

McGovern impressed with Dean's high-tech use of federal funds

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U.S. Rep. James McGovern received a tour, from Dean College President Paula Rooney, of the Dean College Campus on Monday afternoon.

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**By Ashley Studley/Daily News staff
Milford Daily News**

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FRANKLIN — U.S. Rep. James McGovernD-3rd, yesterday paid Dean College a visit to see how the school is using federal funds to improve technology.

After meeting with Dean College President Paula Rooney, McGovern toured the Library Learning Commons - a newly renovated building. A \$150,000 federal appropriation McGovern secured in December helped pay for upgrades in curriculum, technology, faculty and instruction.

"One of the things Congressman McGovern was involved in was getting the appropriation to get the technology you guys use on a daily basis," Rooney said to two students demonstrating new tools in the building's testing room.

Karl McGrotty, a student from Andover, showed McGovern how to use a Pulse Smartpen - a writing tool that records lectures and remembers what's been written. He said a student can jot down a key phrase on a special notebook during class and later click on it to play back that part of the lecture.

Dean has five of the \$150 pens, which Rooney said contributes to skills that set students apart when they hit the job market.

"The student is able to listen, and put down on the paper the specific piece (they) want instead of taking reams and reams of notes and having it mean nothing," Rooney said.

McGovern, D-3rd, who tried the pen out, was impressed.

"It helps you learn the coursework and real-life skills," he said.

"It makes it so much more accessible to a number of learning styles," said Andrew Cioffi, assistant director for the learning center.

Peter Diarbakerly, a student from Lincoln, showed McGovern the Kurzweil 3000, a system that converts text into speech that's read back to the student.

"The tools enable (students) to look at the material differently," Rooney said.

Cioffi said the school has three of the computer systems, and both the pen and the Kurzweil 3000 are reserved for students with learning disabilities and who need special accommodations.

McGovern liked what he saw.

"It's incredibly impressive," he said. "First, (the tools) are making sure everyone gets a first-class education, and secondly, it prepares students for the real world."

He said the programs can only help a student entering the work force.

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"If we're going to continue to be the economic super force in the future, we need the students going into the work force to hit the ground running," he said.

Rooney said the funding has also gone toward instructing faculty how to teach students who learn differently.

"That's why Dean has always been on the cutting edge," McGovern said.

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