

# Manchester Community College CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

## MCC Concept Papers

In preparation for MCC's next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2020, the Strategic Planning Committee has drafted these "concept papers" to summarize key areas facing our college. Their purpose is to provide a foundation of shared understanding for our planning activities. They draw on findings from recent college meetings, surveys and forums; our most recent NEASC/NECHE self-study reports and our Enrollment Management plan.

The intent of these papers is to provide context as our college community articulates a vision and focus for the next three years. We hope to identify what we value and how we want to meet our mission, despite the challenges that currently face our institution.

## Our Mission

*Manchester Community College advances academic, economic, civic, personal and cultural growth by providing comprehensive, innovative and affordable learning opportunities to diverse populations. We are a learning-centered community committed to access, excellence and relevance.*

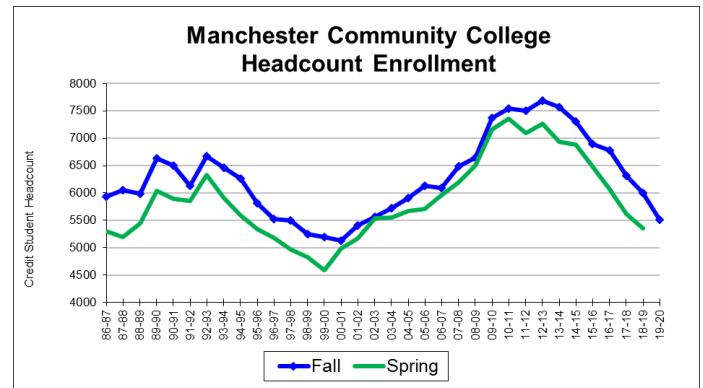
## Our Challenges

These are challenging times for MCC. We are experiencing a rapid decrease in enrollment, resulting in declining revenue. As a result, budget cuts and staffing vacancies have become the norm. In addition, MCC is working with sister colleges and the BOR to become a single community college in 2023. At the same time, the 4Cs union contract and job protections expire in 2021.

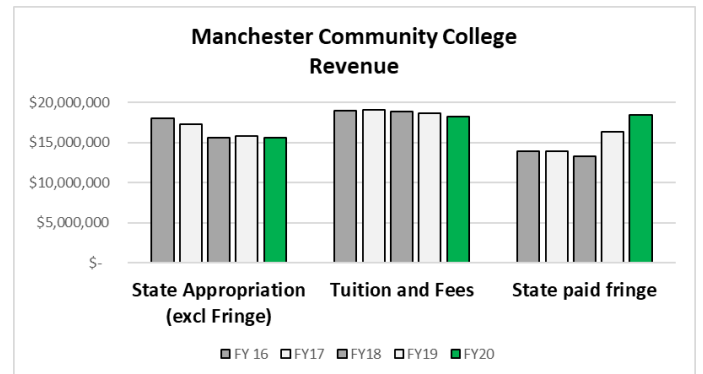
### Budget Challenges

MCC needs to maintain a balanced budget and remain financially solvent while maintaining the excellence that has always characterized its mission and commitment to students.

Our budget is directly linked to enrollment which is down over 20% over the past five years. There are several explanations for the enrollment decrease, including decreasing numbers of high school graduates, a low unemployment rate, decreasing retention rates, and increased competition from other colleges and universities.

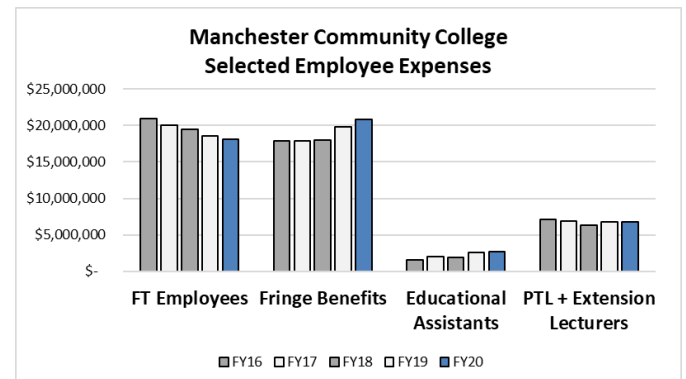


State appropriations and tuition revenue, which are both linked to enrollment, have also decreased over the past several years, but there has been an increase in state payments towards employee fringe benefits.



## Staffing and Organizational Structure

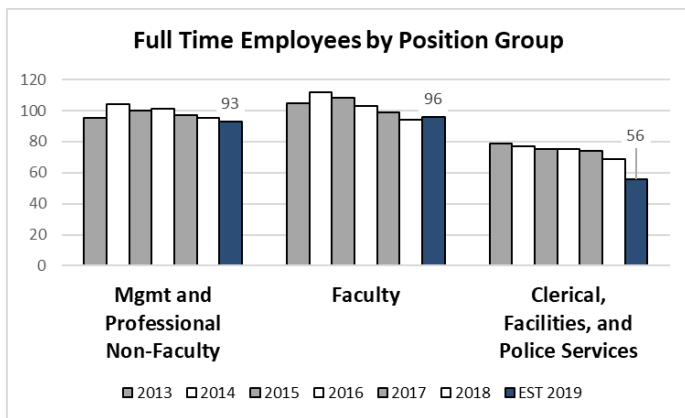
Employee costs are the largest part of MCC's expenses – 86% in FY20s planned budget. Permanent employee salary costs have decreased by almost \$3M over the past five years as some positions were left unfilled, or were replaced by newer or part-time employees, often with lower salaries. Fringe benefit costs, however, have increased by \$3M, and Educational Assistant costs have increased by \$1M over the past five years. Overall, total spending on salaries, wages and fringe is about the same in FY20 as in FY16.



