

The Early Years

The unique origins of the Urban College of Boston: A Two-Year College (UCB) had a profound impact on its mission and character. Now a fully independent, private, coeducational two-year college, UCB grew out of a highly successful program developed by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD), one of the nation's first and largest community action organizations and Boston's officially designated anti-poverty agency. ABCD founded The Urban College Program (UCP) in 1967 to offer opportunities for higher education to low-income, inner-city Boston residents who were underserved by Boston's renowned educational resources. Urban College is, in fact, the only college in the country that originated as part of an anti-poverty agency.

The ABCD Urban College Program was developed in collaboration with Boston College and Northeastern University and later with Middlesex Community College in conjunction with Quinsigamond Community College, as agent for the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges. In addition, several other colleges offered coursework as part of the Program – University of Massachusetts-Boston, Roxbury Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, Lesley University and Wheelock College. The Program provided credit courses from these colleges that lead to college credit for associate, bachelor and master's degrees, non-credit courses, certificate program and workshops.

After twenty years of successfully providing access to higher education to Boston residents for whom college had seemed unattainable, the ABCD Urban College Program applied to the Massachusetts Board of Regents for a charter to award the degree of Associate of Arts in three areas. The mission of the ABCD Urban College Program had been tested and proven; it was time to formalize the institution into a degree-awarding two-year college for Boston's underserved, non-traditional student population.

The Urban College of Boston Since 1993

On May 11, 1993, the Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council granted the Urban College of Boston a charter to award associate degrees in Early Childhood Education, General Studies and Human Services Administration.

Urban College admitted its first degree candidates in January 1994. In June, 1996, the College held its first commencement ceremony, with 30 students being recognized: 26 receiving certificates and four receiving associate degrees.

Shortly after receiving its charter, the Urban College of Boston began to pursue accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). In April 1996, following

submission of a Self-Study Report and a visit from a NEASC review team in November 1995, the Urban College of Boston was granted “Candidate for Accreditation” status.

In January 1997, Urban College became eligible to award federal financial aid, in the form of Pell Grants, to its students. Between 1998 and 2000, other milestones toward becoming a fully independent educational institution suggested by NEASC included:

- Filed *Articles of Organization* with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Higher Education; *Articles of Organization* approved on August 10, 1998;
- Received 501(c)3 Internal Revenue tax exempt status as a separate, non-profit corporation on September 24, 1998;
- Revised and adopted amended *By-Laws*. Broadened and diversified Board, decreasing the number of ABCD representatives at a meeting on February 17, 2000;
- Signed *Memorandum of Agreement* on March 29, 2000 that defined the relationship between ABCD and the Urban College of Boston; and
- Board of Trustees joined Association of Governing Boards of Schools and Colleges.

In March 2001, a NEASC evaluation team visited the Urban College of Boston to evaluate the possibility of granting of initial accreditation to the College, and on October 4, 2001, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education voted to grant the College full accreditation, retroactive to March 2001.

Building on its 30-year tradition of developing collaborative agreements with other educational institutions in Boston, Urban College currently collaborates with:

- Cambridge College
- Emerson College
- Endicott College
- Harvard University Extension School
- Lesley University
- Northeastern University
- Springfield College
- Suffolk University
- University of Massachusetts/Boston
- University of Phoenix
- Wheelock College

In many cases, institutions that used to come to Urban College to offer courses developed formal articulation agreements to provide ease in the transfer of credits, scholarships and residential support for UCB students.

The distinctive character of the Urban College of Boston attracted the attention of leaders in education, business and philanthropy when the law firm Ropes and Gray hosted a corporate breakfast in support of the College in 1991. In attendance were Alan K. Morse, President of U. S. Trust, Dr. Alvin Pouissant, well-known child psychologist, and Dr. Arthur Levine, President of Teachers College – Columbia University. At this event, Dr. Levine remarked that the Urban College of Boston offers a *nationally important model in providing educational opportunities for low income minority residents*. In April, 2001, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Childcare Services conducted a study of programs that teach early childhood education. The report cited Urban College’s Early Childhood Program and noted, *Urban College is unique in its substantial increase in enrollment and development of programs for culturally diverse/newcomer populations*.

