

The Spark

April 2024



From President & CEO Aisha Francis, PhD

Hello Development,

Spring is a time of new beginnings and our Spring Career Fair marks the start of a new chapter for our soon-to-be graduating students.

This year's fair, held April 9, connected 211 students and 23 recent graduates with more than 50 employers seeking to hire great candidates for meaningful internships and good paying, full-time careers in high-growth fields. This signature annual event truly embodies the college's mission: Deliver transformative technical and trade education that leads to economic advancement.

One shining example of our transformative work is Harry Rodriguez, Construction Management Class of 2023, who attended the Career Fair to represent his employer, Dellbrook|JKS. Since graduating last year, Harry grew from being an intern to becoming part of the Dellbrook team overseeing construction of our new campus in Nubian Square.

But Harry isn't an outlier. Many employers at the Career Fair said they come back year after year because Franklin Cummings Tech students are hard-working, smart, and well-prepared workers who rise quickly within their organizations. I can't wait to watch our current students bloom and grow into their own great futures.

[See photos from the Career Fair](#)

Louisa Jenness Uses Engineering to Help House Plants Thrive



Electrical Engineering student Louisa Jenness has created an ingenious automated monitoring system to keep houseplants healthy and happy. The system continuously measures the amount of light reaching the plant and its soil moisture levels (using capacitive sensors). It then automatically turns on extra lighting when needed and/or emits an audible warning when the soil is too dry. The warnings start with a gentle "I'm thirsty" recording but escalate to a screech as the plant gets more desperate for water. In the video above, Louisa, who is scheduled to graduate with her bachelor's degree this May, demonstrates her invention at the college's recent **Engineering Discovery Day**, an Admissions event for high school students considering engineering majors.

Tackling Campus Food Insecurity



Food security is essential for all individuals, and for college students, it has direct and measurable effects on student success. A recent Johns Hopkins study found only about half of students from food-insecure households graduate with a degree. This was particularly true for first-generation college students (47% of Franklin Cummings Tech students are first-generation).

Since 2013, the college has operated a small on-campus food pantry, which increased in size and funding in 2016. To further supplement this, the college partnered with a local restaurant in 2018 to provide meals to students through a Meal Voucher program. Between 2018 and 2021, this program provided meals to 97 students. After receiving a DHE grant last spring, the College was able to expand the Meal Voucher program to students identified as having less access to food resources on campus: those in our evening Automotive, HVAC, and Practical Electricity programs, as well as high school students enrolled in the Early College program.

In total, 138 students are receiving a \$12 voucher they can redeem for meals at partnering local restaurants for each day they are on campus this spring semester.

"One of our values at Franklin Cummings Tech is to foster a supportive learning environment through holistic support and wrap-around services," said Emma Michalowski (pictured above), LICSW, FSW, Director of Student Wellness and Support and the driving force behind the college's Hunger-Free Campus initiatives. "Sometimes that means ensuring students have a substantial meal!"

Commencement Speakers



We're excited to announce that philanthropists Joyce and Bill Cummings will be our 2024 Commencement speakers on Saturday, May 18, with remarks from Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson.

[Read more about the speakers](#)

New Climate Tech Careers Initiative



We are pleased to announce Urban Tech Jobs 2.0 – a collaborative two-year commitment with the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts (ULEM) aimed at promoting access to technical education and fostering diversity in the tech industry. Urban Tech Jobs 2.0 empowers individuals to acquire specialized technical training, equipping them for successful high-tech careers in Automotive, HVAC&R, and Information Technology.

Pictured (left to right): Josh Kraft, Board Chair, Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts; Rahsaan Hall, President and CEO, Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts; Dr. Aisha Francis, President & CEO, Franklin Cummings Tech; and Turahn Dorsey, Board Chair, Franklin Cummings Tech; at our Nubian square Reception.

Roxbury Campus Groundbreaking: Another Milestone



Our historic groundbreaking March 12 at the site of the new Franklin Cummings Tech campus in Nubian Square, Roxbury, is another exciting milestone in the Future Forward vision for this college steeped in the 234-year tradition—beginning with a bequest from Benjamin Franklin's will—of educating and preparing students for the technical and trade workforce. With more than 200 guests in attendance, our new community's elected leadership was well represented thanks to the presence and advocacy of District 7 City Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson, Rep. John Moran, Sen. Liz Miranda and other local leaders, partners and neighbors who stood in solidarity with us to make this special day possible. President & CEO Aisha Francis was proud to offer remarks along with Board Chair Turahn Dorsey, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, City of Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Boston City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, and our other community partners, including MassDevelopment President and CEO Dan Rivera, Liberty Mutual Foundation President Melissa MacDonnell, and Michelle Volpe of PCI.

Donate to our Mobile Career Closet



Our Mobile Career Closet is an on-campus resource available to all students. It provides free access to professional attire for interviews, career fairs, networking events, and other career-related activities.

We accept donations to our closet, including professional attire, shoes, hangers, and storage bins.

Drop-Off and Shipping location:

Franklin Cummings Tech
Office of Career Services
41 Berkeley Street
Boston, MA 02116

Contact us at careers@franklincummings.edu



Upcoming Panels/Speaking Engagements

Franklin Cummings Tech's leadership, faculty, and staff often serve as expert panelists and speakers. Here's an upcoming appearance you should check out:

- **April 26:** Early College Director Lara Tavares is a presenter at the MA Early College Leadership Conference "Guiding Principles: Us Teaching, Us Supporting" [Learn more](#)

We'd like your feedback

Take our 30-second survey and let us know what you'd like to see in future issues of The Spark!

[Take the Survey](#)

Franklin Cummings Tech is especially grateful for the support from the following Fall 2023 Gala supporters who will be recognized this year, without whom our work would not be possible. Thank you!



To learn more about how your company can support our educational mission and be highlighted in future issues of The Spark, please email [Eliza Wilson](mailto:Eliza.Wilson), Executive Director of Development

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