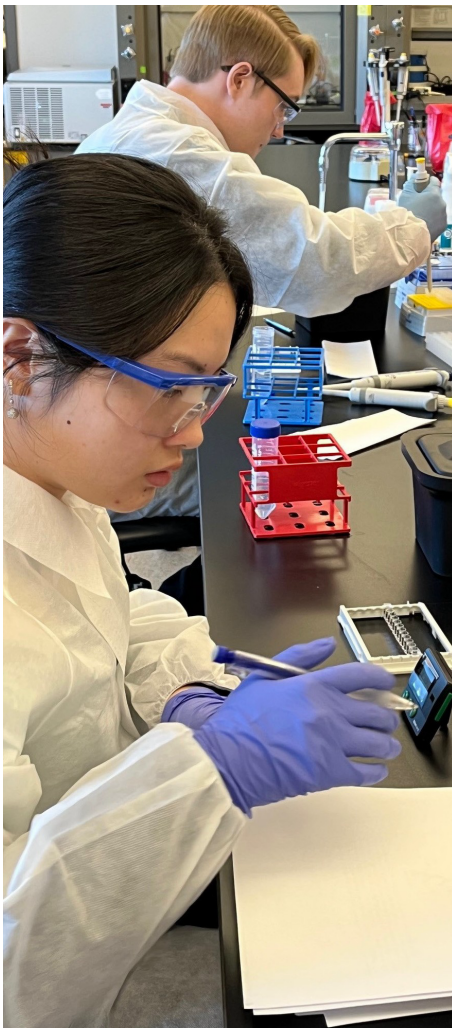




 MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# 2025 MIDDLE STATES SELF-STUDY REPORT



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# Introduction

## Institutional Profile

Montgomery County, the third most populated county in Pennsylvania, includes several suburban residential communities, large farms in its northern and western sections, and several federally certified HUBZones (historically underutilized business zones). To serve its residents, Montgomery County Community College (referred to as MCCC, the College, or Montco) offers in-person courses at two campuses: the Blue Bell campus, situated on 186 acres of former farmland 25 miles northwest of Philadelphia along the Route 202 technology corridor, and the Pottstown campus, located in a small industrial borough bordering the adjoining Berks and Chester counties, 40 miles northwest of Philadelphia and 20 miles southwest of Reading.

While students attend classes at either campus, the Blue Bell campus hosts the Municipal Police Academy and the renewed Hospitality Institute; the Pottstown Campus hosts the first and only Challenger Learning Center in Pennsylvania (one of a global network of space-themed simulated learning environments that aim to strengthen knowledge of STEM subjects). More than 70% of MCCC students enroll in at least one online course, which has provided students with flexible educational options for more than 25 years. Funded jointly by Montgomery County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and student tuition, the College is governed by a 15-person Board of Trustees appointed by the Montgomery County Commissioners and serving six-year renewable terms. It celebrated the inauguration of its sixth president, Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez, during a historic drive-in ceremony on April 16, 2021.

During the 2023 fiscal year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023), the College served 16,483 (unduplicated total headcount) credit-seeking students (including dual enrollment students) in day, evening, weekend, and online classes for a total of 165,716 yearly credits (cumulative for Blue Bell, Pottstown, and Online). Seventy-four percent (74%) of the College's credit-seeking students attended part-time. Approximately 38% of the student population self-identifies as an ethnic or racial minority, and nearly 60% of the College's students are female. While most of the College's students fall into the traditional undergraduate age range (18-26), 23% are over 26 years old. Military veterans receiving benefits accounted for 167 students, and 36% percent of students identify as first-generation. Since its founding in 1964, the College has educated more than 90,000 alumni.

MCCC offers over 100 educational pathways, including certificates, of which 54 are associate degree programs, through four academic divisions (STEM, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Business and Professional Studies).<sup>1</sup> In the 2023 fiscal year, our student-to-faculty ratio was 16 to 1, and the average class size was 14. The College has transfer and articulation agreements with 36 partner institutions for students who aim to complete a four-year degree. Those students benefit from recent statewide legislation allowing those who graduate with a two-year degree to transfer to public partners with junior standing. MCCC also offers a range of specialized training, continuing education, and personal enrichment for all learners in the Montgomery County area.

Since the 2015 Self-Study, MCCC has been recognized for its excellence in many areas, including:

- Achieving the Dream (AtD) named MCCC a 2019 Leader College of Distinction for its work in realizing higher student outcomes and narrowing equity gaps. It is one of only 11 community colleges in the country to receive this recognition. Three interventions – 24/7 online tutoring, a new student onboarding process and a new course withdrawal process – have produced significant results.
- The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* (Diverse) honored MCCC as a 2024 Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges (MPPWCC) award winner for the eighth time since 2016. The College excelled in categories such as family friendliness, salary/benefits, and professional development opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> For assessment purposes, programs with multiple concentrations are “rolled up” into their parent programs. Our Program Effectiveness and Excellence Review (PEER) data counts 42 active associate degree programs in AY24-25.

- The League for Innovation in Community Colleges awarded MCCC its 2023-2024 Innovation of the Year Award for its Food Recovery Program. The College's Hospitality Institute sources, prepares, cooks, packages, and donates excess food, drastically reducing food waste and feeding food-insecure students.

The Montco Cultural Center routinely brings GRAMMY-award-winning musicians to campus (including Eddie Palmieri and Chucho Valdés). At the same time, the Presidential Symposium has sponsored lectures by the Fifth Presidential Inaugural Poet Richard Blanco, National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson, and National Book Critics Circle Award winner Tara Westover. Every semester, the Theatre Arts Program presents two performances by students from the Drama Club and West End Student Theatre. Our Fine Arts galleries, one at each campus, serve as cultural hubs to educate and inspire, and students in the Sound Recording and Music Technology Program produce “Montco on the Move” podcasts in our state-of-the-art recording studio, the Mix Room.

## **Telling Our Story: Delivering Learning During the Pandemic**

On March 19, 2020, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf ordered that all non-life-sustaining businesses close operations because of the spread of the COVID-19 virus. By the time this order took effect, MCCC was prepared to make the necessary changes to continue to provide instruction and stability for its students amidst unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances. A week before Pennsylvania's mandated shutdown, Dr. Vicki Bastecki-Perez, then Provost and Interim President, announced MCCC's plan to complete the spring semester remotely, providing detailed information to both employees and students while outlining how the College would respond to the forthcoming shutdown. During the next two weeks, the College successfully pivoted to fully online instruction, virtual student support and advising, and remote business operations.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the College's subsequent response occurred midway through our reaccreditation cycle. To help tell our story and narrate changes since our 2015 Self-Study, the College has chosen not only to outline compliance with the Standards of Accreditation (13<sup>th</sup> edition) but also to look at our progress through the lens of lessons learned through our COVID-19 response. This narrative, summarized here, is highlighted more specifically in each chapter, with particular attention paid to what the College learned from its 2015 Self-Study, innovations spurred by its COVID-19 response, and new practices adopted post-pandemic.

### *Standard I: Living our Mission and Vision*

Despite campus closures mandated by the pandemic, the College continued to execute its core mission to deliver student learning effectively. Our long-standing commitment to student and employee access, articulated in our 2011 and 2017 Strategic Plans, grounded our emergency response. Previous investment in software to connect our Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses, formerly planned to achieve parity of resources, became a strength. A parallel commitment to academic access ensured that all degree programs were available to students online and accessible to those with disabilities. This mission-centered planning fast-tracked our virtual operations. Until our partial physical campus reopening in August 2021, the College continued, in the words of its mission statement, to “transform the lives of those we serve through educational, workforce, and cultural experiences and programs that drive success both at the College and beyond.”

Within two weeks, the College moved most of its face-to-face classes online and continued its normal operations in a remote environment. Classes that required access to some on-campus equipment were either accommodated (e.g., lab science and culinary classes ordered students remote lab kits, many personally delivered by College staff) or continued via socially distant adaptations. Interim President Bastecki-Perez began virtual Coffee and Conversation forums to help employees connect during lockdown and share information and ideas. And despite being forced to close our physical doors, MCCC awarded 1,669 degrees and certificates at the 53rd Commencement ceremony in October of 2020—a drive-in, live-streamed celebration of the largest graduating class in our history. At the same time, the College vision of becoming “a highly valued hub for all stages of life to empower social mobility and economic prosperity for the community we serve” became a reality. The College functioned as a central resource for pandemic operations in the County, allowing the community to achieve wellness while supporting its economy. MCCC hosted our County's first COVID-19 testing site and its first mass COVID-19 vaccination center. As a result of long-standing, good relationships with our unions, the College

signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Support Staff Union, ensuring that, in return for flexible work assignments, no full-time support staff were furloughed or laid off. And, to assist residents who became unemployed because of the pandemic, the College started the Montco Recovery Tuition Assistance Program, providing last-dollar tuition waivers through Summer 2022. The chapter on Standard I provides additional detail about how our Strategic Plan prepared and supported our mission and vision during the pandemic. It also outlines our current strategic imperatives for future mission achievement.

### *Standard II: Committed to Ethics and Integrity*

MCCC's ongoing commitment to honesty and transparency allowed MCCC to publicize decisions quickly during the early days of the COVID-19 shutdown. The College updated its website regularly, providing new and accurate information about COVID-19 case numbers in Montgomery County and on campus. It also answered "frequently asked questions" about COVID precautions and, eventually, COVID testing and vaccinations. The College continued to promote CDC and County guidelines to boost community confidence in ongoing preventative measures.

While Montco became a source of pandemic information for the community, internal dialogue continued around implementing ongoing goals around inclusiveness in a virtual format. As part of its commitment to creating a climate that fosters respect, the College decided to offer its long-standing annual Presidential Symposium on Diversity remotely. Contrary to expectations, this virtual format was popular; it garnered more audience engagement, especially among students, than anticipated. Post-pandemic, the Presidential Symposium expanded from a one-day, stand-alone event to a four-day capstone event, continuing its interactive, remote format. The Symposium advanced and facilitated ongoing public dialogue about diversity, inclusiveness and belonging. A more complete narrative, which explains the goal of the Symposium and situates it within MCCC's values framework, is provided in the chapter on Standard II.

### *Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience*

Because our mission has always included access strategies, and since the College has offered distance education for more than two decades, most full-time faculty were already certified through the College's professional development programs to teach online in their discipline. When MCCC closed its physical campuses, these faculty members could readily activate a corresponding online version of their current courseload and move students into pre-existing online course shells. Since all instructors were already required to use the Learning Management System for syllabi distribution regardless of course modality, the College expedited its transition, as course shells were already in place, with few exceptions. Those "hands-on" courses, comprised of labs, studios, and clinicals, were quickly supported in safe hybrid modalities which maintained social distancing.

Again, because of a long-standing commitment to transformational access strategies, our Instructional Technology resources were deep; instructional design had long been a foundational resource for professional development. With a robust instructional design team already in place and Spring Break extended by two days in mid-March, those faculty members who were not previously trained in online instruction were fully supported in this transition. Online certification for these faculty members was mandated by August 2020. As the pandemic continued over the next year and a half, our instructors focused on improving the quality and engagement of online and hybrid courses. To support gradual reopening, the College used its governance system to define four delivery modalities (asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid and FLEX), and faculty developed courses using these delivery models to maintain access, engagement, and social distancing. A more complete narrative explaining the design and delivery of student learning during and after the pandemic appears in the chapter on Standard III.

### *Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience*

Learning support was also facilitated by in-house technology tools at first, and then by new support processes over time. Students used over 215,400 free online tutoring minutes in the first semester of the pandemic, and over 175 laptops were distributed to students in the first semester of the pandemic. Students could take advantage of free Wi-Fi from the College's hot spots, when necessary, to support access to remote learning—sometimes from the parking lots. The College also provided food pantry pick-up and delivery to support students with food insecurities. Drop-in and remote advising sessions via Zoom or Teams were quickly adopted, increasing advising accessibility and flexibility, which has positively impacted student support.

Prior to the pandemic, MCCC became the first community college in the country to partner with Talkspace, an online therapy service that connects students to dedicated, licensed therapists from a secure, HIPAA-compliant mobile app and web platform. This partnership allowed the College to support students' wellness needs immediately during and after the pandemic. In late 2022, with the support of a \$1 million block grant, the College opened a Wellness Center on the Pottstown campus and continues to support students and their mental health needs through a partnership with TimelyMD, which serves as a 24/7 virtual extension of campus Wellness Center resources at no cost to students. A more complete narrative explaining MCCC's commitment to holistic student support is found in the chapter on Standard IV.

### ***Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment***

Previous work on General Education renewal and assessment also bolstered our pandemic readiness. At the time of the 2015 Self-Study, the College's programs embedded a subject-centered General Education Core Curriculum comprising 13 Core Goals and a corresponding 41 Student Learning Outcomes. Faculty feedback on the Core Renewal was solicited at various events over three years, most notably at a faculty "World Café" meeting and during a series of roundtable discussions led by the Coordinator of Assessment in 2016. During the spring of that year, the Assessment Committee (now the Educational Effectiveness Committee) used a series of working meetings to reach a Core Revision that kept most of the 41 Current Core outcomes intact (albeit reworded slightly) but reduced duplication. This revision changed the faculty's conception of the General Education Core from one centered on academic disciplines to one grounded in student competencies.

Part of the Core revisions centered around access and parity for students taking classes online and at the Pottstown campuses. As part of this renewal, the Curriculum Committee affirmed online options for each General Education area. Faculty sponsoring quantitative and qualitative reasoning classes (generally STEM options) and Information Literacy options (public speaking options) were asked to ensure online availability, which at the time was controversial. In the end, however, the College's insistence on access and equity during the Core Renewal process served it well during the pandemic. All six General Education areas already had virtual options embedded in their program offerings. Additional narrative explaining how the College's assessment of its equity and access option prepared it for the pandemic appears in the chapter on Standard V.

### ***Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Instructional Improvement***

As the initial COVID-19 shutdown ended and the world began to reopen, MCCC wanted employees and students to return to campus knowing that the College was doing everything possible to create a safe environment following federal and county guidelines. The College invested in HVAC modifications to provide healthier indoor air ventilation. It purchased Plexiglas movable panels to place between individuals who were required to work in close contact with others. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), such as surgical and N-95 face masks and hand sanitizer, were placed at entrances to all physical buildings. Custodians enhanced daily cleaning protocols to sanitize classrooms, protocols which remain in place today. MCCC also purchased Learn2Chairs for most classroom spaces, removing shared tables to maintain social distancing. A more complete narrative explaining how the College responded effectively to the safety challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic appears in the chapter on Standard VI.

### ***Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration***

Changes to the Board of Trustees (referred to as the Board and BoT) subcommittee and meeting structure, some of which occurred during the pandemic, highlight the strength of the College's governance and leadership processes. Since the 2015 Self-Study, the Board has worked to increase the transparency of its operations, broadly publishing its meeting dates and times and encouraging the community to attend via Zoom. It also encourages any community stakeholder to communicate directly with the Trustees. During the pandemic, the Board's agenda was busy, not only with operational pivots but also with the hiring of a new President. After the pandemic, Board Chairperson Frank Custer continued virtual Board meetings and began reorganizing the Board's subcommittees to streamline attendance and enhance communication between the Board and the College administrative staff. Today, the four Board subcommittees existing in 2015 have been collapsed into three (Executive Committee, Student Success and Finance and Institutional Risk). A virtual board book, another innovation fast-tracked by the pandemic, results in an easily referenced digital archive. Additional details about how changes to the Board structure enhanced the College's leadership are found in our chapter on Standard VII.



