

TAKING THE PULSE OF OUR COUNTY'S FUTURE

MCC's continuous improvement process began in 2006 when the College became part of the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), which soon was followed by the development and implementation of the institution's strategic principles, a new Educational Master Plan and Facility Master Plan, and finally the unveiling of a new institutional brand identity. Through the combination of these plans with feedback received from a variety of stakeholder groups, MCC clarified and introduced its core values of Change-Ready, Community and Quality. These values define the focus of MCC today and for the future, which includes: greater access to an affordable education for all community residents; a commitment to student success through completion and meeting individual educational goals; and the creation of workforce development partnerships to build a future skilled workforce for our community.

In December, MCC enlisted the help of Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies to conduct an environmental scan, building on all of the prior planning conducted by the College. Using economic, demographic, educational and workforce data and trends, the environmental scan was completed in January. Its results include key trends and driving forces in MCC's community, which will help create informed decisions about current and future operations of the College, including programming and services that will benefit the overall community, all while remaining committed to its core values.

Below are some general findings and related planning implications:

McHenry County is one of the fastest growing areas in Illinois with 18.7% growth between 2000-2010. Growth in five years will increase by another 2.3% with a projected population of 319,136. However, the overall birth rate in the county has declined 21.4% in the last nine years. This represents a 37% decline among kindergartens in 2010.

Planning Priorities: With such decline impacting the College in the next decade, MCC must prepare for a shift away from traditional-age students. The College should continue to expand its focus on returning students and those workers who need retooling or additional skills.

In the 2012 academic year, there were 15 high schools serving 4,284 seniors in the county. Of these students, 30% completed the FAFSA application.

Planning Priorities: The high percentage of FAFSA completers indicates college interest. Currently, over 30% of high school graduates who continue to college come to MCC. Though the overall number of high school students is decreasing, there still is an opportunity to grow this percentage—contributing to MCC's continued focus on transfer students.



A Letter from MCC President, Dr. Vicky Smith

It is with the new year that people make their resolutions. Most certainly, resolutions focus on change—change around what to do better, do more of, or do differently. More often than not, most new year's resolutions fail because people cannot see the big picture, or are not committed enough to seeing their efforts through to the very end. At McHenry County College, we do not make resolutions on an annual basis; rather, identifying how and what we can improve is woven into our culture's daily decision-making process.

This culture of continuous improvement—formalized through the College's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)—maintains accreditation status for MCC, but just as importantly focuses every College employee on regularly challenging existing processes. Asking questions such as, "How could we do this more effectively?"; "What are the ways we can better meet this need?" and "How might we solve this issue?" is what makes MCC a change-ready institution.

Being change-ready is critical in higher education these days, especially with the dynamic shift of community colleges to supporting a balance of preparing students to transfer and to enter the workforce with the right skills. As a community college that must anticipate the educational needs of this community and contribute to the development of its future workforce, MCC must continue its focus on change-ready programming, services and facilities.

This winter issue highlights a variety of efforts that reflect MCC's commitment to being change-ready, including collaboration opportunities, technology's impact on the current and future direction of higher education, and recent stories of support. I hope you will find the issue informative and helpful in getting to know MCC better.

Whatever direction higher education may take, McHenry County College is change-ready, prepared for adjusting to the shifting needs of our community. The future begins today—and MCC is ready.

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Nine of the county's 76 elementary schools have a higher percentage of low-income students than the statewide average of 49%.

Planning Priorities: MCC must look closely at college affordability in the upcoming years.

The average age in McHenry County was 38 years in 2010 (statewide average is 36). A growing market for MCC includes nontraditional students, particularly Baby Boomers between the ages of 48 and 66, who may want to update their technical or technological skills, reinvent themselves from a career perspective, or pursue leisure and recreational educational programming.

Planning Priorities: These needs support MCC's focus on workforce, community and business programming, as well as a focus on those groups who seek additional personal enrichment courses.

The make-up of the county is primarily White. The largest-growing minority population is Hispanic, with the percentage increasing to 11.4% in the near future.

Planning Priorities: There is an opportunity to further expand services and outreach to the Latino population through the College's Multicultural Affairs office.

Health care and social assistance is anticipated to add the most jobs between 2008-2018.

Planning Priorities: MCC must continue to expand its academic offering in support of jobs in this area.

While manufacturing is experiencing a 28.8% decline, it still remains the largest sector of employment in the county. Construction and manufacturing will continue to lose jobs.

Planning Priorities: The College must realign academic offerings in these areas to include new industries, such as green construction and Medtronic manufacturing.

8,282 new jobs are projected between 2008-2018. However, these jobs will be in the areas of low wage, and low skills. As these positions stimulate the economy, these same workers need to be prepared to move into more stable and higher-paying career paths.

