

College in Central Mass: Why go elsewhere?

Lots of great schools here to choose from

By Betsy Lawson

When it comes to choosing a college, lifelong Worcester residents Stanley and Eleanor Wolosz believe the right choice is close at hand. And they should know — all eight of their children graduated from local colleges. Four attended their parents' alma mater, Worcester State College, two went to the College of the Holy Cross and one each to Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and Anna Maria College.

"With a large family, somehow or other they all learned to help themselves, that you can't wait for somebody to do everything for you," Stanley said of the winning combination of scholarships, part-time jobs and frugal living that saw each child through to graduation.

Their oldest son, Stanley, set the pace by earning grades good enough for admission — and scholarship — to Holy Cross, where he lived in the dorms. He also worked nights loading trucks at Polar Beverages, sometimes coming home for breakfast.

"Our house is right next to Holy Cross and often the boys [a second son later attended] were closer to home than the dining hall," Eleanor said.

For many years, there were three children in college at once. Some chose to live on campus; others at home. The only problem with the arrangement, the couple recalled, was the year two children graduated from separate colleges — on the same day.

"I went to Worcester State with my daughter. Eleanor went to WPI with our son," Stanley said.

Except for Stanley, who is serving in the military in Missouri, all the Wolosz (pronounced Wallace) children have settled locally and are either working in their chosen professions or are at home with young children. Stanley and Eleanor are satisfied that area colleges have served



their family well.

"I don't see why you'd look other places when you have everything here," Eleanor said.

Mark P. Bilotta, CEO of the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, couldn't agree more. The Consortium is a not-for-profit association of 13 local institutions that have been working together for close to 40 years to advance higher education in the greater Worcester area.

Bilotta believes one of the reasons the Consortium has been so successful is that each member institution has carved its own niche in terms of academic program offerings. There's a medical school, a school of veterinary medicine, a college of pharmacy and health sciences, a polytechnic institute as well as traditional liberal arts schools and community colleges.

Because there's a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, the Consortium is able to maintain a master database of all the programs offered at the various institutions. And while Fitchburg State College, Wachusett Community College and Bay Path College are technically outside the Consortium's immediate geography, all work together to strengthen the appeal of Central Mass as a destination of choice for today's college students. Students who come here love Central Mass for everything it has to offer and also for its location, less than an hour from major ski areas, Fenway Park and the ocean. Parents love to send their kids to Central Mass for those same reasons and this region's relative safety compared to bigger cities.

Each one of the 16 schools described below warrants an article of its own to fully

flush out its character, academic offerings and campus experience — but, alas, space does not allow. So what follows are short snippets, of sorts, that you might hear student guides saying during a tour of the campuses they've come to call their own.

For more complete information, visit the colleges' websites. Or, better still, visit for yourself. You'll be amazed by the breadth and depth of the choices right in your own backyard.

Anna Maria College, Paxton

Did you know? A television newsman called it "The small college with a big heart" while reporting on the College's efforts to provide disaster relief to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Founded in 1946 by the Sisters of St. Anne, Anna Maria College continues today as a Catholic institution. Its 180-acre campus is eight miles from downtown Worcester and received an award as the "Safest College Campus in the Nation." It offers associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees as well as a number of certificate programs. www.annamaria.edu

Assumption College, Worcester

Did you know? On June 9, 1953, the College, located in the Greendale section of Worcester, was struck by a devastating tornado. While the Preparatory School branch of the campus was retained in the reconstructed buildings, a new 95-acre campus was built on Salisbury Street.

Assumption College was founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, a religious order of men who were then running schools in other countries, particularly in France and Belgium. Until the mid-1950s, the enrollment was primarily Franco-American, and the curriculum was

bilingual. Women were admitted in 1969; three years later the College welcomed its first lay president. Today, Assumption enrolls some 2,100 undergraduates in the day college and approximately 700 graduate and continuing education students. www.assumption.edu

Atlantic Union College, Lancaster

Did you know? U.S. News & World Report has ranked AUC the third most diverse liberal arts college in the Northeast. Of the 513 degree seeking undergraduates in last year's class, 53 percent were African American, 22 percent Caucasian, 23 percent Latino, and five percent other. Of this group, 18 percent are international students.

