McHenry County College
Crystal Lake, Illinois

Brand Communication Plan

Presented to:
Christina M. Haggerty
Director of Marketing and Public Relations
and
The MCC Brand Facilitating Committee

August 11, 2011
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Introduction

The purpose of this brand communication plan is to outline overarching strategic and tactical components that will help clarify and favorably position the McHenry County College (MCC) brand with internal and external constituents.

In particular, this plan will focus on activities for Year One (the 2011-2012 academic year). MCC's marketing team will update and revise the plan annually as part of the College's ongoing planning and budgeting cycles.

The heart of this plan is a series of brand communication action plans (CAPs). The action plans outline specific brand-building initiatives designed to support the achievement of institutional brand marketing goals also included in this document.

A. Summary of the Planning Process

While marketing planning is a dynamic, ongoing process, this Brand Communication Plan represents, in many respects, the culmination of a seven-month long project that included:

- Quantitative baseline measurement of audience perceptions through a Brand Monitor study of key audiences including:
  - Prospective students
  - High school guidance counselors
  - Current students
  - Internal audiences—faculty, staff, administrators, Board of Trustees
  - Community partners
  - Alumni

- Qualitative research, systematically collecting input from students, faculty, administrators, and MCC Foundation Board members during focus groups held on campus

- Development and testing of a brand pledge statement

The project began with a Brand Marketing Boot Camp conducted by Stamats Associate Vice President Eric Sickler on the MCC campus. During the planning process, a Stamats team and the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee worked together to review existing research, discuss the broad goals of the plan, and then met on campus on three occasions (March, June, and July 2011) to gather audience input, discuss and detail plan elements and strategy.

B. Team Members

More than a dozen people regularly came together to complete this plan. A complete list can be found in Appendix A.

- Christina Haggerty, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, served as the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee lead

- Eric Sickler, Associate Vice President, led the Stamats team

Work on the plan began with Stamats’ proposal presentation in February and carried through early August 2011.
Foundational Elements

We believe that brands, and brand communication plans, are in many respects the public declaration of an institution’s core values. With that in mind, we think it is very important to “rest” this plan on a complete understanding of the College’s mission, vision, principles, and strategic priorities.¹

McHenry County College Vision
The community's first choice for a lifetime of learning.

MCC Mission
At McHenry County College, we value learning, and we put the interests of our students and community first. By providing high quality, affordable and accessible learning opportunities, we enable students to meet their educational, career and personal goals. By sharing our knowledge and resources, we support our community’s educational, social, cultural and economic vitality.

¹ MCC Strategic Plan 2011-2013, http://www.mchenry.edu/strategicplan/
### MCC Principles and Strategic Priorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Strategic Plan Priorities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>To achieve excellence in teaching, learning, and the services we provide by:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting student success through outstanding teaching and support services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Attracting and retaining high-quality employees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Promoting a culture of personal and professional development among employees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Providing up-to-date facilities and equipment that meet student learning needs, support program growth, and promote employee effectiveness</td>
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<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>To provide learning opportunities and support services that meet the needs of our diverse population by:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Providing opportunities that allow students, employees, and our diverse community to engage at MCC, inside and outside of the classroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Meeting student demand for coursework through diverse offerings and delivery methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Providing smooth transitions from one learning stage to another</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Affordability</strong></td>
<td>To offer opportunities to those at all economic levels to pursue their educational goals and personal enrichment by:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Offsetting the financial burden of education on our students by using current resources efficiently and pursuing alternative sources of revenue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increasing financial aid resources available to students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Strengthening the financial stability of the College</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td>To collaboratively generate creative and effective solutions by:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Valuing, inspiring and cultivating people, partnerships, and processes to embrace dynamic growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Creating, reinventing, and promoting opportunities to encourage a lifetime of learning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td>To promote a service-oriented and ethical culture of fiscal, social, professional, and individual responsibility by:</td>
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<td>• Increasing transparency in institutional policies, procedures and processes</td>
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<td>• Improving internal controls</td>
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<td>• Promoting and modeling sustainability and environmental stewardship</td>
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<td>• Creating measurable targets and evaluation processes for key strategies and objectives</td>
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To this list of core principles, the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee added three components:

- People
- Service (serving the customer/student)
- Student Success
SWOT Analysis

As part of this planning process, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified. These came from a review of research and materials provided by the College as well as quantitative and qualitative research conducted as part of this plan-writing process.

MCC Strengths

- **Good grades for performance.** In the UNICOM•ARC survey of 2009, community members gave MCC higher performance evaluations than local elementary or high schools. It also associated highly positive terms with the College: safe, welcoming, reputable, contemporary, convenient, valuable. (Each earned a “descriptive” or “very descriptive” rank for the College among 75% or more of the community.)

- **This positive community impression** of the education provided by MCC seemed to hold true in qualitative and quantitative research conducted by Stamats this spring. A sample focus group comment: “There is a lot of good news that is positive about MCC, this is a crown jewel in the community. And if you talk with a lot of leaders that are familiar with the College, they would all echo those sentiments.” Respondents in the Stamats Brand Monitor email survey rated MCC highly for its convenience, affordability, accommodation for special needs, and personal attention. Quality of faculty rated as both a strength and a challenge. (Full results of the 2011 Brand Monitor study can be found in Appendix C.)

- **Transformative experiences.** Students who attend can talk in terms of “transformation,” and have excellent stories to tell about their positive experiences here. (For example, one student went from being homeless to setting up his own business. Another lost more than 100 pounds, found his self-confidence, and now calls himself “amazing.”)

- **Ability to respond.** “MCC serves the county from its youngest to oldest, responsively. We flex faster than most, developing needs to the community.”

- **Ambiance.** “It’s bright here. The campus is bright. It’s clean. It’s well lit and open. Plus, people look you in the eye. They smile, and they talk to you.”

- **Service with results.** The Shah Center for Corporate Training has a strong reputation of working with the business community and delivering programs—“Where all business conversations start in McHenry County.” Sage Learning Center is lauded by students.

- **MCC people make a difference.** “It’s not just a community college. It’s a community.”
  - The people are service oriented and willing to take the extra step, make the extra phone call, or walk the student through the process to deliver good service and ensure people are comfortable here. MCC has hired right and made sure its people are those who want to serve students well.
  - A handful of participants had experience working at other institutions, including other community colleges. Their comments about the MCC difference were similar, indicating a “genuine warmth.” “Everybody smiles, and says hi. I think MCC is innately a friendly place.”
“We know people’s names here. Students ask us for resources, and we can connect them. The community calls and asks us for employees or interns, and we know who to send them. That didn’t happen (at my previous institution). Employers didn’t want students until they were graduating. Here, they want our students, and that happens across the College...that speaks to the caliber of our students and programs.”

“It’s not just personal service, it’s paying attention....I walked into the Fast Track office after only one previous visit, and Lori knew my name.”

- **Wider reach.** Beyond classes and vocational training MCC also serves as a community and state resource.

- **Good information.** The 2009 MAP: Community Engagement Project indicated the “Office of Marketing and Public Relations does a good job of communicating to and with our stakeholders and that community members would like to receive more information from MCC.” This spring’s Brand Monitor survey showed MCC’s website was consistently the most sited communication channel across all audiences as the source turned to most frequently to find accurate information about the College, with 69% of respondents naming it unaided.

**MCC Weaknesses**

Notice few of these have anything to do with the College's primary function: education.

- **Turnover in key leadership** positions and the accompanying cultural shifts that inevitably occur as a result. During 2009 five people led the College before Dr. Vicky Smith came on board, four as interim presidents. (Walt Packard, Brian Sager, Larry Tyree, Ron Ally, Kathleen Plinske, then Dr. Smith took the helm.)

Other new leaders include:

- Tony Miksa joined MCC in August 2009; he is vice president of Academic and Student Affairs.
- Vern Manke became interim vice president for Administrative Services in January 2010.
- The chief information officer’s position is newly created, and Al Butler came on board in December 2010.
- Larry West joined MCC in January 2011 as CFO and treasurer.
- Dean of Student Success Felicia Thomas joined the College in July 2009, filling a new position.

Many left MCC when a beneficial retirement package was offered. Now some see “reorganization,” and in focus groups voiced concerns that “people who have been here 10-12 years are worried their jobs will be eliminated, or they will be moved.”

- **Contentious board decisions.** A series of board decisions dating back to 2008 and their scrutiny by bloggers and the *Northwest Herald* put the trustees and their behavior in the public eye, negatively affecting the College’s image. Brand Monitor respondents lumped the two together as, “negative perception of the Board and senior leadership.”

- **Poor high-profile perception and planning.** The Promise Program was launched without being fully funded or thoroughly planned and benchmarked against existing programs in other cities, thus ran into snags and became “the broken promise” almost before it was
underway. However, overall, this program brought more than 1,000 students to the College and some 600 persisted, though fewer than 200 remained in the actual program. (Because of missing deadlines, or failing to meet one of the criteria.)

- **Alumni are not engaged.** Though contacted in both research projects as part of this endeavor, alumni responses were bleak, just 7% in the Brand Monitor Study and only 2% in the Brand Pledge Test.

- **Athletics.** Athletic programs are expensive, but serve relatively few students (fewer than 120). While some teams may excel, not all bolster the College’s reputation on the playing field, and none can compete in print because the local newspaper places its emphasis on the high school news coverage. MCC lacks a robust sports information program that might make significant inroads in the current climate. Also, as we understand it from our focus group participants, MCC’s athletic facilities rank near the bottom of the conference in which the College competes.

- **Publications require more verve.** Current print and electronic materials (internal and external) need a stronger message, creativity, personality, and greater emphasis on benefits across the board.