## Manchester Community College CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

Holding positions vacant and hiring less experienced personnel has been one strategy to balance the MCC budget, but those empty roles and the loss of expertise have strained our human resources.

Staffing changes have also led to changes in our organizational structure, particularly in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Several MCC administrators are serving in dual roles; several others are in interim positions. Multiple support positions are vacant or without plans to re-fill, and other positions are being shared with other CT CCs or the System. Faculty and staff have expressed concerns that staffing plans and decisions are not transparent.



### Impacts of Consolidation

The planned consolidation towards a single CT CC in 2023 is still a work in progress. A primary goal is to have one centrally managed community college with campuses statewide. A single administrative infrastructure would support the one college, eliminating redundant functions system-wide and sharing services across campuses. Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Institutional Research (IR) and Institutional Development are areas that have been identified for system or regional consolidation; IT in particular has been targeted for position reductions.

Consolidation plans are incorporating new initiatives. Guided Pathways initiatives are intended to improve onboarding, advising, retention, student success and graduation rates. Alignment and Completion of Math and English workgroup (ACME) is working to develop placement and instructional practices and better align

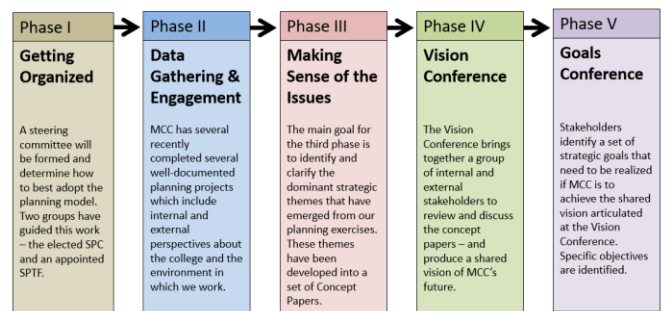
gateway courses to ensure student progress within the first year of enrollment. Statewide discipline groups are working to align course outcomes in discipline and program courses. The Transfer Articulation Policy (TAP) transfer tickets are degree programs that transfer seamlessly between CSCU institutions. Meanwhile, legislative initiatives such as PA 12-40 (which provides mandates regarding developmental education at state colleges) and debt-free college (now known as PACT) continue to have impacts on MCC.

Faculty and staff have expressed concerns that consolidation plans are being implemented while still underdevelopment, are lacking in detail, and are not clearly and widely circulated. Concerns about consolidation include questions about implementation strategies, issues of shared governance, funding for expensive initiatives, and the impact of centralizing infrastructure on day-to-day functioning at MCC. Consolidation issues are a source of dissatisfaction among faculty and staff. The Summer 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey suggested MCC employees have limited confidence in leadership and low morale.

### Planning Process

Our Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 will need to help us navigate these challenges so that we can continue to serve our community and fulfill our mission. The SPC hopes the MCC community sees this planning process as an opportunity to advise leadership on what we think is important, and what we would like to change. The SPC plans to host a series of events in the Spring 2020 semester to discuss the ideas and issues covered here, along with implementation strategies.

### Collaborative Strategic Planning in Higher Education



## Manchester Community College ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

### MCC Concept Papers

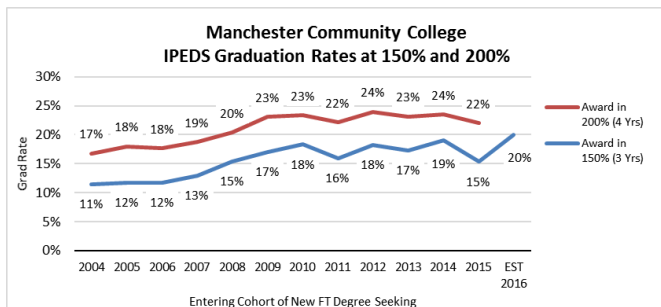
In preparation for MCC’s next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2020, the Strategic Planning Committee has drafted these “concept papers” to summarize key areas facing our college. Their purpose is to provide a foundation of shared understanding for our planning activities. They draw on findings from recent college meetings, surveys and forums; our most recent NEASC/NECHE self-study reports and our Enrollment Management plan.

### Academic Excellence

In our previous strategic plan, we described our Academic Excellence goal as:

*MCC demonstrates academic excellence and rigor in its programs and courses, and continually improves the quality of learning, teaching and student support.*

There are many indications of MCC’s academic excellence. MCC’s highest-ever graduation rate was recorded by our most recent cohort. In spite of decreasing enrollment, MCC has increased the number of degrees and certificates awarded.



MCC has several **BIG QUESTIONS** related to Academic Excellence. This strategic planning process seeks to help the community identify where there is room for improvement, and what strategic directions we could pursue to realize that improvement.

### Assessment

Assessment of student learning, and assessment of general education in particular, has been identified by NECHE as an area of emphasis we will have to cover in detail for our next self-study, due in 2022. Departments have been responsible for identifying and maintaining general education artifacts and assessing student learning within programs of study.