Atlantic Union College is a small Seventh-day Adventist liberal arts college. Its original purpose is still its primary purpose: to help young people of the Atlantic Union Conference prepare for fruitful lives within the Church and in the wider society. Of the range of majors offered, one in four students chooses nursing. www.auc.edu

Bay Path College, Sturbridge

Did you know you can get a degree by just

going to school on Saturdays?

Bay Path College is a four-year private women's college in Longmeadow that has opened a Central Mass campus in Tantasqua High. More than 150 women are currently enrolled in the intense Saturday-only program where an associate's degree can be earned in 19 months and a bachelor's degree in 43 months. www.baypath.edu

Becker College, Worcester, Leicester

X marks the spot! The first perfect game in major league baseball was pitched by J. Lee Richmond of the Worcesters on June 12, 1880. A marker on the grounds of the Weller Academic Center (bordered by Sever Street) shows where the fans' entrance to the baseball field used to be as a part of the Worcester Agricultural Fairgrounds.

Becker College comprises two separate campuses located six miles apart, each with its own dormitories, library, dining hall and academic facilities. The Leicester campus began as an academy in 1784 — the 19th oldest campus in the country. The Worcester campus was founded in 1887. In 1974, Becker and Leicester began working together to

expand academic offerings and provide students with more social and recreational opportunities. The two formally joined in 1977. The College offers 22 bachelor-degree-level major fields of study and 19 associate degree programs. Its student body has grown to a full-time enrollment of more than 1,000. www.becker.edu

Clark University, Worcester

Did you know? It's hard for a local not to know that Clark alumnus and professor Robert Goddard is considered the father of the space age for developing and launching the first liquid-fueled rocket. But Clark was also scientific launch pad for A.A. Michelson, who first measured the speed of light, and arctic explorer Paul Siple who figured out how to measure the wind-chill factor. Burr.

Clark is a teaching and research institution founded in 1887. Clark claims many firsts in the exploration of intellectual frontiers, especially psychology. The University's first president, G. Stanley Hall founded the American Psychological Association. Close to one in five of today's undergraduates major in psychology. Students and faculty are encouraged to follow their intellectual curiosity outside



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- Master of Pastoral Ministry
- BA in Paralegal Studies
- Associate of Paralegal Studies
- Certificate in Paralegal Studies
- Master of Occupational and Environmental Health & Safety
- Master of Justice Administration
- Master of Criminal Justice
- BA in Criminal Justice

the classroom to seek innovative solutions to real-world problems and to create positive change through social action. More than 50 percent of Clark students volunteer for community service. www.clarku.edu

The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

Did you know? When the College held its first Commencement in 1849, the valedictorian was James Healy—the son of a slave.

Founded in 1843 by Jesuits, The College of the Holy Cross devotes itself

exclusively to undergraduate education. Enrollment is approximately 2,700. Top-ranked nationally by widely regarded sources, Holy Cross holds itself to its own high standards of teaching, learning, and research. The 174-acre campus is on a hilltop and strives to be an integral part of the community. www.holycross.edu

Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg

Did you know? CenterStage at FSC offers a wide variety of cultural events open to the general public. These include performances by national and international artists, a New

England Writers Series, an Electric Films series, a Laureate Lecture, dance workshops and more.

