

THE HISTORY OF FRAMINGHAM STATE COLLEGE

Framingham State College began in a building, still standing today, on the corner of Lexington Common on July 3, 1839. It had as its mission the training of teachers, and was the first state-supported normal school (a school which trains teachers) in the United States of America. Twice it outgrew its accommodations, moving first to West Newton and then to its present location on Bare Hill in Framingham in 1853. From the beginning, the Normal School met the challenge of being the first model by educating teachers who were in demand for the common schools of Massachusetts and, indeed, for schools throughout the nation. From the first class, Normal School graduates participated in the new field of education for the blind and the deaf. They traveled to the South and to the West to teach in schools being established for Blacks and Native Americans, and they went as missionaries to distant lands.

From 1848 to 1898 Framingham also conducted an advanced program for women who aspired to careers in high school and college teaching, school administration, law and medicine, opening unprecedented educational and career opportunities for these women. There were principals, professors, doctors, and writers among the early graduates, and women who participated in the suffrage and temperance movements; indeed, in all of the significant educational and social reforms of the nineteenth century. At the close of the nineteenth century, the first teachers of the household arts were graduated from a new program at Framingham, laying the foundation for studies in nutrition and food science, as well as clothing and textiles.

The student body increased steadily during the twentieth century and with it the size of the campus and the number of buildings. New programs and courses marked the increasingly professional character of the education offered, while extracurricular organizations were formed to enrich student life. In 1932 the Massachusetts Normal Schools became the State Teachers Colleges, and in 1960 they became State Colleges with a mandate to develop liberal arts curricula. Framingham, which had served only women, became coeducational in 1964. The College has continued to add departments such as Economics, Sociology, and Psychology, as well as career-orientated programs in Computer Science, Communications, Business Administration, and Nursing, among others, to increase the options for students and to meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

Today, Framingham State College is situated on a beautiful 73-acre campus in the suburban town of Framingham. The College's location in the economically vibrant Metro West area affords many opportunities for students and graduates alike. Approximately 6,150 full- and part-time students with 24 bachelor's degree programs and 21 master's degree programs are enrolled at the College.