## Our 2025 Self-Study Process

### *Preliminary Planning*

Upon receipt of the invitation from MSCHE to send four representatives to the Fall 2022 Self-Study Institute to prepare for the reaccreditation process, President Victoria Bastecki-Perez appointed Dr. Amanda Gatchet, Professor of Communication Studies, Dr. Catherine Carsley, Professor of English, and Therol Dix, then Vice President of Pottstown Campus and Educational Partnerships, to serve as Co-Chairs of the Middle States Steering Committee. Vice President Dix, who retired in 2023, was succeeded by Dr. Celeste Schwartz, Vice President of Pottstown Campus, Information Technology, and Institutional Effectiveness. Dr. Schwartz also served as the Accreditation Liaison Officer. The Co-Chairs, along with Dr. Lianne Hartman, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and acting Accreditation Liaison Officer and Dr. Bridget Haines-Frank, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, attended the virtual Self-Study Institute. Dr. Gatchet, Dr. Carsley, Dr. Schwartz, Dr. Haines-Frank, and Dr. Chae Sweet, Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, served as the Core Team for the Self-Study process. The Steering Committee was also supported by a member of the Board of Trustees, Trustee Margot Clark, who served as a Trustee Liaison.

In consultation with the President's Office and the Accreditation Liaison Officer, the Co-Chairs assembled the Steering Committee in 2022. The Steering Committee comprised the Core Team and the co-chairs of the seven Working Groups. Each Working Group included a cross-section of faculty and staff, some experts in the Standard and some not, and students and Trustees, as appropriate. An eighth Working Group supported the research of the other seven and assembled the necessary evidence. For the complete Steering Committee and Working Group structure, charges and membership, please see the 2025 Self-Study Design.

### *A Standards-Based Approach*

When the Steering Committee convened in January 2023, the Core Team proposed, and the Steering Committee endorsed, a standards-based approach to Self-Study. The Committee agreed that this straightforward model offered the best opportunity to evaluate the College's compliance with the Standards for Accreditation (13<sup>th</sup> edition) and our efforts at continuous improvement. Importantly, this approach also allowed each Working Group to address lines of inquiry by focusing on our Institutional Priorities.

## Overview of the Self-Study Chapters

Each chapter of the Self-Study contains:

- An introduction that briefly outlines compliance with that Standard's criteria (13th edition);
- "Telling Our Story," a discussion section that highlights areas of strength since 2015, particularly through the lens of our COVID-19 pandemic response;
- Research findings and a compliance narrative organized by Standard and criterion;
- Strengths and opportunities mapped to the College's Strategic Imperatives; and
- When applicable, a narrative explaining how recommendations from the College's 2015 Self-Study have been addressed.

In each chapter, evidence supporting assertions appears at the end of each section. Documents are referenced using Standard, criterion, sub-criterion (if applicable) and document number (e.g., I.1.a.1), as uploaded to the MSCHE evidence portal.

## Research Methodology

To ensure compliance with MSCHE Standards of Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, each Working Group (WG) reviewed policies, procedures, and related documents and web pages. Each solicited stakeholder feedback and expertise through personal interviews and group conversations. In February 2024, each WG completed an informational report on its findings, which was formally presented to the Steering Committee. Findings, including strengths and opportunities, were consolidated, discussed, and affirmed. In addition, WGs sent requests for evidence and documentation to our eighth Working Group, chaired by the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who gathered this evidence with her team. In addition to researching compliance with Standard criteria, each WG centered its research around Lines of Inquiry, which may be found in the 2025 Self-Study Design.

## Strategic Imperatives

The College's institutional priorities, known at the College as our "Strategic Imperatives," are based on the three pillars of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. These imperatives are directly linked to the College's mission, vision, values, and commitment to equity. The Strategic Plan provided a strong foundation upon which to build the Self-Study. Throughout our Standard chapters, strengths and opportunities identified by WGs, and later affirmed by the Steering Committee and the College, are mapped to the Plan's Strategic Imperatives, summarized below.

- **Strategic Imperative: Ensure Student Learning.** This imperative ensures students can balance life responsibilities through responsive scheduling and flexible supports, makes early college opportunities available to all high school students, and provides a holistic student experience that connects students to momentum-promoting support systems and learning opportunities.
- **Strategic Imperative: Enhance Employee Experience.** This imperative enhances and evaluates culture-building and engagement opportunities, develops and shares communications that articulate the Employee Value Proposition and related employer brand elements, and assesses employee experiences while seeking to include employees in feedback processes and provide equitable availability of resources.
- **Strategic Imperative: Expand Community Participation.** This imperative establishes opportunities with community partners to promote relevant learning and engagement opportunities, communicates and enables experiences with community partners to build capacities for lifelong learning, and identifies and assesses ways to meet the learning needs and interests of local communities.

| Standard   | Strategic Imperative           | Working Group Findings: Strengths (+) and Opportunities (Δ)   |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Standard I: Mission and Goals  | Ensure Student Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College supports its students holistically.</li> <li>✦ Enacting its mission, vision and values, the College supports equity, diversity and belonging with multiple, wide-ranging initiatives.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Expand Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College operates from a strong foundation in community connections and community input.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard II: Ethics and Integrity                                    | Ensure Student Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College consistently engages in honest and truthful interactions with present and future stakeholders, particularly regarding students' understanding of financial responsibility. All consumer information is readily accessible and transparent.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue discussions with the student body about the student code of conduct and academic integrity.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Expand Community Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ MCCC's processes are linked to corresponding and identifiable initiatives, particularly regarding EDB access, and funding sources.</li> <li>✦ The College consistently provides opportunities for student engagement in its highest levels of policymaking.</li> </ul>   |
|  | Enhance Employee Experience    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ MCCC prioritizes enhancing the employee experience as part of its strategic plan.</li> <li>▲ The College should better disseminate and encourage participation in existing campus climate assessments.</li> <li>▲ MCCC should continue to improve existing occasions where the College community comes together (either in person or online) to provide opportunities for collaboration and unscripted exchange of ideas.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to enhance transparency around evaluation and promotion processes, specifically for administrative roles that are not covered by the faculty or staff contracts.</li> </ul> |
| Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience | Ensure Student Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College has significantly improved the administration of course and faculty evaluation surveys.</li> <li>✦ The College uses multiple measures to evaluate effective student learning outcomes and engagement.</li> <li>▲ The College should enhance teaching frameworks throughout the curriculum to grow applied learning opportunities.</li> </ul>   |

| Standard  | Strategic Imperative                 | Working Group Findings: Strengths (+) and Opportunities (Δ)   |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Standard IV:<br>Support of<br>the Student<br>Experience                     | Ensure<br>Student<br>Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College effectively uses data to measure student success.</li> <li>✦ The College prioritizes well-being as a Student Success Strategy.</li> <li>▲ The College should work to enhance completion pathway opportunities for identity groups who are at risk of not successfully completing a pathway.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to collect and use data strategically to enhance student retention, paying particular attention to the relationship between student activity and student retention to create a support safety net for all.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Expand<br>Community<br>Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The College should continue to improve the dual-enrollment program by working with county dual-enrollment partners to provide pathways to graduation, direct support and coaching, advising to improve dual-enrollment matriculation.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to improve orientation support activities to help students be successful while also recognizing the diverse needs and situations of our student population.</li> </ul>  |
| Standard V:<br>Educational<br>Effectiveness<br>Assessment                   | Ensure<br>Student<br>Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College assesses programs through well-established and continuous processes.</li> <li>✦ MCCC offers full- and part-time faculty many opportunities to attend professional development programs that focus on assessment and continuous improvement.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to enhance its assessment methodology to discover more ways to shape curricular improvements based on disaggregated SLOs and multi-year analysis of PEER assessment data.</li> <li>▲ The College should place additional emphasis on disaggregating student outcomes by demographics and characteristics to identify student populations with equity gaps.</li> </ul> |
|   | Enhance<br>Employee<br>Experience    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The College should extend the regular discussion of assessment data to the faculty at-large at a set time.</li> <li>▲ The College should redesign its Faculty Clipboard to be more user-friendly.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard VI:<br>Planning,<br>Resources,<br>and Institutional<br>Improvement | Ensure<br>Student<br>Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College provides clear leadership and a strong financial plan through 2027, in addition to a history of clean, unmodified audits.</li> </ul>   |
|   | Enhance<br>Employee<br>Experience    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College has developed a Data Hub that serves as a central repository for reports and data analytics that are available to all employees.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to increase transparency around decisions and processes regarding budgets in consultation with stakeholders.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to visually demonstrate how updates and changes align with the College's Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>  |
|   | Expand<br>Community<br>Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College developed a well-received 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan with wide community input and review.</li> </ul>   |
| Standard VII:<br>Government,<br>Leadership<br>and<br>Implementation         | Ensure<br>Student<br>Learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ As evidenced by a successful COVID pivot, the College demonstrates effective processes, plans and leadership.</li> <li>✦ The College maintains a clear and consistent policy and procedure review.</li> <li>✦ The College demonstrates strong fiduciary engagement and responsibility.</li> </ul>  |
|   | Enhance<br>Employee<br>Experience    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College refined its governance structures to support mission and vision.</li> <li>✦ Employee collaboration among leadership, administration and faculty ensures that academic programming is dynamic and relevant to meet student, industry and community needs.</li> <li>▲ The College should continue to update, communicate, and circulate organizational charts and job descriptions.</li> <li>▲ The College should provide more transparency and regularly document important processes and procedures, particularly when there are changes to critical functions (positions, roles, restructures, duties, etc.) at the College.</li> </ul>                 |

## Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

As a result of the 2025 Self-Study process, the College has:

- **Demonstrated how the institution currently meets the Commission’s Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation (13th edition).** Although the Self-Study follows the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the seven Standards, the Evidence Repository was created based on the Evidence Expectation by Standard 14th edition in preparation for the College’s next accreditation cycle.
- **Focused on continuous improvement in the attainment of the institution’s mission and its institutional priorities.** This Self-Study points out both strengths and opportunities for continuous improvement. It aligns these with our 2023-27 Strategic Plan and uses color coding for ease of reference.
- **Engaged the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately seeks to involve members from all areas of the institutional community.** The College submitted its Self-Study Design, which detailed the formation of eight Working Groups, with members drawn from throughout the College community, on April 23, 2023. The Working Groups met, researched, discussed, found evidence, and submitted findings to the College’s Self-Study Steering Committee; the groups further vetted multiple drafts of the Self-Study over 18 months. The College hosted MSCHE Vice President Paul Starkey in Spring 2023 and Self-Study Evaluation Chair, President Anthony Munroe of the Borough of Manhattan Community College in Fall 2024. Each of these leaders met with multiple groups of stakeholders in preparation for reaccreditation. Feedback on both the compliance areas and the findings regarding strengths and opportunities was solicited throughout all five drafts of the College’s Self-Study. The document incorporates responses from all College stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, the President’s Leadership Council, the four Faculty Governance Committees, the Faculty and Support Staff Unions, the Student Government Association, and from multiple open forums held as all-College “Coffee and Conversation” meetings. Multiple drafts were also posted on the College’s external website for public comment.
- **Demonstrated how the College community collaborates on interrelated plans, goals, and initiatives and then communicates these processes and outcomes, particularly by implementing suggestions from the 2015 Reaccreditation Report and three areas in the 2023-27 Strategic Plan.** College collaboration, found in 2015 to be an area that required additional documentation, has emerged since that time as a College strength. Other areas recommended as opportunities to improve in 2015 have been implemented and are specifically highlighted in this Self-Study as they relate to the Standards of Accreditation (13<sup>th</sup> edition). Using color coding to align strengths and opportunities to our current and future Strategic Plan better communicates our collaboration on interrelated plans, goals and initiatives.

## Conclusion and Affirmation of Compliance

MCCC’s 2025 Self-Study Report provides a detailed account, supported by evidence, of how the College has met each of MSCHE’s seven Standards for Accreditation (13<sup>th</sup> edition). The College additionally affirms that it meets all federal Title IV program participation requirements, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. At its meeting on February 10, 2025, MCCC’s Board of Trustees unanimously approved this 2025 Self-Study Report.

# Standard I: Mission and Goals

## Introduction

The College’s Mission, “to transform the lives of those we serve through educational, workforce, and cultural experiences and programs that drive success both at the College and beyond,” functions as our Board of Trustees’ Policy 1.1. Our mission highlights MCCC’s institutional strengths: a foundation in community connections, a comprehensive approach to lifelong student success, and a commitment to access and inclusion. Our vision, which imagines the College as “a highly valued hub for all stages of life to empower social mobility and economic prosperity for the community we serve,” demonstrates MCCC’s aspiration to be an engine of community growth.

Two related Statements augment the College’s mission and vision: our equity statement and our statement of values, both of which elaborate the commitments needed to support those goals (I.1.b.1.; also see Figure I-1. below).




|   |    |   |
|--|---|--|
| Mission and Vision   | Equity Statement  | Statement of Values  |
| <p>Transform the lives of those we serve through educational, workforce, and cultural experiences and programs that drive success both at the College and beyond.</p> <p>Montgomery County Community College will be a highly valued hub for all stages of life to empower social mobility and economic prosperity for the community we serve.</p> | <p>Montgomery County Community College is committed to ensuring that all students, employees, and members of its community are successful by intentionally designing college experiences while celebrating the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender identity, language, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, economic status, and/or religion in its community. Guided by our values, we – collectively – take action through inquiry, dialogue, policies, and practices to promote equity and belonging FOR ALL. We understand that equity is a driving force to achieve the educational, economic, and social benefits of higher education for our students and the communities we serve.</p> | <p><b>Educate</b> to advance equity, opportunity and social justice in the communities we serve.</p> <p><b>Provide</b> quality, accessible and sustainable learning opportunities.</p> <p><b>Innovate</b> to support student success and the needs of our communities.</p> <p><b>Respect</b> our diverse contributions and lived experiences to cultivate inclusion.</p> <p><b>Foster</b> a culture of empathy, trust, transparency, integrity and accountability.</p> |

Figure I-1: The College’s mission and vision are supported through its equity statement and statement of values.

## Telling Our Story:

### Living our Mission and Values Through the Pandemic and Beyond

During the pandemic, the sense of purpose articulated by these four statements guided MCCC’s institutional decision-making. Despite campus closures mandated by Governor Wolf, the College continued to execute its core mission to deliver student learning effectively. Our long-standing fidelity to access in support of transformational education, foundational to our 2011 and 2017 Strategic Plans as well as to our 2015 Self-Study, grounded the College’s emergency response and made our immediate pivot to remote operations possible.

- Within two weeks, the College moved most of its face-to-face classes online and continued its normal business operations in a remote environment.
- Interim President Bastecki-Perez began Coffee and Conversation virtual forums to help employees connect with one another during lockdown and share information and ideas.

- And despite being forced to close our physical doors, MCCC awarded 1,669 degrees and certificates at the 53rd Commencement ceremony in October 2020—a drive-in, live-streamed celebration of the largest graduating class in its history.

At the same time, the College's vision of becoming “a highly valued hub for all stages of life to empower social mobility and economic prosperity for the community we serve” became a lived reality (I.1.c.2.). The College functioned as a central resource for pandemic operations in the County, allowing the community to achieve wellness while supporting its economy. MCCC:

- Hosted our County's first COVID-19 testing site and its first mass COVID-19 vaccination center.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Support Staff Union, ensuring that very few staff were furloughed or laid off in return for flexible work assignments.
- Assisted residents who became unemployed because of the pandemic by starting the Montco Recovery Tuition Assistance Program, providing last-dollar tuition waivers through Summer 2022.

Primary evidence of the ongoing achievement of our Mission and Vision continues, as shown in the annual graduation, retention, and student success data reported in our College Factbook (I.3.a.2.), our four-year Expense Analysis, which documents responsible fiscal management in support of student success (I.3.a.3.) and, ultimately, annual progress against Strategic Plan KPIs (1.1.g.2.).

