and elsewhere with the social services—including assistance with housing, transportation and food—as well as the academic and career support needed for their success in college and beyond.

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dialogue today stresses job training. "We have to overcome the rhetoric" and address the need for a well-rounded and flexible workforce, she said, pointing out that people change jobs six or more times in their careers and must "learn how to learn." Eddinger said that ultimately a job is "a means to an end." That end is empowering individuals to participate in and shape their society, she explained. But, she added, "We cannot underestimate the power of having that first job."

Reacting to a question about community college funding, which has been declining in many parts of the country in recent decades, Eddinger said, "With the national spotlight on community colleges, most of our states are looking at the role [community colleges] play in higher education. I'm seeing a return in the conversation and in actual dollars. I hope it persists."

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Bunker Hill Community College is the largest community college in Massachusetts. The College enrolls more than 14,000 students on two campuses and at three satellite locations. BHCC is one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in Massachusetts. Sixty-seven percent of the students are people of color and more than half of BHCC's students are women. The College also enrolls more than 800 international students who come from approximately 100 countries and speak more than 75 languages.

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