Manchester Community College
Context for Strategic Planning Concept Paper

**MCC Concept Papers**
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

**The Big Questions**
Can we continue to say ‘yes’ to all new and interesting initiatives? How can we stay focused on teaching and learning?

How will MCC respond to non-optional directives from outside constituents?

How will MCC anticipate future funding and budget cuts and establish priorities when we respond to them?

What kinds of values need to be shown in the culture of our organization in order to be most effective in the future?

How can we continue to be a top place to work with all of these challenges?

How do we continue to plan in the face of so much uncertainty? Can we learn to embrace change?

**Background**
While MCC has experienced growth in the number of students served, financial and human resources to support this increase have not increased proportionately.

NEASC has requested a report in Spring 2014 addressing our low full-time vs. part-time faculty ratio the need to strengthen advising and developmental instruction and improve graduation rates, our ability to maintain financial stability while preserving the quality of academic programs and services, and the progress on a new college website.

New legislation and directives from the Board of Regents and other constituents require us to make changes in our curriculum and processes over very short time periods. Examples include:

- PA 12-40
- TAP
- Federal and state financial aid changes
- Union-negotiated agreements and concessions

The Strategic Plan developed in 2008-09 has provided direction for MCC over the past four years and is used to guide the allocation of resources.

Consolidation of the state’s 17 schools into ConnSCU, establishment of the Board of Regents, and a new ConnSCU President will likely impact the college, our resources, how we are organized, and how and what we teach.

Federal and state legislation are trending towards more requirements for accountability, and at least some of our funding may be based on performance.

**Strategic Planning Process**
MCC’s next strategic plan is scheduled to be implemented in Fall 2014. We are following a model called Collaborative Strategic Planning in Higher Education (by Patrick Sanaghan, published in 2009 by NACUBO).

One of the key elements of this model is the creation of a set of concept papers, or white papers, that summarize the key findings from our NEASC report, Educational Master Plan, and Enrollment Management plan. These concept papers support the Vision Conference, scheduled for May 2013.

The outcome of this event is a shared picture of MCC’s future – which will become the vision statement around which we will build more specific strategic goals and implementation plans in 2013-14.

**Collaborative Strategic Planning in Higher Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
<th>Phase V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring/Summer/Fall 2012</td>
<td>Summer/Fall 2012</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A steering committee will be formed and determine how to best adopt the planning model.</td>
<td>MCC has several recently completed several well-documented planning projects which include internal and external perspectives about the college and the environment in which we work.</td>
<td>The main goal for the third phase is to identify and clarify the dominant strategic themes that have emerged from our planning exercises.</td>
<td>The Vision Conference brings together a group of internal and external stakeholders to review and discuss the concept papers - and produce shared visions of MCC’s future.</td>
<td>Stakeholders identify a set of strategic goals that need to be realized. If MCC is to achieve the shared visions articulated at the Vision Conference, specific objectives are identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Plan?

- We must remain mission-centric and maintain focus on our core activities of teaching and learning.
- Changes and new initiatives must be prioritized along with current initiatives and resources.
- Outside regulations and mandates may pull us in new directions. Some may reshape our mission.
- A common plan helps determine how we allocate our limited resources and communicate priorities.

Why Be Involved In Planning?

Collaborative strategic planning encourages:
- Meaningful engagement of stakeholders
- Transparency of information
- Diversity of ideas
- Ownership of the planning process and outcomes
- Reflection and making sense of issues
- Discovery and learning
- An external perspective
- Community building and connections

Collaborative strategic planning creates the opportunity to:
- Create vision and goals
- Identify financial impacts of decisions
- Use data to inform dialogue and decisions
- Identify campus priorities
- Create action plans for implementation

Collaborative strategic planning supports our values of Shared Understanding, Shared Responsibility, Shared Leadership.

Affirmative Action and Diversity

Manchester Community College, as both a community and an organization, believes that it is in our best interest to create a more inclusive society that provides genuine equality of opportunity. Affirmative action programs, strengthen the community, promote its well-being, and maximize the benefits of our great diversity.

It is the intention of Manchester Community College to be in compliance with all statutes guiding the program of affirmative action and to develop and implement programs and processes that are in keeping with the spirit and philosophy upon which these statutes were developed.
Manchester Community College
Budget and Enrollment Management Concept Paper

MCC Concept Papers
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions
MCC will maintain financial stability while preserving the quality of the academic programs and services we offer.

How can MCC best respond to new fiscal realities – including decreasing share of revenue from state, increasing fixed costs, and limited new positions?