## Research Findings and Compliance Narrative

### *Clear Mission and Goals Developed Collaboratively (Std I.1.a-c.)*

The College reviews its mission and vision periodically as part of its Strategic Planning process. Policy Development guidelines, which govern the College's Mission and Vision as Policy (I.1.b.1.) and the Statement of Values as Policy (I.1.c.2.), require review on a regular five-year cycle or as often as deemed necessary by the College leadership. While the President's Office leads all efforts to update these foundational statements, any changes are discussed and affirmed through the College's usual Faculty Governance and Board of Trustees processes. Revisions are vetted based on feedback from the College community. Figure I-2 shows that the College's foundational policies and statements are living documents, periodically revised based on input from internal stakeholders, external advisors and community members.

| Document                   | Last Revised  | Supersedes Version Dated  |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| Mission and Vision Policy  | December 2022 | September 2019, October 2017, February 2012, July 2007, February 2004 |
| Statement of Values Policy | June 2021     | February 2004   |
| Equity Statement           | June 2022     | 2019 (formally titled “Equity Statement for Student Success”)         |

Figure I-2: Documentation of revisions to the College's Mission and Vision Policy, Statement of Values Policy, and Equity Statement.

Two examples illustrate this collaborative approach to revision. The first, the December 2022 Mission and Vision update, demonstrates the periodic modification accompanying regular Strategic Planning. As the minutes of the December 2022 Board meeting evidence, the Board affirmed recommendations for updating language as a direct result of stakeholder input:

“Vice President [of West Campus and Educational Partnerships] Dix reviewed each of the Mission and Vision recommendations that resulted from the Student Success and ISVC [Institutional Strategy and Visioning Committee] committees. The two committees had slight differences in their recommendations. Vice President Dix reviewed all recommendations and their differences with the Board. Dr. Bastecki-Perez stated that both committees discussed removing redundancies within the Mission, Vision, and Values statements and ensuring alignment within all including the Equity Statement. **She added there was an appetite to make the Mission and Vision statements clear, precise, and repeatable among the College community.** . . . Trustee Clark stated “transform” is not a matter of changing, but more so reflecting on where one is currently, and then where they can go beyond that. Chair Fernandez stated she finds the word inspirational as the College provides many the chance for higher education. Trustee

Binder stated she agrees with “transform” as part of the Vision Statement, but that it feels more personal as part of the mission since that revolves [around] the impact of the College. . . .Trustee Guttha motioned for the approval to accept the proposed Mission Statement with “programs” included. Trustee Binder seconded. . . . The Board unanimously approved the Mission Statement with [the word] “programs” included, resulting in: “Transform the lives of those we serve through educational, workforce, and cultural experiences and programs that drive success both at the College and beyond” (I.1.a.1.).

As evidenced above, the Board routinely gathers information from the Office of the President via the College’s Governance structure, designed to engage stakeholders in institutional decisions that directly impact student success. Key components of this model are the Faculty Governance Committees, otherwise known as four all-College committees, mandated by the Faculty Union Contract and comprised variously of full- and part-time teaching faculty, administrative staff, students, and support staff. The four committees, Curriculum, Educational Effectiveness, Student Support, and Instructional Delivery and Technology, meet regularly throughout the semester to revise, approve, and support College initiatives; the Chairs of these Committees also advise the Provost and the President’s Office and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees, through the Faculty Governance Council and the President’s Leadership Council (I.1.a.3.). The President supplements these formal conversations by informal “Coffee and Conversations,” virtual “all-hands” meetings that provide information to and solicit discussion from all College community members. The President also relies on her Advisory Council on Equity & Social Justice (PACESJ) for input. Council members, who include students, faculty, staff and community members, “serve as a strategic advisory committee that focuses on continuous improvement efforts within institutional priorities, with a specific focus on those tied to equity, diversity, social justice, and student-centered values” (I.1.a.2.).

A second example documents the College’s steady and mission-oriented review processes, which continued even during the pandemic. In the Fall of 2020, when the College’s physical campuses were still closed, newly appointed President Bastecki-Perez led a community-wide conversation to revise our statement of values, which the College had last modified in 2004. The existing statement was overly long and presented an unwieldy 28-point list; as COVID-19 was no barrier to MCCC’s usual, collaborative approach, the President asked the College to completely re-imagine its Statement of Values.

The College, therefore, hosted multiple virtual conversations concerning the proposed revision, seeking feedback in various formal and informal venues from Fall 2020 until Spring 2021. Various drafts were circulated to the policy subcommittee of the President’s Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice (PACESJ), the Faculty Governance Committees, the Board of Trustees, the President’s Leadership Council, Student Government Association (SGA), and the community via Coffee and Conversations. Some representative comments appear in Figure I-3 below.

| Representative Community Comments  |   |
|--|---|
| “Trust needed to be added somehow;”  | “Wanted a student-specific value.”                    |
| “Add innovation.”  | “Needed to include diversity!”                        |
| “Felt like maybe the values could be narrowed down, combined, or focused.”                       | “Are these statements aspirational or foundational?”  |
| “Shouldn’t it read fostering instead of creating?” “Disinterest in the phrase ‘with gratitude.’” | “We are the community so why be a community partner?” |

Figure I-3: Representative community comments submitted to the policy subcommittee of PACESJ.

A Working Committee convened to formulate revisions based on that input. An interim statement was re-circulated for conversation and comment. At this juncture, College feedback revealed that the statement still contained language that faculty and staff considered less than central to the mission. For example, this interim draft still contained the phrase “celebrating accomplishment, personal expression and commitment with gratitude,” which was questioned by many during the review process. The committee then expanded its membership, and the Values Statement underwent a new round of edits. In the end, more than 150 community members provided substantive feedback to create our final 2021 Statement of Values. **Strength: MCCC has strong community connections and solicits wide-ranging community input.**

**Mission-Guided Outcomes (Std I.1.d)**

Since the 2015 Self-Study, the College has celebrated the accomplishment of two, and the implementation of a third, Strategic Plan, all rooted in similar collaboration, to advance our mission and vision (see Figure I-4).

| <b>Strategic Planning at Montgomery County Community College Since 2015</b>                    |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Beyond Access:<br/>The Strategic Plan to 2016</b>   | <b>Strategic Plan 2017-2022</b>           | <b>Building Our Future Together:<br/>2023-2027 Strategic Plan</b> |
| Increase student access and success  | Champion student success.                 | Ensure student learning.  |
| Build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems. |   |   |
| Develop an engaged community.  | Foster meaningful external relationships. | Expand community participation.                                   |
| Create a sense of place to support learning.   |   |   |
| Adopt an entrepreneurial approach.   | Ensure a sustainable organization.        | Enhance the employee experience.                                  |
| Create a high-performance culture.   |   |   |

Figure I-4: Strategic Planning during the past decade resulting in fewer and more foundational mission-centered goals.

A finding from our 2015 Self-Study suggested that the College consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and building the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process (I.1.g.7.). The 2015 Visiting Evaluation Team also suggested that the College develop administrative and communicative structures that “link explicitly to existing planning processes and documents.” Since then, the College has made significant progress in documenting its discussions and making those administrative and communicative links simple and explicit. Below are two examples of this progress.

First, during the 2016-17 academic year, then President Dr. Kevin Pollock appointed the Strategic Planning Core Team (SPCT) to lead a college-wide effort to develop the next strategic plan, which deliberately focused on fewer strategic priorities to combat perceived initiative fatigue. More than 400 internal and external stakeholders provided input and feedback through the engagement opportunities. The resulting plan was distilled into three foundational pillars: 1) Champion student success, 2) Foster meaningful external relationships, and 3) Ensure a sustainable organization. Equally importantly, and as a follow-up to the 2015 Self-Study suggestions, the SPCT circulated a corresponding document capturing the rationale for each decision based on situational analysis, stakeholder feedback, and an external environmental plan. Finally, each of these three goals cascaded into clear subgoals (I.1.b.3.).

This data-informed Strategic Plan prepared the College for its pandemic operations. Moreover, the College can align many of its pandemic accomplishments with the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan framework. For example, MCCC continued to champion student success by living its goal of aligning “curricular pathways and services with student needs.” Within two weeks, all remote learning was supported with virtual Advising, Library, Financial Aid and related services. Its willingness to foster meaningful external relationships, which emphasized “growing regional collaborations,” emerged as a strength during the pandemic. Our Vice President of Administrative Services worked daily with the Communicable Field Supervisor as well as the Preparedness Coordinator of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Public Health, creating community updates and writing the College Health and Safety Plan. MCCC even presented a truckload of personal protective equipment (PPE), previously earmarked for its nursing students, to Montgomery County for its use and distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, including face masks, gloves, isolation gowns, thermometers, face shields, goggles, hand sanitizer, professional hand soap, disinfectant wipes, cotton swabs and gauze.

Of course, no Strategic Plan could predict the exigencies of a global crisis. For example, while subgoals cascading from the 2017-2022 Plan to ensure a sustainable organization emphasized energy reductions, some



KPIs needed to be reworked to accommodate physical plant upgrades to deal with pandemic health and safety issues. Instead of focusing on energy conservation, the College pivoted to make needed HVAC improvements while also redesigning its spaces to accommodate social distancing. Still, the idea of a sustainable future guided the College’s decision-making, and most COVID-era innovations, from HVAC to PPE availability to contactless meetings via Microsoft Teams or Zoom continue at the College today.

The College’s next strategic plan, begun before the campus completely re-opened, was intentionally crafted to include lessons learned post-pandemic. Using a transparent process, the Strategic Planning Core Team engaged students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees and community partners to determine how the College would evolve; the Strategic Plan was also aligned with the local Montgomery County 2040 PLAN (I.1.b.2.).

While the planning conversation initially centered around access, positive outcomes and sustainability, it quickly became apparent that an emphasis on equity centered each of these discussions; because of feedback from various open forums, the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan made equity central to outcomes about access and participation. As a result of the planning conversation, the Board of Trustees endorsed an expanded Equity Statement, which resulted from an inclusive review that allowed the College community to re-examine and improve our previous 2019 statement (I.1.f.3.).

The “what” of the Strategic Plan focused on change efforts toward improvement in three areas, corresponding to the “who” of our stakeholder groups: students, employees, and community members. Change efforts for each group were labeled imperatives: “Ensure Student Learning, Enhance Employee Experiences and Expand Community Participation.” Into these buckets, the Core team envisioned 12 strategies to organize the next five years. Measurement of these strategies comprises the “how” of the plan. See Figure I-5 for a graphical representation of the College’s current Strategic Plan and related Strategic Imperatives.

|                                  |                                   |                                       |  |   |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Elements</b>                  | <u>WHO</u><br>Our Institution     | Mission<br>Vision<br>Values<br>Equity |  |   |  |
|                                  | <u>WHAT</u><br>Our Change Efforts | Imperatives                           | Ensure Student Learning                                | Enhance Employee Experiences  | Expand Community Participation   |
|                                  |                                   | Impact Strategies                     | 1. Systematize information flow<br>2. Provide pathways | 5. Provide career pathways<br>6. Build connectivity to the College                          | 9. Grow engagement to promote lifelong learning<br>10. Demonstrate the College’s value to the community        |
|                                  |                                   | Sustainability Strategies             | 3. Scale systems<br>4. Connect college to careers      | 7. Position the College to attract and retain qualified employees<br>8. Plan for succession | 11. Expand workforce development relationships<br>12. Identify resource partners to sustain the College’s work |
| <u>HOW</u><br>Our Accountability | Measurements                      | Student Learning Measurements         | Employee Experiences Measurements                      | Community Participation Measurements  |  |

These strategies are broken down into aligned tactics for both opportunities and objectives. This close alignment demonstrates the College’s action regarding a suggestion made by the 2015 Visiting Team: to develop administrative and communicative structures that start major initiatives and link explicitly to existing planning processes and documents.

For example, the first two imperatives under student learning are focused on these strategies and tactics:

**Figure I-5: The 2023-27 Strategic Plan aligns its Imperatives with the College Mission/Vision, Values and Equity Statements (I.1.d.1. 2023-2027 Strategic Imperatives Alignment).**

**Opportunities to Ensure Student Learning**

1. Systematize information flow. (Strategy)
  - Streamline internal processes to reduce success and completion barriers. (Aligned Tactic)
  - Identify the most effective modes of communication and align learning resources to support. (Aligned Tactic)
  - Employ data analytics and technologies to provide consistent student experiences. (Aligned Tactic)

- 2. Provide pathways. (Strategy)
  - Ensure students can balance life responsibilities through responsive scheduling and flexible supports. (Aligned Tactic)
  - Make early college opportunities available to all high school students. (Aligned Tactic)
  - Provide a holistic student experience that connects students to momentum-promoting support systems and learning opportunities. (Aligned Tactic)

Each unit then operationalizes these tactics according to its area of expertise. Below, the Academic Affairs 2023-2027 Academic Plan links explicitly to the Strategic Plan as shown in Figure I-6 (I.1.g.5.).

| Academic Plan Priorities  | Strategic Imperative              | Strategic Imperative Objectives   |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Priority 1 – Assurance of Learning:</b> Engage and support faculty to be practitioners of distinction, with high-impact practices and innovation as core elements of their pedagogy; ensure students experience rich learning and a sense of belonging, inclusion, and agency during their academic journey. | 1. Ensure Student Learning        | 1.1. Systematize information flow.<br>1.2. Provide pathways.<br>1.3. Scale support services.                            |
|   | 2. Enhance Employee Experience    | 2.5. Provide Career Paths<br>2.6. Build Connectivity to the College   |
| <b>Priority 2 – Pathway-focused:</b> Create and scale pathways to Montco from youth engagement to early college experiences, and through the baccalaureate degree and beyond.   | 1. Ensure Student Learning        | 1.1. Systematize information flow.<br>1.2. Provide pathways.  |
|   | 3. Expand Community Participation | 3.9. Grow community engagement to promote lifelong learning.<br>3.10. Demonstrate the College’s value to the community. |

Figure I-6: Example of how the Academic Affairs 2023-2027 Academic Plan links explicitly to the Strategic Plan.

Finally, the College assembles concrete measurements of these goals by accomplishing them against Key Performance Indicators (See Std I.1.g. below.) **Strength: As part of the Self-Study process, the College found that it enacts the equity value inherent in its mission through multiple, wide-ranging initiatives that either uphold or derive from the centrality of equity within the Strategic Plan.** Below are some representative examples:

- ✓ In the academic realm, the College sponsors special programs for non-traditional students, such as Gateway to College, Upward Bound, Act 101, and the POWER Program. MCCC also hosts the first community college chapter of the Alpha Alpha Alpha Society, which celebrates the achievements of our first-generation College students, another iteration of equity as access.
- ✓ Recently, faculty have used Virtual Reality technology in public speaking courses to help students overcome disabling anxiety and increase student success.
- ✓ Student engagement initiatives have also emphasized equity: for instance, the College’s Athletic Department recently formed an all-gender cheerleading team and has built upon the success of its all-gender eSports team. The College supports faculty-led innovation in the service of equity.
- ✓ In the employee realm, highlighting our Equity statement has made MCCC’s commitment to equity more visible. Every job posting on the College’s applicant tracking system (SuccessFactors) includes the Equity Statement, also featured on the College’s Employment Opportunities page. The College also re-imagined the Director of Equity and Diversity/Title IX position as a new Office of Equity, Diversity and Belonging, providing a central administrative unit for related initiatives.

- ✓ To expand community participation, the College promotes life-long learning as part of its Challenger Center, inspiring K-12 students to have a “better life for future generations.” The Montco Cultural Center and art galleries host multiple cultural events for the County community. The College also connects to and supports local businesses through the Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnetPA) training and roundtables.

