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[Endicott eyes full-fledged program here](#)

By Nancy Gaines Correspondent

Come January, for the first time in its 390 years, Gloucester will be home to a college campus.

The novel meeting of town and gown in this insular city will be provided by Endicott College, which will expand its satellite program here to offer morning courses for young people aiming for an associate's degree.

The virgin venture gives local youth a first-ever opportunity to garner the higher ed experience in a familiar setting while availing all the facilities of Endicott toward an advanced degree or better employment.

Meanwhile, Endicott, based in Beverly, opens its doors on the 4,000-square-foot campus at Commercial Street on Tuesday for evening courses for grown-ups wanting to complete a long-lost bachelor's degree.

Attracting Gloucester youths who might not otherwise pursue college – or ever get familiar with a school that costs about \$50,000 a year, like Endicott — this foot-in-the-door experience has mutual benefits.

For one thing, Gloucester could well become a feeder school for the Endicott campus, a mere 10 miles down the road, school officials say.

“We want to build comfort levels, and build our own support systems, that will give the traditional-age student the confidence to do college work,” said Brian Pellinen, assistant dean of professional studies, who is running the academic side of the Gloucester program.

In addition, local teachers who must complete graduate work and might not have thought of Endicott now can access those courses in their backyard. Local employers can utilize intern and training programs from their academic neighbor, Endicott, leading to enhanced employment relationships.

The curriculum for the two-year associate of arts degree comprises five courses per semester taught from 9 a.m. to noon — such as English Composition, Intro to Psychology and Oceanography, plus electives and a summer course — with a total tuition of almost \$10,000 a year. Financial aid is available; applications are now being accepted, and those interested are being encouraged to call Jason Powers at 978-232-2847.

Endicott/Gloucester already is an incubator for students wanting to get first-hand learning from the working waterfront, said Richard Weissman, the school's director of corporate education, who's been overseeing the project.

“We have a lot of students from here,” he said from the school’s headquarters in the Chamber of Commerce building, “and also a lot of science and environment students and interns who use Gloucester and its waterfront and science organizations. Conversely, we act as a resource for the city, for research and professional help.”

Pellinen said the adult education program, which takes six weeks, was aimed to “fill a hole in the community,” for aspiring learners who are hampered by lack of a car or having to work all day.

The program involves one evening class a week, for four hours, plus credit for learning or life experience, to enable attaining a bachelor’s degree within a year or 18 months, said Weissman.

Gloucester has always had much to offer students of art, history and science but has never had an academic facility to provide the institutional setting. The city’s school system has also historically fallen short in propelling students to higher education. State figures for the Gloucester High School Class of 2010 show slightly more than half the graduating class from Gloucester (56.6 percent) went on to colleges or universities, while the state average, including vocational schools, was 75 percent.

“We’re working with Dr. (Richard) Safier,” said Pellinen, referring to the city’s second-year superintendent of schools. “We could bring in some high school students to take college courses.

“We want to show college is possible, to let the student feel it’s something I could do.”

Nancy Gaines is a regular Times correspondent and a longtime writer and editor with both Boston-based and national publications.