

## AMHERST

# Big boost on campus

State nears offering match for public college donations

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Donors to endowment funds at state universities and community colleges, including University of Massachusetts campuses, could see their dollars partially matched under a supplemental budget pending on Beacon Hill.

"Their money goes further, and who doesn't want their money to go further," said Erica Broman, vice president for institutional advancement at Westfield State University and executive director of the Westfield State Foundation.

The Public Higher Education Endowment Incentive Program could make a comeback under a supplemental budget that is nearing passage. The incentive — which existed from 1997 until the recession-starved budget killed it in 2007 — provides a 50-cent match for every dollar donated.

That means a \$100 donation becomes \$150. A \$1 million gift becomes \$1.5 million, said Christopher Dunn, executive director of government affairs for UMass Amherst. For example, an endowed professorship at UMass requires a \$1.5 million gift right now, Dunn said. With the incentive, that could be \$1 million.

Back when the program was in place, the UMass system received \$54 million in incentives. That leveraged \$100 million from private donors. Today, that money has grown to \$275 million and represents a quarter of the total endowment. Money earned on that endowment investment helps fund UMass.

"It was a game-changer in being able to invest in our faculty and financial aid," Dunn

said. "It's still felt today on the campus."

UMass Amherst thanked local lawmakers for their support.

"We deeply appreciate the support of House Speaker Robert DeLeo, Senate President Karen Spilka, their leadership teams and, of course, our local delegation of Representatives Mindy Domb, Natalie Blais, Dan Carey, Paul Mark and Lindsay Sabadosa as well as Senator Jo Comerford," said UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy in a statement.

"This creative approach provides incentives for fundraising that will enable UMass Amherst to engage more powerfully with our supporters and will have a lasting impact on student costs, academic achievement and improving research."

The money from 1997-2007 fueled the establishment of more than 70 endowed professorships and chairs and numerous scholarships for students, UMass said in a news release.

The current bills call for \$20 million in match money to be used by the end of the current fiscal year in July 2020. It breaks down as \$10 million for the UMass campuses, \$5 million for the nine state universities including Westfield State, and \$5 million for the community colleges.

"This will be an enormous help when it comes to fundraising," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of institutional advancement at Holyoke Community College and executive director of the HCC Foundation. "So really now is the time to see your dollar go further through this program."

The HCC endowment is \$13.7 million and much of it provides scholarships.

"Endowments have become more important than ever because of the challenges facing

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higher education today," she said.

Broman was working in fundraising at Holyoke Community College the last time the incentive program was offered. Westfield State's endowment is \$14 million, she said.

"We need to play catch-up with the private universities in terms of creating a culture of philanthropy on our campuses," Broman said.

Westfield State's share of the match money works out to \$550,000 — \$5 million divided by nine campuses, Broman said.

"I know we'll be working very hard to use that incentive," she said.