

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

NO: BHE 25-30

BOARD DATE: February 25, 2025

APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO AWARD THE ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY AND AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of **Greenfield Community College** to award the **Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree granting authority pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 2/18/2025.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40 (June 2018)

Contact: Richard Riccardi, Sc.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Greenfield Community College
Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology**

DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM

Greenfield Community College proposes a new Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology to prepare students who are competent in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains to enter the profession. At the end of this proposed degree program, prospective Surgical Technologists will be prepared to work under medical supervision to facilitate the safe and effective conduct of invasive surgical procedures; to ensure, under the supervision of a surgeon, that the operating room or environment is safe, that equipment functions properly, and that the operative procedure is conducted under conditions that maximize patient safety. Students in this proposed degree program will gain expertise in the theory and application of sterile and aseptic technique and combine the knowledge of human anatomy, surgical procedures, and implementation tools and technologies to facilitate a physician's performance of invasive therapeutic and diagnostic procedures. Upon completion of the proposed degree program, graduates will be eligible to take the national certification examination, which is required in Massachusetts for employment as a surgical technologist. Certification is conferred by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA).

The proposed Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology program was approved by Greenfield Community College's Board of Trustees on November 13, 2024. The Letter of Intent (LOI) was circulated on November 14, 2024. No comments were received.

A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals

The proposed degree program has been developed to serve the job seekers and employers of Franklin and Hampshire counties in this critical, high-need occupation. The proposed degree program has been designed as a fast-tracked 15-month Associate of Applied Science degree program, modeled after the successful model established by North Shore Community College, which fills this high-need role in

Boston-area hospitals, including Massachusetts General. This model serves adult job seekers looking for a pathway directly into employment in a high-demand industry sector.

The proposed degree program directly responds to the Greenfield Community College's published strategic goal number three: "Contribute to regional resilience by engaging with the community and employers as we prepare students for the Future of Work and for citizenship." The proposed degree program was developed in direct collaboration with a local community hospital to help with a specific job need. After discussion with other industry employers, the current and projected need for surgical technologists was identified.

Greenfield Community College will harness the power of working together for a collective future to advocate for our students, college, segment, community and values at the local, regional and national level. The College will expand its connections and partnerships with local employers to align our educational offerings with labor market needs and to better prepare students for success in a world of societal and workplace evolution. The Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint for 2024-2025 cites healthcare as the #1 priority industry and the region's largest source of career employment, with projected industry growth of more than 18% by 2030, reinforcing the urgent need for training and education programs that prepare and certify students and job seekers for these highly in-demand—and highly critical—roles. Page 8 of the 2024-2025 Blueprint reports 18,750 jobs related to healthcare and social services in the region in 2023 with an average annual salary of \$52,108.

The proposed degree program specifically and directly aligns to Greenfield Community College's strategic goals:

- A. Strengthen Health Sciences
- B. Engage with Local Employers in Preparing Students for the Future of Work
- C. Collaborate and Advocate for our Students, College, Segment, Community, and Values

Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion

Greenfield Community College has in place robust academic, financial and student success coaching support programs. Housed in the office of advising, there is currently a success coach assigned to each student in an allied health program.

A Learning Support Counselor (licensed mental health professional) is available to aid students with personal challenges. One-on-one short term supportive counseling, web-based counseling tips, and mental health information and resources are available in the Counseling Office.

Disability Services collaborates with the Greenfield Community College counseling staff to provide ongoing support for students with a variety of disabilities, including cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, mental illness, low vision/blindness, deafness and traumatic brain injury. Disability Services also serves as a resource center for medical and legal advocacy, information, and referrals.

Peer tutoring is a free service that offers students the opportunity to look at how they learn. Students enrolled in a Greenfield Community College course are welcome to meet individually with peer tutors. In tutoring sessions, students explore ways to study and problem-solve, and they apply these strategies to specific course assignments; tutors also help with course content. In some introductory math and english courses, peer tutors assist students in the classroom.