- **Quality.** While many praised the quality of MCC’s faculty and staff, others cited it as a problem, bringing “uneven quality of faculty, staff, and advisors” to the top of the Brand Monitor challenges list. “Perceived quality of students” admitted to MCC also appeared on the list of challenges.

- **Availability.** Other problems cited by the Brand Monitor respondents: class availability, offerings and variety, and the ever-popular complaint on college campuses—parking.

**MCC Opportunities**

- **The economy.** The 2011 Community Colleges and the Economy Survey\(^4\) shows that nationwide, community colleges continue to see increased enrollment. This, however, is coupled with an accompanying “threat” that comes in the form of reduced budgets.

- **Enrollment.** MCC draws an impressive 35% of the in-district high school students. The College has seen two years of burgeoning enrollments, largely due to the Promise Program; it will have to adjust recruiting now that this program no longer exists.

- **Progress.** While change may be unsettling in some quarters, it’s embraced elsewhere. Many initiatives are underway:
  - Install a new ERP (enterprise resource planning—software designed to automate, integrate, and improve business performance while serving as the backbone for its data.)
  - Develop a new Facilities Master Plan
  - Create an Academic Master Plan
    - A new Culinary Management Program impacts the facilities plan and the academic plan by adding two certificate programs to MCC’s offerings and a $3.4 million remodeling project.
  - Several other new programs are under review or in progress, some of which are pending accreditation:

- Occupational Therapy Assistant Program (OTA)
- Medical Billing and Coding
- Computer and Numerical Control (converting from noncredit to credit)
- Also, MCC is investigating welding, robotics, respiratory therapy, in addition to an evening/weekend hybrid automotive program with a consortium of other colleges.

- **News in new approaches.** With a new administration tackling a wide variety of substantive projects and a revised approach to board of trustees meetings, we expect the opportunity for more forward-looking, positive news coverage. Develop integrated strategies to address and improve community perception regarding past issues with leadership and negative publicity.

- **Strong partnerships.** Based on excellent return rate and positive responses from guidance counselors and community partners, it’s evident MCC has forged strong bonds with its allies in the community. An unheard-of 52% of surveyed guidance counselors and nearly 30% of surveyed community partners answered the call when asked to share their perceptions about MCC. Continue to reinforce those positive relationships.

- **Recognition.** MCC is not an unknown quantity in the community. The College will be building on a largely positive foundation, from perceived strengths of “convenience and affordability” to showcasing for its target audiences newly defined attributes that are more distinctive and important.

- **Enlightened process.** It appears MCC may be reaping the rewards of a well-managed operation in progress, as administrators and communicators have kept key audiences informed about the branding research in progress. Already, key players have begun to ask how they can contribute to its success, and seem to understand this is a strategic endeavor focused on a culture shift, not adding a simple tagline.

**MCC Threats**

- **Budget realities.** The *2011 Community Colleges and the Economy Survey*\(^5\) that highlights the growth in enrollment mirrors what MCC has seen in budgets: doing more with less. While enrollment went up 30%, expenses increased only 3%. The current MCC budget is built anticipating 10% less state funding, $1.1 million more in salaries, and an 18% increase in benefits expense.

- **Harsher fundraising climate.** Within McHenry County, The Friends of MCC Foundation competes for funding among 183 different agencies. That competition will always be fierce, but even more so in a down economy.

- **Indifferent administration.** Across the board, current senior leadership—specifically cabinet members—are perceived in some quarters as less communicative and not as caring as their predecessors. Some MCC middle managers and frontline staff members long for more administrator-staff interaction or even more smiling and simple acknowledgement during hallway encounters. Another mentioned specific occasions when senior administrators publicly asked for input, then ignored or even derided it. When speaking specifically of the president, employees countered saying they enjoyed personable one-on-one meetings with her. Another indicated that a president diligently working behind the scenes might ensure the College is better off in the long run than one roaming the halls chatting up employees. When

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\(^5\) Still Doing More With Less, ibid
expecting employees to embrace a culture change, those at the helm must lead effectively, which will require a decidedly more proactive, effective nurturing of each opportunity to interact with members of the MCC community.

- **Community college as second choice.** In some cases MCC suffers from what other community colleges do, that local students hesitate to select it as a primary choice because it is local, and is seen as too close to home. It’s sometimes seen as a “fallback” option if students don’t get their first choice, or if they can’t afford to go off to a four-year school.

- **News coverage.** While the *Northwest Herald*’s executive editor may be a supporter of the College, many articles take on a sniping tone and continue to attack decisions from years past. Internal College constituencies appear unable to understand that it is front-page news when students stand in line three hours to register for classes and online registration goes down, but it is *not* a front-page story when the College fixes the registration process for the next semester. Marketing does place numerous positive stories about new classes and programs in the *Northwest Herald*, but the campus community finds the negative more memorable and stings at the reiteration of previous missteps.

- **Communication.** While employees complained on one hand about poor communication, it appears there are many venues for collecting details about current events, from forums and printed materials to electronic newsletters and details available on the intranet—and almost as many excuses posited for not attending meetings or for missing abundant messages provided in various media formats. At issue is the clear anxiety some employees feel:
  - “People asked questions about why we were spending money now on branding with our current financial situation. ‘How are they going to pay for it? Is it coming out of our salaries? You know we’re in contract negotiations. Where are they going to get this money?’ I said these are all good questions. Have you talked to anyone but me on the committee or emailed anybody? ’No. It doesn’t do any good.’”
  - “One of the people did email a supervisor about the four-day work week but felt that it was better for them to stay under the radar and not cause any ruffles that would draw attention to them.”
  - In some campus forums people have had the feeling questions weren’t taken seriously, or were “shut down.” This perception can undermine the process and environment administrators are trying to build. As one person put it, “Are you going to get the evil eye for asking the wrong thing?”
  - Probably most telling, internal audiences rated MCC lower than external audiences. As an example, external audiences were more likely to immediately recommend MCC than internal audiences, according to the Brand Monitor survey results.
Competitors’ Brief

The Brand Facilitating Committee identified MCC’s primary competitors by categories based on:

- Volume of programs/opportunities
- Programming
- Geographic location
- Reputation

**Occupational**

**Harper College** (Palatine) calls itself “a top Chicago college and career training school.” Its current branding: An excellent education. The Ivy League of community colleges.

**Elgin Community College** (Elgin) positions itself to prospective students with, “You can do anything. ‘Bright Choice. Bright Future.’” Revolving messages on the site’s main page urge visitors to take action or learn more about the opportunities or “Experience the power of education at ECC and discover you can do anything. Your success is the college’s number one priority and the focus of all our quality-driven efforts.”

**College of Lake County** (Grayslake) doesn’t appear to promote itself through persistent branding or even a consistent tagline. The College’s Spring 2011 fact sheet doesn’t even contain a brief description, instead focusing on tuition, campus locations and phone numbers, co-op agreements, degrees, trustee and administrator names, and other data.

**First Institute** (Crystal Lake) founded in 1982, provides training in fields like medical assisting, massage therapy, and dental assisting. The tagline under the First Institute logo on every web page reads, “Career Training for Success.” Headers on every page also proclaim, “A Successful Career Starts Here!”

**Transfer**

**Northern Illinois University** (DeKalb) boasts three additional “regional sites” to round out its offerings as it calls itself “world class” and a “comprehensive teaching and research institution.” No persistent brand message appears online.

**Western Illinois University** (Macomb) fails to consistently serve up a strong brand message across the site, but on its home page WIU highlights the University’s core values. “Higher Values in Higher Education: Academic Excellence, Educational Opportunity, Personal Growth, Social Responsibility.”

**Eastern Illinois University** (Charleston) is replete with lists and links, but little branding.

**Illinois State University** (Normal) on its undergrad admission pages emphasizes “Passion with a Purpose” using a “State Your Passion” tagline and solid profiles to highlight ISU programs, opportunities, and benefits. Passion doesn’t seem to be a part of the rest of the site, unless it’s just in the hyperactive use of the color red.

**Private/Technical**

**Loyola University** (Chicago) shows the tagline “Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives” under its logo on the home page, and at the bottom of search pages, the main admission page, and a number of other key pages. Unfortunately, the school doesn’t follow through by bringing this important message to life.

**Art Institute of Chicago** communicates in small fonts and lots of video for the infinitely patient, but not with a concise, clear, accessible brand message.

**Columbia College** (of Missouri) notes in its mission statement that it improves lives “through exemplary teaching,” but its website fails to show how the College delivers on that promise.
Columbia College Elgin campus has a design similar to its parent campus.

Workforce Development

Illinois Manufacturing Extension with eight locations statewide consistently brands itself online as “Business Improvement Specialists” and then follows through with information and action items that appear on brand message: client success stories, services that appear to deliver results, and more.

Caldwell Consulting Group (Woodstock) promotes its business online across its site with the tagline “Creating Business Leaders and Teams that Win!”

In addition to these specific workforce development businesses, MCC also competes for students with private consultants and courses offered by businesses via online training.

Community and Personal Development

Competitors in this arena are varied including:

- Park districts
- Libraries
- Elgin Community College (above)
- Harper College (above)
Brand Marketing Overview

Because it is critically important for readers of this plan who were not involved in its development to have a complete understanding of the larger constructs of brand marketing, we wanted to include this short review. It addresses five key concepts:

- What is a brand?
- The two essential elements of an effective brand
- The relationship between brand marketing and integrated marketing communication
- Five important ideas about brand marketing
- The elements of a brand portfolio

Individuals familiar with general brand concepts are welcome to skip this section.

What is a Brand?