Established in 1894 by the state Legislature, Fitchburg State has expanded from a single structure on High Street to 33 buildings on 31 acres in the heart of downtown Fitchburg. The campus embodies the quintessential “New England” setting of stately old brick buildings lined around a grassy quadrangle. Students say the food’s not bad either and that the College helps promote a sense of community among both dorm dwellers and commuter students. www.fsc.edu

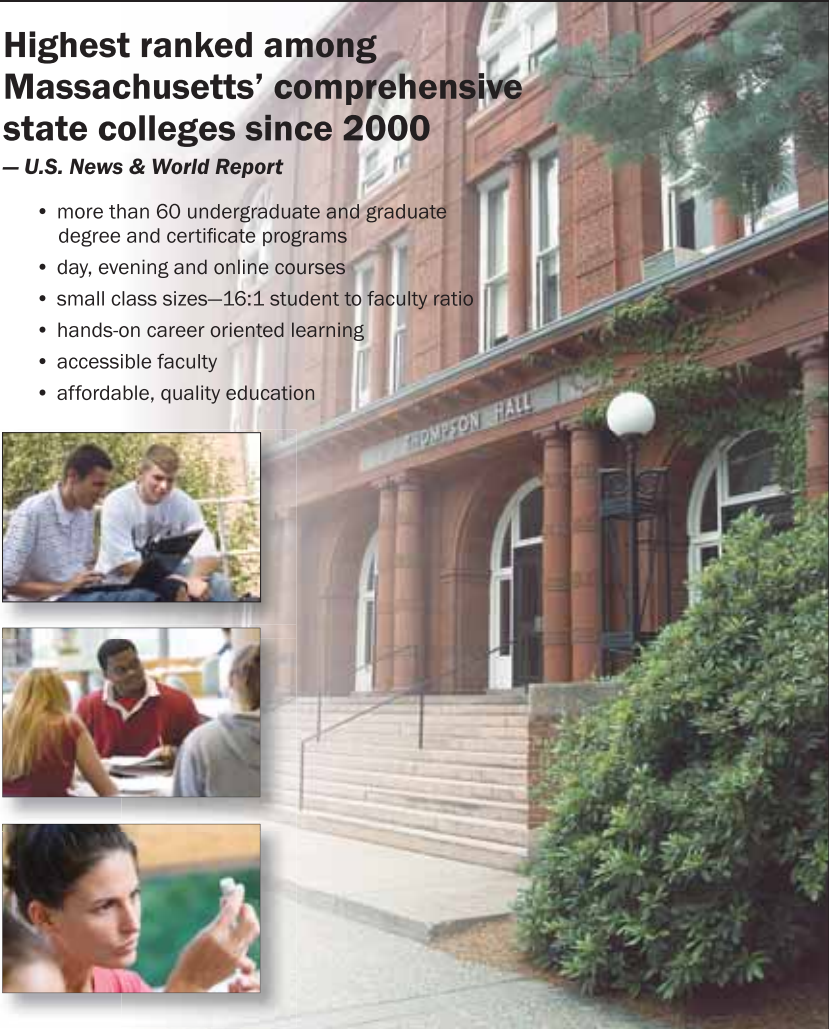
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Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Worcester

Did you know? In partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, MCPHS sponsors MassMedLine, a free information hotline to help state residents obtain prescription medication at the lowest possible price. A staff of 10 pharmacists and pharmacy students provide live (not recorded) information at toll free 866- 633-1617.

Founded in 1823, MCPHS is a private college offering graduate, professional and undergraduate degrees in the health sciences. The Worcester campus was dedicated and admitted its first class in 2000. Together with its campuses in Boston and Manchester, N.H, MCPHS is the largest college of pharmacy in the country with student enrollment of nearly 3,200 students, drawn from 35 states and 34 countries. www.mcphs.edu

Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner

Did you know? Gardner Mayor Stephen J. Erickson proclaimed the week of November 4, 1976, as Theatre Week to honor the first production at the Fine Arts Center at Mount Wachusett Community College. Now in its 30th year, Theatre at the Mount has presented more than 220 plays to 500,000 patrons.

