



# News Release

*Contact:*  
**Jason Parent**  
Development and  
College Relations Office  
33 Edgemont Drive  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
Phone: (207) 768-2808  
Fax: (207) 760-1101  
jparent@nmcc.edu

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## **Student Access to Academic Resources Grows with Addition of Two New Professionals at NMCC**

*Aroostook County* - Students at Northern Maine Community College will have access to greater academic support services with the addition of two new professionals at College. Gail Roy is taken on the charge of running the NMCC library and media center area, while Laura McPherson is now heading the campus' new Academic Success Center.

NMCC renovated what was previously known as the Learning Center last year based on recommendations made to the College by a student support services expert. The consultant 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. As a result, the Academic Success Center was created, with a revised 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.

While the original creation and initial operation of the Center was coordinated by Dan Hotham, an instructor with more than 30 years of experience at the College, it was determined that a permanent person was needed to coordinate tutoring, work with instructors regarding referrals, assist students and handle other center details.

McPherson, who has been an adjunct instructor at the College since 2001 as well as a tutor in the center, is the ideal choice for filling this new position. "Laura brings both experience and expertise to this new position, as well as a genuine passion for helping students fulfill their academic potential," said Alan Punches, NMCC vice president/academic dean. "She understands that students, whether they be highly academically successful or more academically challenged, learn differently and, therefore, require different levels and types of academic support and/or intervention. The innovation with which she provides these services will be fascinating to watch and learn from as the Academic Success Center continues its comprehensive support of our students."

“I’m very excited about this opportunity,” said McPherson. “I’ll have a chance to work with many students, helping them become stronger students and helping them to set their course. I like what I do a lot—working with students and listening to them one on one.”

One of McPherson’s goals is to change the perception of the Academic Success Center as a place only for students needing developmental or remedial help. “This is a place where students can come to sit and study, to review for exams, to get questions answered, to get help with their homework. I really see it as kind of an academic research center.”

In addition to assisting students, McPherson works closely with the College’s instructors. While past practices provided no feedback to instructors once they referred a student to the former Learning Center for assistance, the new Academic Success Center now utilizes a technology-driven system that follows the student through the process. Through a combination of contact with McPherson as well as access to electronic data, instructors know which of their students have come to the center for assistance, what topics are reviewed in a given session and how the sessions are going.

McPherson also works closely with staff from the counseling office as she looks for ways to help students attain their goals. “I am part of the team making it a little bit better for our students—trying to improve their skills across the board.”

McPherson is a 1986 graduate of the University of Maine at Presque Isle, earning a bachelor of science in elementary education. She is currently taking her last class to complete her master’s in science in education from the University of New England and will graduate in December. In addition to her duties as coordinator of the Academic Success Center, McPherson plans to continue teaching developmental reading and architectural history courses at the College in an adjunct capacity.

Another key new member of the team helping NMCC students is Gail Roy, assistant dean of learning resources. Roy began her duties heading the College’s library staff and services last week and has already met many students and done outreach in one class. “I am hoping within the next few weeks to get out and meet even more students and faculty, providing classroom presentations and library tours,” said Roy. “I want to show people what we have in this wonderful facility and how the staff can help them find what they need quickly.”

Roy describes the library as a vibrant, beautiful facility that is an open and comfortable environment for library patrons. “The physical space is already wonderful, and I want to build on that strong foundation to establish a more welcoming environment. I want to create an atmosphere where people really look forward to coming to the library.”

Roy also plans to increase the visibility of the library. “It is not enough that patrons know we exist; they must be reminded that our primary charge is to satisfy their informational needs wherever and whenever they occur, in a way that inspires and helps them to investigate further,” said Roy. One way in which she plans to do this, in addition to her classroom visits, is the creation of a library blog and other updates to the library’s web page.

Since the inception of the College’s library in the mid-1960s, there have only been three individuals to lead those services prior to Roy. “From Margaret Coffin’s efforts over a nearly 30 year period to establish the library and continue to meet the growing needs of the institution, to Greg Curtis’ work to bring the College into the electronic age and to Peggy O’Kane who was integral in not only the establishment of the library in this wonderful facility but in making sure the library met students and faculty needs during NM’s transition to a comprehensive community college—they each did an outstanding job in their own right. Their efforts have gotten us to where we are today. One of my goals is to build on the work and success of these three individuals,” said Roy.

“We were lucky to identify for this position an individual with Gail's commitment to service to the patrons of our library facilities. She brings to the College an experienced, discerning and creative eye for providing library services to our faculty and students, services which extend well beyond those of simply checking out books and journals,” said PUNCHES. “I have every confidence that Gail will help lead the College to the next level of full library science and information literacy.”

Before joining the College, Roy was the reference librarian at Turner Memorial Library in Presque Isle, where she provided tours, instruction and reference service to a variety of community members, including college, high school and middle school students. Roy also has five years experience as first the library assistant and then the health sciences librarian at Danbury Hospital in Connecticut.

Roy earned her bachelor of arts in history from the University of Texas at Austin in 1985 and her master of library science from Southern Connecticut State University in 2002. She lives in Presque Isle with her husband, Earl.

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*Gail Roy has joined the Northern Maine Community College staff as the new assistant dean of learning resources.*



*Laura McPherson has been named as coordinator of the College's Academic Success Center.*