Planning Priorities: This provides an opportunity for MCC to focus its outreach on those with entry-level positions, cultivating them to focus on career advancement.

Based on McHenry County's landscape for employment (supply and demand), those workers with associate's degree make slightly higher than those with bachelor's degrees (\$63,735 vs. \$63,224). Higher-wage workers (those who earn \$40,000/year or more) often travel for employment outside of the county. The greatest number of positions and careers being filled by workers coming from outside the county include; manufacturing, educational services, health care and social assistance, and professional/science/technical services.

Planning Priorities: There is an increased opportunity for MCC to focus on career path programs that will train residents for these high-demand positions.

CHANGE-READY PROGRAMMING.....

Establishing a Focus for Moving Forward- MCC's Strategic Planning Effort

The recent environmental scan completed provides significant insight into planning priorities (see cover story). This is just one piece of the puzzle. The College must continue to establish a clear vision and prioritize goals in order to make strategic and informed decisions. A cross-representative team from all areas of the institution formed a strategic planning committee, focused on soliciting ideas, suggestions, history and data shared by parties inside and outside of the College. This collective content will inform a five-year (2013-2018) strategic plan for MCC and help establish an aligned direction for all departments that will take the College where it needs to be and help measure the results.

MCC's Educational Offerings Align with Growing Industries

As an institution that serves this community, MCC is always looking at ways to enhance existing programs and build new ones that meet a growing need. As servants of the taxpayers, it is our responsibility to the community to provide these extensive educational opportunities that help the county move forward socially and economically. That is why the College's Academic and Student Affairs division developed an Educational Master Plan that focuses on growing those areas that align with high-demand or increasing demand jobs. The plan supports the 2012 McHenry County Labor Report, which identifies manufacturing and health care as two of the largest areas for growth in the coming years. This need is, in part, due to our county's aging workforce, which will be challenged as many individuals retire in the coming years and no one is available to replace them with the appropriate skills.

The manufacturing industry is the county's largest, making up over 16,000 jobs. Because of the industry's specialized fields combined with significant percentage of its workforce near retirement, MCC has been working closely with manufacturing on creating programs to assist with creating more interest in the industry as a whole, as well as preparing students with the right skills and capabilities to meet employers' needs.

In today's workplace, manufacturing and robotics go hand-in-hand. Manufacturing is shifting and now requires new skill sets, including more advanced critical thinking, math and computer skills. MCC's Education, Career and Technical Education



(ECTE) division has recently developed both a certificate and an Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS) in Robotics. MCC is the only community college in northern Illinois to offer an associate's degree in robotics. Robotics instructor Jack Brzezinski's goal is to teach more students in robotics skills, which help meet the demand not only in manufacturing, but in health careers as well.

Health care and social assistance is one of the largest economic sectors in the county, following manufacturing, government and retail, and has a significant number of the county's jobs—11,417 in 2012. The industry's job outlook for 2012-2015 is expected to increase by 10%, translating to a need of approximately 1,091 additional jobs in health care.

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MCC's responsiveness to this need has been evident through the College's expanding nursing program, including the addition of a weekend nursing program, and an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) AAS degree and Medical Billing and Coding certificate.



MCC strives for the ability to implement programs quickly in order to support community members and businesses in training those who desire a career, but many not require a full, four-year program, as well as continuing education or retraining needs. The College's Fast Track is a perfect example of a credit-based program specifically for adults seeking retraining or to enhance their existing skills.

A Resourceful Approach to Program Expansion

McHenry County College is serious about how taxpayer dollars are used, and with decreasing financial support from the state, the institution must continue to do more with fewer resources. Collaboration and resourcefulness have become key elements in all planning efforts. Here are just a few examples:

- Satellite locations, such as in Harvard, to offer even more convenient options
- Robust online course offering
- Collaboration with manufacturers to use their facilities and equipment for onsite education
- Request for grant assistance in high-growth areas
- Onsite internships in manufacturing, health care, business and culinary



Programming growth is being accommodated through the creative initiatives listed above. Space requirements are still inevitable, and some needs cannot be met through collaboration only. For example, it is not possible (without investing significant dollars) to simply offer a biology lab in any facility/location. The health careers and related programming fall into this challenge—including biology, anatomy and physiology, and emergency medical technician (EMT).