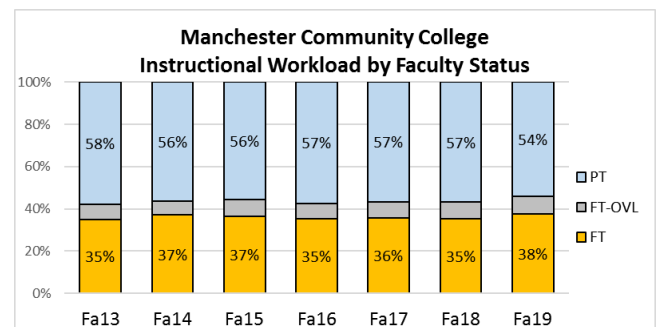
The General Education Assessment Team reviewed the 2019 General Education assessment report submissions over the summer and fall 2019. In addition to writing the Quantitative Reasoning report to FIRC, the Team offered individual or departmental-level feedback for each report submitted; and is currently working closely with FIRC to update the outcomes for these competencies. MCC continues to work with the representatives from Watermark (Aqua) to build MCC’s use of its assessment software. The Team is preparing for the 2022 NECHE report by connecting its current work with the expectations of Standard Eight in the updated NECHE reporting structure and previous feedback from NEASC.

There is state-wide activity on assessment, including the work of the Framework Implementation and Review Committee (FIRC) and Alignment and Completion of Math and English (ACME). Some faculty have expressed concern about the wording of competencies and outcomes and of the rubrics provided to measure student success. Work both at our college and system-wide will have an impact on assessment.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How can programs and department best assess and improve courses? How can assessment practices be incorporated into MCC culture?

### Sufficiency of Faculty

Another area of emphasis for NECHE is “sufficiency of faculty” to meet the needs of the institution.” While the number of faculty has decreased over the past several years, so have the number of courses offered. Over the past five years FT faculty on regular load have covered 35-38% of the instructional workload, while PT faculty covered 54-58%.



**Manchester Community College**  
**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

Recruiting and supporting new full-time faculty may be an area of concern, especially with additional retirements looming.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What steps can MCC take in recruiting, training, supporting and retaining new faculty? Is the college doing enough to adequately provide and equally distribute professional development funding?

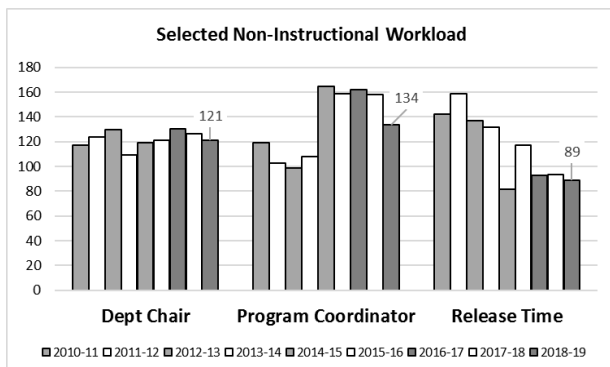
*Additional Responsibilities and Release Time*

Faculty have many roles beyond classroom teaching. Additional responsibilities (AR) is a massive resource, as most FT faculty perform an average of nine hours per week on projects “fulfilling the mission, goals, and priorities of the college...” according to the new 4Cs contract. The contract also stipulates that recent hires will be required to teach a fifth course in place of AR. The college is attempting to coordinate AR projects more closely, to provide clearer parameters on these projects, and to align AR with strategic goals and objectives.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How will key tasks that have formally been addressed through AR be supported? How can new faculty build a portfolio to prepare for promotion and tenure without AR opportunities?

Non-instructional workload (release time) is granted to faculty working as Program Coordinators and Department Chairs, as well as those working on special projects. The number of workload units (WLUs) devoted has varied considerably over the past several years. Release time, in particular, is down significantly over the past several years.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What types of projects should be eligible for release time? How should faculty apply for or be chosen to engage in these types of projects?



*Guided Pathways*

The Guided Pathways initiative has multiple goals related to advising and academic planning. It seeks to:

1. Clarify the educational paths available to students;
2. Help students choose a path;
3. Help students stay on and complete their path;
4. Ensure students are learning.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** How will the faculty participate in Guided Pathways planning? How will the faculty incorporate Guided Pathways strategies?

*New Programs and Curricula*

MCC has long championed new academic program development, particularly in areas of workforce need, in both credit and non-credit curricula.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What criteria should be applied to determining what types of new programs we should pursue? What administrative supports could make program development and launch easier for faculty?

Meanwhile, program and gen ed curriculum alignment across the system, particularly with the work of TAP and ACME, impacts our academic programs. Discipline and program satisfaction with TAP programs vary, with some feeling that the state universities are not accepting enough community college courses toward the major or that former one-on-one articulation agreements were more beneficial for students. There are concerns with unevenness of representation and cost of actual implementation (and thus whether that will be consistent across campuses or not).

Developmental education remains a concern. The system’s PA-1240 teams are leading work on alignment across campuses, including placement via SATs, HS GPAs, and the Next Generation Accuplacer; and outcomes in gatekeeper English and math classes. Their primary goal is to increase rate of completing college-level English and math within students’ first year.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What do we sacrifice so we can properly resource new initiatives? How do we deal with unfunded mandates to provide specific types of support?

# Manchester Community College

## EQUITY

### MCC Concept Papers

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### Equity

Concerns about equity and the achievement gap within the CSCU system underly many current initiatives, including our participation in Achieving the Dream. These state-wide initiatives support our own college's effort to address these concerns, about which we have many questions:

1. What should equity for our students mean at MCC?
2. What information do we need to better understand equity and our students?
3. What can be done in the classroom to promote equity of opportunity and outcomes?
4. How do we best address possible tensions between academic rigor and equity of outcomes?
5. What types of student support can promote equity of opportunity and outcomes?
6. How do we connect faculty to protocols for referring non-academic resources?