Peer mentoring involves a fellow student who has some experience navigating college life, is familiar with the student support resources available, and is trained in supportive communication skills. They can help with understanding college policy and procedures, accessing appropriate college and community services, and with educational goal setting and problem solving. Most students are assigned a peer mentor.

Students can access the resource center for review of any immediate and pressing needs that could potentially stop or otherwise negatively affect them from completing their academic goals. Financial awards do not have to be repaid.

Greenfield Community College veteran students have access to our vet center where the staff can facilitate their success by providing support, resources, and information to meet their unique needs.

In the Math Studio, students from beginning level to advanced math courses work with and help each other or receive assistance from math faculty.

Finally, with the required outside national CAAHEP accreditation, there is built in retention, pass rate and employment results that must be published annually. The full-time faculty instructor is also the designated accreditation program coordinator who will be with the students and able to assess and offer individualized student support and referral to appropriate resources. Greenfield Community College has a history of intrusive and supportive advising which is reflected in their high retention rates in our health care programs.

Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers

Employer Community: The proposed degree program is a workforce-aligned program that has been developed in response to proactive outreach from area employers—namely Baystate Health and Cooley Dickinson Hospital—who are experiencing a labor market shortage in this vital role. Greenfield Community College has established a partnership with Cooley Dickinson specifically, wherein the program's primary skills lab training space will be based out of Cooley Dickinson, allowing Greenfield Community College's Surgical Technology students to be embedded in a major regional hospital from their first term in the program, and to support employment outcomes upon program completion. An MOU outlining this collaborative partnership is fully executed and on file with Greenfield Community College.

K-12 Partnerships: Greenfield Community College has a close collaborative partnership with many area K-12 partners through dual-enrollment programs and admissions-related activities. The Office of Workforce Development collaborates closely with Franklin County Technical School to create additional opportunities for on-ramps to Greenfield Community College via aligned training opportunities that are geared toward regional industry needs, and the two entities partner on shared training space to deliver programs geared toward the Advanced Manufacturing industry sector. Just this month Greenfield Community College received notification that a technical high school in Berkshire County is closing their Surgical Tech program and will be donating their equipment and supplies to the College. The reason for the closure of the high school is the new industry standard that Surgical Technicians must have an associate degree.

Advisory Group: The Surgical Technology program will be accredited by CAAHEP, which requires an advisory board. Greenfield Community College intends to convene an advisory board in compliance with accreditation standards, which will review survey results and advise curriculum and program updates on a regular basis and convene on a regularly scheduled basis. There are already several established healthcare program advisory boards at Greenfield Community College. The connection between Greenfield Community College and the local and regional healthcare agencies is well established and mutually supportive. Other members of the advisory board will be members of the public, students, graduates, faculty and administration.

Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints

Healthcare in general has been identified as the #1 priority industry in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint 2024-2025 given the critical nature of healthcare roles, stating that healthcare is the region's "largest source of career employment," due to the presence of major acute care hospitals; medical practices affiliated with the acute care providers; community-based health care and social assistance providers; an expanding behavioral health network; and a significant number of long-term care and assisted living facilities." (Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint 2024-2025: A Regional Planning Initiative of the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, Retrieved September 23, 2024, from <https://www.masshirefhwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Pioneer-Valley-Labor-Market-Blueprint-2024-2025-FINAL-FINAL-December-2023-MDCS.pdf>). The Labor Market Blueprint specifically cites Surgical Technologist within its top ten most "high demand" occupations in the region on page 11.

In terms of quantifying the labor market shortage, an April 2024 report from labor market data tool Lightcast reports 59 unique job postings across 21 employers from January 2023 to March 2024 for Surgical Technologists (or those with Surgical Technology credentials) in Franklin and Hampshire counties alone. The report anticipates a 15% increase in labor market demand for Surgical Technologists between now and 2035, and identifies that nearly 20% of the current labor force in Franklin and Hampshire counties is 55 years of age and older. Greenfield Community College is targeting 10 students in the inaugural cohort, and this local labor market demand justifies the need for a Franklin/ Hampshire county training provider to address this significant Franklin/ Hampshire county need. It is also worth noting that this entry-level role carries a living wage; the median salary for a Surgical Technologist in Franklin and Hampshire counties in 2022 was \$57,394, per Lightcast data reporting.