Can MCC grow enrollment to increase revenue?

Background
Manchester Community College needs to respond to new fiscal realities. MCC has an annual budget of $41M. Almost half our revenue comes from student tuition and fees, and 40% comes from CT’s general fund. The amount provided by state’s general fund has decreased by over $2M over the past five years, and dropped from 50% of our revenue to just 40%.

MCC’s non-credit registrations provide over $1.3M in revenue. Revenue from grants has increased, but is still a small share of total revenue. More than 75% of MCC’s operating expenses are related to personnel. Full-time positions account for $19M - 60% of personnel costs - and almost half of our total expenses. Part-time lecturers (PTLs) account for $5.5M, almost 20% of personnel costs and 14% of total expenses. Educational Assistants (EAs) account for $1.5M, 5% of personnel costs and 4% of total expenses.

MCC has limited flexibility in controlling operating costs. “Other Expenses” include consumable supplies (instructional supplies for labs and studios among other items) and service contracts. “Other expenses” have traditionally cost about $3M and less than 10% of the budget. In FY13 “other expenses” have been cut by one-third, to about $1.9M.

Over the past several years MCC has “transferred” about 20% of tuition revenue to support the system and other colleges. This totals about $3M each year. This year MCC is expecting “relief” of $1.3M. Over the past several years MCC has been providing transfer amounts that triple that of the next largest giving-college.

National Trends and External Factors
Nationally, state support for public higher education has been decreasing. Over the past five years, across 50 states, fiscal support for higher education is down 11% according to The Grapevine Project, which tracks state support for higher education from Illinois State University. In Connecticut from FY08-FY13, fiscal support for higher education is down 7.5%. At MCC, state support is down almost 12% over the same period.
Within the ConnSCU system there have been a number of discussions about making changes to the formulas used to distribute the ConnSCU community college block grant from the state along with tuition revenue. While nothing has been decided, and conversations are ongoing, new directions in state and system funding formulas may include some of the following:

- Decrease or eliminate transfer back to system
- Decrease in General Fund appropriation that covers salaries and fringe of FT employees
- General Fund appropriation based in-part on full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment
- Increase tuition for students
- Adjust regulations on mandatory reserves
- Adjust policy on financial aid set-aside (currently 15% of tuition revenue = $2.2M)
- Adjust policy on charging full-time students for all registered credits, rather than cap charge at 12 credits
- Performance based funding – retention, graduation, milestones like credit thresholds, and gatekeeper courses

**Strategic Themes: Short and Long Term Plans**

Many have argued that structural changes to MCC and System budgets are needed. Increasing personnel costs suggest we should be prepared to maintain services with fewer full time employees; there will be only limited replacements of retirees and leavers. Functional gaps created by retirements will, in many cases, be met by re-structuring with the talent we have.

Other structural changes include planning and strategizing to increase philanthropic giving to the college, and increasing our focus on a limited number of strategic directions, rather than dispersing our efforts over a broad range of directions within our mission.

Many have suggested that to maintain current services and meet our expenses, MCC needs to increase revenue through tuition and fees. As detailed in our Educational Master Plan and in our NEASC Self-Study, there are several areas considered opportunities for enrollment growth.

One such opportunity is with adult students. Connecticut will have a decreasing number of HS graduates each year moving forward, and there will be growth in age groups that include adults 25-34 and 55+. This demographic shift suggests our enrollment may shrink over time. In order to grow, then, MCC must target new “sectors” of enrollment. MCC’s Educational Master Plan stated that Connecticut’s adult population is less likely to be enrolled in higher education than in other states. Evidence suggests we can meet their needs with additional offerings in accelerated and distance formats.

MCC has successfully increased the number of distance education registrations, invested in positions to support this growth, and professional development has been provided to interested faculty. Late start and other accelerated formats have also increased in recent semesters. Additional strategies are needed, particularly for the 55+ demographic.

Another strategy to increase enrollment detailed in our Educational Master Plan and in our NEASC Self-Study is creating new academic programs in areas of workforce need. MCC recently started new programs in Dental Assisting and Computer Game Design. Students can now earn a General Studies degree online. Development of additional new academic programs may include innovative partnerships, including ones with hospitals on Allied Health programs like radiology and phlebotomy. Similar partnerships are being utilized in programs like Aviation Maintenance and the CL&P Apprenticeship program. Another new program direction is to provide students with “career ladders” from non-credit programs like Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Transfer pathways are also a direction for new program development.