### *Mission-Supported Scholarly Inquiry (Std I.1.e)*

In keeping with its emphasis on transformational educational, workforce, and cultural programming, the College’s Mission informs the faculty’s scholarly inquiry and creative activity. The Office of Faculty Success publishes promotion guidelines that ask for descriptions of service activities and teaching philosophy “relevant to college mission” (I.1.e.1). In addition, travel to professional conferences requires that the faculty “explain how this professional development experience could be incorporated into your teaching and/or supports the College’s strategic plan.” The Office of Academic Affairs administers Teaching Excellence awards.

College policies or agreements affirmed by its Board of Trustees support scholarly inquiry consistent with its mission. For example, Article 10 of the Faculty Union contract defines academic freedom as fundamental to effective teaching and student learning, while the related Board Policy 5.10 on Invention and Patent “facilitate[s] the development and use of research and scholarship in ways that are consistent with and in support of the mission of the College.” (I.1.e.2.). Board Policy 5.11 respects long-standing academic traditions regarding employee ownership of intellectual property created at the College, stating that “everyone associated with the College is encouraged to engage in the free exchange and expression of ideas, to explore new frontiers of scholarship and to expand the boundaries of knowledge” (I.1.e.3.). The College also supports periodic sabbatical leave for full-time faculty (I.1.e.4.).

### *Widely Publicized and Referenced (Std I.1.f)*

The College found that its mission is widely publicized. Students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders can locate the mission on the College’s internal web portal (Montco Connect), the external website (mc3.edu), within its College Course Catalog and Access TV, the College’s internal communication network. The Student Handbook also references the mission. It appears in the navigation of the Canvas Learning Management System (I.1.f.5., I.1.f.6., and I.1.f.7.). While the mission and Strategic Plan are most often used as an organizing framework for various departmental or unit plans, they are also woven throughout curriculum update discussions and internal communications, such as the President’s Monthly Reports.

### *Assessment of Mission (Std I.1.g)*

Finally, periodic self-assessment is embedded within the very statement of the College’s Mission and Vision: “the College views education as a dynamic process. . . to fully meet our mission, the College participates in ongoing self-assessment and review in order to enhance and improve instructional programs and services to students and the county we serve.” (I.1.b.1.). The Self-Study process validated this assessment, citing evidence of mission achievement in the President’s Annual Year in Review, the Annual Educational Effectiveness Report, and the College’s outcomes and accrediting agency data, individual Program and Unit assessment, and the ongoing accomplishment of the Strategic Plan. For example, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are excerpted in Figure I-7 (I.1.g.2.).

### **Evidence for Standard I.1.**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence:

I.1.a.1. December 2022 BOT meeting minutes; I.1.a.2. Summary of the collaborative development of mission and goals; I.1.a.3. Shared Governance Summary; I.1.b.1. Mission and Vision Policy; 1.1 I.1.b.2. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan; I.1.b.3 2017-2022 Strategic Plan; I.1.c.2. Values Policy 1.2; I.1.d.1. 2023-2027 Strategic Imperatives Alignment; I.1.e.1. Faculty Promotion Guidelines; I.1.e.2. Invention and Patent Policy 5.10; I.1.e.3. Copyright Ownership Policy; 5.11 I.1.e.4. Sabbatical Guidelines; I.1.f.3. Equity Statement; I.1.f.5. Student Handbook; I.1.f.6. Course Catalog; I.1.f.7. Sample Publication Demonstrating Mission Promotion eg. Axis Slides; I.1.g.1. Annual Year in Review; I.1.g.2. Student Learning KPIs Updated September 2024; I.1.g.3. Employee Experience KPIs Updated September 2024; I.1.g.4. Community Participation KPIs Updated June 2024; I.1.g.5. Academic Affairs Plan Updates December 2024; I.1.g.6. Strategic Enrollment Plan Updates December 2024; and I.1.g.7. 2015 Middle States Self-Study.

| ENSURE STUDENT LEARNING                    |   |   |                |      |      |             |                    |   |   |                             |
|--|---|---|----------------|------|------|-------------|--------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Category                                   | Baseline FY22                             | FY23                                      | FY24           | FY25 | FY26 | Target FY27 | Reporting Schedule | Definition  | Source  | Reporting Responsibility    |
| Returning Students (Persistence)           | 67.21%                                    | 68.88%                                    | 65.03%         |      |      | 72%         | Annual             | The percentage of active enrolled students who have continued to enroll since the previous academic year. | ASR Dashboard Query                                       | Data Team                   |
| Time to Completion (Program) - Degree      | 2.54 years                                | 2.76 years                                | 2.85 years     |      |      | 2 years     | Annual             | Average time from start in associate degree program to credential date.                                   | CROA  | Data Team                   |
| Time to Completion (Course) - Degree       | 5.12 years                                | 5.09 years                                | 5.00 years     |      |      | 4 years     | Annual             | Average time from first course enrollment to first credential date.                                       | CROA & SQL  | Data Team                   |
| Time to Completion (Program) - Certificate | 0.93 years                                | 1.53 years                                | 1.71 years     |      |      | 1 year      | Annual             | Average time from start in certificate program to credential date.  | CROA  | Data Team                   |
| Time to Completion (Course) - Certificate  | 6.15 years                                | 6.17 years                                | 5.70 years     |      |      | 2 years     | Annual             | Average time from first course enrollment to credential date.   | CROA & SQL  | Data Team                   |
| Dual Enrollment Matriculation              | 10.16%                                    | 10.18%                                    | 11.32%         |      |      | 15%         | Annual             | Dual Enrollment (ECHS) students who graduate high school matriculate to college in next academic year.    | SQL   | Data Team                   |
| Holistic Support Satisfaction              | Satisfied/Very Satisfied = 55% (SSI 2021) | Satisfied/very satisfied = 71% (SSI 2023) | Not Available. |      |      | 74%         | Biennial           | Overall satisfaction with academic and non-academic support: "Rate your overall satisfaction"             | Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (RNL-SSI) | Institutional Effectiveness |

Figure I-7: An example of KPIs used to measure Student Learning Outcomes.

**Realistic, Appropriate Goals (Std I.2)**

The College relies on its Strategic Plan to drive decisions on resource allocation, curricular updates, student support, student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness (I.2.a.2.). Below are some representative examples demonstrating their appropriateness to the College’s mission.

- Resource Allocation:** The College’s iterative budget process cascades from the three Strategic Plan priorities. The process begins with an enrollment forecast and associated revenue projections (I.1.g.6.). The Finance Office works with departments throughout the College to prepare program budgets that support the strategic priorities within the constraints of available resources. After obtaining initial input, the College’s Vice Presidents discuss budget revisions required to achieve the College’s strategic goals. A finalized budget is assembled for review and approval by the College’s President and the Board of Trustees Finance and Institutional Risk Committee. The full Board of Trustees approves the final comprehensive budget for the fiscal year.
- Curricular Updates:** To request a curricular change to an academic program of study, the sponsoring faculty must petition the Curriculum Committee and identify how a proposed modification (i.e., a new elective addition or course deletion) aligns with elements of the Strategic Plan. This alignment is built into the curricular modification process: see, for example, the “Request to Modify a Curriculum” form or “Request to Add a New Curriculum” forms and becomes part of the Curriculum Committee discussion/Faculty Governance process. Similarly, anytime a new workforce program is proposed, a review process determines if its outcomes align; data must be provided from the state of Pennsylvania’s High Priority Occupations List and other websites regarding labor market information. The College’s Self-Study research particularly emphasized the connection between the College’s mission and County needs.

For example, anytime a new Workforce program is proposed, the College first determines if the proposal meets the criteria that align with the College’s mission, including gathering data from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and economic impact reporting. To ensure student learning, the College provides clear pathways. It connects programs of study directly to careers, as the College’s website provides data about job opportunities in Montgomery County along with salary information for selected programs. (See, for example, our Tourism and Hospitality Management program page, provided as sample evidence.) The College offers “fast-track to employment” programs and MontcoWorks Apprenticeship Programs (MAP) to help students quickly gain in-demand skills. Finally, the College has a robust Career Services department to help students prepare for the job market by exploring potential careers, honing resume writing and interviewing skills, circulating job and internship listings, and engaging with employer networking opportunities through our Hire a Mustang platform.

Finally, the College works with area partner organizations to meet employer needs and advance county initiatives when applicable to its mission. Recent partners include the Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board, the Blue Bell Rotary Club, the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Schuylkill River Heritage Center. As evidence of its strong community connections, the College received the Reader's Choice Awards for the best college/university from readers of *The Times Herald & Reporter* in 2017, 2023, and 2024 and from those of *Pottstown Mercury* from 2019 through 2024. **Strength: The College operates from a strong foundation in community connections and community input. It has worked to expand its relationships with the community.**

- **Strength: The College supports its students holistically.** The College surrounds its students with academic, cultural, and wellness support. Not only does MCCC offer traditional advising and tutorial services to support students, but the College also offers customized programs to enhance the academic success of special student populations. Its Gateway to College, Upward Bound, Dual Enrollment, Veterans and POWER programs all focus on specific varieties of academic support for disaggregated populations of students with needs. Via our partnership with TimelyCare, a leading virtual health and well-being solution, the College offers students free and equitable access to medical and mental health support. MCCC students may select from a wide-ranging menu of virtual care options from licensed physicians and counselors in all 50 states – at no cost. MCCC's Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) is a campus-wide substance recovery program available to students seeking information, guidance, and support regarding substance use recovery. In September 2020, the Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted a student essential needs survey, which showed that 38 percent of respondents said they experience some level of food insecurity. The College's "Stock up for Success" food pantries on both campuses offer take-away foods, such as peanut butter, canned tuna and produce that students can use for dinner or a weekend meal. The Stock Up for Success Food Pantry saw 218 unique visitors with 979 visits, a 200 percent increase estimated over previous semesters. In 2023, the College launched its Food Recovery Program, preparing meals using excess foods from the Culinary and Baking and Pastry Arts programs and delivering them to the Wellness Center. WG1 affirmed that the College follows its mission and vision to enhance economic prosperity and social mobility and, through community engagement, supports students in many non-academic aspects of their wellness. A key strength of the College is its holistic approach to students, which fulfills its mission to "transform the lives of those we serve."

### Evidence for Standard I.2

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: I.2.a.2. 2024-2025 Annual Goals.

### *Institutional Goals Focused on Student Learning and Improvement (Std I.3)*

Every year, the President reports to the Board of Trustees on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Strategic Plan KPIs. This reporting occurs during the first meeting of the new academic year. Student achievement data is also measured by other institutional effectiveness reports and surveys, most found on the College's internal Data Hub, a repository of assessment results managed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and available to all faculty and staff. Here are some representative reports on progress toward institutional goals:

- The College Fact Book, which details demographic and student achievement data (I.4.a.1.)
- IPEDS and MSCHE data filings, which provide evidence and trend analysis of the institution's progress at meeting the established student achievement goals
- Voluntary Framework of Accountability reports (I.4.a.2.)
- Internal PEER (Program Effectiveness and Excellence Review) data, containing program-specific, disaggregated data about student persistence, retention, transfer and graduation rates
- Pass rates for external exams offered by specific accredited programs, including Nursing
- Strategic Plan KPIs (I.1.g.3.; I.1.g.4.; and I.1.g.5.)
- Quarterly Finance reports and related budgetary spreadsheets

Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.

**Evidence for Standard I.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: I.3.a.1. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Ensure Student Learning Goal and Strategies; I.3.a.2. Factbook Data: Graduation rates, Retention rates, Successful Course Completion; and I.3.a.3. Four-Year Expense Analysis for Instruction.

*Periodic Assessment of Mission (Std I.4)*

As discussed above, the College’s mission and vision are updated periodically, with the most recent revisions coming in 2022, 2019, and 2017 (Figure I-2). Every five years, the College evaluates the results of its KPIs, forms a representative planning team, and develops a new Strategic Plan, detailed in our discussion of Standard VI.

Results and periodic assessments of institutional mission and goals are regularly reported to the College Community. For example, a monthly President’s Report highlights institutional accomplishments organized according to the three pillars of the strategic plan. In October 2024, the “Ensure Student Learning” section covered the Nursing Pinning Ceremony and Merck Day, a chance for students from all majors to explore exciting career paths and opportunities with the global pharmaceutical leader, while our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Opening Day celebration and the arrival of the Justice Bell replica headlined the Enhance the Employee Experience and Expand Community Participation sections respectively. Measurements of all Strategic Plan KPIs are available on the College’s public website by academic year and progress. The College regularly updates information on Student Outcomes and communicates its Economic Impact.

Many other reports related to mission assessment are published by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, with the College’s Factbook (which represents institutional characteristics, enrollment, and performance metrics), Voluntary Framework of Accountability, and Consumer Information posted on the College’s website and other reports available internally to the Faculty Clipboard and the portal’s Data Hub. Finally, the Office of the President issues an annual Year-in-Review Report, an interactive summary of the College’s accomplishments.

**Evidence for Standard I.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: I.4.a.1. College Factbook 2023; I.4.a.2. Voluntary Framework of Accountability Public Outcomes Report; I.4.a.3. Fact Sheet Economic Impact Study May 2023; I.4.a.5. SENSE 2022 Executive Summary; and I.4.a.6. CCSSE 2022 Executive Summary.

**Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings**

The College’s institutional priorities are the “Strategic Imperatives” of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

| <b>Ensure Student Learning</b>  |
|---|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College supports its students holistically.</li> <li>✦ Enacting its mission, vision and values, the College supports equity, diversity and belonging with multiple, wide-ranging initiatives.</li> </ul> |

| <b>Expand Community Participation</b>   |
|---|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The College operates from a strong foundation in community connections and community input.</li> </ul> |

## Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

### Introduction

During its Self-Study research, the College confirmed that ethics and integrity are fundamental values at MCCC and serve as guiding principles in all its operations. The College is committed to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights. MCCC also seeks to promote a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from various backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

The College is committed to honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, and internal communications. It has dedicated public-facing webpages to all consumer information, providing students, parents, and the community with needed information about the College, including financial assistance, degrees, and programs.

The College complies with all applicable federal, state, and Middle States Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements, including full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure and licensing board pass rates.

### Telling Our Story:

#### Fostering a Climate of Respect, Inclusion, and Belonging

As the world shut down in 2020, the College, as part of its commitment to creating a climate that fosters respect, decided to offer its long-standing annual Presidential Symposium on Diversity remotely. The 2020 Symposium featured Richard Blanco, the fifth and youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history. Prior to the event, the College mailed copies, free of charge, of Blanco's published collection of poems, *How to Love a Country*, to the homes of interested students, faculty, and staff. Blanco read from and discussed this work during the virtual Symposium. Following the formal Symposium, Blanco continued the discussion during a "Coffee & Conversation," chatting with 80 students via Zoom and answering questions about writing, diversity, sexuality, and current issues of racism and social injustice. Blanco met virtually with and heard readings from the student winners of the year's poetry contest and encouraged the new writers to keep working on their craft. In a moment of mandated physical isolation, MCCC created a space for its community to be together, interact, and share a common experience.

The following year, Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, one of the lead scientists who helped to develop the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, spoke at the College's virtual event in 2021. As the scientific lead for the Coronavirus Vaccines & Immunopathogenesis Team at the NIH, Corbett spent more than six years working on vaccines for coronaviruses, building on decades of work to understand how the viruses function. During her talk, Dr. Corbett not only advocated for the importance of vaccines but also reflected on and gave advice to students based on her experiences as a woman of color in the STEM field. This event allowed the College community to learn about the timely and important topic of COVID-19 vaccines from a scientist directly involved in their development and created an interactive, virtual space to share that experience.