A brand is not a look, letterhead, or logo. Rather, a brand is a valued and differentiating promise a college, university, or school makes to its most important audiences to meet a need or fulfill an expectation. Truly successful brands are perceived by the target audience as the only solution to a particular need. This insight highlights the two essential components of an effective brand: awareness and relevance.

The Two Essential Elements of an Effective Brand

**Awareness** is first. In other words, among the 3,000 or so other messages they will receive this day, did your audience members notice yours? Did your message stand out from the background clutter? And did the audience know how and when to respond? The purpose of MCC’s brand communication is to help establish that awareness through the consistent and vibrant communication of the College’s brand attributes.

Second, there is the **relevance** component. After the message was noticed, did members of your audience begin to sense how the message—and MCC—might begin to fill a need they had? Was the message relevant to them? Did it build on previous messages? Did it lay the groundwork for future messages? Did it help create a relationship? Because MCC’s brand strategy is rooted in its larger institutional vision and long range strategic plan, we have every confidence that it will be almost immediately relevant to its most important audiences.

These two ingredients—awareness and relevance—are absolutely essential for effective branding. If people are not aware of your brand, you will never have a chance to be relevant. This is much like the great academic program that no one ever hears about. The quality may be there, but if the marketplace is not aware of it, the quality is for naught.
Brand Marketing and Integrated Marketing Communication

Brand marketing is one element of integrated marketing communication. The other two elements are direct marketing and internal communication.

As you know, brand marketing has as its primary focus the creation of awareness and relevance in the minds of your most important target audiences.

Direct marketing has a slightly different focus: generating response. Direct marketing encourages and creates opportunities for people to attend...and give.

Whereas brand marketing is the responsibility of the larger institution, the primary responsibility for direct marketing rests in two domains: admissions and advancement.

A direct marketing strategy is always more successful when it is preceded by an effective brand strategy.

The third element—internal communication—has a number of important functions. It helps keep people informed about day-to-day activities. It communicates progress toward key goals. And it helps turn faculty, staff, and other audiences into brand advocates.

Integrated marketing communication works best when all three elements—brand marketing, direct marketing, and internal communication—are coordinated through a single comprehensive marketing plan with shared budgets and goals.

Five Important “Ideas” About Brand Marketing

Martin Lloyd, as part of an ongoing discussion, offers five key ideas about branding:

- Your brand is the sum of the experiences that your customers have whenever they are exposed to your product or message. It is this breadth across all College offices and functions that give a brand depth and endurance.
- You control your brand if these experiences are planned and conform to your vision.
- Your brand is consistent if these experiences all say the same thing to your audiences. For example, do customers in financial aid, the Advising and Transfer Center, and Continuing and Professional Education all feel that they are valued and cared for? Do donors, small and large, understand their worth to the institution? If they do, your brand is consistent across all venues and will experience great synergy.
Your brand is working if these experiences create the desired impression in the minds, hearts, and pocketbooks of your target audiences. And remember, the impression you want to own is one of relevance.

Your brand is successful if the perception you have created makes people act in the right way. In other words, do people follow through? Do they enroll? Do they give money? Do they commit? Do you get buzz?

**Elements of a Brand Portfolio**

A brand strategy is conveyed through a comprehensive document called a brand portfolio. Elements of the portfolio typically include:

- **Brand pledge:** A valued and differentiating promise a college, university, or school makes to its most important audiences to meet a need or fulfill an expectation. The MCC brand pledge is largely an internal document that rests firmly on MCC’s core values.

- **Brand attributes and proof points:** A series of differentiating words or phrases—implied or explicitly stated in your brand pledge—that you want to position in the minds of your most important target audiences. Brand attributes are words you want to own. Over time, MCC must develop a rich verbal and visual vocabulary to convey these brand attributes. In addition to the attributes, you must create “proof points,” the anecdotes, stories, data, metaphors, and photographs that bring these stories to life.

Brand attributes are the public face of your brand. As a result of your brand communication plan, your most important audiences should be able to repeat these attributes back to you, and to others.

- **Brand attribute matrix:** The matrix “translates” and connects each attribute to each key target audience and provides compelling language to bring each attribute to life. The matrix provides the framework for a targeted message strategy and related institutional proof points that resonate with your audiences.

**The Foundation of a Brand**

The brand comes alive through brand stories, culture, and creative campaign

Brand attributes serve as the trunk and branches, providing common and enduring themes and structure

Begins with your core values and vision
Your institutional brand is “rooted” in your brand pledge
The MCC Brand

As a result of the research and MCC consensus through brand pledge-statement testing, the statement that best captures and articulates MCC’s distinctive strengths is:

*McHenry County College makes a valuable difference in our community by inspiring, engaging and transforming learners through quality, meaningful, educational opportunities.*

MCC Brand Attributes

Supporting the statement are established brand attributes and talking points:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Attributes:</th>
<th>Draft Talking Points:</th>
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| Quality    | Delivering quality education through our courses and our people.  
Enhancing the quality of life for everyone in and around McHenry County.  
Enriching our student experiences by hiring quality faculty and administrators.  
Supporting personal and professional growth by providing quality educational facilities. |
| Change-Ready | We embrace opportunities to improve, innovate, flex, and grow.  
Our world—locally, regionally, nationally and globally—is ever-changing; and we’re preparing our students to lead, support, and thrive in it.  
Our team of educators and administrators has a firm finger on the pulse of the dynamic educational and professional development needs of our local community.  
Students come to MCC to change their lives, and in doing so, they change us all. |
| Community  | We’re a community that serves the community.  
Our classroom extends far beyond the confines of the MCC campus.  
Students, faculty, and administrators share equal responsibility for our individual and collective betterment.  
By caring for each other throughout the MCC community, we all move more confidently toward the future. |
Target Audiences

In the final analysis, the purpose of a brand communication strategy is to establish McHenry County College’s brand pledge and attributes in the minds and hearts of key audiences. As a starting point, the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee looked at the full range of MCC’s target audiences, in relationship to its major brand efforts:

Recruitment Support

- Traditional high school-agers
  - Dual credit prospects
- Returning adults
- Veterans
- Prospective athletes
- Multicultural
- Personal education; non-credit
  - Kids in College prospects
- Professional education; non-credit
- Shah Center: Business and industry
- Shah Center: Nonprofit organizations

Retention Support

- Traditional high school-agers
  - Dual credit prospects
- Returning adults
- Veterans
- Prospective athletes
- Multicultural
- Personal education; non-credit
  - Kids in College prospects
  - Retired Adults Program (RAP) members
  - Trips and Tours participants
- Professional education; non-credit
- Shah Center: Business and industry
- Shah Center: Nonprofit organizations

Foundation Support

- Alumni
- Friends (non-alumni donors)
- Corporate sponsors
- Employees

McHenry County Community Support

- Parents
- Guidance counselors
- Board of Trustees
- Teachers
- Businesses, nonprofits, industry, and government leaders
- Media
- General public

Educational Master Plan Support

- Campus community
Institutional Strategic Priorities Support
- Campus community
- District population

Human Resources Support
- Prospective faculty
- Prospective staff
- Prospective administrators

Employee Retention Support
- Faculty
- Staff
- Administrators
Prioritized Target Audiences

As we sought to refine and prioritize the list of potential target audiences for this brand communication plan, we kept four issues in mind:

- The need to directly support MCC’s mission, vision, principles, and strategic priorities
- A balance between the breadth of possible audiences and the dollars available for the plan
- The understanding that branding is more effective through a deep relationship with a smaller set of audiences than a nominal relationship with more audiences
- The keen awareness that brand understanding and loyalty among internal stakeholders creates a college’s *best ambassadors* among its other publics

Using these criteria, and with the recommendation of the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee this plan will focus on the audiences below in the order outlined:

**Tier 1 — Internal Stakeholders/Torchbearers**
- Employees
- Current students
- Board of Trustees
- Foundation Board of Directors

**Tier 2 — Influencers**
- Media contacts
- Elected officials/legislators
- Local businesses and nonprofits, corporate sponsors, "friends"
- Alumni[^1]

**Tier 3 — Prospects and Pipeline Audiences**
- Parents
- Teachers
- Guidance counselors
- Prospective students
  - Traditional and returning adults
  - Veterans
  - Prospective athletes
  - Personal and professional education students
- Multicultural community

[^1]: Note: This will require action plans to develop an infrastructure to support, as this group will be important to leverage in future years
Brand Marketing Budget

Simply put, the proposed Year One budget is misleading. If we added in all the ongoing communication programs, the budget becomes deceptively inflated, making it appear this single project is expensive, when in actuality those costs would have been incurred under normal operational expenses without this branding effort. However, what the estimated budget below doesn't account for is the extra time, and much energy that will be devoted in the days ahead, particularly in the Office of Marketing and Public Relations (OMPR) and among senior leadership to intensive retooling, strategy, and hard work to bring this plan to life. The Year One plan doesn't have a lot of out-of-pocket expenses, but will require intensive staff effort.

During Phase II, when the College will engage in a clarification of the brand’s visual identity, a more significant budget will be required, and that will be the time to invest extensively in the design and execution of creative deliverables.

Budget Details (estimated)

For now, the estimated additional out-of-pocket expenses in this Year One plan come to:

- Brand launch/training
  - $10,000
- Ongoing Support
  - $5,500 Brand Team
  - $1,200 Awards

Brand Marketing Communication Goals

As noted earlier, the primary purpose of a brand communication plan is to firmly establish McHenry County College’s brand attributes in the minds and hearts of its important audiences.

Although the brand attributes were not defined prior to the flight of research completed in spring 2011 (and, consequently, we do not have baseline values for attribute perceptions), unaided attribute and pledge recall should be principal markers of progress going forward.