Another opportunity to increase enrollment is tied to retaining the students already enrolled at MCC. Student support programs and other best practices tied to student engagement and success can increase MCC enrollment and position the college to take advantage of performance funding.
Manchester Community College  
Academic Excellence Concept Paper

MCC Concept Papers
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions
MCC will distinguish itself by demonstrating a commitment to excellence and rigor across all our programs and disciplines.

How will the limited resources of faculty additional responsibilities be allocated to attend to the many facets of academic excellence?

How will we prioritize the work of the college so that there are sufficient resources to engage in meaningful ways?

How do we balance our own initiatives with those that have been mandated by the legislature and the Board of Regents?

Background
Over the last six years, Manchester Community College has focused on and made substantial progress in the areas of overall student learning goals and outcomes, assessment, success in college level courses, and General Education reform.

In 2008, after over a year of campus-wide conversations, the college approved its first set of college-wide student learning goals. These goals outline the outcomes we expect all students to pursue and all degree seeking students to meet. The goals provide the foundation for important work in assessment and General Education reform that the college has engaged over the last several years.

In 2009 and 2010, teams of colleagues attended the annual NEEAN (New England Educational Assessment Network) conference. The first team returned to campus and formed the Assessment Resource Team that guided programs and disciplines through a year-long assessment project focused on a single question. That work has been continued both in institutional and NEASC self-studies. The e-series forms required for NEASC helped to guide work on articulating and assessing program outcomes. As programs worked through these forms, many decided to revisit and revise their outcomes.

Work on General Education reform began in 2008. In June 2010, a team from the College attended the AAC&U Greater Expectations workshop to finalize a proposal for reform which after several rounds of campus input and refinement is being piloted in Liberal Arts and Sciences and General Studies. The reform focuses on a limited number of the learning goals. We will begin our first round of assessment of our new General Education program in Fall 2012. Some aspects of the General Education program have been questioned by the college community, particularly the transferability of some required courses.

Emphasis continues to be placed on faculty ownership of assessment of learning goals. Rubrics, based upon the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, have been created; departments and discipline faculty will create rubrics to assess the knowledge area content of general education courses.

In 2011, based upon institutional research on student success in college-level courses, the college added college-level writing eligibility pre-requisites on most college classes. The research made a compelling case that students eligible to take English 101 succeeded at a significantly higher rate than students who were not eligible.

An academic advising self-study was conducted during the 2011-12 academic year, and the recommendations are being implemented. MCC utilizes a “shared advising” model through which many students are served by the Advising and Counseling Center, and other students are referred to their program-specific academic advisors. Survey data has suggested that MCC students are less likely to utilize advising and academic planning than students at other community colleges.

The College has begun important work on linking co-curricular experiences to overall learning goals. This project is especially important for learning goals that are not directly addressed in the General Education and academic components of students’ experiences. In December 2012, MCC was selected as a leadership institution for AAC&U’s Developing a Community College Student Roadmap. The selection provides funding for MCC’s work in developing a comprehensive roadmap curricular and co-curricular – for students.
In response to recent legislation, the 17-college ConnSCU system has developed a framework for articulating improved transfer between designated degree programs. That work included the development of core competencies that substantially align with both MCC’s overall and General Education learning goals. Late this past fall and continuing through the spring, pathways committees will develop specific transfer pathways, guided by the TAP 30 credit framework.

Lessons Learned
Work on college-wide learning goals, assessment and General Education reform has depended upon a belief in shared governance – and we have had to learn how to engage this practice. Committee leaders have found that as more voices and viewpoints are invited into the planning, greater buy-in and understanding across the community is achieved. There have been a number of difficult moments since we were not only pursuing new initiatives, but also engaging a new process at the same time. Committees have been encouraged to continually reflect upon their work and modify where necessary.

Resources are limited. Only one-third of the instructional workload is accounted for by full-time faculty. At times, it seems the college is trying to forward too many initiatives at once. General Education reform, course certifications, assessment projects, program reviews, new program development, managing adjunct faculty - among many other initiatives - have stretched the college’s ability to manage change. The requirements of the TAP agreement and PA 12-40, mandates that have come to us from legislation and the Board of Regents have only added to our workload.

National Trends/External Picture
AAC&U has emphasized the important work of creating clear learning goals for students and clear and useful methods of assessment that concentrate on documenting what students have learned. We have been closely associated with the work of AAC&U since attendance at an AAC&U institute in 2006. More generally, the national scene has seen an increased call for accountability that actually looks at what students learn, not simply at attendance, retention and graduation rates. We see an increased emphasis, then, on defining learning goals and creating clear and transparent ways of measuring and reporting the extent to which students meet those goals.