The Presidential Symposium on Diversity returned to campus in 2023. It expanded to a three-day event around the theme "Inspire Beyond Inclusion," featuring work by award-winning author, activist and educator Dr. Lorene Cary. The College provided free copies of Cary's bestselling book, *Black Ice*, to symposium attendees, and participants had the opportunity to attend various online workshops and book chat with Cary. Throughout the event, MCCC collected non-perishable donations for its Stock Up for Success Food Pantries on both Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses and provided free food and other items for students battling food insecurity. In 2024, the College hosted a four-day event featuring a keynote presentation, "Transforming Lives: Breaking Barriers & Empowering Change," by Dyana Williams, an award-winning on-air personality and trailblazer in broadcasting, music activism, and celebrity media strategy. Ms. Williams was also a guest speaker for a Sound Recording and Technology master class.

## Research Findings and Compliance Narrative

### *Commitment to Academic and Intellectual Freedom (Std II.1)*

The College affirmed that MCCC clearly defines and supports academic and intellectual freedom and that these practices directly connect to student success. Academic freedom is defined in the 2022-2026 Faculty Contract, which also designates academic freedom as fundamental for the protection of the rights of a teacher's ability to teach and the student's ability to learn (II.1.a.1.).

Ethics, as part of MCCC's General Education Core, is embedded in every associate degree program the College offers. This requirement teaches students the importance of intellectual freedom and intellectual property rights while allowing them to explore freedom of expression in their work. When assessing the ethics requirement within the General Education Core, faculty must share the assignments and artifacts that demonstrate compliance. Ethics is also included in the Curriculum maps for all associate degree programs, where faculty list assignments or courses that meet the requirement. Faculty also have the academic freedom to create assignments that fulfill the ethics requirement for their courses.

The College's Course Catalog includes the College's Statement of Values that our students, faculty, support staff, administration and Board of Trustees uphold. These values outline the College's dedication to each student's intellectual, personal, and ethical growth and our dedication to providing opportunities for the intellectual, personal, professional, and ethical growth of faculty, support staff, administrators, and Trustees. The College encourages all its constituents to engage in the free exchange of expression of ideas and explore new areas of scholarship and knowledge. MCCC's Copyright Ownership and Invention and Patent policies are intended to promote these goals (II.1.a.2. and II.1.a.3.). Intellectual property documents are also indicated in the College's Records and Retention Schedule, which specifically outlines copyrights (general) and patents (applications, assignments, and license agreements).

The Student Academic Code of Ethics Policy (and other College policies such as the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy) creates an integrated ethical practice at MCCC. Violations of these policies are addressed via a student appeal process, and the policies are reviewed and updated on a five-year cycle or more frequently if a need arises. Faculty have latitude in applying resolutions to academic ethics concerns, which allows resolutions to become learning opportunities for students rather than strictly punitive measures. Library Services offers an "Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial," linked to Canvas, the College's LMS, making it readily available to every student. Plagiarism is detrimental to academic freedom and student success because it infringes on another's intellectual freedom or property and disincentivizes free thinking. The College's consistent promotion of awareness about academic honesty aids student success by helping students avoid the academic and disciplinary sanctions that come from plagiarism and cheating and provides a guardrail for preserving academic freedom.

**Opportunity: The College should continue its discussions about the student code of conduct and academic integrity with the student body.** With the rise of easily accessible generative Artificial Intelligence tools (Generative AI), faculty members have engaged in many discussions surrounding the maintenance of the College's standards for academic integrity. Here are some examples:

- Governance review of both the Academic Grading Policy and the Academic Code of Ethics resulted in updated language specifying the importance of not "submitting work generated by AI or another person's work as one's own" (May 2024 update) and guidelines surrounding the reporting of plagiarism at the College, as evidenced by the minutes of the Curriculum Committee and various updates about these revisions shared at Faculty Meetings and with the President's Leadership Council.
- A series of professional development opportunities sourced by faculty surrounding the use of Generative AI (e.g., "The Development of Student Writing across Curriculum in the Age of Generative AI" and "Generative AI 101: Demystifying AI in Lesson Design - An Introduction to "AI-Proofing" Assignments")
- Discussions posted on Montco Connect by faculty members pointing out research and resources surrounding Generative AI.
- New, optional syllabus language produced by the Office of Educational Effectiveness at the request of concerned faculty that outlines acceptable use of Artificial Intelligence when completing coursework.



As a result of these faculty conversations, the College has reinstated its “Know the Codes” campaign for students. This campaign makes academic and student conduct codes more visible during key points in the academic year. The College should continue to discuss academic integrity and plan additional opportunities for student and employee conversations surrounding these issues and those related to AI and academic honesty.

Academic integrity and information regarding changes to course syllabi are required elements in the Syllabus Template, which is assessed, updated, and provided to all faculty members every academic year. The Syllabus Template also ensures that students have links to the Student Academic Code of Ethics and Student Code of Conduct readily available to them for every course. The College also provides a statement regarding First Amendment rights and guidance regarding the use of generative AI in a Best Practices Addendum to the Syllabus Template. This guidance arose from the College’s work with the Racial, Equity, Leadership Academy (RELA) in Spring 2022, which included a pilot of the now adopted Syllabus Template. The College also participates in an Annual Syllabus Compliance Project where select faculty and staff review the syllabus template, use data to streamline syllabi for all faculty, and address potential issues involving generative AI, plagiarism, or any other matter that might impact academic freedom. Since implementing the Syllabus Compliance Project, the College has seen an increase in course syllabi that provide students with links to college policies, from 67.3% in 2019 to 92.4% in 2022.

The syllabus auditing team meets each academic year to discuss the results of the syllabus audit and develop a list of recommendations. Those recommendations are then reviewed and voted upon by the Educational Effectiveness Committee. Any policy or procedure changes approved by the Educational Effectiveness Committee are shared with the other Faculty Governance Committees and the President's Leadership Council. Syllabus Compliance Reports are published on the Educational Effectiveness resource page of the Faculty Clipboard and included in the Annual Assessment Report, available to employees for the academic year.

Through Faculty Governance Committees and the Board of Trustees, the College’s Comprehensive Grading Policy was revised in 2021-2022, aiding in student success by standardizing all grading scales across the College and improving the student experience by clarifying the goals and rubrics for student success as they relate to course grades.

### **Evidence for Standard II.1**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.1.a.1. Academic Freedom, Article 10 of the Faculty Contract; II.1.a.2. Invention and Patent Policy 5.10; and II.1.a.3. Copyright Ownership Policy 5.11.

### ***A Climate that Fosters Respect (Std II.2)***

The College affirmed that it continuously maintains a climate that fosters respect, inclusion, and belonging among students, faculty, staff, and the community. This climate enhances each constituent’s experience and engagement with the College. The value of equity was elevated within the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and is threaded through the ongoing work of the College. In September 2022, the College expanded the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion role and welcomed new leadership positions, including an Equity, Diversity, and Belonging Team reporting directly to the President’s Office. College constituents can participate in the President's Advisory Council on Equity & Social Justice and the President’s Leadership Council meetings, which gather students, employees, and trustees alongside community members to discuss opportunities for enriching our equity, diversity, and belonging initiatives. These meeting forums are public to provide transparency and promote inclusivity.

As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering this climate of respect, inclusion, and belonging, the College has expanded its Presidential Symposium on Equity and Diversity from a one-day event to a four-day capstone event that advances and facilitates ongoing public dialogue on diversity and inclusiveness among students, employees, and the community. This annual event, free of charge and open to the public, has featured speakers from various backgrounds and professions whose life and work experiences provide timely and meaningful points for discussion.

In addition to the College's annual Presidential Symposium on Diversity, other examples that illustrate the College's commitment to maintaining a climate that fosters respect, inclusion, and belonging include Coffee with a Cop, a nationwide initiative to help build positive associations with law enforcement; annual Safe Space training for students, faculty, and staff; Alpha Alpha Alpha National Honor Society – MCCC was the first community college to join this organization that recognized first-generation students; Heritage Celebrations across campus; a partnership with Employee Development and Talent Management to enhance professional development to close knowledge gaps around Equity, Diversity, and Belonging topics; and the address of food insecurity among our students through service projects to stock the College's resource pantries on both campuses. To ensure every member of our community is considered during their experience in our physical locations, the College has implemented—and has continued to discuss via the 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan—other ways to ensure facilities remain available to all, including lactation rooms, meditation rooms, inclusive restrooms and showers, washers and dryers, building accessibility, a Veteran's Resource Center, and resource pantries for students.

Accommodations can be made for employees by Human Resources and for students through the Office of Disabilities. Through case-by-case accommodation, the College seeks to minimize any impact of a disability without altering academic standards. The College also provides Faculty Resources for guidance on inclusive pedagogy and other helpful answers to frequently asked questions on supporting students with disabilities. Contact information for the Office of Disabilities and procedures for accommodation are included in all course syllabi via the College's syllabus template. The College also ensures that documents and websites – particularly course web pages and program descriptions – follow ADA readability guidelines. An ADA Compliance Checklist accompanies the syllabus template.

The College respects the feedback and opinions of its students and provides various opportunities for student engagement at the highest levels, including in policy making. MCCC's Student Government Association (SGA) acts as a liaison to the College community on behalf of the student body. The SGA listens to and, when appropriate, acts upon the suggestions and concerns expressed by the student body to foster recognition of student rights and the College's responsibilities to students. It acts in students' best interests when participating in the development of College policies. MCCC students are represented in the Middle States Self-Study process by students serving on several Standard Working Groups. Students are also represented at the President's Leadership Council, some Faculty Governance Committees, and the President's Advisory Council for Equity and Social Justice. The College uses a Student Usability Board, which consists of students who provide feedback to the College to make our digital systems easier to use and more beneficial to students and all College constituents. Through this Board, the College compensates diverse students with a stipend to provide feedback, both virtually and in person, based on a contractual agreement. This agreement requires students to meet in person with the Assistant Director of Digital Experience at least six times per semester and provide unlimited feedback via email/surveys. This program helps the College obtain student feedback when needed for various projects, such as developing the Monty Chatbot and purchasing a new portal product. **Strength: The College consistently provides opportunities for student engagement in its highest levels of policymaking by including student representation on key committees and through the utilization of a Student Usability Board.** In addition to direct representation from students, the College also provides faculty resources for guidance on inclusive pedagogy and other answers to frequently asked questions on supporting students with disabilities.

### *Following Up: Recommendations from the 2015 Self-Study*

One recommendation from MCCC's 2015 Self-Study was that the institution should continue to place high priority on hiring diverse faculty. In a direct address to this recommendation, the College expanded its Faculty Diversity Fellowship program. This program, which began in the 2008-2009 AY, provides minority scholars in the early stages of their careers with the opportunity to develop their teaching skills at MCCC and receive mentoring from colleagues while they continue to work on or complete their terminal-level degrees. The program has grown from one Diversity Fellow in 2008-2009 to six fellows in 2022-2023. Since 2015, the program has also expanded to include non-teaching faculty positions with the addition of librarians and advisors. With respect to hiring practices, the College has a diversity representative program, which plays an ongoing and critical role in the diversification of the workforce.

While the College has made strides in diversifying its workforce and excels at providing opportunities for student engagement, it found that it could continue to increase transparency and awareness of the outcomes garnered from external surveys and campus climate assessments. **Opportunity: The College should better disseminate and encourage participation in existing campus climate assessments to further the College's understanding of student/stakeholder perspectives, needs, and concerns.** The College currently participates in Modern Think (the Great Colleges to Work For survey) for employees, the Healthy Minds survey for students, and the Community Perception Survey for the community (II.2.a.2., II.2.a.3., and II.2.a.1.). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness generally provides research briefs on selected survey results and posts those briefs on the internal Data Hub. For example, results from the 2023 Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNL-SSI) were summarized and presented to the Board of Trustees, the President's Advisory Council for Equity and Social Justice, the President's Cabinet, Enrollment and Student Services, the Student Government Association, and the Student Usability Board. These results are also provided on the Data Hub. Bottom line indicators from the results of this 2024 survey show that 71% of students enrolled at MCCC were satisfied/very satisfied with their experience -- a rate that is 5% higher than the national cohort of community colleges) and 78% of currently enrolled students would enroll again (a rate 1% higher than the national cohort of community colleges) (II.2.a.4. and II.2.a.5.).

Results from assessments such as Modern Think and the RNL-SSI informed the development of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and its corresponding key performance indicators. Additionally, these assessments and other Institutional Effectiveness measures are used to develop departmental plans and reports.

The College found that the institution could expand these efforts and explore using an assessment focused on campus climate and has comparable or identical items for employees, students, and the community. MCCC can also leverage the institutional effectiveness cycle to ensure that climate assessments are performed regularly. It could administer climate surveys a year prior to the end of a Strategic Plan so that survey results can inform the new Strategic Plan.

Since the return to the College's physical locations following the COVID-19 pandemic, MCCC has also found an opportunity to continue to ensure that members of the College community can come together to collaborate, connect, and exchange ideas. **Opportunity: MCCC should continue to improve existing occasions where the College community comes together (either in person or online) to provide opportunities for collaboration and unscripted exchange of ideas.** The College should also ensure that stakeholders can provide feedback on these existing opportunities to measure the efficacy of the process and employee engagement. MCCC should also support additional opportunities for unscripted, open dialogue among the College Community to continue to foster connectivity to the College. The College has begun this process by designating some Coffee and Conversation meetings to answer questions from the College community; however, there is still an opportunity for more open dialogue and exchange even within these forums. Other examples might include "office-hours style" opportunities for employees to speak openly with members of the College leadership.

## **Evidence for Standard II.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.2.a.1. Community Assessment; II.2.a.2. Healthy Minds 2023-2024 National Comparison Report; II.2.a.3. 2024 Modern Think Survey Results - All Job Categories; II.2.a.4. RNL 2023 Student Satisfaction and Priorities Results; and II.2.a.5. RNL Executive Summary: Student Satisfaction Inventory Academic Year 2022-2023.

## ***Fair and Impartial Grievance Policies (Std II.3)***

The College affirmed that MCCC has policies to ensure that there is no discrimination or retaliation against any students or employees. The fair treatment of students and employees establishes consistent expectations for the success of the College and all served. These policies comply with local, state, and federal laws and are updated at least every five years.

Title IX is well documented and shared on the College's Sexual Misconduct webpage and related web pages. Title IX personnel and off-campus resources are indicated on those pages. There is a clear path to make a report, as well as documentation and training on reporting sexual harassment or misconduct. There is also a clear

process for Title IX hearings, guidelines for parties, process, and resolution (II.3 a.8.). MCCC also links College policies to Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting, Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct on this dedicated webpage, highlighting their importance and making them more readily accessible. The College has an established process for students to file complaints or share concerns and questions with appropriate College officials. MCCC also provides student complaint information by state and agency for complaints that, in the state of Pennsylvania, are handled by the Department of Education (II.3.a.4., II.3.a.5., and II.3.a.7.). The College also provides an Out-of-State Student Complaint Process, which complies with Federal Department of Education and state agencies (II.3.a.6.). MCCC's sports teams adhere to the NJCAA Sports Code for College athletics.

Grievance opportunities and disciplinary procedures are outlined in several College-wide policies as well as Faculty and Support Staff Contracts (II.3.a.1. and II.3.a.2.). The College makes these contracts widely available on its website and on the Montco Connect platform within the Human Resources section. Faculty and Support Staff Union meetings, open only to members, offer routine opportunities to discuss grievances. These meetings are supported by departments so that Union members can freely and widely attend.

In addition to federal and state whistleblower statutes, the College has a Whistleblower Policy intended to deter and detect illegal, dishonest or unethical activity by establishing a confidential channel of communication by which anyone can report activity that they reasonably consider to be illegal, dishonest, unethical, or in violation of College policies (II.3.a.3.).

