



March 18, 2016

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Dear X:

As the Assembly and the Senate work to finalize the state's budget, Monroe Community College urges the New York State Legislature to consider an increased investment in base aid of \$285 per FTE. Without increased community college base aid, we will not be able to sustain essential student support services or maintain and grow workforce and academic programs critical to New York's economic development.

The attached graph documents a simple truth: community college base aid funding has not kept pace even with the low level of inflation seen since the recession. At MCC, each year, we have cut our costs, and pushed efficiency and shared services, but we can only go so far before the quality of our students' education begins to suffer. Sadly, for the past few years, we have had to ask our students to fill the growing gap between state aid and the true cost of college.

Reduced state investment has made it increasingly challenging for community colleges to maintain a commitment to affordability, accessibility, quality, and innovation. Without a significant increase in base aid, community colleges will face almost insurmountable challenges in meeting the demand for:

- Essential services to assure students are prepared for the rigors and responsibilities of college
- New programs and partnerships that create pathways to meaningful careers for students
- More graduates ready for the demands of the 21st century workforce
- Affordable access to higher education sought by students and their families

In the sea of funding requests that floods Albany every year, our request is unique: community colleges drive opportunity and prosperity for our students, their families, neighborhoods, cities and towns, regions, and our shared state. MCC has thousands of stories of students who began at our College with nothing but dreams of a better future ... and then fulfilled these dreams because New York invested in excellence.

- Susan was homeless single mother; her only asset was a hard-earned GED. Today, she holds a doctorate from Rochester Institute of Technology and runs one of New York's leading solar energy installation companies.
- Adrian returned from several tours of duty with the Marines; he was a natural leader but faced academic struggles. Today, he is in his senior year at Yale University, after spending the summer interning at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

- Karen looked for a new start after being unemployed; she found it in the field of Optics. Today, after turning down out of state job offers, she works for a Rochester firm, helping it expand and grow each day.
- Tim was an outstanding student discouraged by a lack of financial resources; he encountered faculty who challenged him in the classroom and served as caring mentors. Today, he is the president—soon to be CEO—of an integrated pharmacy benefit management company with over \$100B in revenue.

Without your help, today's MCC students will have little chance of following in the footsteps of these inspiring alumni.

Together, we urge you to restore community college base aid to a level that will assure that those with the greatest need—our students--do not have to pay the greatest share of this public good: higher education.

Thank you for supporting New York's community colleges.

Sincerely,



John L. Bartolotta
Chair, MCC Board of Trustees



Anne M. Kress
President, Monroe Community College



Bethany Gizzi
President, MCC Faculty Association



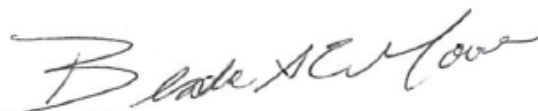
Tom Pollizi
President, MCC CSEA



Mark Ernsthausen
President, MCC Faculty Senate



Mary Jo Toepfer
Chair, MCC Support Staff Planning Council



Blake A. E. Moore
President, MCC Student Government
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Nuri Simmons
President, MCC Student Events and
Governance Association

Enclosure