

THE COLLEGE AND ITS HISTORY

Since our inception as the Normal School in North Adams in 1894, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) has provided educational access and exceptional learning opportunities to generations of students and alumni. Over the years, MCLA has evolved to meet the challenges and needs of changing times. In 1932, the Normal School became the State Teachers College of North Adams, reflecting the increased importance of education as an academic discipline. In 1960, we changed our name to North Adams State College and expanded our focus to include professional degrees in business administration and computer science. In 1997, with eyes focused on the horizon of a new century, the College assumed a unique mission within the state university system as Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, the public liberal arts college for the Commonwealth.

Today, MCLA continues to innovate. We guide students as they develop critical thinking, communication and leadership skills both in class and through a range of high-impact experiences. Applied learning always has been part of what the College provided to students; for many, the teacher practicum was an opportunity to learn by doing and to take what they learned into the classroom and out into the field. Today, teacher preparation opportunities exist alongside arts management internships with local cultural organizations, undergraduate research in collaboration with faculty members, travel courses and study abroad, community service projects, and leadership positions in clubs, organizations and athletics teams. These activities enable students to enhance academics with practical experience and prepare them for graduate study or to launch their careers in whatever field their passion leads them.

As the economy continues to evolve, MCLA expands its majors and programs to address critical needs in the marketplace. New degree programs include those in art, arts management, chemistry, and political science and public policy. Each of our degree programs is delivered in small classes by faculty who know their students well and challenge them to excel. Our newest graduate program, the Master of Business Administration, offers a flexible curriculum for working professionals that prepares them to advance in their careers as leaders and innovators.

To support expanded programs in the sciences and the teaching and learning needs of the 21st century, MCLA has recently opened the Feigenbaum Center for Science and Innovation. This state-of-the-art facility supports learning and research for students, faculty and community members, and connects the College to important developments in the life sciences—one of the keys to the competitive advantage of the County and the Commonwealth.

The proof of MCLA's success can be found in the example set by our alumni. They are distinguished teachers, civic, community and business leaders, journalists, scientists, activists and entrepreneurs. They are proud of the education they received, loyal to their alma mater, and dedicated to its continued success.

Though changing times present new challenges and opportunities, the essential nature of MCLA remains constant: a place that delivers a high-quality, affordable public liberal arts education in an environment that supports the development of intellectual and practical skills, promotes scholarship and inquiry, and challenges students to model personal, social and civic responsibility.