1. Create a solid brand launch and foundation among MCC’s Tier One Stakeholders to develop this group as the College’s best ambassadors for the brand. Measurements:
   a. Bring internal audience ratings of MCC up to 3.9 or above when Brand Monitor baseline perception research is repeated. (CAP 4.3)
   b. Increased participation in MCC special events, forums

2. Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace. Measurement: Unaided recall of at least one brand attribute or portion of the brand pledge. (Goal: 25% of target audiences)

   Note: None of the selected MCC attributes stood alone as terms selected by respondents in the spring 2011 perception results, though “Community College” came through as a top descriptor, neither “quality” nor “change-ready” (or a synonym) appeared on the board; these will need to be added in future perception research.

3. Enhance the reputation of MCC. Measurement: Boost by 5% the number of respondents who rank MCC quality as “very good” when Brand Monitor baseline perception research is repeated. (CAP 4.3)

4. Ensure the MCC Brand drives College decisions large and small, from informing the MCC Master Plan and Education Plan to aligning sub-brands and guiding hiring decisions. Measurement:
Strategic plan reviews, board meetings, faculty meetings—is the brand alive? Is this plan being executed, revised, and lived?

Communication Action Plans for Year One
Communication action plans (CAPs) are the tactical expression of strategic initiatives. CAPs are based on the strategic framework outlined in this document and the planning workshop. The CAPs are segmented by communication goal, though they may support more than one goal. Please note that extensive, formal proposals and pricing can be supplied for any of the following action items.

When used effectively, these action pages can be handed off to the person in charge of each tactic, used as the cover sheet of an assignment notebook, and easily updated as the CAP is completed with debriefing notes.

Budget figures outlined in each CAP do not include staff time.
Goal #1: Create a solid brand launch and foundation among MCC’s Tier One Stakeholders to develop this group as the College’s best ambassadors for the brand.

CAP 1.1 — Launch Rally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Launch Rally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>Faculty, staff, administration, foundation members, trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Consistently communicate to the internal audience (brand launch).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Begin Date | Advance Prep: September 2011 (PPT, speechwriting)  
Campus-wide Launch rally: October 3 |
| Description | Key leadership hosts event on campus  
- Education of brand and “call to action” to live the brand is communicated by MCC leadership and guided by PowerPoint presentation  
- Ensure buy-in, walk-through process, research, what’s-in-it-for-me benefits, discuss brand teams, coming “Living the Brand” awards program (see CAP 3.1)  
- Leadership drives attendees to brand microsite (see CAP 1.2)  
- Drives action to awards program, brand team recruitment, set expectation for departmental meetings and culture shift  
- Requires the president to conduct meetings with her staff, trustees, foundation members, and the general forum—and demonstrate consistent, on-brand enthusiasm about the topic each time  
- Ensure inclusion of sub-brand managers, outline specific items for these managers in talking points: MCC, one brand |
| Cost/Resources | Internal time for presentation development  
Consider including takeaways |
| Evaluation | Number of attendees at launch event, traffic driven to microsite, applications for Brand Teams, award nominations |
| Assigned to | OMPR, President |
| Debrief notes | |
### CAP 1.2—Brand Microsite (Internal and External Communication)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Create an MCC Brand Microsite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Audience(s)</strong></td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy in Support of</strong></td>
<td>Consistently communicate to the internal audience (brand launch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Begin Date</strong></td>
<td>Build: August-September 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch: October 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Description**        | The most efficient way to gather all the brand information and communicate it to your audiences is via a “brand microsite.” Initially, this will serve primarily for internal audiences with a link off the intranet, but should be accessible from the Internet if news media or external sources request details. From this link, all internal and external audiences will have access to the following:

- **Overview**
  - This is where leadership defines the brand platform, reveals the strategic goals and discusses the marketing process.

- **Frequently Asked Questions (for example)**
  - How was the campaign developed?
  - Does MCC really need to market itself?
  - How much is MCC spending on this?
  - How long will the campaign last?
  - How does this affect sub-brands?

- **Brand Story Submission**
  - This section allows the internal audience an opportunity to feel engaged in the process by submitting a story about a program or individual that reflects the brand.
  - Fully developed feature articles stem from the submission and are posted on the website, used in internal publications, and possibly submitted to the regional media.

- **The Basic Working Tools**
  - Talking points (see [Illinois College sample](#))
  - Using the campaign
  - Message guidelines (model sub-brand alignment)
  - Key messages
  - Support—who is accountable
  - Add in Phase II:
    - Graphic guidelines
    - Graphic files (downloadable internally only)

- **First Week of Rollout Schedule**
  - Announcement of Face-to-Face forum event via email blast
  - Departmental meetings schedule
  - Web link goes live

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cost/Resources</strong></th>
<th>Internal time for microsite development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Web traffic page views, continued update and use of tools, story submission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CAP 1.3—Let Leaders Lead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Bring in an Executive Spokesperson/Media Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>Senior leadership, trustees, foundation members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Create a solid brand launch; enhance the reputation of MCC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Begin Date | Recruit consultant: August 2011  
Begin training key leaders: September 2011  
Complete leadership training: before November 30 |
| Description | Beginning with the notion that MCC leaders can be among your best ambassadors in the community, ensure they’re onboard and on message. Conduct training for the executive team and trustees to ensure the brand is well understood, and will be well communicated universally.  
Combine the bevy of new leaders, brand alignment and the culture shift expected of the MCC community, this is the perfect time for this training and an excellent investment.  
Include trustees and foundation members. Ensure they’re fully informed about the brand and have the benefit of the coaching as well. |
| Cost/Resources | $10,000 (estimate) |
| Evaluation | Attendance by MCC leadership at workshop/training sessions  
Set expectation they will lead meetings  
Performance of MCC leadership in meetings |
| Assigned to | OMPR to vet, hire, and schedule consultant  
Senior leadership to attend sessions |
| Debrief notes | |

---

Assigned to | OMPR web specialist, IT
Debrief notes |
### CAP 1.4—Departmental Forums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Departmental Forums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Audience(s)</strong></td>
<td>MCC employees (faculty, staff, administrators)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy in Support of</strong></td>
<td>Create a solid brand launch; consistently communicate the brand to internal audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Begin Date</strong></td>
<td>Advance preparation: September 2011 (talking points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Departmental workshops: October 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete by: October 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Meetings conducted by department managers to discuss how individuals and departments can embrace this culture shift to bring operational aspects of MCC entirely on-brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide department heads with talking points to use as follow-up to launch rally, in disseminating the brand concept information to all staff and faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include such things as how to apply for Brand Teams, how to nominate or get nominated for new award program, discuss how “our” group can live the brand, and how this affects sub-brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost/Resources</strong></td>
<td>Recommend an incentive: Grant for department with best/first brand idea, quality improvement, change-ready approach, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set amount and determine criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Number of departmental workshops fully executed by October 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic driven to microsite, applications for Brand Teams, award nominations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expect at least 50% of MCC employees to be able to recite the College’s brand attributes, and the essence of the MCC brand pledge on demand by January, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assigned to</strong></td>
<td>OMPR—prepare talking points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debrief notes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal #2: Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace.

CAP 2.1 — Campus Events Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Inventory and Align Campus Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>Internal and external events participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand; ensure the MCC brand drives College decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Begin Date | Begin inventory: September  
Work with Brand teams begins: January 2012 |
| Description | Prepare an inventory of campuswide events.  
Have Brand Teams work with event planners to build a better campus lifecycle around the brand.  
Ensure the overall calendar is reviewed strategically—not just looking at events individually. Which events contribute to MCC’s mission, vision, and principles and delivers for the brand? Consciously build future years’ schedules with the brand attributes in mind. Do some need to be reshaped, reinvigorated, or eliminated?  
Many events are listed in Appendix B: Inventory of Current MCC Brand Marketing Efforts. |
| Cost/Resources | Staff time |
| Evaluation | Significant realignment of calendar  
Campus satisfaction with revised programs |
| Assigned to | Inventory—OMPR and Brand Facilitating Committee  
Alignment—Brand Teams working with campus event planners |

CAP 2.2 — Internal Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Inventory All Internal-facing Communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>Staff, faculty, administrators, and current students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand ...differentiating MCC in the marketplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Begin Date | September 2011  
Complete by: October 31 |
### CAP 2.3—External Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Inventory All External-facing Communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>External audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand...MCC in the marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>September 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete by: October 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(concurrent with internal-facing communications inventory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>This system should mirror that being established for internal-facing communications:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish an inventory process and record-keeping system (e.g., a centrally stored spreadsheet with a plan to keep it updated).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go department by department, including sub-brands, reviewing known communications and speaking with lead administrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess and prioritize: which publications/media work well, which if any need retooling or elimination? Which should be aligned first?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Resources</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Completed inventory sheet, ready for use in Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to</td>
<td>OMPR staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CAP 2.4—Assess the MCC Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Continue to Assess the MCC Website, Social Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace; enhance the reputation of MCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Description | Continue the assessment of the MCC website and social media channels that’s underway. Ensure elements are within brand compliance and develop timeline for bringing materials into brand compliance. Don’t forget to pay close attention to needs of sub-brand sites and tools being used and what will be required to serve constituents best in Phase II:  
  - Athletics  
  - MCC Foundation  
  - Shah Center  
  - Student Life  

At the same time, determine areas across MCC where content requires enhancement.  
Prioritize needs for Phase II. |
| Cost/Resources | OMPR staff time |
| Evaluation | Completion of the assessment, ready for use in Phase II |
| Assigned to | OMPR staff |
| Debrief notes | |

### CAP 2.5—On Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Ensure Ongoing Communications Are on Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>All four goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Immediate and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description

If you’re touching it, you should be fixing it.