Finally, the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA) characterizes the workforce shortage and the strong need for high quality degree programs in Surgical Technology as follows: “Critical shortages of surgical technologists have contributed to an increase in hospital-based alternative training as well as abbreviated online training programs, neither of which meet the Standards associated with a fully accredited surgical technology educational program. Some of the alternative training pathways to educate surgical technologists are shockingly abbreviated. A 120-hour training course is simply not adequate to educate a surgical technologist. These alternative pathways, both hospital-based and online, do not meet the long-established and required curriculum for surgical technology education, and are not the answer to alleviate workforce shortages—particularly in a critical patient care area like the operating room.” (ARC/STSA Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting, Addressing the Surgical Technologist Workforce Shortage (2023, Feb. 8). Retrieved September 23, 2024 from <https://arcstsa.org/st-workforce-shortage/>).

Duplication

Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) offers a similar degree: an A.S. in Surgical Technology. Unlike the two-year A.S. degree program at STCC, this proposed degree program has been designed as a fast-tracked 15-month A.A.S. degree program, modeled after the successful program established by North Shore Community College, which fills this high-need role in Boston-area hospitals, including Massachusetts General Brigham (MGB). The proposed degree program will fill a demonstrated need in the region served by Greenfield Community College. It has been requested by the local Cooley Dickinson MGB hospital, as is demonstrated by the MOU, and the regional Baystate Health System.

Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The Surgical Technology program accreditor (CAAHEP) and Committee on Accreditation (ARC/STSA) requires a minimum number of cases (120) performed in a clinical setting in order for a student to successfully complete the program. The proposed degree program includes both a clinical experience and an externship, both required credit-bearing components of the proposed degree program that will take place at a regional acute care facility.

The seven-week clinical course (SGT210) introduces Surgical Technology students to the clinical experience and expectations, and also affords an opportunity to complete up to 20 of their required cases

in advance of the required externship course (SGT220). Students complete their clinical case requirement during the fourteen-week clinical course.

As with the other healthcare programs at Greenfield Community College, video recorded simulation scenarios, Virtual Reality scenario opportunities, online learning via Moodle, Zspace (which is a 3-dimensional computer access anatomy & physiology program), and electronic health record documentation will be incorporated in the proposed degree program. In this competency based educational model, students' progress will be tracked via an electronic excel sheet in a shared Google drive.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

The proposed degree program is a priority based on identified employer needs and Greenfield Community College's strategic plan, specifically items 1 and 3:

1. Evaluate and make necessary adjustments to current academic programs for relevancy through robust analyses of course enrollment patterns, program costs, and staffing analyses in conjunction with projected labor market data for the region.

Greenfield Community College has reviewed the current allied health programs and especially with the rollout of Free Community College for All has seen enrollments increase significantly. As Greenfield Community College looks to expand allied healthcare programs, extensive market research was conducted, collaborative meetings with industries were held, and an MOU was created with Cooley Dickinson MGB for shared space and use as a surgical clinical site. As a show of support from the college administration, Greenfield Community College has funded a Full Time Surgical Tech/Program Coordinator position and filled it in August 2024. The faculty member has been instrumental in creating the syllabi and educational track. The college Curriculum Action committee has also already reviewed, suggested changes and approved the proposed degree program curriculum. Finally, the Board of Trustees approved this proposed degree program in November 2024.

3. Further the development of an integrative learning plan that encompasses both workforce and academic programs, that stacks credentials and creates instructional bridges from short-term credentials to credit-bearing certificates and degrees, while maximizing Prior Learning credits where appropriate.