With physical and facility limitations but a growing need for a quality educational experience in health-related fields, MCC reached out to the community to ask how to support this growth. Three interested parties responded, resulting in further exploration of their respective ideas. One proposal identified potential opportunities to develop a Health Sciences Education Building. That concept moved into an exploratory phase in 2012, which concluded that a dedicated facility would provide new classroom space, thus freeing up some of the College's existing classrooms to be recaptured for additional learning needs. Through exploration, the following benefits were identified if the College would have a dedicated health sciences education building, including:

- The College would continue being a leading continuing education provider for area hospitals and medical facilities/services.
- Area hospitals and clinics would have a dedicated place to send staff for accredited training and licensing.
- In-demand programs could be developed and offered more quickly.
- Existing noncredit programs would have the opportunity to grow and be added as credit and/or stackable degree offerings.
- A centralized facility would allow the space to fully integrate and align the health and science curriculum, while considering partnership with a local health care organization for clinical services and wellness programs.

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In late 2012, MCC moved into phase two of the effort, which will actually determine the feasibility of the project. During this phase, the College and the firm secured to conduct the study (Power Wellness) are looking at whether or not the project is doable. This phase includes:

- Review of existing buildings/locations around county for such programming
- Discussions with potential health care partners to explore their interest in being a part of such a facility
- Surveying students and community members to identify the level of interest and support
- Funding models available and level of risk to the College without impacting the taxpayer

This study is expected to be complete in June 2013, at which time the viability of the effort will be determined.

CHANGE-READY TECHNOLOGY.....

Online Learning

For the growing number of adult students who want to earn a degree or certificate, it can be difficult to find time to attend class all day due to work or family obligations. Many adults need to return to school to broaden their career options and earning potential, while at the same time take affordable classes that can be worked on at a time that works for them.

According to the College's Office of Institutional Research, the number of students taking at least one online class at MCC has increased from 1,907 students in the 2007 school year to 2,884 in the 2012 school year, a 51.2 percent increase.

These statistics reflect the growth in MCC's online coursework, which provides students to work toward their completion at times most convenient with their schedules. Online courses at MCC include:

- Administrative Office Management (AOM)
- Business
- Computer Information Systems (CIS)
- English
- Speech
- Health Sciences
- Human Resource Management

Due to increasing demand related to our students' need for flexibility, the College is developing further online opportunities, including the addition of an online Associate in Science degree in Criminal Justice, launching in Summer 2013. Business and Liberal Studies options are planned for the near future as well. The program will feature a six-month cohort format, as well as 21-month and 24-month cohort options for those students who want a less accelerated pace. These online degree options will provide a streamlined transfer for students to pursue a bachelor's degree in an online learning environment.

Because thriving online learners must be self-motivated and focused, MCC provides them access to the same academic resources as those who attend traditional, face-to-face classes, including library resources, tutoring, advising and registration. These resources are in place to provide the additional support needed for online learners' success.



This spring, 1,631 students are taking online classes at MCC, and 1,207 of those same students also are taking face-to-face classes on campus.

- MCC Office of Institutional Research

Preparing for a New Learning Management System (LMS)

A Learning Management System (LMS) is an e-learning application to administer, document, track, report and deliver educational courses or training programs. With the recent acquisition of MCC's current LMS, ANGEL, by Blackboard, MCC re-assessed the capabilities needed and will move to a new LMS called Canvas. The College's new LMS will benefit students through the following offerings:

- Easy-to-use, simple and powerful platform that integrates 21st-century technology into a single, cutting-edge system
- Expansive features for teaching, learning, collaborating, evaluating academic performance, and assessing student learning outcomes
- Integration of multimedia, e-portfolios, social media tools and web conferencing
- Predictive analytics feature to help at-risk students
- Flexible communication and notification options for faculty and students

During the Spring 2013 semester, the College is conducting a pilot to receive feedback from faculty and students on what improvements to make before going live.

Through Canvas, MCC's faculty will be able to provide a quality, online learning experience to students that will contribute to their overall success at the institution. The new system is expected to be live in Summer 2013.

Special Segment

SHIFTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEAD TO CHANGE-READY PROPOSALS AT MCC

by Anne Humphrey, Instructor of English

Higher education constantly evolves, although the change is often slow. One recent, rapid change involves the emergence of free or very low-cost and open-access courses, lessons and teaching materials. These materials are made by universities, individual teachers and educational publishers, and are easily available over the Internet. Instructors may use individual pieces or entire courses, and students can access these materials to study any topic. Over the past year, quick growth in free materials has centered on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), open-enrollment free courses from a variety of universities. Some of these courses offer certificates of completion, and some institutions are discussing how to give credit for completion of these courses. Major corporations and foundations have started funding these efforts.

Colleges across the country are attempting to predict the impact of these emerging resources and to determine how to best serve the student body in this environment. At MCC, many instructors use Internet materials to supplement or add variety to their courses. In some courses, these materials can replace textbooks or allow the instructor to use a lower-cost textbook. MCC faculty members also are receiving training on options and methods available for using such resources.