### **Evidence for Standard II.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.3.a.1. Faculty contract Article 3; II.3.a.2. Support Staff contract Article 6; II.3.a.3. Whistleblower Policy, 6.11; II.3.a.4. EEO for Individuals with Disabilities and Grievance Procedure; II.3.a.5. Resolution of Student Concerns; II.3.a.6. Out of State Student Complaint Process; II.3.a.7. Student Complaint Resolution by State and Agency; and II.3.a.8. Title IX Policies and Procedures.

### ***Avoidance of Conflict of Interest (Std II.4)***

The Community College Act of 1963 (Act 484 of 1963) has been codified as Article XIX-A of the Public School Code of 1949. Sections 1904-A and 1905-A outline the specific responsibilities of the Board of Trustees who govern Montgomery County Community College. The Montgomery County Commissioners appoint members of MCCC's Board of Trustees to six-year renewable terms. The Board is a policy-governing body that focuses decision-making on achieving results that advance the core mission of the College. The Board meets monthly in public sessions from October to December and February to June. It uses a committee structure to consider finance/audit, institutional risk, physical plant, curriculum, student success, and personnel issues. The Board's meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes are public.

The Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest policy provides guidance to members of the Board concerning conflict of interest from outside interests, concerns, and/or relationships as required by MSCHE regulations (II.4.a.2.). The Employee Conflict of Interest policy provides similar guidance to College employees while conducting College business (II.4.a.1.). The College requires that any employee who has a potential or actual conflict of interest complete a Disclosure Questionnaire form (II.4.a.3.). The form is then kept on file in Human Resources to be updated as applicable for the duration of that person's employment at the College. Employees are trained to use this form bi-annually during HR search committee training workshops. Similarly, members of the Board disclose potential conflicts of interest through a written questionnaire on an annual basis. The questionnaire used by the Board is updated by the state when needed; the College follows its policy review cycle when any changes need review (II.4.a.4.).

### **Evidence for Standard II.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.4.a.1. Employee Conflict of Interest Policy; II.4.a.2. Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest Policy; II.4.a.3. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Questionnaire – Employee; and II.4.a.4. Board Conflict of Interest Form from State Ethics Commission.

### ***Fair and Impartial Practices in Human Resources (Std II.5)***

The College affirmed that MCCC continues to demonstrate commitment to impartial and equitable hiring, compensation, evaluation, and promotion, as well as discipline and separation of employees (II.5.a.1.). In fact, the College's commitment to employee experience serves as one of three pillars of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

**Strength: MCCC prioritizes enhancing the employee experience as one of the three pillars of its strategic plan.**

The College also affirmed MCCC's commitment to ensuring that constituents are aware of and afforded prompt, appropriate, fair, and impartial grievance opportunities and/or disciplinary actions. Voluntary separation incentives are offered periodically as part of the College's Strategic Workforce Planning Initiative. When offered, the process for initiating such a program is documented and available for employees. Faculty can participate in a three-year step-down process once their retirement date is declared.

The College has a well-documented process for impartial and equitable hiring, including various policies (EEO and Diversity, EEO for Individuals with Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Nepotism) and a robust search committee and hiring structure, which includes diversity representation on hiring committees.

Hiring, promotion and classification-specific information is available to applicable employees (II.5.a.2.). The College has posting and hiring procedures for interim and permanent positions, temporary or casual positions, and student workers. The College's Human Resources site documents a capacity promotion process for Administrators (2018-2022), the reclassification request process for support staff, and promotion processes for faculty. This Human Resources portal, which is routinely reviewed and updated, organizes such classifications and procedures in one accessible location. In the College's continued efforts for transparency in pay, employees can view the levels of administrative roles and the associated ranges of administrative compensation. Faculty and Support Staff can view salary information in their respective contracts. The College identifies the level and range of pay for all administrative, support and faculty open positions for all College employees and the public.

Faculty are evaluated by students each semester/session through course instructor evaluations. Administrators then review these evaluations when faculty seek promotion, which is typically a year-long process that includes various assessments and observations.

The Supervisory Effectiveness Program (SEP), offered once a semester, provides new supervisors with the management structure's roles, responsibilities, and processes. Training and development materials are provided in finance; hiring and onboarding; leadership; equity, diversity, and belonging; and performance management.

The process for employee advancement prepares and positions employees for career opportunities as they arise, facilitating their readiness to be considered for advancement. The College does so by providing many development opportunities:

#### **Internal Job Postings**

- *Visibility of Opportunities:* The College prioritizes internal candidates by posting opportunities for five days before considering external applicants, as detailed in the contract.

#### **Performance Evaluations**

- *Feedback and Growth:* Regular performance evaluations provide employees with feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement. These evaluations are crucial for identifying and aligning potential advancement opportunities with the employee's career goals. Evaluations at the College allow the employee and/or the supervisor to identify professional development opportunities and areas for growth.

#### **Mentoring and Coaching**

- *Guidance and Support:* Both the Faculty Mentoring Program and the Employee Mentoring Program provide employees with guidance and support from experienced colleagues (see more below). This mentorship helps employees navigate their career paths and develop the necessary skills for advancement.

### Leadership Development

- *Supporting Professional Growth:* MCCC offers leadership development programs that enhance leadership skills, strategic thinking, understanding of higher education, and decision-making. For example, in 2024, MCCC partnered with a local community college and sent five employees to participate in a leadership program. In prior years, the College has sent employees to the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program and industry-specific leadership programs.

### Professional Development Programs

- *Skill Enhancement:* MCCC offers various professional development programs, including workshops, training sessions, and mentoring programs. These initiatives help employees acquire new skills and prepare for higher-level positions. Faculty members can engage in special projects, fostering innovation and collaboration. Examples of some of our programming include:
  - **Professional Development Weeks (Fall and Spring):** MCCC offers comprehensive Professional Development Weeks featuring various sessions to enhance faculty and staff skills. These sessions cover topics such as technology tools, teaching strategies, and personal development, ensuring all participants can access the latest resources and best practices.
  - **Administrator's Day (Spring):** Administrator's Day is dedicated to the professional growth of MCCC's administrative staff. This event includes workshops and seminars on leadership, management skills, and effective communication, providing administrators with the tools they need to excel in their roles.
  - **Opening Day / Spring Faculty Development Day:** Opening Day and Spring Faculty Development Day are essential to MCCC's commitment to continuous improvement in teaching. This day includes sessions on innovative teaching methods, curriculum development, and the integration of new technologies in the classroom, updates from leadership, and other activities to ready the campus community for the start of classes.
  - **Wellness Week (New as of Fall 2024):** Wellness Week at MCCC promotes the physical and mental well-being of the College community. Activities and resources are provided to help students, faculty, and staff manage stress, improve health, and maintain a balanced lifestyle.
  - **Faculty Mentoring Program:** The Faculty Mentoring Program is offered in two parts. The first part focuses on providing a faculty orientation and onboarding program for full-time faculty new to the college. During this experience, faculty meet with the Director of Faculty Success to review teaching strategies, structure promotion portfolios and learn more about the operational and teaching expectations at the college. The second part of the mentoring program is for faculty eligible for promotion, providing one-on-one guidance to support the development of their promotion portfolio.
  - **Employee Mentoring Program:** The Employee Mentoring Program is designed to support the professional growth of all staff members. Through this program, employees receive mentorship and career development opportunities, helping them to achieve their professional goals.
  - **Supervisory Effectiveness Program (offered throughout the year):** MCCC offers a Supervisory Effectiveness Program designed to enhance supervisors' skills and capabilities, ensuring they can lead their teams effectively and efficiently. Sessions include topics about leadership development, compliance, performance management, talent recruitment and development, staff development, conflict resolution, team building, and financial management.
  - **Employee Resource Groups:** MCCC offers several Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) designed to support and empower our diverse workforce. These groups provide a platform for employees to connect, engage in development, share experiences, and foster a sense of community. Here are some of the key ERGs at MCCC: Navigating the Doctoral Experience (ERG) and the Research Series; Young Professionals; and Clerical, Administrative, and Support Staff (new FA 2024).

The College also offers a comprehensive tuition waiver and reimbursement benefit, as well as sabbatical opportunities for faculty as per the faculty contract.

In 2021, Segal conducted a survey on behalf of the College to collect information on prevailing practices among two-year colleges regarding compensation, benefits, and workload expectations for full-time and part-time faculty. The institutions invited to participate were two-year public colleges in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and New York, with a total enrollment of 6,000 or more. Beginning in January 2022, the College collaborated with Korn Ferry, a renowned global organizational consulting firm, to conduct a comprehensive study on employee benefits and compensation for administrators and support staff. This study included a compensation analysis focused on market analysis, job leveling, and salary ranges. The study was executed in two distinct phases: Phase I (concluded in July 2023) focused on program design and led to modifications in the College's salary structure and the introduction of a new job leveling nomenclature; Phase II (finalized in June 2024) focused on compensation administration, equity, job tenure, titles, and internal processes for administrators. Looking ahead to 2025, the College plans to initiate a job-level review process that will enable supervisors to review jobs that may have changed as a result of departmental or team restructuring, job redistribution, or job expansion. The job-level process replaces the capacity promotion process (2018-2022).

The College has well-defined appraisal processes for administrators and support staff to evaluate performance and identify growth opportunities. Self-Study research revealed that these processes could also include opportunities for administrators to receive feedback from direct supervisors and colleagues and direct reports, much like the feedback a faculty member receives from students and Division leadership. This additional feedback will extend the impartial employee review processes to all College leaders and offer opportunities for substantive feedback on the College's strategic direction. Additionally, the capacity promotion process was removed before another process was fully in place, creating a gap in promotion review. **Opportunity: The College should continue to enhance transparency around evaluation and promotion processes, specifically for administrative roles that are not covered by the faculty or support staff contracts.**

### **Evidence for Standard II.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.5.a.1. Policies and Procedures for hiring, evaluation, promotion and separation and II.5.a.2. Analysis of hiring and promotions disaggregated by relevant population.

### ***Honesty and Truthfulness in Promotion Materials (Std II.6)***

The College affirmed that MCCC demonstrates timely, truthful, and transparent internal and external communications that enable informed decision-making and active participation from all College constituents and the community. In fact, it is MCCC's commitment to honesty and transparency that allowed the College to make decisions quickly during the early days of the COVID-19 shutdown and provide timely, accurate information throughout the duration of the pandemic. At the height of the pandemic, the College maintained daily contact with the Communicable Field Supervisor at the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and the Preparedness Coordinator at the Montgomery County Office of Public Health to obtain accurate and timely information about an ever-changing global crisis. The College's website was updated regularly, providing new information about COVID case numbers in Montgomery County, answering frequently asked questions about COVID precautions and, eventually, about COVID testing and vaccinations (with MCCC's Blue Bell campus eventually serving as one of Montgomery County's first mass testing sites). As early as August 2020, the College issued a Health and Safety Plan outlining guidelines and recommendations from federal, state, and county authorities to provide a safe physical environment for all MCCC students, employees, and visitors.

The College's commitment to honesty and truthfulness is not limited to exigent situations. MCCC provides reflections to the College Community via its Annual Report and Year in Review, a yearly encapsulation of the collective work the College community has accomplished throughout each academic year (II.6.a.1.; see Figure II-1). More frequent updates are communicated monthly via President's Reports, while internal feedback is solicited during the President's monthly Coffee and Conversation sessions (II.6.a.2.). Employees are encouraged to attend, ask questions, and share news with their colleagues during these monthly gatherings.

The Office of Strategic Communications serves as the official source of information on behalf of the College. It is the primary point of contact for all media inquiries and interview requests. The office was recently recognized nationally for its work on several unique campaigns in 2020. The College's Enterprise CRM team earned the Innovative Team Award at the 8th annual Tambellini Technology Leadership Awards for the team's remarkable successes in streamlining and enhancing the user experience for campus communities.

Historically, the College has had one marketing team to handle strategic communications and enrollment marketing activities. After assessing how the needs of the College had grown and become more complex, two separate teams were formed in 2022: a Strategic Communications team and an Enrollment Marketing team. The benefits of strategically re-aligning these groups include allowing each team to optimize efforts in its area as the skills and approaches for the two are different, along with a reduction in overlap in duties and better allocation of resources (II.6.a.4.).

The Enrollment Marketing team provides honest and truthful information about the College and its admission process to potential students (II.6.a.3. and II.6.a.5.). Additionally, MCCC hosts many public events including Open Houses, Admissions, and Student Engagement Events. These events are held for both prospective and current students and the community. External partners, including K-12 guidance counselors and community-based organizations, are invited to participate on campus to learn more about the College through an annual School Counselor & Partner Appreciation Breakfast focused on student support programs held at both the Pottstown and Blue Bell campuses.



Figure II-1: An example of MCCC's communication includes the postcard to promote access to the College's Annual Year in Review.

The College's dedicated webpages and other materials provide students, parents, and the community with an overview of financial aid options, help students complete the FAFSA, describe the PA State grant program, and discuss student citizenship status. Students may use a virtual chat to help understand financial aid options or may schedule 20-minute or 40-minute appointments to address more complex financial aid concerns. Information about tuition costs, payment plans, and a link to a net price calculator is published on the College website; video training and information sessions are also available in multiple languages on financialaidTV.com. Finally, the College offers "The Living Intentionally Financial Empowerment (LIFE) Program" to help students make informed financial choices through a free partnership with Inceptia, a nonprofit financial education organization. This program, which is educational only, guides students in how to manage and repay student loans and offers a 24/7 accessible video library on financial topics. **Strength: The College consistently engages in honest and truthful interactions with present and future stakeholders, particularly regarding students' understanding of financial responsibility. All consumer information is readily accessible and transparent.**

### Evidence for Standard II.6

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.6.a.1. Annual Report; II.6.a.2. Monthly President's Report (Example); II.6.a.3. Sample Marketing Communications; II.6.a.4. Expense Analysis for Marketing, Advertising, and Recruitment Related Expenses (4 years); and II.6.a.5. Admissions material (Sample).



### *Promoting and Providing Education Around Funding Sources (Std II.7)*

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), includes many disclosure and reporting requirements (II.7.a.1.). The College has dedicated webpages to all consumer information we are required to report, providing students, parents, and the community with needed information about the College (II.7.b.1. Consumer Information, II.7.b.2. and II.7.b.3.). This includes information on financial assistance, health and safety, institutional information, intercollegiate athletic programs, out-of-state student complaint processes, resolution of student concerns, student lending code of conduct, student outcomes, and voter registration.

#### **Evidence for Standard II.7**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.7.a.1. Higher Education Reform and Opportunity Act; II.7.b.1. Consumer Information; II.7.b.2. Presidential Scholarship Initiative; and II.7.b.3. Cost Calculator.

### *Compliance with Reporting Policies, Regulations, and Requirements (Std II.8)*

The College affirmed that, in addition to demonstrating its compliance with applicable federal, state, and Middle States Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements, MCCC evaluates and ensures its own policies, processes and practices are ethical and have integrity. The College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness supports the collection, organization, analysis and dissemination of internal and external information (II.8.b.1.). In addition to annual reports that are shared across the College community, the Institutional Effectiveness website lists the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) Public Outcomes Report, which includes data that colleges are required to report and share publicly, as well as other accreditation information (II.8.a.1., II.8.a. 2., II.7.b.1., II.8.a.4. and II.8.c.1.).

MCCC's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) team provides information, processes, consultation, data analyses, and reporting. Their work upholds and strengthens the College's evidence-based decision-making, planning, and implementation. **Strength: MCCC's processes are linked to corresponding and identifiable initiatives, particularly regarding Equity Diversity and Belonging (EDB), access, and funding sources.**

The College uses Proof of Identity and Statement of Educational Purpose to verify student identity and certify that Federal student financial assistance received will only be used for educational purposes and to pay the cost of attending MCCC (II.8.d.1.). Course Tuition and Fees and Tuition Refund Policy information is widely accessible and distributed to the College community (II.8.d.2.). The College requires all students to accept (every semester they are enrolled) the Student Financial Responsibility Agreement (SFRA), which acknowledges their financial obligations and understanding of related College policies. This satisfies our requirement by federal debt collection and consumer protection laws to be transparent with our billing and payment policies, procedures and collection requirements.