While OMPR reviews current materials and tactics, work will continue to flow through the office. News releases, features, Facebook posts, and more will be created. As that daily work is planned and executed, it should be done with the new Brand Pledge and attributes in mind.

As MCC will soon be asking each employee to make decisions with those as guideposts in mind, do your daily work with them as your inspiration.

As OMPR brings “quality, change-ready, and community” to life in vivid words and images for MCC, it will be easier for the community to understand and embrace the brand.

Likewise, ensure all sub-brand communications are tuned-up as well. Work with brand managers (and consider them brand managers) to ensure sub-brand communiqués align with the MCC brand. OMPR may want to hold a workshop with sub-brand managers to provide tips tuning up materials created by Athletics, MCC Foundation, Shah Center, and Student Life.

Cost/Resources

Staff time

Evaluation

Established evaluation measures CAP 4.3

Assigned to

OMPR staff

Debrief notes

CAP 2.6—Email Footers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Place Attributes and Logo in Footer of All Emails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace; enhance the reputation of MCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Create signature: September 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch: October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Using the stationery or signature option in Outlook, create a footer bearing the attributes and the MCC logo, to be used institution-wide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate with appropriate departments to share the footer immediately after launch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare boiler plate, gentle reminder response for emails received without the footer in the first month after launch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This would include all branches of the College, including sub-brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Resources</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Percent using footer on January 16, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to</td>
<td>IT, OMPR designer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CAP 2.7—Lay the Foundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Lay the Foundation for Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand to internal and external audiences, differentiating MCC in the marketplace; enhance the reputation of MCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Review previous research, plus assessments collected thus far:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CAPs debriefing notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internal communications inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- External-facing communication inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Campus events inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Website and social media audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include key sub-brands: Athletics, Shah Center, MCC Foundation, Student Life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch plans for Phase II, development of visual identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Resources</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>The smooth launch of Phase II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to</td>
<td>OMPR, Brand Facilitating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Goal #3: Enhance the reputation of MCC.

### CAP 3.1—Living the Brand Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Create Award Program (Living the Brand/Brand Champion/Torchbearer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Enhance the reputation of MCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Announce award program at launch rally October 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalize and begin to process applicants: Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give first award: Week of January 16, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue promoting opportunity through regular communication channels and giving monthly awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CAP 3.2 Showcase the Brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Collect Stories That Bring the MCC Brand to Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>All internal and external MCC audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Enhance the reputation of MCC. (Plus each of the other goals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

Develop a regular event (a coffee?) hosted by Dr. Smith in which an individual (staff, faculty, or student) are celebrated. The winner's story should showcase the MCC brand.

- Develop nomination process
- Vet the nominees
- Nominal “award”—gift certificate, college merchandise?
- Photograph event and award winners
- Celebrate the award winners creatively through various channels, archive stories online

When creating this program, MCC might modify its existing STAR awards to align it with the brand, or instead of taking away one program to put another in its place, could add this one for Brand Champions. MCC will have to weigh the pros and cons and determine which path will serve the College and its brand best.

**Cost/Resources**

$1,200 for award expenses (estimate)

Staff time, assumes in-house photographer

**Evaluation**

Attribute recall among internal audiences

Continuing nominations

Attendance at award ceremonies

**Assigned to**

Nomination process: Brand Facilitating Committee

Follow-through: OMPR staff, President

**Debrief notes**
Description

Enrich the MCC publications and the vault of stories (stored in a simple database) the President (and other leaders) have to share with the community about MCC. Ensure those narratives are brand-aligned and showcase the College’s pledge and attributes.

Data should be used to support anecdotal stories. Repository created so stories are located in a single place. Develop and maintain a log of how/when stories are used to avoid duplication. Strive for stories that showcase brand attributes: Quality, Change-Ready, Community.

Be sure to include stories that show the brand across the College and through the sub-brands.

Create opportunities for senior leaders to share these stories (if they’re not already in the community, and after spokesperson training) with Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.

Cost/Resources

Staff time

Evaluation

President’s and senior leaders’ use of anecdotes in speeches
Improved perception rankings in evaluations CAP 4.3

Assigned to

OMPR staff
Leadership torchbearers

Debrief notes

**Goal #4: Ensure the MCC Brand drives College decisions.**

**CAP 4.1—Brand Teams**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th>Create Brand Teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>Faculty, staff, administration, students who plan campus events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Ensuring the brand drives College decisions; build a platform to consistently communicate the MCC brand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Begin Date | Announce: October 3  
Deploy: Week of January 17, 2012 (after recruiting, training teams) |
Create three-person working teams with at least one member per team who has served on the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee. Ensure various audiences of the College are well represented among the teams. (For instance don’t send out a cadre of Brand Teams staffed only by faculty members.)

Equip the teams to facilitate brainstorming sessions with MCC employees and students who may not recognize opportunity for aligning their work with the College’s brand.

Develop brand “cheat sheets” for the Brand Teams with key talking points, attributes, and proof points from brand portfolio.

A good starting point may be campus events, then consider adding other campus projects that deserve (or could benefit from) a Brand Team focus.

The designated Brand Team meets with group planning an event and together identify ways to re-tool and re-script what has always been done to create, promote, and deliver programming so that the revised version is fully brand-aligned.

Designate a modest pool of money that a Brand Team could draw from for unanticipated event costs caused by brand-aligning the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create three-person working teams with at least one member per team who has served on the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee. Ensure various audiences of the College are well represented among the teams. (For instance don’t send out a cadre of Brand Teams staffed only by faculty members.) Equip the teams to facilitate brainstorming sessions with MCC employees and students who may not recognize opportunity for aligning their work with the College’s brand. Develop brand “cheat sheets” for the Brand Teams with key talking points, attributes, and proof points from brand portfolio. A good starting point may be campus events, then consider adding other campus projects that deserve (or could benefit from) a Brand Team focus. The designated Brand Team meets with group planning an event and together identify ways to re-tool and re-script what has always been done to create, promote, and deliver programming so that the revised version is fully brand-aligned. Designate a modest pool of money that a Brand Team could draw from for unanticipated event costs caused by brand-aligning the event.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost/Resources</th>
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<td>$5,550</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of attendees at event</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Facilitating Committee</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debrief notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**CAP 4.2—Think Brand MCC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Description</th>
<th><em>Think Brand MCC Before Buying, Deciding, Acting</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Audience(s)</td>
<td>MCC decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy in Support of</td>
<td>Ensure the MCC Brand drives College decisions; build a platform to consistently communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin Date</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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7 We tallied some 22 “event” type programs on the Brand Inventory list (Appendix B) and set a modest budget of $250 for each, knowing that some events would not need funds while others might request more. Plus, the teams deploy halfway through the academic year, leaving many of the events completed for this budget season.
Before front-line employees embrace the brand pledge and its attributes, it will be important to see that it’s not another “flash in the pan” program, but instead a cultural shift with benefits to individuals and the institution. Senior administrators will need to model that important distinction, and the College will have to demonstrate its commitment with more than lip service. For example:

- Create measures that are built into performance reviews, so people are rewarded professionally for “living the brand.”
- Take advantage of naming opportunities to be found in the upcoming facilities master planning process and program decisions in the academic master plan. Select names with an eye toward brand attributes and the brand statement. Ensure that each time MCC spends money to buy a new sign, build a structure, or create a new program, questions are asked that relate to the brand pledge and attributes.
- Fight against sub-brand confusion and/or sub-brands that don’t enhance your reputation in the marketplace. Does the College allow individuals to craft their own niche in the marketplace or provide guidelines that provide for creativity under the MCC umbrella?
- During campus-wide strategic planning process, emphasize integrated strategic planning. Build a brand focus into all strategic plans. Then, ensure that all the “planning” and communication come together as well, thus avoiding multi-faceted initiative confusion that may exist now.
- Seek out appropriate community partners where logical collaboration/alignments make sense. For instance, is there an innovative organization in McHenry County that might be a logical partner for the “change-ready” MCC?

| Description | Strategic planning, time, patience |
| Evaluation | Brand alignment |
| Assigned to | President, Senior Administrators, then carried throughout the organization |
| Debrief notes | |

**CAP 4.3—Build in Evaluation**

| Name/Description | Debrief, Plan, Evaluate |
| Target Audience(s) | OMPR, senior leadership, MCC Brand Facilitating Committee |
| Strategy in Support of | All goals |
| Begin Date | Debriefing: Immediate following a CAP, ongoing |
| | Retesting: Fall 2013 |
| Description                                                                 | Debrief after each CAP to ensure action plans are on target, or adjust plans where necessary  
| Plan strategically for Phase II  
| Establish timeline for measuring success of current efforts—repeating elements of spring 2011 Brand Monitor perception research ([See Appendix C](#)) and strategically adding new brand perception components. Specifically check plan goals:  
| • Unaided recall of at least one brand attribute or portion of the brand pledge by 25% of target audiences  
| • Boost by 5% the number of respondents who rank MCC’s overall quality/reputation as “very good”  
| • Bring internal audience ratings of MCC up to a mean rating of 3.9 or above on reputation quality rankings  
| Cost/Resources                                                                 | Debriefing: staff time  
| Retesting: Budget TBD based on scope of retesting, methodology, and timing  
| Evaluation                                                                    | Debriefing—results will pay dividends with successful future strategies  
| Assigned to                                                                  | OMPR  
| Debrief notes                                                                |
Brand Marketing Calendar/Timeline
This calendar covers the one-year Brand Marketing Action Plans (CAPs) outlined, beginning with work toward launch as the campus returns to school this fall.