Further change-ready response is also under discussion. One possibility is that MCC could offer tutoring or support courses for students attempting to complete free online courses. Use of free developed courses to expand MCC course offerings is another area for exploration. Some community colleges are using a modified MOOC format for certain courses, such as a large online orientation courses for incoming registered freshmen where all the students are in one online classroom engaging in rich interaction. As discussions continue, more options will surface, and many different models may be tried in an effort to determine what works best for our students and our community.

In a shifting environment, MCC's commitment to being change-ready is critical to success. As the College investigates new methods and technologies, meeting the needs of our students remains the primary goal.

In 2013, MCC is exploring how to integrate free or low-cost access to coursework and materials. This spring the College is offering a MOOC on Information Literacy through the College's library. Other considerations include the areas of biology and chemistry, serving as refresher classes to prepare students for regular college-level coursework.

CHANGE-READY COLLABORATION.....

A Closer Look at Workforce and Community Partnerships



MCC's Workforce and Community Development Division provides extensive programming that meets the education needs of business, industry and community members. It is dedicated to developing programs and services for students, employers, employees and adult learners seeking education opportunities, new skills and career advancement. A strong contribution to program development and success is the focus on building lasting partnerships and relationships with other organizations in the community, including:

McHenry County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

In partnership with the McHenry County Workforce Investment Board, the College meets with plastic manufacturers to understand current workforce needs and identify educational needs. An initial meeting was held in November 2012 with representatives from four local companies, as well as representatives from the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center. In January, a follow-up meeting was held to review current curriculum options and identify next steps. Another joint partnership initiative underway with WIB is increasing the awareness for employers of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Joint information sessions and employer visits have taken place during the past two years. The NCRC credential measures key employability skills needed for success in today's workforce.

Workforce, Community and Business Programs—Traffic Safety Program

The National Safety Council has named three of the MCC Traffic Safety Program courses to National Trend Setter status. The Online Defensive Driving courses have been recognized for their quality program performance. The MCC program will be officially recognized at the National Safety Council 2012 Congress and Exposition Awards Banquet being held this year in Orlando, FL. During FY 2012, over 12,000 community members participated in the Traffic Safety Program.

Small Business Development Center

In December 2012, the Illinois Small Business Development Center hosted an Export Trade Fair at MCC's Shah Center in McHenry. The event provided manufacturers with the opportunity to learn about international market conditions and meet one-on-one with trade representatives and consulate staff from ten countries. In addition, three countries unable to attend the event in person sent contact information and trade updates. The event was well attended with representation from 37 companies and 115 participants. Breakout sessions provided participants with information on Marketing, Research and Business Development; Banking, Finance and Law; Manufacturing, Logistics and Compliance as well as the economic development support and incentives available from local and state sources.

McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau

The partnership between MCC's Continuing Education Department and the McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) offers community members the opportunity to travel to local areas of interest and events that are unique to McHenry County. These local excursions will be accompanied by qualified staff who will ensure an extraordinary experience. MCCVB refers organizations to MCC for facility rental and has put in a bid to host a statewide luncheon and trade show at MCC in Summer 2013.

Huntley Park District

In a new collaboration with the Huntley Park District, the Continuing Education Department offers personal development classes, which will take place at the Huntley Park District's Recreation Center. This partnership gives community residents the opportunity to experience the high quality of MCC's personal development program and instructors, right in their own community.

MCC/SEDOM Education and Careers Pathways Program: A Transition Educational Program for Students with Disabilities

Education and Careers Pathways (a collaborative program between McHenry County College (MCC) and the Special Education District of McHenry County (SEDOM)), is a noncredit Certificate of Successful Completion program for students 18+ with disabilities. SEDOM also partners with the College's Conferences and Facility Rental department by hosting their annual teacher in-service at the College and conducting various trainings at MCC throughout the year.

Sneak Peek!

A New Career Exploration Event Coming in April 2013

This spring, MCC will host its first career exploration event. **The Community Career Exploration Showcase: A 3-D Perspective of Our County's Future Careers** will take place on Saturday, April 13 from 9 a.m.-noon at the College.

This immersive, open-house event will help area middle school and high school students and their families explore the many career options available to them in McHenry County. The entire community will also be invited.

With many people in our county moving toward retirement, many businesses are concerned about who will fill those jobs. By showcasing businesses alongside the educational areas needed, local students will be better prepared for their college and career paths after high school. They will also become more engaged about the various opportunities available to them. Participants will learn about:

- Emerging and exciting career opportunities
- Different industries in McHenry County
- Jobs that are available within each industry
- The educational path they should take during high school and college

The event will be free to the public and is hosted by McHenry County College, in partnership with all McHenry County School Districts, the McHenry County Economic Development Corporation and the Workforce Investment Board.



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