Housatonic Community College is approaching its 50th anniversary. Anniversaries are times of looking back and the history of the college assumes greater interest as we continue to move forward and plan for the future. How did the College begin? What happened when? How? How has HCC’s past shaped its future?

Preserving Housatonic's history through conserving original resource material is the task of the Presidents Archive. It organizes and saves past documents, photos, newspaper clippings, and printed materials relative to the College as well as current materials which will be tomorrow's past.

The Presidents Archive belongs to Housatonic. Its resources are accessible for research and for professional or personal use.

Everyone at Housatonic including students, faculty, and staff as well as alumni, interested persons, or friends of the College who have materials or collections that contribute to the story of Housatonic and its history is welcome to contact the Presidents Archive at 203-332-5226 or archive@hcc.commnet.edu. The Archive will keep the material safe and available.
Housatonic Community College

Dates & Facts

1966 – The College opened at the Stratford Community College Center as a branch of Norwalk Community College with 378 students in the first semester. Various sites were used for classes including Bunnell High School, Wooster Junior High School, Stratford United Methodist Church, Alliance Medical Inns Building, Masonic Temple, Stratford Public Library, and trailers.

1967 – Housatonic Community College became an independent part of the Connecticut Community College system. The Housatonic Museum of Art was founded with works donated by artists and collectors under the leadership of Burt Chernow, HCC Art Professor. The HMA is now one of the largest permanent collections of any two-year college in the United States, the collection valued at over $13 million. HCC’s first president was Edward Liston.

1968 – The Inaugural Exhibition of the HMA was held at the Museum of Art, Science and Industry in Bridgeport. Among the works from the Museum on exhibit were those by Larry Rivers, John Marshall, Andy Warhol, Elaine deKooning, Milton Avery, Robert Rauschenberg, Takeshi Kawashima, and others.

1971 – Housatonic moved to the former Singer Metrics Building on Barnum Ave. in Bridgeport as a temporary move while the search for a permanent site was undertaken.


1990 – The Housatonic Community College Foundation, Inc. was founded by a group of Greater Bridgeport residents, business, and arts leaders to assist the College and its students beyond the fundamentals provided by the state. The Foundation was IRS approved as a tax-exempt organization.

1993 – The College changed its name to Housatonic Community Technical College in recognition of the extended mission to provide high-level technical education to students in the region. Bonding was approved for the purchase of the former Hi-Ho Mall at Lafayette Boulevard as a permanent site for the College.


1997 – Classes began at the new campus on January 27. The Burt Chernow Galleries of the Housatonic Museum were named for the founder of the Museum. The opening exhibit was Ansel Adams Classic Images. Many of the photographs were on public view for the first time. Over 8,000 visitors came to view the exhibition. The College’s third president, Janis Wertz (Hadley), was inaugurated.

1998 – President Bill Clinton visited the College on March 3. He toured the building with a specific visit to the Early Childhood School Lab. He made a speech in the PAC about early childhood education.

1999 – The College name was changed to Housatonic Community College in an October vote of the Trustees.

2004 – Housatonic became one of three community colleges in Connecticut to receive an Achieving the Dream four-year grant from the Lumina Foundation to determine ways to assist at-risk students to achieve success.

2006 – Ground was broken for the addition to the campus of a second building, the former Sears building, at the southern perimeter of the campus. The College celebrated its 40th anniversary.

2007 – Anita Gliniecki, the College’s fourth president, was inaugurated. The HCC Foundation launched its first Major Gifts Campaign – Pathways to Success – and exceeded its $1 million goal.

2008 – Beacon Hall opened in September and Housatonic became a two-building campus, Lafayette Hall remaining the home of the Burt Chernow Galleries and the administrative offices. The buildings were named by a college-wide contest. Names selected were chosen from over 100 submissions and the final (blind) decision was made by a committee and the President. Lafayette Hall was the entry of two staff members; Beacon Hall was the entry of a student. Enrollment exceeded 5,000 students.

2009 – HCC received a Developmental Education Initiative grant from the Gates Foundation, administered by MDC, Inc. to sustain and expand the student success initiatives started under the College’s participation in Achieving the Dream.

2010 – Enrollment exceeded 6,000 students in the fall.

2011 – The College changed its logo (see below).

2016 – Housatonic Community College will celebrate its 50th anniversary.