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2.5 – Ensure ongoing communications are on message... "If you’re touching it, fix it. Live the brand."

3.2 – Immediate, ongoing: Showcase the brand; collect, share stories that bring the brand to life

4.2 – Immediate, ongoing: Senior management leads the culture shift—think then deliver Brand MCC

1.3 Recruit Trainer

1.2 – Build Microsite

1.1 – Launch materials (PPT, talking pts)

2.1 Event inventory

2.6 Email signature

3.1 Develop awards

2.2 Internal comm. inventory

2.3 External comm. inventory

1.3 Sept. – Nov. Executive training for key leaders

4.3 Debrief, Plan, Evaluate — ensure this plan becomes a working document

Oct. 3

1.1 – Launch rally

3.1 – Announce award

4.1 – Ann. Brand Teams

1.2 – Launch Microsite

2.6 – Launch email signature

1.1 – Dept. forums

3.1 – Finalize award criteria, vet nominees by Dec. 2*

4.1 – Recruit, train Brand Teams

2.4 Assess website

3.1 – Begin monthly awards Jan. 16

2.1 – Jan. Brand Teams begin work

4.3 Evaluation tools

2.7 Phase II Foundation
Recommendations on Evaluating the Brand Strategy

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” – Peter Drucker

There are four reasons to evaluate your brand strategy and individual brand communication action plans:

- To determine effectiveness
- To improve performance
- To enhance internal credibility for your brand marketing efforts
- To help support your request for additional resources

In most cases, the evaluation of MCC’s brand strategy will occur at three levels:

First, were action plans completed on time and within budget? Though this measurement may seem basic, we know that any subsequent measurement cannot be undertaken if the action plan was not executed.

Second, were the brand communication goals outlined on page 20 achieved? Determining whether or not these goals were accomplished will require that MCC repeat the research that was undertaken in the spring of 2011 as outlined in CAP 4.3.

We offer two recommendations regarding the repetition of this research. First, conduct this research no earlier than fall 2013. The two years from when the plan is launched to when you repeat the research will give your plan time to gain traction.

Second, rather than using statistically valid samples that were necessary to establish the baseline, we suggest smaller samples. This will allow you to gather these data with a much smaller budgetary investment.

The third component of evaluation involves measures of brand equity. We suggest that MCC measure brand equity in six ways:

- Did the cost of recruiting a student go down?
- Has net tuition revenue increased?
- Has student persistence toward degrees/certificates been affected?
- Have partnerships with area businesses increased?
- Is the College more consistently able to shape its class on key dimensions of academic quality, academic interest, ethnicity, and other variables?
- Has participation in the MCC Foundation fundraising increased?
  - Both percent of alumni and community members participating and average size of gift?
  - Did the cost of raising a dollar go down?

In the final analysis, these measures of brand equity are critically important because they are true indicators of the true impact of your overall brand strategy.
Appendix A

MCC Brand Facilitating Committee
- Christina Haggerty, Director of Marketing And Public Relations (committee lead)
- Dennis Adams, MCC Trustee
- Joe Baumann, Director of Institutional Research
- Thomm Beggs, Instructor of Graphic Arts
- Bill Brennan, Executive Director of Friends of MCC Foundation
- Kellie Carper, Coordinator of High School Recruitment
- Kathy Hayhurst, Professional Development Assistant
- Catherine Jones, Executive Director of Shah Center Programs
- Nicole Nootens, MCC student
- Jose Ortiz, MCC student
- Laura Power, Instructor of English
- Sonia Reising, Coordinator of Multicultural Programs
- Wally Reynolds, Director of Athletics
- Thomas Takayama, Executive Dean of Humanities
- Dawn Wagner, Instructor of International Business and Marketing

MCC Advisory Group
MCC Executive Council provided an advisory role to the MCC Brand Facilitating Committee and was included in discussions at critical points throughout the process.
- Al Butler, Chief Information Officer (CIO)
- Vern Manke, Interim Vice President for Administrative Services
- Tony Miksa, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
- Vicky Smith, President
- Pat Stejskal, Acting Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Larry West, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Treasurer

Stamats Team
- Eric Sickler, Associate Vice President for Client Services
- Jack Sandeen, Research Analyst
- Julia Carey, Brand Strategist
- Jennifer Shaddox, Account & Communication Services Manager
Appendix B

Inventory of Current MCC Brand Marketing Efforts

Strategies & Tactics:

(Please note: List compiled during brainstorming session; items appear in no specific order.)

- Radio awareness campaign—“Personality Plus” featuring personal profiles and interviews of employees, students and alumni, focusing on value received; re-merchandised through multiple communication channels
- “MCC Night” each fall, collaborative effort across the College (7th year); showcasing quality and forging connection between community and MCC
- “Multi-Chamber Mixers” engage workforce and business partners similar to MCC Night program
- “Ready. Set. Go.” program combines marketing messaging campaigns and events for elementary, middle and secondary students (variable, as it combines a number of different campaigns.)
- “New Student Convocation” (new initiative in 2011; the “Go” dimension), targets internal audiences, builds community and institutional awareness
- Institutional website and drive-to-the-web campaigns/efforts; showcasing value equation and engaging audiences through interactive opportunities
- “Slainte” restaurant; promotional purposefully connects the quality program with the quality of the larger College; only open Spring semester
- “Fast Track” adult for-credit sub-brand; strong reputation within adult learner community)
- College schedules (5/year) and one annual catalog, printed and distributed throughout the community
- Sell sheets by department and program, distributed to prospective students and donors, current students, etc. Tailored to recipient interests
- Annual Report distributed to alumni, friends, etc.
- Shah Center quarterly magazine, newspaper columns, “Communities of Practice”
- President’s monthly column in Northwest Herald (coming soon)
- “Voices” publication features student written work; communicates quality and community
- Speakers’ Series, driving in collaboration with faculty, thematic, focuses on quality
- MCC art throughout the campus and in the community; art faculty shows throughout the campus
- “One Book, One College” joins community and campus in a full-year dialogue about a chosen work
- Student Planner, distributed annually to students, includes schedule-planning tools, pre-populates with campus and community events, programs, meetings, etc. to encourage participation throughout the community
• Business and technical career competitions, targets prospective students but has broader brand promotion impact
• Foundation is revisiting alumni relations and identifying possible investment
• Student performing groups reach into the community (forensics team, jazz ensemble, Black Box Theatre, horticulture shows)
• Art department exhibits and gallery showings
• Horticulture column in the Northwest Herald
• Horticulture events on campus bring in some of the largest attendance of the year
• Community events hosted by the campus; great visibility opportunities: Cooking Show, Craft Show, Quilt Show, Holiday Show, Children’s Health Fair, Senior Fair, Flu Shots, Veterans Day Celebration, Fitness Center Events (Midwest Strength and Conditioning Clinic), Pottery Workshop, Early Childhood Educators Conference
• College Fair
• “Fit for Life"
• Women’s History Month, Film Festival and Care faire
• African American History Month
• Hispanic Heritage Month
• “Taste of McHenry County”
• Social media/social networking: business side and overall College presence expansion to brand and engage stakeholders (and prospective stakeholders) in dialogue—rather than just promotion MCC (minimal marketing cost—big human resources)
• 150-200 Athletic events and sports camps
• “Kids & College” educational workshops, kindergarten through high school students in a variety of disciplines, enrichment, academic, and athletic; focus on students and parents
• “Take A Walk In Her Shoes Ball” (2 years; annual event)
• Annual Golf Outing
• “People in Need” quasi-campus/community event
• Bioneers and Green Living Expo (annual event)
• McHenry County Green Guide in partnership with MCC, Northwest Herald and Recycling Center, demonstrates innovation, quality, accessibility, distributed throughout the entire community, key resource
• Presence at community events, including speeches by Dr. Smith
• Employee Recognition Reception (annually, each April)
• STAR Awards, and Classified, Professional, Administrator, and Adjunct-Faculty Awards
• Professional Development Day (October), Fall Workshop and Spring Workshop Days (August and January)
• Commencement Programs (Adult Ed/ESL, Nursing and General) (2 general commencements/year; 1 nursing pinning ceremony/year)
- Departmental Intranet sites (such as PD Autoreg)
- MCC Friends of MCC Scholarships. They get a lot of attention both internally and externally
- Trips and Tours
- Retired Adults Program (RAP)
- Adult Education (ESL, GED, ABE, and Continuing Education)
- Recruitment and Financial Aid nights at area high schools
- MCC Marketing Challenge (coming in Spring 2012)—for high school and college students to compete on campus
- Media Relations: 35+ news releases and feature opportunities per month sent to local and regional media outlets
Appendix C

2011 Brand Monitor Study

Key findings to retest:
- Top identified strengths overall, unaided
- MCC’s overall reputation, particularly internal audience ratings
About Stamats

Stamats is recognized and respected as the nation’s higher education integrated marketing thought leader. Our comprehensive array of innovative services has set the standard for pairing insightful, research-based strategic counsel with compelling creative solutions. We promise our clients the highest level of professional service and attention to detail in the industry because, in the end, we know our success is measured entirely by theirs.