The collaboration between the college workforce development office and local hospitals through outreach from the MassHire board was the impetus for getting the proposed degree program started. Greenfield Community College has had a longstanding relationship between academic allied health programs and the workforce development department. Greenfield Community College's model of blended classes between matriculated and workforce students specifically in the Basic EMT training has been in place for over 15 years. Many of the students who complete the Basic EMT further their career by advancing through the 29-credit paramedic certificate program on their career path. Several also then complete the AS in Fire Science Technology, as many municipal services now require paramedic certification to get hired. Greenfield Community College anticipates creating a Sterile Processing stackable certificate offered through WFD in the future. This will allow students a job path as they determine whether or not Surgical Tech is a career path for them.

Goals and Objectives (Form B)

As the proposed degree program is nationally accredited, the goals and objectives are set by their standards and prescribed curriculum. The accreditation annual reporting requirement ensure that specific goals and objectives are met according to data on certification pass rates, graduate and employer surveys and review and suggestions for improvement by the program advisory board. Greenfield Community College has two other CAAHEP accredited programs, Paramedic and Medical Assistant, both with a history of positive results for their respective goals. See **Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives** for specific details.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

Enrollment Projections (Form C)

Greenfield Community College anticipates that by having an additional allied health program to offer their students, they will increase enrollment options for students who do not see themselves in the current EMS

or Medical Assistant careers. Some of the overlapping course requirements will allow for movement between programs in the first semester. The proposed degree program is designed to enroll 10 students as an initial cohort. Greenfield Community College intends to build the proposed degree program with cohorts of 10-15 students and plans to increase enrollment numbers up to 30 students per year once a second faculty member is hired. While the numbers appear to be small, they are a function of accreditation and student/faculty clinical placement. The proposed degree program is a critical local employment need even with these numbers. The partner hospital estimates that they will be short 90 surgical technicians this year, and they have been postponing some surgeries due to the shortage.

Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution

(Form D, Appendices)

Greenfield Community College has already committed to, and hired, a full-time faculty/program coordinator for the proposed degree program. Greenfield Community College has identified a lab space and already begun to acquire needed equipment and supplies, both donated and through existing grant funds. Greenfield Community College is planning for 10 students in the initial cohort with the full-time faculty also fulfilling the role of clinical coordinator. As the proposed degree program expands in the second and subsequent years, Greenfield Community College plans to fund an additional clinical coordinator position in year two. Greenfield Community College will also attach program specific fees to courses in order to support the budget for equipment maintenance and soft good supplies replacement.

STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology** program submitted by **Greenfield Community College**. Staff validate that the **LOI** includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast-Track review protocol.

Form A: LOI Undergraduate Program Curriculum Outline

Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 14)		
Course Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
SGT101	Surgical Technology I	6
SGT120	Introduction to the Profession Surgical Technology and the Allied Health Field	3
SGT122	Surgical Technology II	6
SGT124	Pharmacology and Anesthesia	2
SGT201	Surgical Technology III	6
SGT210	Surgical Technology Clinical	4
SGT220	Surgical Technology Externship	8
SGT221	Professional Practice in Surgical Technology	4
SGT223	Surgical Technology Capstone	1
SGT101	Surgical Technology I	6
SGT120	Introduction to the Profession Surgical Technology and the Allied Health Field	3
SGT122	Surgical Technology II	6
SGT124	Pharmacology and Anesthesia	2
SGT201	Surgical Technology III	6
	Sub Total Required Credits	40
Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 4) (attach list of choices if needed)		
ENG101	English Composition I	3
BIO126	Biology I	4
BIO215	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
BIO216	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
MAT120	Mathematical Problem Solving in STEM, Business, and Health Care	3
	Sub Total Elective Credits	18

<i>Distribution of General Education Requirements</i>		# of Gen Ed Credits
Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		
Social Sciences		3
<i>Sub Total General Education Credits</i>		3
<i>Curriculum Summary</i>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		15
Total credit hours required for degree		61
<i>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</i>		

Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives

Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy for Achievement	Timetable
<p>Prepare students to be able to apply skills and knowledge utilizing the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains to provide safe and competent patient care as an entry level Surgical Technologist.</p>	<p>Percentage of students graduating and entering the field of surgical technology within 1 year of their graduation date.</p> <p>Graduate Survey</p> <p>Employer Survey</p>	<p>Cognitive will be assessed through examinations.</p> <p>Psychomotor will be measured with skills assessments.</p> <p>Affective assessments will be continually evaluated through peer interaction.</p>	<p>Annual Assessment</p>
<p>Demonstrate critical thinking skills by passing the Certification exam.</p>	<p>NBSTSA exam pass rates at first attempt, and second attempt</p>	<p>During the program core curriculum, the students will take a Capstone course that will focus heavily on exam preparation.</p>	<p>Annual</p>
<p>Utilize effective communication with members of the surgical team in order to analyze and anticipate the perioperative needs of the patient and the surgical team.</p>	<p>Affective evaluations, utilizing a specific grading rubric, will be completed at least once per semester during labs and scenarios by both peers and instructors.</p> <p>Graduate Survey</p> <p>Employer Survey</p>	<p>Students will be exposed to a hands-on skills/Sim lab, and clinical rotations that will help develop the skills necessary for effective communication in the operating room, and anticipation of surgical needs.</p>	<p>Each Semester for evaluations</p> <p>Annual for Surveys</p>
<p>Demonstrate theoretical and practical proficiency in surgical aseptic technique and patient care.</p>	<p>Performance evaluation created by the Association of Surgical Technologists.</p> <p>Graduate Survey</p> <p>Employer Survey</p>	<p>With a vigorous lab skills/Sim Lab section to this program, the student will be able to practice skills necessary for success.</p>	<p>Capstone</p> <p>Annual Survey</p>

Provide patient care in a professional, ethical, and legal manner as a Surgical Technologist.	Clinical Preceptor Evaluations Employer Surveys	Skills/Sim Lab to prepare students for clinical setting	Annual
Integrate recognition of the patient as a whole person with multiple dimensions of social, cultural, religious and ethical beliefs to address the biopsychosocial needs of the surgical patient.	Clinical Preceptor Evaluations Employer Surveys	Lecture, Skills/Sim Lab. Provide a curriculum with outline requirements set by accreditation and the CCST.	Annual
Demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.	Physical demonstration of adaptation during surgical cases. Clinical Evaluations Employer Survey	Skills/Sim Lab students will be exposed to many different scenarios which will require adaptation, clinical rotation provides hands-on learning.	Annual

Form C: LOI Program Enrollment

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Full-Time	10	10	15	15	15
Continuing Full-Time		10	10	15	15
New Part-Time					
Continuing Part-Time					
Totals	10	20	25	30	30

Form D: LOI Program Budget

One-time/ Start Up Costs	Cost Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
	Part Time/ Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	none	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
	Staff (Medical Director)	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
	General Administrative Costs	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
5,000	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
20,000	Facilities/Space/ Equipment	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	Field & Clinical Resource	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Marketing	1,500	500	500	500	500
6,000 Initial Accred.	Other (Specify) Continuous Accreditation		2,750	2,750	2,750	2,750
	TOTAL EXPENSES	170,500	232,250	232,250	232,250	232,250

One-time/ Start Up Support			Annual Income			
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Revenue Sources					
52,282	Grants FY24 CTE & FY25 Secondary and Postsecondary Program Improvement and Equipment Grant					
285,565	Applied for: FY25 Skills Capital Technology and Equipment					
	Tuition (\$26/credit)	9,100	15,860	20,410	23,790	23,790
	Fees \$211/credit \$51/head/semester	75,270	126,390	168,575	196,410	196,410
	Departmental Program fees \$25/credit	8,750	15,250	19,625	22,875	22,875
	Reallocated Funds					
	Other (specify)					
	Total Revenue	93,120	157,500	208,610	243,075	243,075