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**BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES THE HISTORIC
INAUGURATION OF THE COLLEGE'S FOURTH PRESIDENT LAURA L.
DOUGLAS, PH.D.**

Bristol Community College hosted an Inauguration Ceremony today, officially welcoming the college's fourth president, Laura L. Douglas, Ph.D., at the BCC Fall River campus, to an audience of over 400 BCC faculty, staff, students, community members, family and friends.

Bristol Community College's Board of Trustees unanimously selected Douglas in December 2017. Douglas, formerly provost at Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), in Des Moines, Iowa., succeeded John J. Sbrega, Ph.D., who retired August 2017 after 17 years as BCC's president. He succeeded Eileen Farley (1979-2000) and Jack Hudnall (1965-1979), the college's founding president.

Massachusetts Secretary of Education James A. Peyser provided a greeting, before administering the Oath of Office. Her husband, Gregg S. Johnson, and her parents, John G. and Priscilla D. Douglas, of Mansfield Center, Conn., then presented the presidential medallion to Dr. Douglas. Student Trustee Kylie Pasternak '18 served as the events emcee and the President of the Student Senate Paul R. Vermette II '18, gave the student address.

President Douglas delivered her inaugural address, in which she underscored the importance of creating a college-going culture in Bristol County.

“As our economy shifts and technology plays a major role in all that we do, we need to raise the level of education in our region and prepare our community for new jobs that

will lead us to greater prosperity,” said President Laura L. Douglas, Ph.D. “When we create a college-going culture, where students graduate and assume good jobs, we change lives for the better. This position will be the culmination of my life work, where my education, experience and passion come together to elevate the work of the college, strengthen the economy and lift up the community.” [Check here for complete text of President Douglas’ Inaugural address.](#)

“Since her first day on the job, President Douglas has worked to address the new reality that although we continue to strive to improve the educational climate of the communities we serve, there is another dimension that cannot be ignored – a need for inclusion, unity, diversity and an array of wrap-around services to further student success,” said Joan Medeiros, chair of the BCC Board of Trustees. “We are grateful to President Douglas for choosing Bristol and continuing our legacy of strong and innovative leadership that will influence our community well into the future.”

During the ceremony, Thomas P. Murray, president of the Bristol Community College Foundation, announced that on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Bristol Community College Foundation, the day would be commemorated with the creation of an endowed scholarship of \$100,000. The President’s Merit Scholarship and its recipients The President’s Merit Scholars will be entitled to a two-year scholarship at Bristol Community College.

“This scholarship supports President Douglas’ goal of creating a college-going culture in Bristol County,” said Murray. “The President’s Merit Scholars will be adults in our community who have completed one of the college’s literacy programs, high school equivalency or English as a Second Language, and wish to continue their studies at Bristol Community College and earn a degree. It is our hope that this scholarship will not only positively impact the recipients with knowledge, skills, a degree and a sustainable good-paying job, but also be the impetus of new family traditions—specifically a family tradition of going to and graduating from college.”

The academic procession, led by the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 207 Honor Guard and Grand Marshals Robert Delaleu and Jennifer Boulay, included Bristol Community College’s faculty, staff and delegates from learned societies and institutions of higher education, members of the BCC Board of Trustees, president of the BCC Foundation, student delegates, principal administrative officers and the president herself. The program celebrated higher education and the difference that Bristol makes in the community, changing lives learner by learner. The musical selections for the inauguration were carefully chosen as a way to celebrate the influence of art and culture throughout our community and President Douglas’ education and career. The processional music, "Trumpet Voluntary in D" by Henry Purcell, was the same selection used at Bristol Community College's first commencement ceremony in 1968. The ensemble of [Women in World Jazz](#) took guests through a musical journey featuring music composed by women artists around the world, past and present. The journey began in Mexico where President Douglas studied in college, and continued with her time spent in Japan as a

visiting professor of English and American Culture and as campus dean. It was also in Japan that President Douglas met her husband, Gregg S. Johnson.

The Cultural Interlude features a Cambodian blessing dance by Kanika Men, Marlena Men and Abbigail Thorng. The dance is a Khmer traditional dance with graceful and elegant movements. The dance is often performed at ceremonial occasions to bless the event and to bring good health, happiness, prosperity and success to guests. President Douglas credits her time in Thailand working with Cambodian refugees as a catalyst for choosing a career in education.

A reception immediately followed the ceremony under the large ceremonial tent, specially prepared by BCC's Culinary Arts department.

Prior to her arrival at Bristol Community College, Douglas had served from 2005 to 2017 as Provost of Des Moines Area Community College's Urban Campus (DMACC). During her tenure, she experienced a remarkable record of accomplishment working with underrepresented populations to enroll them in college and ensure that they graduate. During her career, she has also served at community colleges in Japan, Michigan, North Carolina, and Iowa. Her professional and scholarly interests include leadership, organizational behavior, diversity and community college governance.

Douglas earned a Bachelor of Arts in social welfare from the University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine; a Master of Arts in international administration from the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont; a Master of Arts in higher education and a Doctor of Philosophy in higher education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Since taking the helm as BCC's president on July 1, 2017, President Douglas has made it her mission to bolster the college-going culture within the community and help students reach their goals and be successful in their lives.

"While today celebrates my dream of becoming a community college president and my unwavering dedication to our local community needs, I know that I am fortunate to be at Bristol Community College. I know that the fit is right, and that I can make a difference," said President Douglas.

For more information about the inauguration ceremony, please visit BristolCC.edu/Inauguration.

About Bristol Community College

Bristol Community College is a leading resource for education and workforce development in Southeastern Massachusetts. BCC has locations in Fall River, Attleboro, New Bedford, and Taunton, along with flexible online offerings that lead to an associate degree, a career-ready certificate, or the ability to seamlessly transfer to baccalaureate colleges throughout the state and country.

The College's Center for Workforce and Community Education provides customized training for businesses and the community including healthcare, workforce and sustainable initiatives, and corporate services.

The BCC Foundation, a non-profit organization utilizing community donations and partnerships, supports the College's mission to meet the lifelong educational needs of the community. For more information, visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/about>.