Strategic Themes: Short- and Long-term Plans
In order for our work to be effective, to continue to move forward, MCC will need to address a number of themes:

- Allocate or redirect resources for key activities, such as collection and assessment of artifacts; may require continued conversation about additional responsibilities and college priorities.
- The ratio of FT to PT faculty – critical to management of curriculum and completing the work related to academic excellence.
- Work with programs to successfully incorporate the new General Education model.
- In this first year of the implementation of our new General Education requirement, work on the process of assessing General Education, but also report results in useable ways to all key stakeholder.
- Use information gained from piloting General Education and the new Integrated Learning Course to revisit and refine the work.
- Provide professional development and well-articulated course outcomes for full and part time faculty.
- Work with transfer programs to effectively create and adopt pathways developed system wide within the TAP framework.
- Ensure that the 30 credit General Education (TAP) portion of our transfer degrees is aligned with MCC’s 21-credit General Education program.
- Engage MCC’s AAC&U Roadmap Institution status to continue to work on curricular and co-curricular learning goals.
- Deepen commitment to partnerships with business, industry and organizations for curriculum guidance, student internship opportunities, and job placement.

Projected Costs
Resources are limited. Much of the work falls to full-time faculty, often as part of additional responsibilities. How will the limited resources of faculty additional responsibilities be allocated to attend to the many facets of academic excellence? How will we prioritize the work of the College so that there are sufficient resources so that work can be engaged in meaningful ways? How do we balance our own initiatives with those that have been mandated by the legislature and the Board of Regents?

As positions remain unfilled, the number of full-time faculty will decrease, making prioritizing our work and initiatives that much more pressing.
Manchester Community College
Distance Learning Concept Paper

MCC Concept Papers
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions
Online learning has been identified as an opportunity for enrollment growth at MCC.

Is online learning a viable avenue for growing enrollment, serving students’ best interests and creating additional revenue?

Can the quality of MCC’s academic and student service programs be matched online?

Background
MCC has long been providing distance education opportunities for students, but this area has received increased attention in recent years, with increased offerings, enrollment, professional development and support for faculty and students engaged in distance education.

The 2011 Educational Master Plan outlines population growth for the next seven years to be the highest in the 25-34 age group, and the plan cites trends in higher education indicating that online education opportunities are the highest for the 22-30 age groups. The combination of these two statistics suggests MCC could attract and serve this growth best by developing and offering online courses, certificates and degrees.

In Fall 2012, Manchester Community College launched an online General Studies A.S. degree. As the college begins the process of reviewing and renewing its strategic goals and objectives, online learning is an area that needs planning and discussion. Online course enrollments have been steadily rising at MCC and the college has highlighted online learning as an area of enrollment growth.

MCC’s Current Online Learning Environment
On November 10, 2010 the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education accepted MCC’s Substantive Change report on distance education. As a result, MCC’s distance education program was included within the institution’s accreditation and became effective on January 1, 2011.

MCC has continued to increase credit online course offerings every semester in almost all disciplines. In spring 2013, the college has 1244 students taking 1682 online and hybrid courses – 368 (30%) of these distance students are enrolled exclusively in online and hybrid classes.

In addition to online courses, the college offers a fully accredited online degree program in General Studies, and two credit-bearing certificate programs. The creation of these online programs precipitated the need to move student services, originally available only on-ground, online. According to the MCC Online Learning web page, MCC currently offers etutoring, SmarterMeasure, Ask a Librarian, Success Coaching, and Blackboard Support provided by Board of Regents Help Desk.

Students interested in the online General Studies degree are required to take an on-ground assessment test to determine their proficiency in mathematics and English. Other student services are accomplished either through email with the appropriate department or as on-campus services. On-campus services listed on the web page include one-to-one and small group tutoring, the writing center, ESL conversation lab, technology skills assistance and a variety of workshops on study skills, note taking, stress management and other academic topics.
MCC’s Continuing Education Division also offers credit-free, online courses from a third party called Education to Go (Ed2Go), a division of Cengage Learning. Courses are available on a variety of topics and enrollments have shown steady growth.

MCC’s Education Technology and Distance Learning (ETDL) department provides consulting services and project assistance upon request for faculty. Training sessions are periodically organized on various topics according to demand.

As of January, the Community College System's Instructional and Informational Technology Training Program (IITT) has been replaced by ConnSCU offering training opportunities throughout the year on all twelve campuses, including MCC.