A November 2019 essay from the CSCU Student Success Center suggested:

*Equity is not diversity. Equity is not equality. Equity provides students with the necessary resources to achieve their educational goals, regardless of when they begin their educational journeys or the obstacles they might encounter. Equity in education demands placing support systems in line to guarantee all our students have an opportunity to succeed and thrive.*

### Achieving the Dream

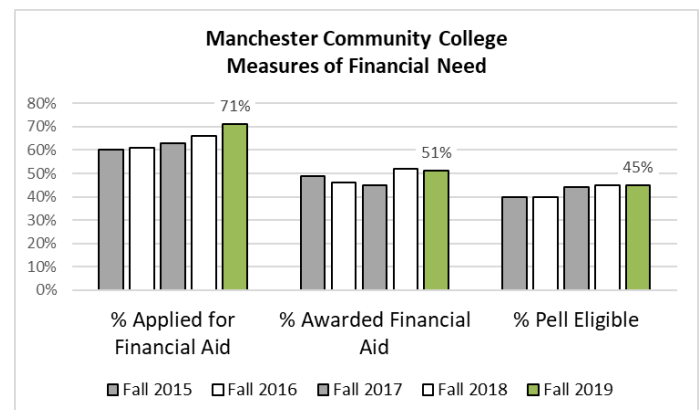
Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a nationwide community of practice with coaching, resources, tools and a network of colleges to support student success work. ATD at Manchester Community College is a multi-year initiative with a focus on improving success rates and

creating equity in opportunity and outcomes for all of our students. The work starts with an overall campus assessment based on institutional research and the voices of students, staff and faculty. This work will be led by MCC's ATD Core Team but relies on engagement from the entire MCC community.

### Historically Underrepresented Students

The Achieving the Dream Statement on Equity identifies "historically underrepresented students [to] include but ... not [be] limited to: first-generation, low-income, students of color; adult students; marginalized orientations, gender identities, and intersex students; students with second-language backgrounds; undocumented students; veterans; students with disabilities; students with dependents; foster care youth; and formerly and currently incarcerated students." MCC has a very diverse student body that includes substantial numbers of students from groups that are historically underrepresented:

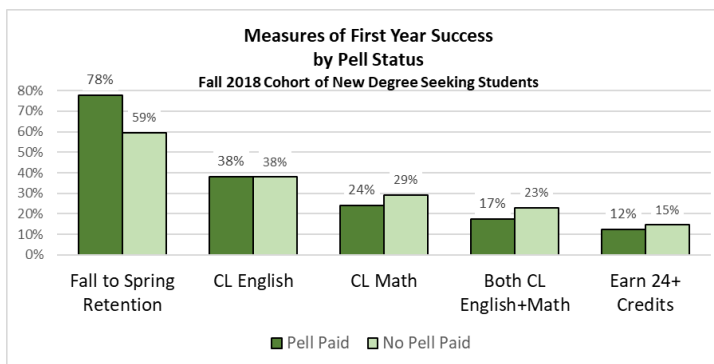
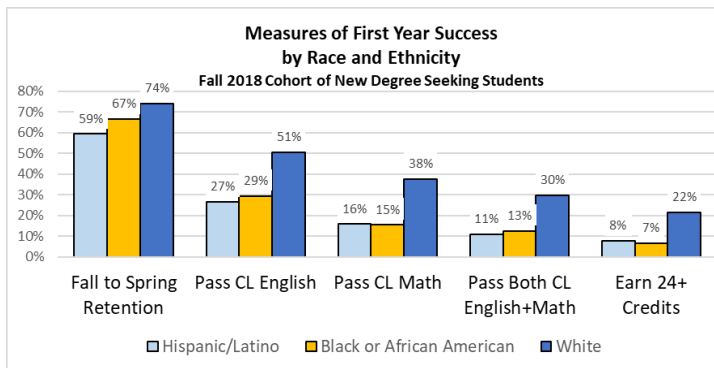
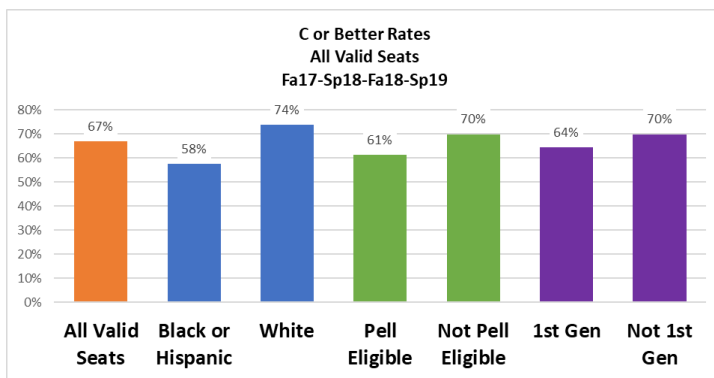
- almost half of the students are of color
- almost half of the students are eligible for Pell Grants, a common measure of significant financial need
- many students struggle with transportation
- many students do not have computer and internet access at home
- almost one in ten students register for accommodations with the Disability Services office
- many students struggle with health issues, including mental health issues
- many students struggle with food insecurity



## Manchester Community College EQUITY

### The Achievement Gap at MCC

MCC data suggest a significant achievement gaps exist when comparing students from historically underrepresented groups vs. comparison groups. For example, a smaller percentage of students of color reach key measures of success than white students. A smaller percentage of students that are eligible for Pell Grants reach these milestones than students with access to more financial support. A smaller percentage of students who are first-generation college students successfully navigate their first year of college than students with parents who have college degrees.



