

2019

MCCS STRATEGIC PLAN



Approved and Endorsed by the
MCCS Board of Trustees
November 13, 2018

Overview

The mission of the Maine Community College System (MCCS) is to create an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force that is responsive to the changing needs of the Maine economy. The state's seven community colleges are uniquely positioned to accomplish this work through their mix of occupational and transfer programs, statewide reach, affordable tuition, and strong partnerships with business and industry.

Since their transition from technical to community colleges, the institutions have made it possible for thousands more Maine people to access greater educational opportunity. But increased access has not meant that Maine has fully realized the potential of the community colleges to prepare and sustain a highly skilled and adaptable labor force.

Realizing that full potential will require strategic responses to statewide challenges that threaten Maine's ability to attract and retain jobs that sustain its families and communities.

- College going and completion rates lag those in the rest of New England; as a result, not enough Maine people have the skills and credentials the state's economy needs to grow and sustain good jobs at good wages;
- This challenge is compounded by the fact that the state's aging population means that its labor force is projected to continue a steady decline over the next 15 years;
- At the same time, rapid technological change will continue to transform Maine's economy and demand even higher skill levels of both incumbent and future workers;
- In short, many more Maine people must be prepared and able to attain additional training, education, and skills.

Faced with these realities, Maine's community colleges—as detailed in this new strategic plan—are focused on three fundamental priorities: access and attraction, student success, and lifelong learning.

- 1. Get them in: access and attraction**
- 2. Get them through: student success**
- 3. Keep them connected: workforce development and lifelong learning**

1

Get them in: access and attraction

As Maine's population ages, the state faces a lack of skilled workers to fuel the state's economy.

- While the number of Maine high school graduates continues to decline (down 15% in the last 10 years)¹, only 62% of Maine students enroll directly in college after graduating from high school²;
- Only 14% of Maine high school graduates enrolled directly in a Maine community college in fall 2017³;
- Between 180,000 and 230,000 Mainers have earned some college credit but have not completed a certificate or degree;⁴ and
- Thousands of adult workers remain out of the labor force because they lack the personal qualities and technical skills to qualify for high-demand jobs.⁵

Maine's community colleges are uniquely positioned to help many more Maine people gain the skills and education they need.

- The seven colleges and their off-campus centers are within 25 miles of 92% of Maine's population;
- The colleges offer the lowest tuition and fees in New England, and half of all students receive grant aid that covers the cost of tuition and fees;
- Over 75% of the programs offered by Maine's community colleges are the only ones of their kind in the state; and
- The colleges have the capacity to be innovative and flexible in their programming, scheduling, and delivery models in order to meet the immediate and long-term needs of both students and employers.

¹ <https://knocking.wiche.edu/state-profiles/>

² <https://mitchellinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2014MaineCollegeGoing.pdf>

³ MCCS IR direct from high school data and state profile referenced in footnote 1 above.

⁴ Educate Maine: <https://www.pressherald.com/2015/05/10/hardest-hit-college-students-who-never-finish-school/>

⁵ <https://www.pressherald.com/2018/07/01/commentary-retooling-maines-displaced-workers/>

**#1 Get them in:
Access and Attraction**

Goal: Increase the number of individuals served by Maine’s community colleges

| Objective | Strategies |
|--|---|
| Increase the percent of recent Maine high school graduates who enroll in a Maine community college | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain the statewide public awareness campaign and further develop messaging and attraction efforts targeted to recent Maine high school graduates • Strengthen pathways and partnerships with CTE’s • Strengthen/expand <i>Embark: Support for the College Journey</i> • Increase outreach to and recruitment of dual and concurrent students • Support the development of the colleges’ capacity to use SAT data to identify and recruit students |
| Increase the number of adults served by MCCS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support & incentivize new delivery models to meet needs of adult learners • Support & incentivize pathways from and between non-credit to credit • Support & incentivize badging/micro-credentialing • Support expanded implementation and use of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) • Further develop public awareness messaging and attraction efforts targeted to adults • Strengthen partnerships between MCCS and Adult Education, MDOL, and employers |

Foundational Supports

| Finance | Information Technology | Data & Institutional Research | Professional Development |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Secure funding for operational costs and needed capital investments so that programs and facilities meet both existing and emerging needs of students and employers</p> <p>Keep MCCS affordable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MCCS tuition and fees remain lowest in New England - At least half of full-time MCCS students continue to receive grant aid that covers tuition/fees <p>Operationalize strategic innovation fund</p> | <p>Strengthen data governance to improve data security</p> <p>Implement systemwide method for registering and tracking non-credit enrollments (Higher Reach)</p> <p>Using a Master Data Management approach, build a data system and structures that support a single formal Operational Data Store.</p> | <p>Track dual and concurrent enrollment outcomes</p> <p>Code CTE students properly.</p> <p>Track CTE outcomes (enrollment of CTE students; alignment of CTE program and college major; success of CTE students)</p> <p>Determine key characteristics of 39% of Maine high school graduates who do not currently enroll immediately in college</p> <p>Assess ROI of dual and concurrent activities</p> | <p>Provide support for curriculum redesign and new pathways</p> <p>Provide support for new and innovative attraction initiatives and practices</p> |

#2

Get them through: student success

To have a meaningful impact on the state's workforce challenges, increased educational access must be supported by an organizational culture and structure focused on student success. In joining the national Achieving the Dream network, MCCS is pioneering a statewide, evidence-based, student centered effort to achieve significant improvement in the success of our students. This and other critical steps are necessary to assist more of our students in persisting toward their educational goals.