The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) is a division of Charter Oak State College and a member of the Connecticut Board of Regents of Higher Education. The CTDLC is a membership organization that regularly discusses innovations in eLearning technologies and best practices for teaching and learning online. CTDLC offers the iTeach Essentials training program (fee-based) for faculty who are new to online teaching.

National Trends in Online Higher Education

The 2011 Babson Survey Research Group study reports that the number of students taking at least one online course has now surpassed six million, and nearly one-third of all students in higher education are taking at least one online course. Online courses are also becoming prevalent in high schools with five states requiring students to take at least one online course in order to graduate. These states feel that students will have to be prepared for online learning in college and their careers.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) offerings, which are usually at no cost, will continue to grow. MOOCs have at least two key features: open-access - participants do not need to register and there is no fee; and large-scale - designed to have a "massive" number of students (100,000s)

The American Council on Education has agreed to review a handful of the free online courses offered by elite universities and at this time have recommended five MOOC courses for credit. This development brings the “disruption” of free and open courses closer to institutions of higher education. Chronicle of Higher Education

There continues to be rapid growth in the free and low cost general education online courses through for-profit companies such as StraighterLine and free CLEP prep courses. Several “learn it yourself” courses are available for free and allow students to learn and renew skills such as programming languages which in turn will allow them to test for credit.

Strategic Themes: Online Learning Growth

There are several themes the College will need to consider as it continues to develop more and more online courses and programs. With online learning being targeted as a significant area of enrollment growth how will the college manage faculty training and development, and student success? Should online learning at MCC be developed into a strategic goal/strength of the college?

Organizational Structure

The APLU Sloan Nation Commission on Online Learning Benchmarking study illuminates the following key points for a successful online learning environment:

1. Centralized organizational structures and administrative functions that support and sustain online programs.
2. Reliable financing mechanisms for sustainability and growth.
3. Supported curriculum and development with consistent and adequate academic, administrative, and a strong technological infrastructure support system for faculty and students.

Faculty Training & Development

1. The MCC Educational Master Plan suggests the creation of a Faculty Development Center.
2. Expand opportunities for faculty at all levels of experience to have access to technology-based content, resources, training and tools where and when they need them.
3. Develop standards for online courses that encompass MCC's institutional and instructional goals and course quality.
4. Address agreement on course ownership and intellectual property rights for online faculty.

Student Success

1. Continue to develop a strong communications venue to inform students of available student services, program expectations, program costs, and the university’s academic policies and procedures. Evaluate students’ readiness for online learning.
2. Transform the current ‘brick and mortar’ support system into the virtual environment. Develop student services and supports that do not require the student to come to campus at all. Services like admissions, advising, registration, financial aid, tutoring, Library, and Help Desk support.

Online Student Services - Lessons Learned
MCC Concept Papers
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions
MCC will distinguish itself by demonstrating a commitment to college readiness in our service area.

How will the limited resources of faculty additional responsibilities be allocated to attend to the many facets of college readiness?

How will we prioritize the work of the college so that there are sufficient resources to engage in meaningful ways?

How do we balance our own initiatives for college readiness with those that have been mandated by the legislature and the Board of Regents?

How do we best partner with Great Path Academy and other high schools in our region?

Background
College readiness is the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course.

The college-ready student is able to understand what is expected in a college course, can cope with the content knowledge that is presented, and can take away from the course the key intellectual lessons and dispositions the course was designed to convey and develop. In addition, the student is prepared to get the most out of the college experience due to a thorough understanding of the culture and structure of post-secondary education. (Redefining College Readiness, EPIC 2007).

Of the public high school students who attended MCC in Fall 2012 immediately after graduating from high school, 38 percent were assessed as college-ready in both math and English.

MCC has implemented a number of programs that prepare students for college-level work before they attend MCC in order to boost the likelihood of their academic success once enrolled.

In 2011, based upon institutional research on student success in college-level courses, the college added college-level writing eligibility pre-requisites on most college classes. The research made a compelling case that students eligible to take English 101 succeeded at a significantly higher rate than students who were not eligible.

Programs / Services Offered
The Summer Training and Academic Retention Service (STARS) program prepares financially disadvantaged and academically under-prepared students who are transitioning from secondary school to MCC. This past summer, the program was expanded to include college readiness support in math by using MCC’s newly-redesigned developmental math sequence. As a result, 57% of the program’s participants improved their English placement by at least one level, and 27% completed a developmental or college-level math course.