### Achieving the Dream Statement on Equity

*Community colleges are an indispensable asset in our nation's efforts to ensure and preserve access to higher education and success for all students, particularly students of color, low-income students, and other historically underrepresented student populations.\* However, student access and success in higher education continues to be impacted by the effects of structural racism and systemic poverty. Achievement gaps among student groups reflect structural inequities that are often the result of historic and systemic social injustices. These inequities typically manifest themselves as the unintended or indirect consequences of unexamined institutional or social policies.*

*Achieving the Dream believes that access to a high-quality education in an inclusive environment is the right of all individuals and imperative for the continued advancement of a strong democracy and workforce. Achieving the Dream also believes higher education institutions have an obligation to work toward equity for their students. Equity is grounded in the principle of fairness. In higher education, equity refers to ensuring that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.*

*Achieving the Dream expects colleges to dismantle the barriers facing underserved students. Colleges must routinely scrutinize structural barriers to equity and invest in equity-minded policies, practices, and behaviors that lead to success for all students.*

*\* Examples of historically underrepresented students include but are not limited to: first-generation, low-income, students of color; adult students; marginalized orientations, gender identities, and intersex students; students with second-language backgrounds; undocumented students; veterans; students with disabilities; students with dependents; foster care youth; and formerly and currently incarcerated students.*

## Manchester Community College STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMING

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### Student Support Programming

MCC provides a variety of support programs for our students. From advising and counseling, to mentoring programs like WiSTEM and STARS, to tutoring at the Academic Support Center and Math Lab, to holistic supports like the food pantry, to co-curricular clubs and organizations – there is a wide variety of programming and support available.

#### At-Risk Students

Demographic changes in our student body show that the number of students with risk characteristics like financial need, or being a 1<sup>st</sup> generation college student, have decreased; but the number of students with less financial need, or a parent with a college degree has decreased far more dramatically.

There have been a number of MCC and system-wide initiatives to address student foundational needs, including:

- Food insecurity
- Mental health
- Disabilities services
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Financial need
- Housing insecurity

#### Cougar Pantry

One example of MCC addressing these foundational needs is the Holistic Student Support Center and the Cougar Food Pantry. The pantry has been supported by grants from the VISTA program that provided a full-time staff member to build capacity. That grant is ending, and with it the financial support for the staff coordinating work at the pantry.

National estimates suggest 45-50% of MCC’s students will encounter food insecurity during their college career. Even more may face housing insecurity or even homelessness. From September 2018 through June 2019, MCC went through almost 140,000 pounds of food – most acquired from retail rescue and Foodshare.

Recent funding for the food pantry has come from:

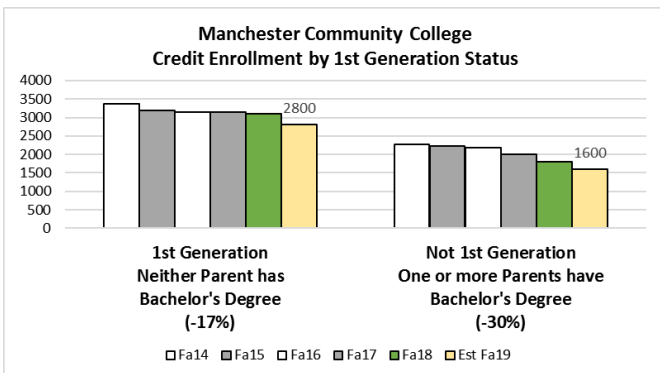
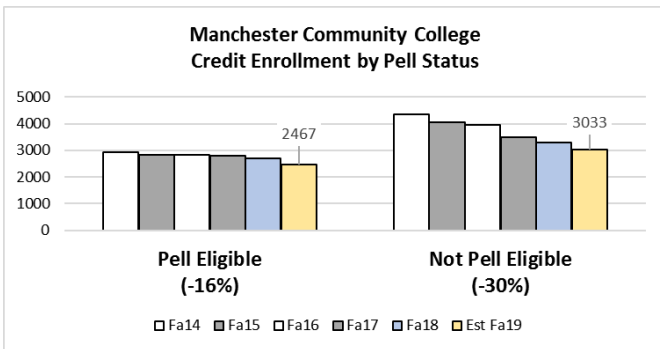
- VISTA grant supporting capacity building in the food pantry
- Student Activity Fee budget
- Staff/student Donations
- Manchester Community College Foundation
- An equipment grant from FoodShare to purchase a commercial refrigerator

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What types of student support are a priority for the college?

If student support is a priority, what do we sacrifice so we can properly fund student support?

What is the threshold of evidence that identifies a student need (academic or non-academic) as one that the college should address directly?

How do we deal with unfunded mandates to provide specific types of support?



## Manchester Community College STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMING

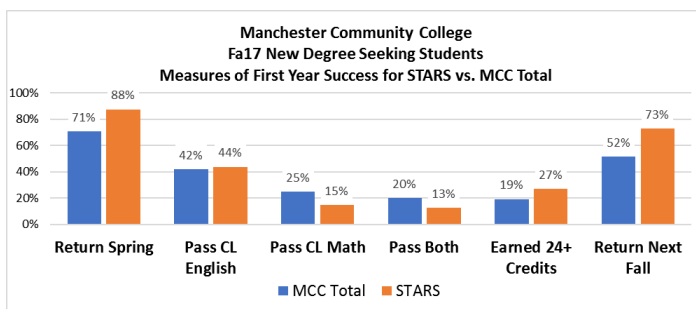
### *Student Support Programs*

MCC has several major student support programs based on academic planning, skill building and mentoring.

