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Verizon Provides \$40,000 Grant to Support UMass Boston Urban Scholars Program

(Boston, December 22, 2008) – Verizon of New England President Donna Cupelo and University of Massachusetts Boston Chancellor J. Keith Motley today announced a \$40,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to help support the Urban Scholars program, which this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary of helping middle and high school students to achieve at the college level.

With the new funding from the Verizon Foundation, the Urban Scholars college readiness curriculum will be infused with leading-edge content provided by premier education experts and organizations through Verizon's Thinkfinity.org efforts. Thinkfinity.org is the cornerstone of Verizon Foundation's literacy, education, and technology initiatives and provides high-quality content and extensive professional development for teachers.

“UMass Boston’s Urban Scholars program has demonstrated a history of commitment to success, making it an ideal program for the Verizon Foundation to support,” said Cupelo. “We look forward to helping Boston students lay the groundwork to excel in college.”

The UMass Urban Scholars program provides gifted and talented students from selected Boston Public Schools with the skills, task commitment, and self-motivation they need to enter and successfully complete college. The program has served nearly 1,500 students. Of the graduates, 98% went on to college, and 85% graduated from college or are still enrolled.

“We are always looking for additional resources to strengthen our programs, and we are thankful for the Verizon Foundation’s generous support,” said Chancellor Motley. “With the help of our partners, we are making a difference in the lives of young students in Boston and helping them to achieve.”

About the Verizon Foundation

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its signature program, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2007, the foundation awarded more than \$67.4 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the United States and abroad. The foundation also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$25.1 million in combined contributions. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 3 million hours of community service since Verizon's inception in 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

About UMass Boston

With a growing reputation for innovative research addressing complex urban issues, the University of Massachusetts Boston, metropolitan Boston's only public university, offers its diverse student population both an intimate learning environment and the rich experience of a great American city. UMass Boston's seven colleges and graduate schools serve more than 14,000 students while engaging local, national, and international constituents through academic programs, research centers, and public service activities. To learn more about UMass Boston, visit www.umb.edu.