Great Path Academy (GPA) is a middle college high school on MCC’s campus, serving 9th-12th grade students. MCC and GPA faculty, with funds from a Louise Ruddell Foundation (The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving) grant, developed curricula that increased student placement into college-level English from 55 percent to 73 percent.

The High School Partnership program gives many high school juniors and seniors with a “B” average or higher the opportunity to register for MCC classes. During the Spring 2013 semester, 92 students from 20 participating high schools were enrolled in 162 college-credit classes. Great Path Academy students account for almost 40% of these registrations.

College Career Pathways (CCP) is a combined secondary and post-secondary education program designed to prepare students for college and the workforce. The high school curricula is articulated by MCC faculty and provides a foundation of applied academics and job skills. MCC awarded 3,328 college credits to CCP students in 2011-12.
Reaching Education Achievement for College Transition (REACT) is a two-credit program in partnership with MCC and Manchester’s Adult and Continuing Education. This state-funded pilot program provides support for students who want to transition to college. Participants complete the equivalent of MCC’s developmental English and math sequences.

In 2012, MCC was one of three Connecticut higher education institutions to share in the $31.5 statewide, seven-year Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) grant. MCC’s portion of the grant is $2.3 million and will be used to partner with East Hartford Middle School and its participating students through middle school, high school and their first year of college.

The College Access Challenge Grant has funded a pilot program between MCC and Manchester, East Hartford and Rockville High Schools – with plans to expand to other high schools. A key component involves MCC faculty working directly with high school teachers on curriculum, outcomes and standards. Using pre- and post-assessment testing, the English and math college readiness skills of participating students in grade 12 nearly doubled.

MCC’s developmental math sequence has undergone a complete redesign, based on the emporium model, and utilizing ALEKS software. Students are able to work at their own pace; and those capable of working at an accelerated pace can complete the coursework in one semester (or less), while those who might be struggling with a particular concept are able to pick up at that point without repeating the entire course. Using this new approach, there was a 50 percent increase in student success in the lowest level developmental math course with twice the success in upper level developmental math.

Lessons Learned
Best Practices have included connecting activities with high schools aimed at strengthening the collaborative relationships between institutions and faculty. They are designed to better align curricula, increase levels of student readiness for college, and reduce the need for developmental coursework by entering college students. Some examples include:

Disciplines with articulated courses and programs hold annual or bi-annual roundtable meetings between college and high school faculty where best practices are shared and changes in course curriculum are communicated. In addition, professional development events, held each year, engage college faculty and staff on topics supporting college and workplace readiness issues.

Perkins Grant awards provide MCC faculty and staff with funding to support the programs that contribute to the goals associated with curriculum alignment and student college readiness.

National Trends/External Picture
In response to the recent CT Public Act 12-40 legislation, the 17-college ConnSCU system has begun to develop frameworks for providing developmental education at three levels: Regional Remediation Strategies, Intensive College Readiness Programs, and College Level with Embedded Support.

National trends support intensive remediation experiences with embedded support. Many successful models include increased seat time for students, with required additional instruction and tutoring.

Strategic Themes: Short- and Long-term Plans
In order for our work to be effective, and to continue to move forward, we will need to address a number of themes:

- Developmental Math will continue to be evaluated, and included in any interpretation of PA 12-40.
- English pilots for Fall 2013 include accelerated English 066 and 101 with Embedded Support, English 101 with Writing Embedded Support, and English 101 Reading Learning Community with Embedded Reading Support.
- Initial pilots for multiple measures of college readiness assessment include the challenge essay, alternate essays and interviews, and possibly high school transcript review.
- Beginning in Fall 2014, Public Act 12-40 must be fully implemented.

Projected Costs
As mentioned above, resources are limited. Much of the work falls to fulltime faculty, often as part of additional responsibilities. How will the limited resources of faculty additional responsibilities be allocated to attend to the many facets of college readiness? How will we prioritize the work of the College so that there are sufficient resources to engage in meaningful ways? How do we balance our own initiatives with those that have been mandated by the legislature and the Board of Regents?

A complete redesign of developmental education, as currently required by PA 12-40, could radically change teaching loads for full-time faculty, and require additional adjunct faculty positions.

As positions remain unfulfilled, the number of full-time faculty will decrease, making prioritizing that much more pressing.
MCC Concept Papers

In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions

How can we expand our engagement between the college and our community – particularly in service learning and regional partnerships with businesses and organizations?