**STARS** supports students from admission to graduation from MCC. Funded in part by a five-year grant from the US Department of Education, STARS begins with a six-week, pre-college summer program that runs from mid-June to mid-August. It is designed to prepare new low income and first-generation students for the coming academic year. Students practice and reinforce reading, writing and math skills; retake the English and math assessment tests to determine their placement in college-level courses; earn up to seven college credits; benefit from one-on-one guidance from tutors and peer mentors; develop time management and study skills; and more.

In 2019-20 there is a new SSS proposal in progress that seeks to extend the grant and increase the number of students served.

The chart below illustrates how a recent STARS cohort - made up of at-risk students (shown in orange) - was able to close the achievement gap vs. MCC averages on several of these measures of success.



MCC's Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (**WiSTEM**) is a program for women at MCC who have a strong interest in the STEM fields, providing a place to learn, network and grow together on- and off-campus. WiSTEM has a foundation of a one-semester IDS\* 101: First Year Experience course, which includes reading, discussion and activities around the topics of personal responsibility, stress management, collaboration, self-awareness and community-building. This program has been supported by grants from the Aurora Foundation, but that funding is not expected to be available after 2019-20.

The **Academic Support Center** offers individual and facilitated small-group tutoring, free of charge to current Manchester Community College students in courses they are presently taking. The Writing Center is a place to write. Tutors are available on a walk-in basis to assist students while they are engaged in the writing process. Walk-in math tutoring is an alternative to an individual appointment with a mathematics tutor. These tutors are also available on a walk-in basis.

**Disabilities Services** aims to provide an inclusive campus that is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Disability Services is committed to serving the diverse student population at MCC by promoting full participation and equal opportunity for students with disabilities to pursue higher education. Students may be provided with assistive technology or software, or accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, job activity, or facility that ensures an equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities to participate in - and enjoy the benefits of - this service, program, or activity. Aids, benefits, or services need not produce equal results, but must afford an equal opportunity to achieve equal results.

The **Career Services** office runs regularly scheduled job search skills workshops, organizes job fairs, and coordinates alumni career panels, an online job listing service, on-campus recruitment opportunities and various career-focused special events throughout the year.

The **Veterans OASIS** provides a dedicated, supportive space for veterans and military service men and women to network, socialize and study as they integrate into the college experience. The Veterans OASIS is staffed by MCC's School Certifying Official, veteran students and work-study assistants, who are all dedicated to meeting the educational and transitional needs of veterans at MCC.

There are a number of other important support programs at MCC, where we face important decisions on the types of programs we will offer in the future.



**Manchester Community College**  
**ADVISING**

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**Advising**

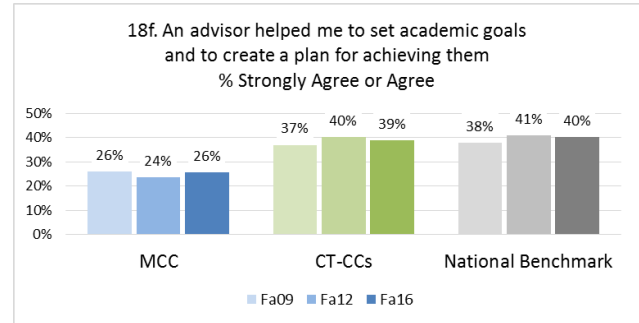
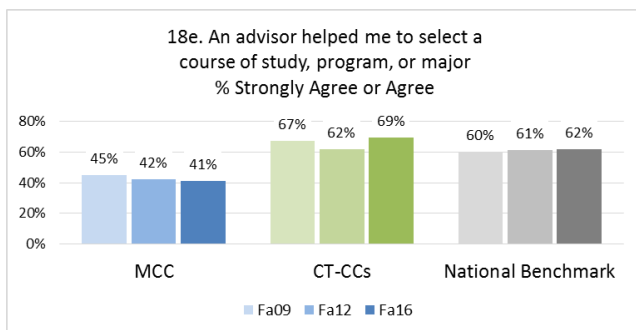
In MCC’s previous strategic plan, the goal “Student Success and Enrollment Management” suggested MCC could be “a college where all students develop a clearly identified plan to meet their educational goals.”

Most evidence suggests we have not realized that vision, but many believe that to best serve students it is essential that the college provide students with:

- Repeated exposure to academic planning and advice.
- Sufficient staff to provide, as needed, group advising, one-on-one advising, and crisis counseling.

MCC has received regular feedback from faculty and staff at several recent Opening Day and May Institute workshops that MCC needs more advisors.

Similarly, **SENSE survey** results indicate that almost half the new students who took the survey did not get an advisor’s support in selecting their courses and program. In fact, almost 70% of the survey respondents did not get assistance with setting goals and creating a plan to achieve those goals. Low agreement on these survey questions are a consequence of our new student onboarding model, staffing limitations, and limited time for a comprehensive NSO curriculum.



*Staffing and Leadership Challenges*

Student Affairs leadership, administration and reporting lines have been in flux in 2019-20.

- The Dean of Student Affairs position is vacant. The CEO has taken responsibility for day-to-day management of the division.
- Two of four Counselors left MCC recently. Their counselor-level positions were replaced with Academic Advisor positions.
- In Fa19 MCC hired one FT advisor instead of the planned two; choosing to use our limited resources to staff with PT seasonal Advisors on EA contracts.
- There is a need for mental health experts within the counseling team.
- The First Year Programs team recently moved under supervision of Academic Affairs; Counseling Services remain under Student Affairs. This has created issues for staffing New Student Orientation and Next Step Advising events.

