Monty Tech Superintendent Sheila Harrity to Lead MAVA Extended Campus Program

MARLBOROUGH – Sheila M. Harrity, Superintendent of Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School in Fitchburg and vice-chair of the state Board of Higher Education, will lead an initiative designed to help vocational teachers and administrators earn their professional licenses and college degrees.

Dr. Harrity has been appointed to serve as Coordinator of the Extended Campus Program run by the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA) in cooperation with Fitchburg State University and Westfield State University. The announcement was made by Ernest F. Houle, President of MAVA’s Board of Directors and the Superintendent-Director at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School.

“Those of us who have worked with Sheila know that she is a talented, driven, and intelligent leader,” said Mr. Houle. “She understands higher education and knows what it’s going to take to help our teachers, students and our schools. MAVA is very happy to have her join our team.”

Dr. Harrity was one of five candidates for the job. She was recommended by a screening committee. Her appointment was ratified by the MAVA Officers.

Dr. Harrity will succeed Robert Packard, who held the position for many years and is retiring. Mr. Packard served as an administrator at Joseph P. Keefe Technical School in Framingham. Most recently, he held the position of Cooperative Placement Coordinator at Keefe Tech.

“I really think Sheila is the right person for this job,” said Dr. Heidi Riccio, Treasurer of MAVA’s Board of Directors and the Superintendent at Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School. “We already have a great program. Sheila is going to make it even better.”

The Extended Campus Program is run by MAVA for the benefit of its members. It offers graduate and undergraduate courses for vocational licensing for teachers and administrators. It can also offer postgraduate courses.

Courses are offered during the fall, spring, and summer. On average, MAVA offers 10-17 courses per semester, with an enrollment ranging from 200-350 students per semester.

The Extended Campus Program complements the work of MAVA Leadership Academy I and Leadership Academy II as well as other professional development activities offered through MAVA.

Students who take courses can come from regional vocational technical schools, agricultural schools, independent schools, or traditional high schools offering state-approved vocational-technical programs. Students who work in one of the MAVA “cohort” schools pay discounted rates for their tuition.

In her new position, Dr. Harrity will coordinate and execute all activities related to the MAVA Extended Campus Program, including selection and sequencing of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate courses; recruiting, selection, oversight, and evaluation of instructors; creation and billing
of “cohorts” of schools to pay for instructors; and coordination of all activities with Fitchburg State and Westfield State University. She also will serve as the program’s public “face” and official spokesperson.

Dr. Harrity has served as Superintendent at Monty Tech since 2014. Before that, she served as Principal at Worcester Technical High School. Since 2015, she has served on the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education as its vice-chair.

She received a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Northeastern University, a Master’s in Early Childhood Education from Worcester State University, a Master’s in Moderate Special Needs from Assumption College, and a B.A. in Social Work from Providence College.

She has served as an adjunct member of the faculty at Fitchburg State University since 2016.

MAVA, the professional association that runs the Extended Campus Program, advocates for high-quality vocational education in Massachusetts.

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