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For many students, Monroe Community College is the most viable college option because of its affordability, proximity to home, and commitment to welcoming learners from all backgrounds. However, the obstacles students face in completing an associate degree or certificate can prove challenging and even insurmountable. Over the past three years, MCC has launched various programs and initiatives aimed at eliminating barriers to student success. Latest data highlight promising strategies for improving retention rates.

## Whole-Student Approach to Academic Success

To help students stay in college and complete their degree, MCC's Resource Committee is leading the effort in planning non-academic support and ensuring students get connected to essential resources.

Composed of students, faculty, staff and administrators representing a cross-section of the college, the committee works to better serve the holistic needs of students. Their approach is to address physical, mental and emotional aspects of health.

Currently, several of the group's key areas of focus include financial literacy, food and housing insecurities, recovery/substance abuse, and faculty education and support.



*"A long time ago I realized that my students come to class hungry and they cannot concentrate on what I'm trying to teach them if they're hungry."*

—Diane Clements, assistant professor for Transitional Studies (shown left in photo)

The committee may develop new resources or create ways to maximize existing resources, like Dreamkeepers and Single Stop programs.

*(Continued on reverse)*

### Some of the Resources

**Dreamkeepers** – Scholarships of up to \$500 are awarded to students facing unforeseen financial emergencies.

**Single Stop** – MCC students and their immediate family members are connected to free and low-cost resources/services available at MCC and throughout Greater Rochester.

**Doing What Is Good and Healthy Together (DWIGHT)** – Through partnerships with Foodlink, Trader Joe's and Panera Bread, MCC's food pantry and mobile food wagon on the Brighton and Downtown campuses provide temporary aid to students with limited resources and access.

## MCC-RTS Program Fills Significant Need



Thanks to a new transportation collaboration with Regional Transit Service (RTS), MCC students have unlimited fare-free access to all RTS bus routes in Monroe County in 2018-19.

Routes include direct service between MCC's Brighton and Downtown campuses.

The new Universal Pass (U-Pass) program removes a barrier for MCC students, including those

living on campus, who struggle to find transportation to campus, internships, jobs, volunteer opportunities, shopping and medical appointments. The U-Pass allows students to travel anywhere RTS fixed-route bus transportation is provided to take advantage of community resources.

MCC is the first participant—and collegiate partner—in the Finger Lakes region to join the U-Pass program. The College is assessing ridership data as it considers the model for future years.

## Emergency Aid, Food and More Under One Roof

In fall 2016, less than a year away from graduating, MCC student Terence Durham (shown at right) was fighting hard to hold onto his apartment in Gates while going to school full time. Legal costs left the Air Force veteran and father of six children struggling to make ends meet.

Then he learned about the Single Stop program, which connected him to a range of free and low-cost resources at MCC and in the local community.

Through Single Stop, he received a gift card for groceries and a bus pass that allowed him unlimited rides on all RTS routes for a year.

As he was trying to get back on his feet, he faced a major setback the following year. After he was able to keep his apartment, he owed back rent and past-due utility payments.

He sought assistance from the Dreamkeepers program, which



MCC student Terence Durham visits the Downtown Campus food pantry in December 2018.

awarded him a scholarship to cover his emergency expenses for two months.

“If it wasn’t for Single Stop, Dreamkeepers and the MCC staff, I don’t know what I would have done,” said Durham, who went on to earn a liberal arts degree from MCC. “I was so happy. By helping with my food, clothing and shelter, it helped me stay focused on my school work and stay positive. I went from getting Cs to As.”

Durham has been named to the dean’s list since fall 2016 and is on track to graduate with a second degree—in addictions counseling—in June.

### Whole-Student Approach to Academic Success

*(Continued from front)*

The group’s efforts so far include developing cooking classes for students, expanding collection sites for food donations, and partnering with Foodlink, Trader Joe’s and Panera Bread for food donations.

Diane Clements, assistant professor for Transitional Studies, serves on the committee and often refers students to on-campus resources.

“I remember being a college student having food and housing insecurities and nobody talked about it at college at that time. A teacher helped me figure out how to get those needs addressed,” Clements said. “I feel fortunate to be in a time where we can address these needs with students and help students be successful in college.”

### Did You Know ...?

**656** Number of applications from MCC students seeking Single Stop services since 2016.

**70.3%** Single Stop recipients in 2017-18 who completed one semester and returned to MCC the following semester.\*

**\$102,743** Amount of Dreamkeepers aid awarded to MCC students since 2015; 207 awards granted.

**71.6%** Dreamkeepers recipients in 2017-18 who completed one semester and returned to MCC the following semester.\*

**187,774** Number of RTS bus rides made by MCC students in fall 2018.

*\* Average persistence rate for MCC overall is 65%.*

*Coming in ...  
March*

Support along the way.

#### Contact MCC

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