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Press Release

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BCCC Life Sciences Institute Director Kathleen Kennedy Norris to Receive Association of Community College Trustees Northeast Region Faculty Award



BALTIMORE – Dr. Kathleen Kennedy Norris, director of the Baltimore City Community College Life Sciences Institute (LSI) at the University of Maryland BioPark and coordinator of the BCCC Biotechnology Program, has been chosen to receive the 2012 Northeast Region Faculty Award of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). The award is presented annually to outstanding faculty members nationwide as it recognizes the importance of teaching and learning.

Dr. Norris is an inspiring force to her students as she seeks to transform learners into doers. In Dr. Norris's classrooms, students master laboratory skills in biochemistry, molecular biology and genetics while discovering the fundamentals of DNA through molecular cloning and analysis. Working under the watchful eye of one of the nation's most experienced bioscience educators, they uncover the possible determinants of disease, as well as its deterrents.

In many respects Dr. Norris was the driving force behind the creation of the Life Sciences Institute (LSI), which partners BCCC, the University of Maryland, and some of

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the world's leading bioscience firms who are also located at the BioPark. BCCC students learn in close proximity to top-notch university and private industry researchers, an unprecedented cross-pollination of academic and 'real-world' work experience. As a result of Dr. Norris's efforts, 58 students have been placed in paid internships and 32 in full-time STEM-related jobs over the last two years.

Dr. Norris is no stranger to national recognition. She presented the LSI at the 2010 Bellwether Awards of the Community College Futures Assembly – the prestigious venue which recognizes “outstanding and innovative programs and practices that are successfully leading community colleges into the future.” Dr. Norris is also the recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development's Excellence Award.

“Dr. Norris is a great teacher and pioneer who puts students first,” said Dr. Carolane Williams, BCCC president. “LSI is the perfect way to address the longstanding underrepresentation of minority students in STEM as well as get people moving toward college and graduation completion. It's spectacular what we can achieve when an open-access public community college enters the mix of a 21st-century workforce training partnership such as this. And Dr. Norris is fielding requests from institutions across the country who want to copy it.”

As the Northeast Region awardee for 2012, Dr. Norris becomes the sole nominee from her region to compete for the prestigious William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award, the national association award of ACCT named in honor of its founding executive director, who championed faculty excellence as the foundation of success in the community college movement.

For more information, contact the BCCC Institutional Advancement office.

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