How will we think differently about revenue and revenue generation? What resources and efforts are needed to increase philanthropic giving to MCC and attract grants?

How can we best leverage MCC on Main to establish connections, develop partnerships between the college and community, and increase student learning?

Background

MCC engages with the community by offering and responding to requests for education, human services, training, programming, service projects, and technical assistance. MCC actively partners with businesses and community organizations in order to better understand the needs of our constituents, to remain current in our offerings, to maintain links with the communities we serve, and to enrich the experiences of our students. Broad categories of partnerships include:

- Program Advisory Groups
- Regional Advisory Council
- MCC Foundation Board
- Regional businesses and organizations that provide opportunities for student service learning, internships, clinical experiences and cooperative education placements

MCC is in the planning phase of a capital campaign that will bolster funding for programs, and allow for growth and expansion in strategic areas as identified by the Educational Master Plan and other planning. One of these strategic areas is a focus on community outreach.

MCC on Main expands opportunities to partner with the Town of Manchester to ensure a vibrant, cultural and economically strong downtown environment. The Center hosts an art gallery, Entrepreneurship Center and other programming. This initiative is funded through philanthropic efforts and earned income. MCC on Main was launched in 2012, and the startup was funded through nearly $1M in leadership gifts.

The MCC Foundation provides financial assistance for student scholarships, college programs and strategic initiatives, and has been instrumental in keeping the college current in areas of professional development, and technology and skills training. Support from the Foundation helps MCC enhance the quality of existing programs and aids in funding the development of new programs, raises funds from private sources, and builds a network of community support in the region served by MCC to promote a better public understanding of the college.

The Annual Fund, supported by college employees and friends of the college, supports a range of college programming, and in 2012-13 also funded part-time staffing for several campus offices affected by budget cuts. Over the past five years revenue from the Annual Fund has grown from $15,000 to $30,000.

MCC recognizes the opportunities that grants can provide, and has actively looked to acquire grant funding from regional and national sources. Current grants include:

- Gear Up, six years beginning Fa12: $2,020,524 (Federal)
- Health and Life Sciences, three years: $1,291,552 (Federal)
- College Access Challenge Grant: $529,172 (Federal)
- STARS Program 2013: $120,746 (State)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Public Transportation Program, 2009-2012: $77,368 (Federal)
- East of the River Action for Substance-Abuse Elimination (ERASE) Grant: three years: $75,000 (Federal)
- Speech Language Pathology Assistant Grant, 2011-2013: $24,000 (State)
- Perkins Grant, FY13: $200,742 (Federal)
- Perkins College Career Pathways, FY13: $23,765 (Federal)
- AAC&U Roadmap Grant: $9,800 (Private)

National Trends / External Picture
As public revenue sources continue to decline nationally, regional partnerships and philanthropy will become increasingly critical sources of revenue for colleges.

To address this shortfall, community colleges have invested in advancement operations to increase private support. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, overall giving to higher education increased 5.5% in 2012, a return to pre-recession levels. Community colleges outpaced that gain, posting a 7% increase for 2012.

Historically, community colleges have raised about 1% of the philanthropic support given to all higher education, while educating about 50% of all undergraduates in the country. (College Fundraisers Predict a Return to Prerecession Levels of Giving)

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) includes community engagement as one of its “Hot Issues.” They write “Community colleges seek to serve as catalysts, connectors, and collaborators for the community.” (Foundation Building - Community College Week April 2013)

Strategic Themes: Short and Long-term Plans
MCC benefits from partnerships with the regional businesses and community organizations. Strategic themes can include initiatives such as identifying additional placements for students, creating new ways to partner with businesses, and to increase Foundation revenues.

Continue to work with the MCC Foundation to expand their role in revenue generation and management.

Create a common understanding of the concept of a Capital Campaign and the important role it plays in the future of MCC. Engage faculty and staff in the initiative.

Increase awareness of the importance of the Annual Campaign to provide unrestricted financial support for the college.

Further develop our ability to recognize and respond to valuable grant opportunities that will support our strategic initiatives.

Partner with towns and organizations to improve and cultivate the economic health and cultural needs of our communities so we are a vibrant place to live and work.

Work with community leaders, student groups and faculty to provide meaningful and relevant programming and use of MCC on Main.

Maintain Institutional Development staff’s role in ensuring engagement efforts are happening effectively.

Increase philanthropy revenue, grants and earned income as a share of the college’s total revenue.