Financial Aid Policies and Resources provide an understanding of financial aid, including student rights and responsibilities to know the federal Return of Title IV Funds Policy/Impact of Withdrawing. These documents are intended to be transparent and helpful resources to help students make the best financial decisions in relation to their education.

An Annual Security Report is provided as a part of the College's continuing commitment to safety and security on our campuses. The security report complies with the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting Act and the Federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. The document outlines our policies, procedures, and programs concerning safety and security.

#### **Evidence for Standard II.8**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.8.a.1. Student Outcomes Data; II.8.a.2. Accreditation and Awards; II.8.a.4. Licensing Board Pass Rates; II.8.b.1. Annual Institutional Update (Example); II.8.c.1. Substantive Changes 2015-2024; II.8.d.1. Proof of Identity and Statement of Educational Purpose; II.8.d.2. Paying for College; II.8.d.3. Documentation of the Degree Granting Authority (DGA); II.8.d.4. Privacy Statement; II.8.d.5. FERPA Policy; II.8.d.6. HIPPA Policy; and II.8.d.7. MSCHE AIU Supplemental Information Report.

*Assessment of Ethics and Integrity in Policies and Processes (Std II.9)*

MCCC's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) team provides information, processes, consultation, data analyses, and reporting via the Montco Data Hub. The team's work upholds and strengthens the College's evidence-based decision-making, planning, and implementation, and it self-evaluates to measure outcomes and achievements related to the College's mission.

The Student Handbook, available digitally and in print, is a compilation of services and other information critical to MCCC. It familiarizes students with their rights and responsibilities as well as with non-academic College policies, procedures and regulations. The Student Handbook is revised every year by Student Life in the Spring semester, with the input of multiple departments. A corollary Student Life Handbook, which governs student clubs, their rights, and responsibilities, is also widely available and was revised in 2023-2024. The College's Course Catalog, both current and archived, provides important information about the College, our programs, curriculum, and courses. It also speaks to important College Policies for our students.

College Policies are reviewed and assessed per an established timeline—every five (5) years or more frequently as required by changes in statutes, regulation or practice (II.9.a.1.). The review cycle is tracked by the Office of the President and managed by the Chief of Staff. Policy revisions are identified as substantive (requiring Board approval) and non-substantive. Through shared governance, proposed changes may be reviewed by Faculty Governance Committees (Curriculum, Educational Effectiveness, Instructional Delivery & Technology, and Student Support), the Student Government Association, the President's Leadership Council, the President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice, and affected Administrative Offices for comment and feedback. Faculty Governance Committees comprise administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The College has many advisory committees that support internal review processes, including the Student Government Association and the Academic Program Advisory Committee, which assists in ensuring quality curricula and connects to the broader community and access to public and private funding sources. Some academic programs have their own advisory boards.

There are also academic programs that work with programmatic accrediting agencies of their own, such as the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), which verifies the contents of the Medical Laboratory Technician Program. A list of all accredited programs at the College can be found on the College's website.

**Evidence for Standard II.9**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: II.9.a.1. Policy Development Policy 1.3.

## Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings

The College's institutional priorities are the "Strategic Imperatives" of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

### Ensure Student Learning

#### Strengths

- ✦ The College consistently engages in honest and truthful interactions with present and future stakeholders, particularly regarding students' understanding of financial responsibility. All consumer information is readily accessible and transparent.

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should continue its discussions about the student code of conduct and academic integrity with the student body.

### Enhance Employee Experience

#### Strengths

- ✦ MCCC prioritizes enhancing the employee experience as one of the three pillars of its strategic plan.

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should better disseminate and encourage participation in existing campus climate assessments to further the College's understanding of student/stakeholder perspectives, needs, and concerns.
- ▲ MCCC should continue to improve existing occasions where the College community comes together (either in person or online) to provide opportunities for collaboration and unscripted exchange of ideas.
- ▲ The College should continue to enhance transparency around evaluation and promotion processes, specifically for administrative roles that are not covered by the faculty or support staff contracts.

### Expand Community Participation

#### Strengths

- ✦ MCCC's processes are linked to corresponding and identifiable initiatives, particularly regarding Equity Diversity and Belonging (EDB), access, and funding sources.
- ✦ The College consistently provides opportunities for student engagement in its highest levels of policymaking by including student representation on key committees and through the utilization of a Student Usability Board.

## **Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience**

### **Introduction**

The College offers 106 educational pathways, ranging from transfer- and career-ready associate degrees to credit-bearing certificates and non-credit workforce training, descriptions of which are readily available on the College's website and in its Course Catalog. Curricula for all degree programs are carefully mapped to foster student learning across program, General Education, and course outcomes, all in support of authentic student learning. Qualified, dedicated faculty craft, develop, teach, support, and assess its programs. The College also follows regular processes for student course evaluations, faculty evaluations, and classroom observations, which are based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria.

Registered students use an internal software program called "self-service" to follow degree pathways and choose requirements and electives. Montco also supports students with 24/7 tutorial services, robust program and transfer advising, wide-ranging library services, as well as other resources that support student academic progress. Each program, whether a transfer-ready AA, AFA, or AS or workforce-ready AAS, shares a common General Education Core Curriculum (the Core). In every program the College offers, students achieve six Core goals: communication and information literacy, quantitative and scientific reasoning, aesthetics, cultural awareness and diversity, ethical perspectives, and technological fluency, with critical thinking embedded throughout. The few student learning opportunities designed, delivered, and/or assessed by third-party providers (for example, tutorial services) receive appropriate institutional review and approval.

### **Telling Our Story:**

#### **Access and Equity Focus Prepares MCCC for Pandemic-Era Learning**

When the College's physical campuses were ordered closed in March 2020, two institutional decisions allowed MCCC to continue to deliver excellent education: first, the decision to prioritize access and holistic student success through our information technology resources, and second, a pre-existing commitment to equity across campuses. Both facilitated the College's success during and after the pandemic.

Because our mission always emphasized access strategies, the College leveraged its existing investments in video conferencing software, multimedia lectures, and interactive online tools to enable a quick pivot to remote learning. MCCC, which has been offering online classes for over 20 years, consistently ranks high among the top community colleges for its use of technology (2015-16 Center for Digital Education "A+," 2023 Cisco Networking Academy "Be the Bridge" Award). For the past 30 years, the College has hosted an annual Technology & Learning Conference that draws international participation. An all-College Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT) is explicitly embedded into the College's governance structure. As the pandemic hit, the Office of Academic Affairs could rely on a trained staff of Instructional Designers and an existing, robust online certification process for faculty to support remote student learning. And years of improvements to multimedia tools, partially in response to suggestions coming out of our 2015 Self-Study to ensure ADA compliance in all online offerings, also prepared the institution well.

As it became clear that re-opening our physical location was not yet an option, the all-College IDT Committee worked tirelessly to clarify College definitions for each of its modalities and to communicate those definitions to students at the point of registration. One sticking point, for example, was to clarify to students that group work or virtual conferences might be obligatory in asynchronous classes. IDT also proposed a new modality called the FLEX classroom, which allowed students to join classes physically or virtually at their discretion. That work was recognized as a 2021-2022 Innovation of the Year by the League for Innovation in the Community College.

The College's existing resources jump-started our students' transition to fully remote learning. For decades, the College had invested, for example, in videoconference tools, primarily to ensure equitable faculty, staff, and student representation across physical campuses in governance meetings, hiring committees, and professional development sessions. Our focus on equity, therefore, gave us an immediate advantage during our physical closure, as we already had a culture of remote collaboration in place. When the College added Zoom software to

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

supplement its Teams, Blackboard Collaborate, and other video conferencing software, most faculty and staff were already comfortable conducting some of their administrative responsibilities in a remote environment; transferring those skills to our students was straightforward in most instances.

Students adapted to remote learning immediately and well. Since our faculty had previously agreed to post syllabi and grades to the LMS, even if the course was offered in person, students were mostly familiar with the platform. If economic conditions precluded affordable Wi-Fi access, students could take advantage of free Wi-Fi from hot spots set up by staff in our parking lots. The College also offered virtual drop-in and remote advising via Zoom or Teams, which continues to have lasting and positive impacts on student support. Overall, MCCC’s attention to access and equity in the service of students and employees served the College well until its physical re-opening.

**Research Findings and Compliance Narrative**

*Coherent Student Learning Experiences (Std III.1)*

Montco’s four academic divisions (STEM, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, and Business and Professional Studies) organize its 42 associate degree programs, 23 of which are transfer-focused and result in an earned AS, AFA, or AA degree and 19 of which are terminal AAS degrees preparing students for immediate entry into the workforce. Figure III-1 lists the College’s 10 most highly enrolled programs by unduplicated headcount in AY 22-23.

| 1  | Degree Program               | Unduplicated Headcount | New Student | Part Time % | PELL Recipient % |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2  | Nursing (AAS)                | 1,331                  | 417         | 87.38%      | 38.39%           |
| 3  | Liberal Studies (AA)         | 1,293                  | 459         | 59.94%      | 30.32%           |
| 4  | Business Administration (AS) | 1,163                  | 449         | 55.55%      | 27.43%           |
| 5  | Computer Science (AS)        | 500                    | 182         | 55.00%      | 29.00%           |
| 6  | Psychology (AS)              | 490                    | 181         | 58.37%      | 35.71%           |
| 7  | Dental Hygiene (AAS)         | 378                    | 150         | 92.33%      | 37.04%           |
| 8  | Edu Early Years (AA)         | 362                    | 96          | 69.34%      | 29.01%           |
| 9  | Engineering Science (AS)     | 337                    | 132         | 58.46%      | 30.27%           |
| 10 | Radiography (AAS)            | 285                    | 97          | 85.61%      | 32.28%           |
| 11 | Life Sciences (AS)           | 260                    | 100         | 60.77%      | 28.85%           |

Figure III-1: A list of the 10 most highly enrolled programs based on unduplicated headcount, noting new students, percentage of part-time students, and percentage of students receiving PELL.

Students complete degree programs by earning between 60 and 70 credits. Through the oversight of the VP of Academic Affairs/Provost and the Curriculum Committee, the College ensures that each of its 42 degrees comprises three parts: program requirements (totaling 30 or more credits), General Education (totaling a minimum of 18 credits) and open electives (III.1.a.2.). The learning outcomes for each program appear in the Catalog as well as on the College website. Each program, whether a transfer-ready AA, AFA, or AS or workforce-ready AAS, shares a common General Education Core Curriculum, through which students achieve the College’s six Core goals in communication and information literacy, quantitative and scientific reasoning, aesthetics, cultural awareness and diversity, ethical perspectives, and technological fluency.

One recently updated program, the Tourism and Hospitality Management AAS, provides an example of how curricular updates are developed as coherent student learning experiences. The faculty sponsor of the former Hospitality Program, responding to an environmental scan, proposed significant curricular revisions to align with parallel local and national degree programs, County workforce needs, and tourism career trends. The revisions also aimed to improve program retention and graduation rates. Since the region has a high demand for tourism and hospitality professionals, the faculty proposed that the externship requirement be embedded in the curriculum.

### Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

As with all the College's offerings, the revised degree pathway spans three categories of coursework:

- 33 credits of required Program courses
- 24-25 credits of General Education directed electives
- 3 credits for an open elective

All programs at the college are comprised of these elements. In this example, the sponsoring faculty suggested replacing the culinary-centric courses in the old Hospitality program with tourism-based courses. These courses more closely mirrored the nature of the industry, which the College had identified as a growth segment of the local economy. The faculty proposed additional exposure to eco-tourism, sports tourism, entrepreneurship, and concepts of sustainability, leadership, and innovation; this approach allowed the program to cross-utilize electives offered in the Business Management program curriculum. The faculty then proposed a General Education sequence well above the College's 18-credit minimum, ensuring that students were well prepared for transfer and adding an appropriate Aesthetics option, an option to take a transferrable college-level math course or an accounting course, and a more flexible technological fluency elective. Finally, the program ensured that students had at least one open elective, which is a best practice of MCCC's curricular planning.

To begin the approval process and take the program through College Governance, the sponsoring faculty compiled a congruence table between revised course outcomes and the College Mission, an assessment plan mapping Student Learning Outcomes across program and General Education requirements, updated transfer agreements, a General Education map, a Program Assessment plan, and the approval of the Division Dean. These documents are compiled in the "Request to Modify a Curriculum" form, which the Faculty Governance Curriculum Committee manages. The program also received simultaneous approval for a stand-alone 30-credit certificate, in which ten of the 11 courses in the major may also be taken towards a Tourism and Hospitality Management certificate and then "stacked" into an AAS degree later. The College offers 27 additional certificate programs, each designed to provide education leading to entry-level employment. While the certificate programs are discipline-intensive, most certificate coursework can be applied to a parallel associate's degree program.

Ongoing initiatives in the Tourism and Hospitality Management program include transfer partnerships with Temple University, Florida International University, and Cornell University, among others, as well as employment partnerships with Walt Disney World, Yellowstone National Park, and Marriott Hotels. In the past two years, 22 MCCC students were hired, and five were promoted to management in organizations such as Hyatt Hotels, Kimpton Hotels, and destination marketing organizations. Current students have also participated in academic study abroad experiences throughout Europe, Latin America, and North Africa.

To create and sustain innovative programs like this, the College regularly reviews educational offerings and conducts trend analysis to determine their viability. The College's Course Catalog and the interactive Academic Program finder on the external website describe each program in detail. Enrolled students use a software program colloquially called "Self-Service" to view degree pathways and choose courses when registering. Academic advisors meet with students at designated intervals (or when the student requests) to review programs of study and registration calendars. In addition, eight of the College's programs are accredited through their own professional bodies (Dental Hygiene, Education in the Early Years, Medical Lab Technician, Nursing, Phlebotomy, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiography, and Surgical Lab Technician) and meet additional external requirements.

Regardless of location or mode of delivery, the quality of instruction and the rigor of courses are guided by the College's credit-hour policy (III.1.a.1) and the maintenance of standard course outlines, known as ACT 335s. The ACT 335 lists credit hours, a uniform course description, all prerequisites/corequisites, course learning outcomes, a sequence of topics, assessment methods, and recommended student materials. Every ACT 335 is approved by the College's Curriculum Committee and the Provost; each appears on the website at the point of registration ("Standard Course Outline"), includes course assessment criteria and ensures a coherent student learning experience across multiple sections and semesters. Supporting these course outlines are a variety of assessment tools, including the Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment (DERCA), used by online instructors to review best practices, apply sound instructional design principles, and ensure compliance with accreditation standards, and the Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE), which records instructional hour equivalencies of

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online interactions per DoE requirements (III.1.a.3.). An annual syllabus review ensures that faculty members inform their students of course outcomes, college resources, and policies. See Figure III-2 for examples of credit policies and measurements.

| CREDITS AWARDED | MINIMUM CONTACT TIME PER WEEK FOR 14 WEEKS | MINIMUM INSTRUCTIONAL TIME OVER A 14 WEEK PERIOD | MINIMUM CARNEGIE UNIT HOURS INCLUDING 1 HOUR OF INSTRUCTION AND 2 HOURS OF PREP TIME |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| 1               | 55 contact minutes                         | 770 contact minutes                              | 42 hours   |
| 2               | 110 contact minutes                        | 1540 contact minutes                             | 84 hours   |
| 3               | 165 contact minutes                        | 2310 contact minutes                             | 126 hours  |
| 4               | 220 contact minutes                        | 3080 contact minutes                             | 168 hours  |

Montgomery County Community College  
PSY 136  
Personality  
3-3-0

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
A comparison of major approaches to the study of the development, assessment and structure of normal personality. Topics include the applications of research to understanding and promoting mental health and human resilience. Consideration is given to the role of healthy personality in managing frustration, conflict, adjusting to predictable and unpredictable life changes, and achieving maximum well-being.

