

*Media Contact: Mike Horyczun, (203) 254-4000, ext. 2647
mhoryczun@fairfield.edu*

**Fairfield University's Partnership with Bridgeport Schools
Earns State Merit Award from The New England Board Of Higher Education**

FAIRFIELD, Conn. (February 28, 2014). The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) announces that Fairfield University's partnership with Bridgeport Schools has earned its 2014 Connecticut State Merit Award. NEBHE is honoring Fairfield University's overall institutional commitment to Bridgeport Schools, the partnership's efforts to contribute to their mutual goals of preparing students for post-graduate success, and the university's commitment to access and success.

Fairfield University's long-standing and multifaceted partnership with Bridgeport Schools includes such initiatives as the Community Partners Scholars program, the Bridgeport Tuition Program, Project Excel, and a number of community outreach programs such as the Connecticut Writing Project, Teacher Preparation internship programs, service-learning courses with university students tutoring K-3rd graders, the Bryant School Book Club facilitated through Campus Ministry, and enrichment programs for Bridgeport Schools presented by Fairfield's Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts.

"All universities and colleges have a responsibility to serve their neighbors and communities," said The Rev. Jeffrey P. von Arx S.J., President, Fairfield University. "As a Jesuit and Catholic University, Fairfield has an even more explicit obligation. It is our mission to form men and women who will embrace their obligation to work in the service of their fellow men and women, to engage with the world as it is, and to do their utmost to transform their communities for the better. Our partnership with Bridgeport schools enriches us. It brings energy, strength, ingenuity, and love into our University community, and we are deeply grateful for all the benefits that we derive from that partnership."

"Fairfield University has been an outstanding community partner to the City of Bridgeport and our public schools," said Mayor Bill Finch of the City of Bridgeport.

"The administration, staff, students and faculty are helping to improve the lives of young people in Bridgeport every day through numerous collaborative programs. We are very thankful for our partnership and are very proud of Father von Arx and the entire Fairfield University community for winning this award."

"As Chief Academic Officer for Bridgeport Public Schools and an alumna of Fairfield University I find this partnership to be mutually beneficial," said Amy Marshall, Chief Academic Officer for the City of Bridgeport. "Our students in Bridgeport are provided with broad based academic support and fulfilling enrichment experiences. Through their work in Bridgeport Public Schools, the students and staff from Fairfield University are living the mandate of St. Ignatius of Loyola to live a life of service above self. They are actively engaged in an environment that is rich in diversity in Bridgeport as they do their work."

The successful results of this partnership include:

- Over \$16 million in Fairfield University scholarships distributed through the Community Partners Scholars program.
- Nearly \$3 million in full scholarships to Fairfield University distributed through the Bridgeport Tuition Program.
- More than 310 Bridgeport students benefitting overall from the Community Partners Scholars and Bridgeport Tuition program.
- Nearly 400 Bridgeport students served by Project Excel; 280 students have graduated from Fairfield University and 90 are still enrolled.
- Fifty student teachers from Fairfield's Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions (GSEAP) benefitting from collaborative student-teacher learning experiences with Bridgeport Public Schools (BPS) classroom teachers.
- Fairfield's Connecticut Writing Project providing over 100 hours of service to students and faculty at Bassick High School, including sponsored workshops to design stronger high school curriculum for college and career-ready writing.

- A service-learning model that provides literacy support to over 400 Cesar Batalla School students, K-3rd grade, while supporting the education of over 200 Fairfield University students serving as literacy tutors through Fairfield University's Office of Service Learning and GSEAP.
- Over 3,000 pre-school, elementary school and middle school students from throughout Fairfield County receiving enrichment and educational programs in ARTSBOUND Schoolday Series, provided by Fairfield University's Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts.

Fairfield University is a Jesuit University rooted in one of the world's oldest intellectual and spiritual traditions. More than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students from 36 states, 47 foreign countries, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are enrolled in the University's five schools. In the spirit of rigorous and sympathetic inquiry into all dimensions of human experience, Fairfield welcomes students from diverse backgrounds to share ideas and engage in open conversations. The University is located in the heart of a region where the future takes shape, just an hour from New York City on a stunning campus on the Connecticut coast.