**New Student Orientation** generally consists of receiving placement test results, a brief orientation, choosing classes, and completing registration for those classes. There is limited pre-enrollment advising to identify majors and career interests. There is a tension between providing a “one-stop shop” in a setting that is easily manageable for busy students vs. a need for a comprehensive pre-enrollment orientation that helps students identify interests and an appropriate major. Some suggest students need a simple and quick onboarding process, while others suggest students are better served by receiving more information and guidance about their upcoming college experience.

## Manchester Community College

### ADVISING

**Next Step Advising** is advising to groups of students in a single session. Generally, three advisors meet with up to fifteen students in 60-90 minute sessions. The focus in these sessions is to help students with choosing classes for the upcoming semester. This strategy has been useful to address the shortage of staff who are available for one-on-one advising meetings.

**Guided Pathways** and the “Framework 30” seek to make advising and academic planning easier by providing a set of “meta-majors” that recommend a similar set of courses for students in similar fields. Meta-majors, sometimes referred to as career clusters or areas of interest help students identify a career path early on in their college career. With over 80 programs offered at MCC, students may become overwhelmed and confused by all the options available to them. Meta-majors will help students decide on a major and connect them to their field faster.

#### *Holistic Case Management Advising*

A Fall 2019 proposal from the CSCU Guided Pathways Implementation Team suggests a Case Management Model should be implemented.

The proposed policy, titled “Holistic Case Management Advising (HCMA) at the CSCU Community Colleges” includes the following:

1. Ensures all degree- and certificate-seeking students have an assigned professional advisor and support network of faculty and staff who collaborate with students to plan for their educational goals and deliver the necessary holistic services to stay on track to completion.
2. Reduces the student-to-FTE professional advisor ratio to 250:1 by Fall 2022.
3. Adopts a student success platform that facilitates holistic case management advising.

The central premise of a holistic case management advising model is that every student is assigned to a professional advisor who guides students through college from intake to graduation, monitors their academic progress, and coordinates the seamless provision of support services with a team of faculty and staff that stretches across traditional departmental lines. Professional advisors are able to provide deeper, more personalized services to students as a result of

reduced caseloads and regular contact with their advisees. The ultimate benefit of a holistic case management advising model is that students are more likely to build a meaningful relationship with their assigned advisor and to receive a continuum of care that helps ensure their efficient completion of a credential (Richardson, 2008).

#### *Faculty Role in Advising*

The 4Cs contract, under “teaching and related duties of teaching faculty,” states “all teaching faculty members shall... engage in academic and career-oriented advising of students.”

MCC Counseling Services has provided several professional development and training opportunities to help faculty become better advisors, and work is being done to create an online self-paced version. Faculty have expressed a need for “Advising FAQs” not related to choosing classes, and many have noted the current “open door” policy does not reach all of our students.

Several new technological tools have the potential to improve the quality of advising for students, faculty and staff. Students are having advisors assigned to them in Banner. Simplicity Insight provides a single source of information about student appointments and outcomes with MCC service providers. Degree Works provides assistance with program requirements and scheduling.

**BIG QUESTIONS:** What are faculty responsibilities related to advising?

How can we ensure students receive the advising they need?

Is academic planning the role of counselors/advisors, New Student Advising, Program Faculty, or FYE?

Can we mimic the success of program-level advising (as in cohort programs, including those in Allied Health) for students in general studies, liberal arts and other programs?

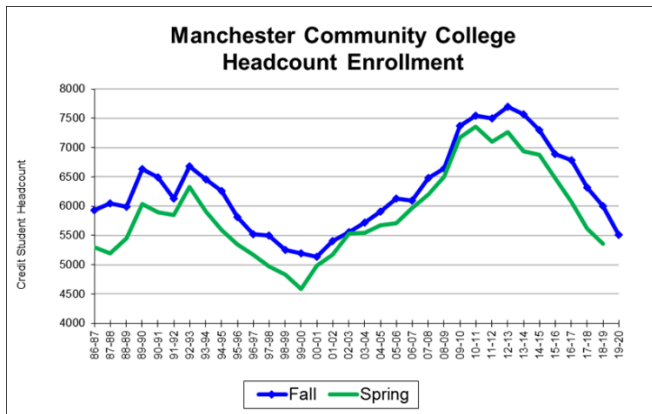
# Manchester Community College ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

## MCC Concept Papers

In preparation for MCC's next strategic plan, to be implemented in Fall 2020, the Strategic Planning Committee has drafted these "concept papers" to summarize key areas facing our college. Their purpose is to provide a foundation of shared understanding for our planning activities. They draw on findings from recent college meetings, surveys and forums; our most recent NEASC/NECHE self-study reports and our Enrollment Management plan.

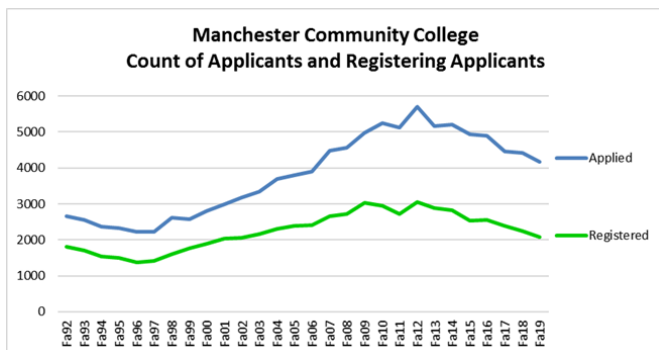
## Enrollment Management

Manchester Community College credit enrollment has decreased by 25% over the past five years. Enrollment is down across all student types.