Research, Planning, and Consulting Services
- Image, perception, and brand studies
- Recruiting, marketing, brand, and academic program marketability audits
- Tuition pricing elasticity and brand value studies

Creative & Digital Marketing
- Creative concepting
- Web strategies
- Recruiting and advancement publications
Objectives and Methods

• Objectives
  – To capture, evaluate, and provide a quantitative baseline measurement of key audience perceptions of McHenry County College (MCC)
  – To identify perceived strengths, weaknesses, differentiating characteristics, and overall impressions of MCC

• Methods
  – Stamats conducted an online survey of MCC’s primary audiences: current students, prospective students, employees, alumni, high school guidance counselors, and other community partners such as Shah Center affiliates.
  – Survey fieldwork was conducted from April 14 to May 13, 2011
  – A total of 10,663 invitations were sent
    ▪ Three follow-up reminder emails

Objectives and Methods

• Methods
  – 1,283 surveys (12%) were completed:
    ▪ 685 current students; 7,387 emails sent (9%)
    ▪ 125 faculty members; 432 emails sent (29%)
    ▪ 33 guidance counselors; 63 emails sent (52%)
    ▪ 180 community partners; 625 emails sent (29%)
    ▪ 19 prospective students; 1,343 emails sent (1%)
    ▪ 210 staff/administrators; 331 emails sent (63%)
    ▪ 31 alumni; 475 emails sent (7%)
  – MCC provided lists
  – Stamats managed the survey development, fieldwork, and data analysis
  – Due to the large sample size, a randomly selected sample of 500 respondents was coded for open-ended questions
Student Demographics

Current students (n=685)
• For-credit – 538 students
• Non-credit – 35 students
• Credit and non-credit – 95 students
• Retired Adult Program – 16 students
• Program (top 10) – 26% associate in science; 24% baccalaureate course enrollee; 11% health careers; 7% business management; 6% associate in arts; 4% general education; 3% computer and information systems; 3% early childhood education; 2% accounting; 2% criminal justice
• Gender – 72% female; 28% male
• Age group – 4% 16 to 18; 24% 19 to 20; 17% 21 to 24; 12% 25 to 34; 16% 35 to 44; 18% 45 to 54; 5% 55 to 64; 2% 65 or older; 2% declined to answer

Alumni Demographics

• Alumni respondents (n=31)
  – Very low participation rate: 7%
• Program – 12 health careers; 6 associate in science; 3 accounting; 2 associate in general education; 2 business management; 2 digital media; 1 associate in arts; 1 administrative office management; 1 fire science; 1 construction
Key Findings – Images & Perceptions

Strengths
- Convenience
- Affordability
- Accommodating to individuals with special needs
- Personal attention from faculty, staff
- Quality of faculty as teachers
- Helpfulness of registration/enrollment staff
- Appearance

Challenges
- Uneven quality of faculty, staff, advisors
- Parking
- Class availability, offerings, variety
- Negative perception of the Board and senior leadership
- Promotion and support among the community; bad publicity
- Perceived quality of students admitted to MCC

Opportunities
- Bolster efforts to inform the public about MCC’s success, accomplishments, and value to the community
  - Focus on specific student successes to increase the perception of the type of students who attend MCC
- Continue to reinforce positive relationships with community members and guidance counselors
- Promote MCC’s most recognizable characteristics: convenience and affordability
- Develop integrated strategies to address and improve community perception regarding past issues with leadership and negative publicity
MCC Descriptors

How would you describe MCC to someone who is not familiar with the school? (unaided)

- Community college, 2-year college, good for those not wanting to attend a 4-year college (36%)
- Good faculty, staff (helpful) (16%)
- Affordable, good for those on a budget (13%)
- Good school, good credentials, good place to earn a degree (13%)
- Small (11%)
- Good place to start, get gen eds out of the way (9%)

- Community college, 2-year college, good for those not wanting to attend a 4-year college (51%)
- Good academics, programs (18%)
- Affordable, good for those on a budget (12%)
- Good school, good credentials, good place to earn a degree (12%)
- Good faculty, staff (helpful) (12%)
- Small (10%)
- Good academic variety (10%)

- Community college, 2-year college, good for those not wanting to attend a 4-year college (49%)
- Good academic variety (17%)
- Good place to start, get gen eds out of the way (17%)
- Affordable, good for those on a budget (17%)
- Good school, good credentials, good place to earn a degree (17%)
- Good academics, good programs (10%)

- Community college, 2-year college, good for those not wanting to attend a 4-year college (54%)
- Local, good for those wanting to stay close to home (31%)
- Good academic variety (14%)
- Good school, good credentials, good place to earn a degree (13%)
- Affordable, good for those on a budget (12%)
- Good place to start, get gen eds out of the way (12%)
Frequently Mentioned Strengths

Based on what you have seen or heard, what are the main strengths of MCC? (unaided)

Top Identified Strengths Overall – Unaided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Top Mentions</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Faculty, staff, advisors</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable, reasonable cost to attend</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs, courses, academics, education</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Location(s), proximity to home</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic variety</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Small classes, personal attention, student-faculty interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities (labs, dark room)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-centered, students are valued</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus (clean, comfortable, easy to navigate)</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class availability, scheduling options</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visible presence in the county, connections to business partners, locally focused</td>
<td>4%</td>
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Note: a full list of all verbatim responses to this question can be found in Appendix B.
Top Strengths by Key Audiences

Based on what you have seen or heard, what are the main strengths of MCC?

- **Current Students (n=223)**
  - Faculty, staff, advisors (34%)
  - Affordable, reasonable cost to attend (22%)
  - Location(s), proximity to home (14%)
  - Programs, courses, academics, education (13%)
  - Small classes, personal attention, student-faculty interactions (9%)
  - Campus (clean, comfortable, easy to navigate) (6%)
  - Class availability, scheduling options (5%)

- **Faculty (n=43)**
  - Faculty, staff, advisors (58%)
  - Programs, courses, academics, education (35%)
  - Affordable, reasonable cost to attend (28%)
  - Small classes, personal attention, student-faculty interactions (14%)
  - Location(s), proximity to home (12%)
  - Academic variety (12%)
  - Good value, cost effective (9%)

- **Staff & Administrators (n=94)**
  - Faculty, staff, advisors (46%)
  - Affordable, reasonable cost to attend (22%)
  - Programs, courses, academics, education (14%)
  - Location(s), proximity to home (14%)
  - Student-centered, students are valued (10%)
  - Academic variety (7%)
  - Adapts to needs of community (6%)

- **Community Partners (n=64)**
  - Location(s), proximity to home (27%)
  - Programs, courses, academics, education (25%)
  - Faculty, staff, advisors (22%)
  - Academic variety (19%)
  - Visible presence in the county, connections to business partners, locally focused (16%)
  - Affordable, reasonable cost to attend (13%)
  - Shah Center (9%)

Note: a full list of all verbatim responses to this question can be found in Appendix B.

Frequently Mentioned Weaknesses

What would you say are the key weaknesses or drawbacks of MCC? (unaided)

- Limited budget, funding
- Lack of resources, services
- Too much like high school
- Lack of information
- Bookstore
- Marketing, public relations, bad publicity
- Online program
- Parking
- Class availability
- Some programs not offered
- Lacking social events, opportunities, activities
- Faculty, staff, advisors
- Scheduling
- Facilities
- Academics
- Doesn't offer 4-year degrees, doesn't offer AS
- Lack of transparency
- Accommodation of growth
- Campus
- Limited academic variety
- Administrative process
- Cost, fees, tuition increases
- Small programs
- Not a good value
- Administration

Note: a full list of all verbatim responses to this question can be found in Appendix B.
Top Identified Weaknesses Overall – Unaided

What would you say are the key weaknesses or drawbacks of MCC?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you say are the key weaknesses or drawbacks of MCC?</th>
<th>Top Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty, staff, advisors (uneven quality, understaffed, rude, inaccessible)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (lack of direction, turnover, lack of planning, top heavy, doesn’t value its employees, Board)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class availability, scheduling (classes have limited seats, classes not offered often)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety, some programs not offered</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication, lack of information, lack of transparency</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities (outdated, small, lack of space, not easy to navigate)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics (programs are weak, outdated, too easy; inconsistent requirements)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, public relations; bad publicity</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus (space limitations, size, lack of lighting, outdated, dirty, hard to navigate, smoking areas)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation, image</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Main weaknesses
  - Inconsistent quality of faculty and staff
  - Administration, Board, leadership issues
  - Course availability, scheduling
  - Parking

- Faculty and staff being both a top strength and weakness indicates inconsistent quality of academic support and instruction

Note: a full list of all verbatim responses to this question can be found in Appendix B.

Top Weaknesses by Key Audiences

What would you say are the key weaknesses or drawbacks of MCC?

**Current Students (n=217)**
- Faculty, staff, advisors – uneven quality, understaffed, rude, inaccessible (32%)
- Class availability, scheduling – classes have limited seats, classes not offered often (14%)
- Parking (11%)
- Limited academic variety, some programs not offered (7%)
- Academics – programs are weak, outdated, too easy; inconsistent requirements (5%)
- Online programs – few offerings (4%)

**Faculty (n=49)**
- Faculty, staff, advisors – uneven quality, understaffed, rude, inaccessible (25%)
- Administration – lack of direction, turnover, lack of planning, top heavy, doesn’t value employees, Board (22%)
- Facilities – outdated, small, lack of space, not easy to navigate (18%)
- Campus – space limitations, size, lack of lighting, outdated, dirty, hard to navigate, smoking areas (15%)
- Class availability, scheduling (10%)
- Lack of communication, information, transparency (10%)

**Staff & Administrators (n=91)**
- Administration – lack of direction, turnover, lack of planning, top heavy, doesn’t value employees, Board (31%)
- Faculty, staff, advisors – uneven quality, understaffed, rude, inaccessible (14%)
- Lack of communication, information, transparency (13%)
- Reputation, image (10%)
- Facilities – outdated, small, lack of space, not easy to navigate (10%)
- Atmosphere – poor morale, fear, apathy (9%)

**Community Partners (n=60)**
- Administration – lack of direction, turnover, lack of planning, top heavy, doesn’t value employees, Board (15%)
- Marketing, public relations, bad publicity (12%)
- Parking (10%)
- Too few vocational, occupational, technical programs and courses (8%)
- Faculty, staff, advisors – uneven quality, understaffed, rude, inaccessible (8.3%)
- Limited academic variety – some programs not offered (7%)
Strongest Programs Identified - Top Mentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percent Mentioned (aided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Science</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Corporate Training and the Illinois Small Business Development Center – Shah</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English and Reading</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Information Systems (CIS)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Management</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Management</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Development (GED)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Management – Fast Track</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Services</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All 63 programs supplied by MCC were listed in the questionnaire. Refer to Appendix B for the percentage breakdown for all programs.

