

June 2016

In 2014-15, MCC students received \$75 million in financial aid. More than \$1.7 million of the money came from 700 Monroe Community College Foundation scholarships. While MCC's tuition is the third lowest in the SUNY system, college costs can still create tremendous challenges for our students and their families. MCC is committed to remaining accessible and affordable to all students who wish to transform their lives by pursuing a quality education.

Affording the Dream



"MCC was not my first choice," says MCC student Amber Jackson. Once she graduated from the Joseph C. Wilson Magnet High School, Amber

wanted to go away to college and enjoy a little bit of freedom. Then, she got the housing bill.

"I would have had to take out two loans," says Amber. She was just beginning to accept the reality that college wasn't going to be part of her future when Amber's grandmother set her straight. "She was having none of it," Amber says. "I wasn't just going to get some old job and I wasn't going to sit around either. My grandmother preaches education. She wasn't giving up."

During her first semester at MCC, Amber took the bus. The second semester, she scheduled her classes around her mom's work hours and got a ride. By the third semester, she had her own car—a 2001 Honda Civic with payments of \$63 a month that she's proud to have paid off already. A work-study job has helped her cover the essentials.

Amber's cousin graduated from college with tens of thousands in student loan debt. Her best friend is similarly burdened. Meanwhile, Amber is looking forward to graduating with a graphic arts degree and no college debt. She has already started a part-time freelance design business.

"I had a lot of help from people at MCC—people in Admissions and Financial Aid especially," says Amber. "But you have to really want it. You have to work hard."

Message from MCC's President

"MCC is building a 2016-17 budget that is pragmatic about our funding sources, realistic about our need to manage and contain costs, and mindful of our students' ability to access the financial aid needed to keep college affordable. We will continue to seek efficiencies in operations that allow us to devote the majority of our resources to instruction and direct student services."

New Bridge from MCC to RIT Makes College Affordable

For the past year, RIT and MCC have been working on a unique partnership to serve Rochester City School District students. The partnership began with RIT's Rochester City Scholars program, which covers full tuition for RCSD students attending that university. Unfortunately, the program has not grown as expected.

Thanks to this new MCC/RIT collaboration, students who do not quite

meet RIT's entrance requirements but otherwise qualify for its Rochester City Scholars program are directed to MCC for a year of college-level classes.

This fall, 14-17 RCSD graduates will enroll at MCC in a pilot 1+3 articulation with RIT. If they meet performance standards, they will be admitted to the Rochester City Scholars program in their sophomore year and qualify for the full RIT scholarship.

According to Diane, Shoger, executive director, MCC Foundation, The Every Bright Future Needs a Strong Foundation scholarships that the Foundation provides these students are key to breaking our community's intergenerational poverty crisis. "The lives of our students and the trajectory of entire families will change because of this opportunity," Shoger says.

MCC Faculty Respond to Textbook Prices with New, Lower-cost Options

On the first day of classes in any given semester, MCC faculty members frequently hear the same question from their students: “How much does the textbook cost?”

Making college as affordable as possible for students has become a motivating factor for a group of MCC faculty who are exploring Open Educational Resource (OER) alternatives. Open Educational Resources are any resources available at little or no cost that can be used for teaching, learning, or research. This includes textbooks, course readings, simulations, games, and other learning tools.



MCC’s College Orientation Seminar courses implemented OERs this year, creating a significant savings for students. Other courses are following suit. Verdis Robinson, assistant

professor, history, has implemented OER for his Honors U.S. History course, is writing his own open textbook for African-American History and is searching for a potential World History OER for the fall.

There are several reasons MCC faculty have become increasingly interested in developing OERs. Control over content and flexibility of updating are two motivating factors. However, this faculty group was initially brought together in response to affordability issues raised by MCC students. Faculty efforts are working. In one year, OER alternatives have saved MCC students approximately \$300,000 over the cost of textbooks.



46%

According to the Community College Research Center, “Among all students who completed a degree at a four-year college in 2013-14, 46 percent had enrolled at a two-year college in the previous 10 years. Community colleges provide affordable, flexible pathways for students who intend to earn a bachelor’s degree. Many of those students would otherwise not have the financial resources to forge a path through college.”

MCC’s Dreamkeepers Program is Living Up to Its Name



Emergencies and financial troubles can derail even the most committed student. A program designed by Scholarship America and implemented at MCC is helping students stay in college when faced with unforeseen financial emergencies. Dreamkeepers provides mini-grants of up to \$500 for students who have unanticipated costs related to child care, transportation, utilities or medical expenses that can’t be covered by other means.

During the fall 2015 semester 42 students received Dreamkeeper micro-grants. With that financial support, all of the students finished the semester;

40 returned for the spring semester and two students graduated. These small grants helped each student succeed. While a donation from MCC alumni Timothy and Robin Wentworth partially funded the program’s startup, the College and the MCC Foundation are now working to establish an endowment to support the fund in perpetuity.

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Dreamkeepers[®]
A Program of Scholarship America[®]

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