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Five FSC students earn state tuition scholarship

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By **Matt Rocheleau**, *Globe Correspondent*

Five Framingham State College students were among the 53 from across the state who received a scholarship covering full tuition and fees at any of the nine state colleges for up to four years today at the State House.

The noontime ceremony recognized Framingham State students Elise Howell of Franklin, Derek Pietras of Webster, Emily Slora of Ludlow, Melissa Keene of Blackstone, and Katerina Tylicki of Oxford as Tsongas Scholars.

Now in its 12th year, the scholarship launched by the Board of Higher Education is a tribute to the late Senator Paul E. Tsongas, who once served as chair of a former board which is now the Board of Higher Education. He died in 1997

The scholarship, “was designed to further Senator Tsongas’ belief in the value of education and the importance of public colleges and universities in providing all citizens access to academic excellence,” according to a press release announcing the awards.

The scholarship covers in-state tuition and mandatory fees for up to four years, which is approximately \$6,800 each year, the release said.

Scholarship awards are merit-based, and financial need is not required for eligibility. In order to renew scholarship funding, students must maintain a minimum 3.3 grade point average and fulfill requirements set by individual colleges in the program, added the release.

“These are some of the best and brightest students in Massachusetts and we are proud to have them as students at our colleges,” said Admiral Richard Gurnon, President of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in the release. “We are deeply thankful to the late Senator Paul Tsongas and to his family for continuing to support this program, which recognizes how vital our state colleges are to the future of Massachusetts.”

Thalia Tsongas Schlesinger, former Sen. Tsongas’ sister, Senate President Therese Murray and State Treasurer and 2010 state gubernatorial candidate Timothy Cahill attended the Monday afternoon ceremony.

All nine state college presidents were also present, along with Secretary of Education Paul Reville, numerous state senators and representatives and Jay Curley, Senior Vice President of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which sponsored the event.

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