

SEACOAST

N.H. Technical College appoints interim president

O'Donnell aims to attract more students to campus

By Kiana Minkle
Staff Writer

John O'Donnell, after 25 years working in community colleges, has been appointed interim president for New Hampshire Community Technical College, while the college conducts a national search for a new president to be hired in August.

As interim president, O'Donnell said he hopes to help bring more students to the campus. In an effort to reach his goal, he plans on increasing the liberal arts program to broaden the appeal to prospective students.

O'Donnell was born in Scotland and lived there till he was 10 years old. Then, one by one, he and his family immigrated to New York City. He attended Queens College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in history. Then he moved to Boston and attended Boston College, graduating with a master's degree in education, as well as a doctorate in psychology.

He loved New England so much, O'Donnell said, that he decided to stay.

O'Donnell lives in Beverly, Mass., with his wife, Ellen. The couple have three children: twins Caitlin and Patrick, 17, and Shelagh, 12.

"As first children, I didn't realize how hard it was until looking back," O'Donnell said about raising twins. "Very often people think of them as a unit, but they are so different."

He said one of his hobbies is spending time with his family by playing sports or running. Every year, his family runs the Falmouth road race; this year, his youngest daughter will join them.

"As a family, we try to mesh our lives and do our hobbies together," O'Donnell said.

Ellen is an attorney who also teaches at a community college coordinating a program in paralegal education.

His sister lives in Beverly as well, and he has a brother who lives on Long Island.

After graduating, he worked in psychiatric hospitals for a while. Then he moved on to become the director of counseling service at North Shore Community College in Danvers, Mass., from 1977 to 1983. It was there he first realized the effect community colleges could have on changing and advancing people's lives, which led him to stay in the educational field.

He also has extensive undergraduate and graduate teaching experience.

Glen DuBois, commissioner of the New Hampshire Community Technical College System, called O'Donnell awhile back and asked him if he wanted to

take the position as interim president. DuBois and the other board of trustee members were reportedly impressed by O'Donnell's credentials, especially while he was working as assistant dean for student development at North Shore Community College, where he helped build a national model for community colleges to bring students into the college, and help them stay and succeed.

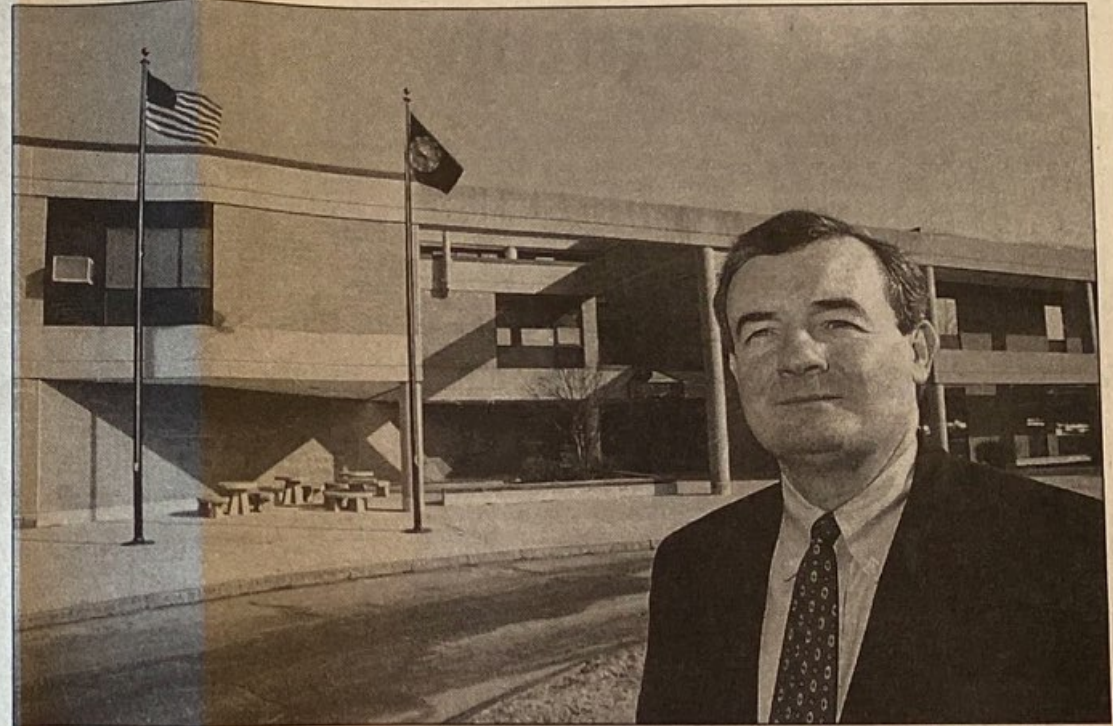
The previous president, Jane Power Kilcoyne, was hired as director of the NHCTCS Foundation and Alumni Association.

O'Donnell said he is interested in seeing the college grow and evolve into becoming a comprehensive technical college.

New Hampshire Community Technical College was first established in 1945 as two separate colleges in Stratham and Manchester. The two merged in 1996. They have campuses in Manchester, Stratham, Derry and at the Pease International Tradeport.

"We believe there's a very new economy out there that demands lifelong learning. We believe that the combination of our programs, delivering formats and support services, make us a college that could change your life and enrich your career potential," O'Donnell said.

More than 3,500 students attend the school. There are 30-33 certificate and degree programs



Staff photo by Rich Beauchesne

John O'Donnell will assume the role of interim president of the New Hampshire Community Technical College in Stratham for the next several months.

offered at the Stratham and Pease campuses.

"It started as a vocational college; and as (the) economy grew, they added programs that had a sophisticated technical emphasis," O'Donnell said.

The college focus is to be a regional community technical college, O'Donnell said, with programs that range from ac-

counting to welding.

"Our aim is to provide personalized teaching and support services that allow students to succeed," O'Donnell said. "Education is changing as technology enters every industry."

The college hopes to attract students straight from high school who want technical training so they can go directly

into the work force. The college also provides help for corporations where workers need more training, and it will work with the companies on-site.

"Dr. DuBois has asked me to consider applying for the position," O'Donnell said, "and I will look at that five months from now and look at personal and professional aspects of that decision."