



# News Release

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## **New, first-of-its-kind, high-tech NMCC Academic Success Center opens doors and opportunity with start of spring semester**

**Aroostook County** - Students returning to the Northern Maine Community College campus after the break between semesters are being greeted with a new high-tech center and service designed specifically to provide them with the tools they need to succeed in the classroom.

The Academic Success Center is a project that has been in the works at NMCC for nearly a year. A first-of-its-kind in the Maine Community College System to use an electronic referencing and registration process, the initiative was launched to ensure students have as convenient access as possible to the wide array of comprehensive tutoring and supplemental instruction programs offered on campus.

“The primary reason we have worked to create this new center is to enhance student persistence and retention,” said William Egeler, NMCC dean of students. “The work completed to this point and the efforts that continue will create a more student-centered approach that will provide us with the data we need for continuous quality improvement.”

One of the more immediate benefits realized as the center goes on line will be a more immediate and efficient processing of information.

“The key to the Academic Success Center is the communication that is facilitated between faculty and students and the center itself,” said Dan Hotham, a veteran NMCC faculty member who was asked by College President Timothy Crowley to lead the task force of faculty and staff members charged with the center’s creation.

“The new center is designed to assist all students either individually or in groups and to work in conjunction with faculty to provide services and strategies to personalize, fortify and enhance classroom instruction in order to promote academic success,” said Hotham.

Integral to the operations of the Academic Success Center is the new technology-driven system that follows the student through the process. It begins when an instructor or College counselor completes an electronic form which details the specific areas in which a student is in need of assistance. The record then becomes part of a database accessed by tutors in the center.

When the student visits the Academic Success Center for assistance, he or she signs in by swiping his or her College identification card and the information specific to that student appears on a touch screen monitor. At that point, the student is provided with the assistance in the areas identified. Students can also visit the center for tutoring or supplemental instruction without a faculty reference and log-in using the touch screen technology.

Services offered by staff in the center include feedback on writing assignments, review for exams, help with homework assignments and sessions that focus on improving study skills.

“After students receive the assistance for which they visited the center, the tutors report the information back electronically to the faculty member who recommended the supplemental instruction. This really helps us close the communication loop. It is a clear method of both identifying who is using the center and if the assistance they received was effective,” said Hotham.

Aside from the high-tech referral and registration process, the Academic Success Center also houses a new PLATO Learning Center. The computer stations, set up in a central location, allow students to log-in to complete specific exercises in a select subject area. Upon completion of the work, the student receives immediate feedback.

The new technology may lend itself to NMCC’s Academic Success Center standing apart, but the new addition represents one of a number of changes implemented on the campus in recent months to bring the new facility on-line.

The task force has been working to incorporate a series of recommendations made to the College last spring by a student support services expert who visited the campus and met with faculty and staff to better understand what infrastructure existed and to identify what was needed to enhance those services.

Among the areas that have seen improvements or changes include a revision to what was previously known as the learning center’s mission, a renovation of the physical space, the creation of a visible administrative space, new signage, and the establishment of a formal training program for all tutors.

The work of the Academic Success Center task force will continue in the spring semester as the group examines recommendations for future staffing for the facility, looks to strengthen ties between the center and faculty, and develops a comprehensive assessment plan.

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*Northern Maine Community College administrative secretary to the vice president Joyce Campbell shows entering student Emery Lincoln of Houlton how to use the touch-screen technology to “sign in” to the newly created Academic Success Center on the NMCC campus. The high-tech center is located just off the main lobby of the Christie Building.*