These decreases can be attributed to a number of external forces, including increased competition from other higher education institutions, low unemployment in CT, a decreasing number of traditional college-aged students, and increased costs of college attendance.

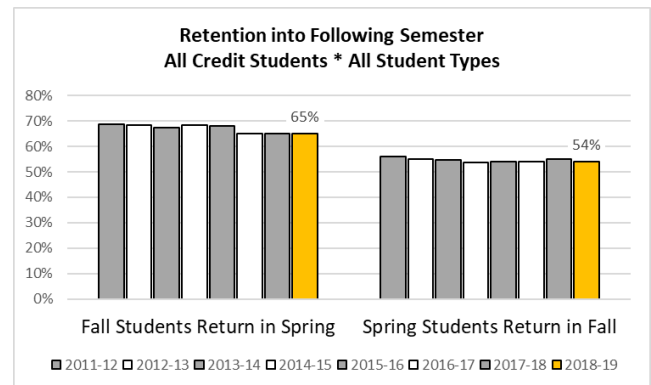
MCC has seen a steady decline in the number of applications received, while yield rates have remained relatively stagnant or have declined based on student population. Transfer-in students, for example, have seen a 6% decline in yield from 2015 to 2019.



MCC's largest feeder towns (Manchester, East Hartford and Hartford) have all seen dramatic declines in their enrollment and the size of their graduating classes. This is true for most of the towns in our service area, with only a few exceptions.

## Retention

Retention is a concern and contributing factor in enrollment declines. About 65% of students registered in a fall semester will return the following spring. Only 54% of spring students return, meaning each fall semester nearly half the students are new to MCC or returning after a break in attendance.



It is possible that given the demographic and market conditions, we are moving to an era where retention is more important to enrollment management strategy than recruiting.

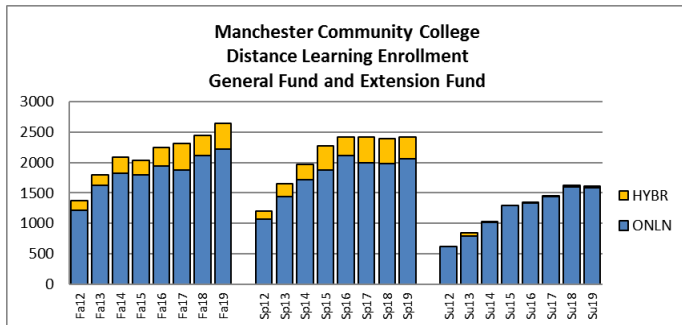
## Technological Advances

The Enrollment Management team is adopting a number of technological advances in hopes of improving efficiency and student support. The Admissions Office will be using a **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** tool, which will allow MCC to roll out a communications plan for recruitment from the time a student expresses interest in the college, tailored to specific audiences. The college will also be moving towards a paperless environment with a product that allows for digitizing and scanning of documents. Both of these products are set to launch in March 2020.

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Other tools like Simplicity Insight and Degree Works can improve efficiency of advising and thereby improve retention and completion.

One area that has the potential for enrollment growth is the **adult student** population. Working collaboratively across divisions, MCC can enhance course offerings for adults and extend the credit for prior learning program. Growing distance learning is one possible method to better serve adult students.



### Enhance Academic Offerings

Reviewing current program offerings and ensuring that the proper course offerings and selections are available to students will be key in enhancing the enrollment numbers. It is also key to student success indicators (graduation rates, etc.). Currently, much of the academic course schedule is typically rolled from year to year with limited adjustments for the scheduling needs of the current student body or the incoming student population. Using data from previous semesters, and an enhanced enrollment pipeline (available through the aforementioned technological solutions), we should be able to structure a schedule that meets the needs of students and allows for growth potential.

College readiness continues to be a challenge for many of the incoming students. Several new initiatives are in place to address this. In Fall 2019, MCC offered a pilot program that offered developmental courses in conjunction with college-level courses in eight-week sessions, a format that may allow students to advance at a quicker pace into their college-level courses. Placement is also undergoing changes with Next Generation Accuplacer and work on the scores related to course assignments, and using high school GPA as a “multiple measure” for English placement.

There is a tension between desire to have revenue-generating students filling courses and seats vs. the faculty prerogative to define placement and rigor.

Collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs is critical to increasing both enrollment and retention rates for the near future at MCC. An easier enrollment process, enhanced communication to students, and the right academic offerings, may be the key to turning around the enrollment decline at MCC.

### Debt-Free College

In the 2019 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, Public Act 19-117 included the establishment of a last-dollar scholarship program intended to ensure that beginning in Fall 2020, Connecticut high school graduates who are attending college for the first time will be able to attend a Connecticut community college without any out-of-pocket charges for tuition or mandatory fees. The program includes these features:

- Grants to eligible community college students that, when combined with other available financial aid, will reduce the cost of tuition and fees to \$0.
- Generally, eligible students must graduate from a Connecticut high school and reside in Connecticut, complete a FAFSA, enroll for 12 credits or more for both the fall and winter/spring semesters, and meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- Eligibility for assistance under PACT continues for three years from initial participation, for up to 72 credit hours, provided that students maintain eligibility.
- Provisions are made for students with disabilities and for appeals.

The proposed program has been crafted to meet the requirements of the law while aligning administratively with other forms of financial assistance that are already offered by the colleges. Projections for the cost of the program across the state range from \$7 million to \$15 million per year.