In fall 2014, 43% of first-time MCCS students enrolled in a remedial math course. According to data from the Community College Research Center, less than 25% of remedial students at community colleges earn a certificate or degree within eight years of enrollment. Nationwide, only a third of those who take remedial math pass.⁶ Key to MCCS efforts to help more students succeed is the implementation of new math curricula and pathways.

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/10/opinion/sunday/cuny-ending-the-curse-of-remedial-math.html>

| #2 Get them through: Student Success | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Goal: Increase student success rate to 57% for fall 2018 cohort and 59% for fall 2019 cohort <i>Student success rate: percent of students in an entering fall cohort who graduate, are still enrolled, or have transferred at 150% time to completion. Includes degree-/certificate-seeking students who entered the college as first-time or transfer in students, enrolled full- or part-time.</i> | | | |
| Objectives | | Strategies | |
| Increase MCCS credential completion rate | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support colleges in the implementation of their Student Success Action Plans. • Strengthen systemwide capacity to institutionalize data-driven decision making and support the continued development of a systemwide culture of evidence • Implement math pathways systemwide • Pilot guided pathways • Promote and support reverse transfer | |
| Increase MCCS fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce reliance on remediation; increase percent of students who are placed in college math and college English upon enrollment in a program of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use 11th grade SAT to inform and promote 12th grade remediation - Support expansion of co-requisite options • Move navigators from soft funding to permanent funding as resources allow | |
| Increase the number of MCCS students who transfer on to 4-year programs of study, mindful that receiving institutions determine access and affordability. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work with UMS and MMA partners to streamline transfer policies and procedures between Maine's public institutions of higher education • Strengthen tracking and reporting of transfer activity between MCCS and UMS • Strengthen existing pathways and develop new ones between MCCS and UMS that decrease cost of attendance and time to completion (block transfer, meta-majors, connected pathways) | |
| Foundational Supports | | | |
| Finance | IT | Data & Institutional Research | Professional Development |
| <p>Secure funding for operational costs and needed capital investments so that programs and facilities meet both existing and emerging needs of students and employers</p> <p>Keep MCCS affordable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCCS tuition and fees remain lowest in New England • At least half of full-time MCCS students continue to receive grant aid that covers tuition and fees. | <p>Strengthen capacity of MCCS IT to track student progress.</p> <p>Create an MCCS Data Dictionary to ensure that all data has a common definition and meaning</p> | <p>Strengthen capacity of MCCS IR to track and analyze student progress</p> <p>Strengthen capacity Systemwide to present, communicate, and understand data</p> <p>Develop a data-sharing agreement with UMS to support transfer</p> <p>Report on ATD metrics two times each year</p> | <p>Promote and support high-impact practices in teaching, learning, and advising.</p> <p>Explore ways in which MCCS can sustain the work of ATD at end of Kresge funding in 2020</p> |

#3

Keep them connected: lifelong learning and workforce development

MCCS seeks to reengineer its delivery of workforce training and to create new educational pathways that lead from short-term training to post-secondary credentials for Maine adults. The goal: to build an innovative, demand driven workforce development system that is responsive to Maine's established and evolving industry sectors and that provides Maine people with ready access to the training and education they need to build a more prosperous future for their families and their state.

**Keep them connected:
Lifelong learning & workforce development**

Goal: Strengthen alignment of MCCS programs and services with the needs of Maine employers and workers to enhance the employability and career development of adults served by MCCS and to better address the state’s workforce challenges.

| Objectives | Strategies |
|---|--|
| Strengthen MCCS workforce training programs and services to ensure their relevance and responsiveness to employers and adult learners statewide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine industry sector training needs • Identify and map MCCS systemwide workforce training assets • Track and assess new programs launched with 2018 workforce development funds • Develop a three-year training plan to address statewide needs • Optimize resources of the Maine Quality Centers program • Strengthen marketing, outreach, and partnership development with employers • Develop and implement a survey tool to assess and track employer satisfaction with MCCS programs and services • Strengthen capacity to assess graduate and trainee outcomes in the workforce • Develop capacity to reconnect with and market to those who participate in MCCS programs |
| Increase types of credentials of value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and expand pathways from non-credit to credit • Support development of digital badging and micro-credentialing • Build/expand new delivery models and employer partnerships that are highly responsive to the needs of industry, incumbent workers, and other adult learners |
| Increase the number of adults served by MCCS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Priority #1 for list of strategies |

Foundational Supports

| Finance | Information Technology | Data & Institutional Research | Professional Development |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Secure funding for operational costs and needed capital investments so that programs and facilities meet both existing and emerging needs of students and employers</p> <p>Secure funding to expand and strengthen the capacity of the Workforce Development Division</p> | <p>Implement Higher Reach</p> <p>Build badging support structure</p> <p>With IR, explore development of standardized employer feedback loop</p> | <p>Increase capacity to analyze and share key labor market data in order to inform program development and delivery</p> <p>Strengthen partnership with MDOL to access wage and outcomes data on a regular, reliable basis</p> <p>Update capacity to count and report on individuals and employers served</p> | <p>Support curriculum redesign, new pedagogies, and new pathways for adult learners.</p> |