Expand revenue options, including planned giving.
MCC Concept Papers

In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2014, a set of “concept papers” has been created to summarize some of the key findings of our Educational Master Plan, NEASC self-study, and Enrollment Management Plan. The purpose of the concept papers is to inform and educate readers who may have little knowledge or expertise about a particular subject. The goal has been to be neutral, accessible, and cover the critical issues rather than being comprehensive. Each is based on a major issue facing the college, and attempts to provide context for the “big questions” we face in planning for 2014-2019.

The Big Questions

How can we motivate more MCC students to create an educational plan and seek academic advising?

How can we most effectively develop a college culture of shared responsibility for advising students?

Background

MCC enrollment has grown significantly over the past ten years, but staffing in the Advising and Counseling Center has not increased at the same rate.

Entering MCC students are required to participate in a New Student Group Advising Seminar, and are invited to attend a New Student Orientation program. In Summer 2012 over 1300 attended group advising seminars, and over 1200 attended New Student Orientation. Advising and Counseling Center staff provide academic advising and counseling session contacts with students. (12,700+ between January – April 2013). In addition, faculty members, particularly those associated with academic programs, actively advise many students and assist them with their academic planning. The Advising Council acts as a resource and advocacy group for the college advising program.

MCC has several well developed mentoring programs for students, including Sister2Sister/Brother2Brother, STARS, Adults in Transition (AIT). Student success metrics for participants in these programs exceed those for comparison groups.

The office of Student Retention Services provides academic advising, referrals to student services, and academic coaching for students experiencing academic difficulty.

A Spring 2012 self-study of academic advising included a student survey (558 respondents), a faculty survey (30 respondents), and several faculty focus-groups. The results suggest that a large share of students do not access the academic advising available to them, and that those that do use advisors are generally satisfied with the advising they participate in – among those who had met with an advisor, 94% would recommend fellow students meet with an advisor.
MCC students have participated in national surveys about the student experience, including advising, six times over the past ten years. In each the results suggest that MCC students are less likely than those at other CCs to use advising.

In Fall 2012 new MCC students who responded to the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) were less likely to agree with statements about using advising and creating an academic plan than student respondents from other Community Colleges.

In December 2012 MCC received its accreditation report from NEASC, an official response to our self-study and visiting team report completed in Spring 2012. NEASC is requiring MCC to report on progress related to the advising program in a two-year out report (due Spring 2014). The expectation is to see improvements to advising program reflected in core measures of student success, including retention and graduation rates.

National Trends/External Picture
National best practices suggest that when a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a roadmap — one that shows where he or she is headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal — that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them. (from SENSE – Effective Practice with Entering Students)

MCC is a partner in the AAC&U Roadmap project. Developing a Community College Student Roadmap is designed to help community colleges create robust and proactive programs of academic support—tied to expected learning outcomes—that engage students at entrance and teach them, from the outset, how to become active partners in their own quest for educational success. MCC’s participation aims to improve coordination to create an Educational Mapping Program for students – including both curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Strategic Themes: Short- and Long-term Plans
MCC has recently completed several updates to the advising program, including:

- Renamed office from Counseling Office to Advising and Counseling Center.
- Assigned all program-specific students to their respective program coordinators within Banner system
- 30 Credit Model: All new students in General Studies or Liberal Arts & Sciences degrees assigned to the Advising and Counseling Center staff until they reach 30 credit status
- Hired full-time director

Over the next several years, MCC plans to implement the recommendations of the Advising Self Study.

- All new students participate in a new student seminar, and each student’s next advising session is with their primary advisor.
- Develop a college culture of shared responsibility for advising students – among faculty, counselors, and staff members in other departments.
- Make training available for all faculty and staff interested in being an advisor. Training materials and modules should be available online.
- Procure a software system that supports the tracking and management of student advising files, notes, and scheduling.

In January, 2013, Manchester Community College was selected to participate in the Roadmap Project, sponsor by AAC&U. This project aims to help every student identify a clear pathway to success from their first expression of interest to meeting their educational goals. The project provides consistent exposure to High Impact Practices throughout their educational career at MCC. The MCC Roadmap Team’s goal is to design and embed “Educational Mapping” as a virtual game model. This virtual game model will help students, advisors, mentors, faculty, and professionals in Student Affairs, Registrar, and Financial Aid offices more effectively and comprehensively serve students as they prepare, plan and navigate their academic careers.

Projected Costs
Software system for tracking and management of student advising files, notes and scheduling.

Advisor Training - Human resources: create training modules; and provide one-on-one or group training sessions and assistance from webmaster for uploading of new advisor training modules into Advising webpage.