Urban College has also benefited from collaborations with the following area businesses, foundations and corporations:

- State Street Bank and Trust
- Bell Atlantic (in providing funds and services for technology development)
- Citizen’s Financial Group, Inc., Larry Fish, Chairman & CEO, (in providing a scholarship in honor of Senator Ted Kennedy)
- Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust
- Jesse B. Cox Trust
- Boston Foundation
- Agnes M. Lindsay Family Foundation
- John F. Welch Foundation
- Constance and Lewis Counts Foundation
- Nellie Mae Foundation (in partnership with ABCD)
- Moses and Hannah Malkin Family Foundation
- Mifflin Memorial Fund
- Amelia Peabody Charitable Foundation
- Bright Horizons Family Solutions

Since 1993, the Urban College of Boston has made significant strides in its academic program. Annual student enrollment has grown from 429 (1996) to 751 (2005) in the three degree programs, an increase of 43 percent in twelve years. Students who receive their Associate of Arts degrees have increased from four in 1996 to 39 in 2005. Over 316 students have earned their Certificate of Achievement since 1996.

Interestingly, UCB’s retention rate by semester has improved from 50 percent to 70 percent since 1993, and approximately 75 percent of UCB associate degree graduates continue their educations at four-year institutions, most often through transfer opportunities and formal articulation programs that the Urban College has developed with eleven four-year area colleges.

Now in the fall of its twelfth year, the Urban College of Boston has 751 students enrolled in 64 courses. The College has three full-time faculty and approximately 40 part-time faculty. Two full-time academic professional staff members were added in 2005.

Urban College of Boston History Timeline

Pre-Charter	
1962	The founder of Urban College of Boston (UCB), Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) begins its distinguished long-term service as a private, non-profit antipoverty agency of the War on Poverty.
1964	ABCD receives designation by federal, state and subsequently City of Boston action as a community action agency under the Equal Opportunity Act
1967	ABCD begins offering higher education opportunities to inner-city residents through the Urban College Program (UCP).
1987	ABCD requests that Massachusetts Board of Regents approve charter amendment to permit award of degrees
May 1988	MA Board of Regents Visiting Committee reviews request.
June 1988	Visiting Committee report praises UCP; recommends strengthening governance, finance, curriculum, faculty affairs and learning resources, among other recommendations.
February 1992	Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC), formerly MA Board of Regents, Visiting Committee reviews request again and recommends approval of charter amendment, deleting Baccalaureate authority and authorizing award of Associate Degrees.
Charter	
May 11, 1993	The MA HECC grants charter to Urban College of Boston to award associate degree in Early Childhood Education, General Studies and Human Services Administration.
September 1993	Urban College of Boston enrolls 297 students from the Urban College Program.
January 1994	Urban College of Boston admits its first Associate Degree candidates.
September 1995	UCB submits Self-Study Report for first visit by NEASC review team.
November 5-8, 1995	NEASC review team visits UCB.
March 31, 1996	NEASC grants “Candidate for Accreditation” status to the Urban College of Boston, effective November 1995.
June 5, 1996	UCB holds its first graduation with four students receiving Associate of Arts degrees and 26 Certificates awarded.
September 13, 1996	UCB receives eligibility to award federal financial aid – Pell Grants.
August 10, 1998	MA Board of Higher Education approves the <i>Articles of Organization</i> .
September 1998	Urban College of Boston enrolls 398 students.
September 24, 1998	UCB receives 501(c)3 status; affiliation with ABCD redefined as partnership.
April 1998	UCB’s second NEASC review results in continuation of “Candidate for Accreditation” status; institution commended for having aggressively pursued improvements after initial evaluation.
February 18, 2000	UCB submits Self-Study Report for initial accreditation.
March 2000	UCB develops first Strategic Plan.
March 29, 2000	UCB signs <i>Memorandum of Agreement</i> , becomes fully independent college while maintaining ABCD partnership.
April 2-4, 2000	NEASC review team visits UCB.
Accreditation	
March 19-20, 2001	NEASC review team revisits UCB.
October 2001	NEASC awards Urban College of Boston full accreditation.
September 2003	Ten years after receiving its charter, Urban College of Boston enrolls 603 students.
2003	UCB Board of Trustees organizes four new subcommittees.
June 4, 2004	Urban College celebrates the 10 th graduating class with 37 Associate of Arts degrees and 42 Certificates of Achievements awarded.
February 25, 2005	Department of Education designates Urban College as a Hispanic Serving Institution.
September 16, 2005	UCB develops the second Strategic Plan.
January 20, 2006	Urban College of Boston sends Self-Study Report to NEASC and visiting team.