Information Sources – Top Mentions

Which of the following sources do you turn to most frequently to find accurate information about MCC? (unaided) n=1,278 (total sample)

- MCC’s website was consistently the most-cited across all audiences
- First and foremost, the website should effectively convey MCC’s value to all students and stakeholders, including the general community
Information Sources – Current Students

Which of the following sources do you turn to most frequently to find accurate information about MCC? (unaided)
n=683 (current students)

- Top mentions by students
- Students are less likely to get information from the newspaper, coworkers, and faculty/staff members
- Students are more likely to get information from friends, relatives, alumni/graduates, and the MCC website

Perceptions of MCC: Total Sample

We’d like to better understand how you rate MCC of the following aspects using the scale provided: 5=Very good and 1=Very poor (aided)
Perceptions of MCC: Total Sample

We'd like to better understand how you rate MCC of the following aspects using the scale provided: 5=Very good and 1=Very poor (aided)

- Ratio of teachers to students n=995: 33% Very Good, 38% Good
- Quality of computer and technological resources n=1047: 32% Very Good, 36% Good
- Registration process n=1079: 31% Very Good, 33% Good
- Variety of programs offered n=1149: 30% Very Good, 37% Good
- Quality of educational experience for MCC students n=1076: 27% Very Good, 28% Good
- Ability to earn a degree in a short amount of time n=1021: 26% Very Good, 37% Good
- Financial aid office responds to my questions in a timely manner n=633: 25% Very Good, 35% Good
- Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms and labs n=1097: 24% Very Good, 34% Good
- New student orientation n=734: 23% Very Good, 33% Good

Perceptions of MCC: Total Sample

We'd like to better understand how you rate MCC of the following aspects using the scale provided: 5=Very good and 1=Very poor (aided)

- Academic advising n=942: 23% Very Good, 33% Good
- Quality of campus facilities such as workout facilities, student lounges, and other common areas n=734: 22% Very Good, 31% Good
- Availability of scholarships n=734: 19% Very Good, 33% Good
- Graduation rate of students from MCC n=621: 18% Very Good, 34% Good
- Career, internship, and job placement advising services n=633: 16% Very Good, 29% Good
- Quality of athletic programs n=481: 12% Very Good, 31% Good
- Graduates get good jobs n=515: 12% Very Good, 30% Good
- Quality of the students admitted to the school n=996: 12% Very Good, 30% Good

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Perceptions of MCC’s Reputation

• Slides 24–26 reveal the top attributes rated by audience, based on average rating scores. The following color codes indicate the level of assigned rating:

  - **Blue** = Very good (rating 4.5 or above)
  - **Red** = Good (rating of 4.0 to 4.4)
  - **Tan** = Slightly above average (rating of 3.5 to 3.9)
  - **Green** = Slightly below average (rating of 3.0 to 3.4)
  - **Purple** = Below average (rating of 2.9 or below)

Perceptions of MCC: by Type

• By and large, MCC’s most strongly regarded aspects are:

  - Accommodating to special needs
  - Registration and enrollment staff
  - Personal attention from faculty
  - Faculty are quality educators
  - Cost to attend
### Perceptions of MCC: by Type

#### MCC’s Reputation Across Key Brand Attributes

We’d like to better understand how you rate MCC on the following aspects using the scale provided. Every good: 1=very poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Type</th>
<th>Current Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff &amp; Admin.</th>
<th>Community Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCC credits are accepted/transferred to other institutions</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of computer and technological resources</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration process</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of programs offered</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of educational experience for MCC students</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to earn a degree in a short amount of time</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of academic facilities such as classrooms and labs</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid office responds to my questions in a timely manner</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New student orientation</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Blue** = Very good (rating 4.5 or above)
- **Red** = Good (rating of 4.0 to 4.4)
- **Tan** = Slightly above average (rating of 3.5 to 3.9)
- **Green** = Slightly below average (rating of 3.0 to 3.4)
- **Purple** = Below average (rating of 2.9 or below)

#### Perceived challenges to overcome:
- Quality of students
- Value of an MCC education in terms of employability
- Low graduation rates
- Career/job placement and advising
- Some inadequate campus facilities
MCC’s Reputation Overall

Overall, how would you rate MCC based on what you know right now?

- External audiences tended to provide more favorable ratings than internal audiences.
- Mean ratings by audience:
  - Community Partners: 4.0
  - Guidance Counselors: 3.9
  - Faculty: 3.8
  - Current Students: 3.7
  - Staff/Admin: 3.6
- Total (all-audience) mean: 3.7 (n=1283)

Attributes Linked to Overall Rating

- Stamats was able to determine which individual attributes most correlate with overall perceptions of the College; the closer “r” is to 1, the stronger the correlation:
  1. Quality of educational experience for MCC students (r=.701)
  2. Graduates get good jobs (r=.656)
  3. Quality of faculty/instructors as teachers (r=.629)
  4. Personal attention from faculty/instructors (r=.599)
  5. Variety of programs offered (r=.584)

- In other words, the more positively respondents rated MCC on these five attributes, the stronger overall opinion they tended to have of the College.
MCC Perceptions: Statement Agreement

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. 5 = Strongly agree; 1 = Strongly disagree (aided)

- MCC provides a convenient education n=1220
  47% Strongly Agree
  39% Somewhat Agree
  39% Strongly Agree
  42% Somewhat Agree

- MCC provides an affordable education n=1227
  47% Strongly Agree
  39% Somewhat Agree
  39% Strongly Agree
  42% Somewhat Agree

- MCC staff and leaders maintain a wide array of community relationships to promote its students and mission n=1224
  36% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree
  36% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree

- MCC’s academic programs reflect the needs of local employers n=1216
  35% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree
  36% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree

- MCC provides excellent preparation for students seeking immediate employment n=1229
  34% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree
  36% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree

- Community leaders show strong support of MCC’s mission n=1217
  33% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree
  36% Strongly Agree
  36% Somewhat Agree

- MCC does an excellent job telling the community about its successes n=1221
  31% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree
  33% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree

- MCC’s on-campus administration is strong and respected in the community n=1229
  31% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree
  33% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree

- MCC senior leadership is effectively dealing with important issues facing the school n=1228
  32% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree
  33% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree

- MCC’s Board of Trustees is strong and respected in the community n=1231
  31% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree
  33% Strongly Agree
  33% Somewhat Agree

The next slide (#31) demonstrates the average agreement ratings on key statements regarding MCC’s reputation. The following color codes correspond to each ratings score:

- **Red** = Very high agreement (rating 4.5 or higher)
- **Tan** = High agreement (rating of 4.0 to 4.4)
- **Green** = Moderate agreement (rating of 3.5 to 3.9)
- **Purple** = Low agreement (rating of 3.4 or lower)
Statement Agreement: by Audience

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. 
5=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Type</th>
<th>Current Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff &amp; Admin.</th>
<th>Community Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCC provides a convenient education</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC provides an affordable education</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC staff and leaders maintain a wide array of community relationships to promote its students and mission</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC's academic programs reflect the needs of local employers</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC provides excellent preparation for students seeking immediate employment</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leaders show strong support of MCC's mission</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC does an excellent job telling the community about its successes</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC's on-campus administration is strong and respected in the community</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC senior leadership is effectively dealing with important issues facing the school</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCC's Board of Trustees is strong and respected in the community</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Red = Very high agreement (rating 4.5 or higher)  
Tan = High agreement (rating of 4.0 to 4.4)  
Green = Moderate agreement (rating of 3.5 to 3.9)  
Purple = Low agreement (rating of 3.4 or lower)

Recommend MCC

Would you recommend MCC to a friend or relative who is considering attending a community college?

- Yes, 74%
- Depends, 23%
- No, 4%

Base n=1200  
All Audiences

Most Frequent Reasons Provided for Reluctance to Recommend (unaided) n=195

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the program</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the student</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are better schools available</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality of education, provides a limited education, lack of academic rigor</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor class availability</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a poor experience, doesn't provide a good experience</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (turnover, out of touch, weak leadership, issues with the board)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited academic variety</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommend MCC

Would you recommend MCC to a friend or relative who is considering attending a community college?

- Nearly all guidance counselors said they would recommend MCC; not one said no
- Students and Staff/Admin were the most reluctant to recommend MCC
- External audiences are more likely to recommend MCC

MCC Rank Among Schools Considered

Where does/did MCC rank among the schools you are/were considering? n=687
Current & Prospective Students Only

- MCC was 1st Choice, 58%
- MCC was 2nd choice, 23%
- MCC was 3rd Choice or Lower, 18%

Most Frequent Reasons for Ranking 3rd or Lower (unaided) n=71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>was looking at 4-year schools</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only use MCC for continuing ed. or an occasional course</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wasn't looking at community colleges</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too close to home, I wanted to go away for college</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had already decided on a college, narrowed the choices, MCC was my last resort</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't offer many courses pertaining to my program, doesn't offer my program</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to attend a real school, a school that offers a true college experience</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>