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QVCC celebrates Black History Month

ANTHONY ZEPPERI

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

DANIELSON — An Eastern Connecticut State University official helped students and staff at a local community college learn and celebrate Black History Month, which is February.

Stacey Close, associate provost and vice president for equity and diversity at ECSU, spoke at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson Feb. 12.

In February 1969, Black History Month was first celebrated in the United States and has always been a time to honor key African American people and their contribution to society, according to TIME Magazine. It was first coined in 1929 by educator Carter Woodson, who helped launch a week celebrating African-American history.

Prior to his presentation, QVCC student Jesus Pauline sang a moving rendition of “Amazing Grace.”

About 45 people attended.

Rose Ellis, the QVCC interim chief executive officer, said presentations like these are important in honoring Black History Month.

“These events serve as a reminder to celebrate African Americans,” Ellis said. “It reflects their importance to our country’s history.”

During Close’s presentation, he talked about the song “Amazing Grace” and its importance in black culture.

“It’s one of the first songs that I heard,” Close said. “I knew the importance of it as the African American free-



Eastern Connecticut State University official Stacey Close speaks recently at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson for a program on ‘Black History Month.’ Anthony Zepperi | For the Chronicle

dom struggle.”

Throughout Close’s presentation called, “Africana Americans and the Vote,” he educated QVCC students and faculty on key events in African-American history.

Some names mentioned throughout his presentation were the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall as well as the Black Panther Party.

Some key events touched on by Close were the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, as well as important court cases like Plessy vs. Ferguson, a controversial 1890s Supreme Court case that said “separate

but equal” wasn’t unconstitutional, setting the tone for decades of racial segregation.

Regarding the future, Close said there has been some success with black women compared to black men regarding higher education.

“There has been a continued uptake of African-American women,” Close said. “They will continue to climb as there are more African-American women going to college compared to men, which is a good sign for the future.”

QVCC’s main campus is in Danielson. The campus has a branch at Windham Technical High School in Willimantic.

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Stacey Close, ECSU