Founded in 1963, MWCC is an accredited, public, two-year institution that offers 45 associate’s degree and certificate programs to 2,000 students. The 269-acre main campus is in Gardner, with satellite sites in Leominster, Fitchburg, Athol and Devens. “The Mount” welcomes partnerships to improve local under-performing elementary and secondary schools and seeks alliances to deal with structural economic problems affecting area communities. www.mwcc.edu

Nichols College, Dudley

Imagine that! A tight-knit Marlboro family holds the record for the longest uninterrupted stretch with a student at Nichols College – 10 years! All four Ankstitus brothers have received their undergraduate degrees from Nichols, and two have gone on to earn MBAs from Nichols as well.

The original Nichols Academy was founded by Amasa Nichols, a wealthy Dudley industrialist, and funded in part by Samuel Slater “the father of cotton manufacture in the United States,” who owned mills in Webster. It closed its doors in 1909. Then in 1931, James Lawson Conrad founded Nichols Junior College, the first junior college exclusively for men in the East. It became a four-year college in 1958 and, in 1970, women were again admitted. www.nichols.edu

Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester

Go Chiefs! The men’s basketball team had an outstanding 2006-2007 season, earning the College its first appearance at the NJCAA Division III National Tournament by winning the Region 21 title.

Established in 1963 to provide access to higher education for those in Central Mass, QCC’s tuition remains the lowest in the region at \$129 per credit for state residents; \$335 for non-residents. Enrollment has grown from 300 to more than 13,000 full and part-time day and evening students. QCC offers five associate degrees and four certificates, as well as more than 100 courses online. In addition to the 52-acre main campus in north Worcester, the college has locations at the Senior Center in Worcester (hotel and restaurant management), Blackstone Valley Regional Technical High School in Upton (automotive technology), and Southbridge High School (evening classes offerings). A wide variety of non-credit courses and seminars are offered through its Division of Continuing Education at its downtown College at CitySquare campus. www.qcc.edu

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts U., North Grafton

Did you know? Tufts operates a Pet Loss Support Hotline to aid those grieving the loss of a pet—(508) 839-7966.

Founded in 1978, Tufts is the only veterinary school in New England. The 585-acre campus includes three teaching hospitals where more than 28,000 animal patients are treated annually. There’s also a 250-acre working farm. www.tufts.edu/vet/

UMass Medical School, Worcester

Did you know? Dr. Craig Mello was awarded the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physiology for Medicine—together with Dr. Andrew Fire of Stanford University—for their discoveries related to RNA interference.

The state’s first and only public medical school was founded in 1962 to provide affordable, high-quality medical education to state residents and to increase the number of primary care physicians practicing here. UMass Medical School also collaborates with public agencies to improve access and delivery of health care to at-risk and uninsured populations. www.umassmed.edu

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester

Imagine that! Dean Kamen, who attended WPI but never graduated, invented The Segway PT, the two-wheeled, self-balancing electric

transportation device.

Since its founding in 1865 as the Worcester County Free Institute of Industrial Science, WPI has always strived to combine classroom learning with practical application. This approach has fueled generations of problem solvers whose ideas and inventions have changed the world. A short list of those include the Air-Bag Safety System, first commercial radio station and stainless steel. WPI’s 80-acre campus is set on a hilltop in a residential area of the city. The male-female ratio is 3:1, but WPI has initiated programs to encourage and promote women in the sciences. www.wpi.edu

Worcester State College, Worcester

Did you know? On permanent display in the Ghosh Center lobby is a refractor telescope made by one of the world’s greatest telescope makers, Alvan Clark, and purchased by the Normal School in 1878.

The State Normal School at Worcester was founded in 1874 with the sole mission of training classroom teachers. It has retained — and expanded on this mission — as it first changed its name to Worcester State Teachers College in 1932 and, finally, to Worcester State College in 1963. It now offers an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees to its some 5,500 full- and part-time students. The College also runs the Intensive English Language Institute to provide English training to immigrants and the international population as well as the Latino Education Institute that provides services to support the educational achievement of Latino students. www.worcester.edu ●

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