**PREREQUISITE(S):**  
None

**CO-REQUISITE(S):**  
None

| LEARNING OUTCOMES   | LEARNING ACTIVITIES   | EVALUATION METHODS                           |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Describe and give examples of the influences of individual, interpersonal and societal factors on personality and adjustment.  | Lecture<br>Discussion<br>AV/Multimedia Materials  | Quiz<br>Group Presentation                   |
| 2. Define and give examples of major concepts in the study of Personality including the Five Factor Model, social class, psychodynamic, Maslow's research, and behavior genetics. | Web based research<br>Completing and summarizing self-assessments<br>Lecture<br>Viewing video clips | Quiz<br>Paper summarizing web-based research |

**SEQUENCE OF TOPICS:**  
 1. Adjusting to Modern Life  
 2. Theories of Personality  
 3. Stress, its Effects and Coping Processes  
 4. What is the "Self"? How is it Shaped and Why Does It Matter?  
 5. Social Thinking and Social Influence  
 6. Interpersonal Communication  
 7. Friendship and Love  
 8. Marriage and Intimate Relationships  
 9. Gender and Behavior  
 11. Careers and Work  
 12. Psychological Disorders and Psychotherapy  
 13. Positive Psychology

**Instructional Engagement Matrix for Online Courses**

| Assessment | Description & Student Learning Outcome(s) from ACT 335 | Type of Interaction   | Student Work in Hours |
|------------|--|---|-----------------------|
|            |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Student-student<br><input type="checkbox"/> Student-instructor<br><input type="checkbox"/> Student-content |                       |

Check Totals

Number of Credits:

- 1 Credit Course = 42 hours
- 2 Credit Course = 84 hours
- 3 Credit Course = 126 hours
- 4 Credit Course = 168 hours
- 5 Credit Course = 210 hours
- 6 Credit Course = 252 hours

Total Student Work Hours:

Figure III-2: Sample evidence of credit-hour calculations (III.1.a.1.) and excerpts from ACT 335 course outlines.

**Evidence for Standard III.1**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.1.a.1. Credit Hour Policy and Procedure; III.1.a.2. Course/Program Review Procedures; and III.1.a.3. Verification of Compliance - Assignment of Credit Hours.

**Qualified Faculty Teaching and Assessment (Std III.2.a-e)**

The College's reputation of academic excellence attracts qualified, dedicated professionals who craft, develop, teach, support, and assess its programs. The College employs 168 full-time faculty, including Academic Advisors and Librarians, who hold faculty rank, and 413 part-time adjunct faculty, in support of an average student class size of 14 (III.2.c.1.). Both full- and part-time faculty members hold advanced qualifications in their discipline (at least a master's degree or equivalent). Among the full-time faculty, 30 (18%) hold the rank of Instructor, 78 (46%) have attained the rank of Assistant Professor, 35 (21%) are Associate Professors, and 25 (15%) are full Professors. Of the 168 full-time faculty members, 65 (38%) have a doctoral degree (III.2.b.1.).

The Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Union Contract detail faculty responsibilities (III.2.e.3. and III.2.a.1.). New full-time faculty members are hired via a well-documented Search Committee process; all Search Committee chairs and members are trained by Human Resources prior to the search and use standard SuccessFactors software to support the candidate review process. In addition, and to promote the College's Equity and Values statements, all Search Committees include a specified Diversity advocate.

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Per the contract, all faculty who wish to teach online, hybrid, or videoconference courses will engage in training (III.2.a.1 and III.2.b.2). Per the recommendation of the former Distance Education Committee (DEC), the training, then called eLearning 101, focused on how to “build out” a class at the College since no standard or pre-built courses are offered to new faculty members. This past recommendation from a Faculty Governance Committee emerged as a strength during the pandemic. Montco’s instructional designers, who partner with what is now called the Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT), oversee the course. Learning outcomes incorporate an understanding of the ACT 335 form, which is the College’s standard course outline, and connect the learning objectives to assessments. The training simultaneously offers instruction in creating videos and rubrics, enhancing the accessibility of course materials, and building an online community. When the pandemic arrived, any faculty members not yet certified to teach online could enroll in eLearning 101 immediately or during the 2020 summer semester (III.2.d.1.).

New challenges with this training arose as the pandemic continued. Our instructional designers heard feedback from faculty that the eLearning course didn’t encompass new synchronous or “tweaked” hybrid modalities. As is College practice, the Instructional Design staff consulted with the appropriate all-College Governance committee, IDT. An IDT subcommittee met and worked alongside the instructional designers to define and include all learning modalities (online synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, flex, and face-to-face) into this professional development course. After several months of brainstorming, the faculty training was refreshed and renamed “Course Design Across Modalities.” “Course Design Across Modalities” explicitly focused a week on synchronous online and hybrid offerings. The revamped course included step-by-step instructions on course builds in the new learning management system (Canvas), ideas to reduce the cognitive load of material (via headers, videos and callouts) and adjustments to the emphasis on specific topics. (See Figure III-3 and III.2.d.2.)

| Week | Module Content Topics  |
|------|--|
| 0    | Course Overview and Introduction   |
| 1    | What are students expecting in their learning experience?  |
| 2    | How important is accessibility?  |
| 3    | How do I know my students are learning?  |
| 4    | Does learner experience matter in my online/hybrid course?   |
| 5    | How do I know which Canvas tools will support my course build?   |
| 6    | What are additional design and facilitation considerations for student learning?   |
| 7    | How do I transition an online course to another modality, like a synchronous course?   |
|      | Bonus Modules  |
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid and Flex Considerations</li> <li>• Generative Artificial Intelligence Considerations</li> <li>• Plagiarism (Turnitin and Draft Coach)</li> </ul> |

Figure III-3: Faculty work through 7 weeks of training during the refreshed Course Design Across Modalities class.

In 2023-2024, the Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC), another Faculty Governance Committee, was refreshing two key documents: The Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment by Instructors (DERCA), a tool designed to allow faculty to meet external accreditation standards while enabling self-reflection on course design, and the Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE), an online form verifying that a course contains the requisite student engagement per credit hour. The EEC worked with IDT and the instructional designers to incorporate the DERCA throughout the Course Design Across Modalities training, showing faculty the alignment of the material covered in the course with the specific items on the DERCA document. The EEC team established an auditing process for the DERCA and MIE documents submitted to complete the review cycle. The review process will be similar to what the institution does for the syllabus. The Instructional Designers will review a sampling of submitted work and work with the faculty member if there are any discrepancies. The first review will occur in Spring 2025 for materials submitted in Fall 2024 (III.3.a.2 and III.2.e.5.).

Course observations (with a schedule detailed in the Faculty Contract) and student evaluations (for every course, every semester) provide evidence of how faculty teaching pedagogy aligns with the College’s mission and offer the faculty ongoing assessment from both those they teach and those who supervise them. These results must be included in faculty promotion portfolios to show pedagogical excellence and academic rigor as part of faculty self-



assessment. In addition, every observation process, whether conducted by a dean, a discipline coordinator, or a peer observer, as appropriate, results in collegial conversations about teaching practices and pedagogy.

### *Following Up: Recommendations from the 2015 Self-Study*

To address a recommendation from the 2015 Self-Study, the College investigated whether it had developed a process to track and ensure a higher level of student participation in faculty evaluation. The College transitioned from GAP Smart Evaluations to Watermark CES for faculty evaluations to increase student response rates. It then reduced the number of questions on the evaluation surveys from 36 to 6 (7 questions for clinical courses). The College's Student Usability Board members reviewed the survey/questions. Before the survey, multiple announcements were sent out through various modalities (emails, LMS notifications and Montco Connect). Before implementing these changes (2015), student response rates averaged 30%; post changes, the student response rates increased and averaged 52% from Fall 2021 through Spring 2023. After making changes to the student course/faculty evaluation process, the average response rate increased from 30% in 2015 to 54% in 2023 (III.2.e.1.). **Strength: The Self-Study affirmed that the College has significantly improved the administration of course and faculty evaluation surveys. What in 2015 was viewed as an opportunity for improvement has become a new area of strength in 2025.**

The College also assesses the success of its faculty's performance using nationally normed tools. As documented via the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) in 2017 and 2022, MCCC ranks in the top 10% for large community colleges in the Early Connections and Academic Social Support areas. The SENSE also found that the College has improved in active and collaborative learning in the classroom and academic challenges. In 2017, MCCC scored 44.4 (active learning) and 47.3 (academic challenge); those scores were 51.7 (active learning) and 52 (academic challenge) in 2022. Related Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data also point to improvements in academic rigor, as the College scored 47.8% in 2019, 48.4 in 2021, and 52% in 2022 in the academic challenge category. Nationally, the top 10% of the current three-year cohort scored 56.8%, indicating the College is making progress toward the top 10% in the academic challenge category. These results validate our faculty's academic rigor against student outcomes data (III.2.e.6. and III.2.e.7.).

**Strength: The College uses multiple measures to evaluate effective student learning outcomes and engagement, and this process has become an area of strength** (III.2.e.2.). The College regularly administers and reviews student surveys, which have seen a significant increase in return rates since 2015. For example, the College's 2023 Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) results indicate that the College is in the top 10% of the large college cohort for three of the six benchmarks: *Early Connections*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Academic and Social Support Network*. MCCC's benchmark scores on four factors of student engagement (*Early Connections*, *High Expectations and Aspirations*, *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway*, and *Academic and Social Support Network*) are higher than the 2023 SENSE cohort and the MSCHE and Achieving the Dream member averages.

In key areas, aggregate percentage scores for the levels of student engagement exceeded the percentages of the other members of the SENSE Cohort – Large Colleges. Specifically, MCCC outperformed the other 2023 SENSE participants when it came to advisor assistance (77.9% v. 69.6%), in-class questions and discussions (95.0% v. 90.2%), use of an electronic tool to communicate with instructors (84.4% v. 76.2%) and prompt written and oral instructor feedback (83.5% v. 80.5%). These post-pandemic scores demonstrate survey benchmarks of *Engaged Student Learning* and a *Clear Academic Plan & Pathway* (III.2.e.6.).

The faculty promotion process prioritizes effective teaching. New full-time faculty must attend an initial orientation series and participate in a mentoring program at the time of their hire. Faculty seeking promotion must compile a promotion portfolio demonstrating teaching excellence, professional development and service to the College (and each of these three is evaluated differently depending on the rank for which the faculty member is applying). The portfolio provides individual evidence of "teaching excellence" by assembling a teaching philosophy, examples of course design, and data showing positive student outcomes; they must also provide documentation of service to the College and professional engagement. Advisors, counselors, and librarians have corresponding Handbooks

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guiding their promotion process. The Faculty Union contract codifies responsibilities, promotion schedules, service requirements, the attainment of seniority, workload, benefits and pay for both full-time and part-time faculty members (III.2.e.3.).

The Director of Faculty Success manages training for the promotion process and convenes the Promotion Committee as needed. The Promotion Committee reviews faculty teaching portfolio materials and makes recommendations. Seven faculty comprise the membership of each committee convened, with at least one faculty member from each division and at least one 12-month faculty member from advisors or librarians. The Committee or Committees (if needed) convene in early October for Fall and early March for Spring promotions. Full-time faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate and Full Professor may serve, with the members' rank equaling the level of those seeking promotion (III.2.e.3.). Figure III-4 illustrates the number of faculty promoted according to rank between 2019-2024. In addition, according to the Director of Faculty Success, five faculty went through the process and were unsuccessful upon their first attempt; four of the five revised their portfolios and were successful the following year, while one withdrew their application.

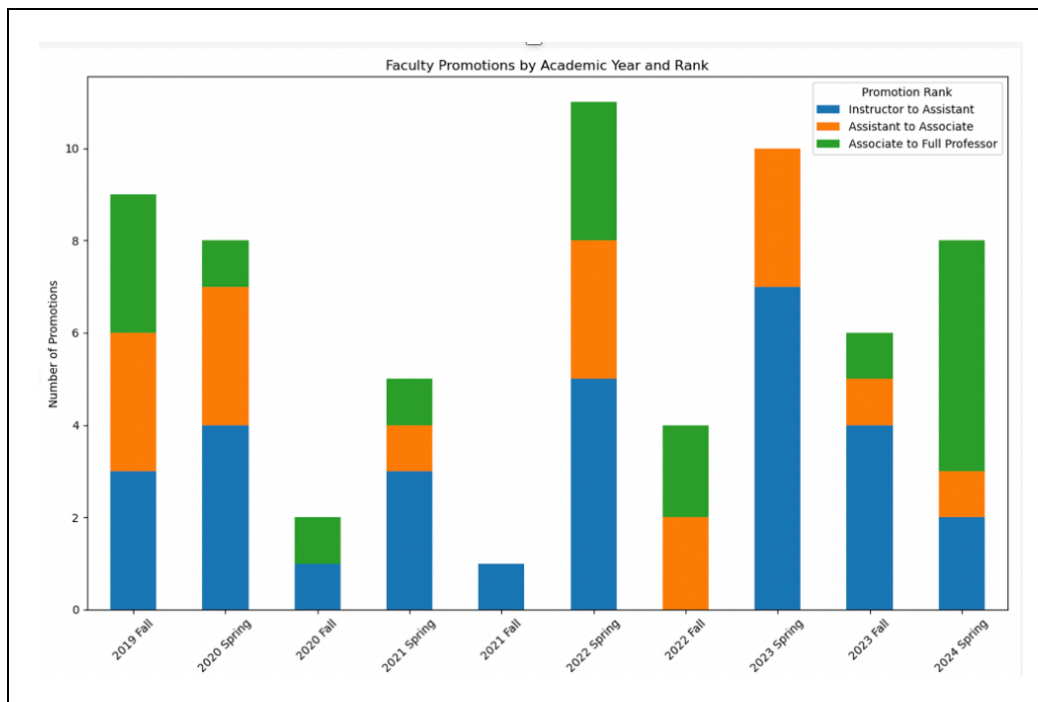


Figure III-4: Faculty promotions by semester and rank between 2019 and 2024.

Faculty members are required to participate in professional development every academic year. The Director of Faculty Success organizes many additional opportunities for training during the academic year based on needs and requests. The College also offers group and individual classes, tutoring, and assistance from instructional designers (III.2.d.1.). Procedures in the Contract also govern the faculty grievance, discipline, and dismissal process based on principles of

fairness and regard for the rights of all. Board of Trustees Policy 6.8 addresses procedures for progressive faculty discipline. The Faculty Union Contract, as well as a variety of Board policies governing sexual harassment, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and anti-nepotism, ensure the College adheres to equitable practices for faculty employment.

The College supports faculty scholarship and innovation in multiple ways. Funds for academic conferences and other professional development activities are available through the divisions, the Office of the Academic Vice President and Provost, and Pearlstine grants. The College also has a clear application procedure for faculty sabbaticals, outlined in the Faculty Union contract. Selected sabbatical projects, which demonstrate the rigor and scope of faculty research, appear in Figure III-5.

Every year at Commencement, the College recognizes one full-time and two part-time faculty members with teaching excellence awards. These awards are presented to faculty members who provide intellectually stimulating, accessible instruction that supports the well-being of students, both inside and outside the classroom. League for Innovation in the Community College Excellence and National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Awards are periodically presented to selected faculty for exceptional College service or the development of high-impact practices.

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| Discipline       | Division       | Term   | Year | Sabbatical Project Description  |
|------------------|----------------|--------|------|---|
| Computer Science | STEM           | Fall   | 2023 | This project will explore the application of auto-code generation by sophisticated machine learning software on the evolution of student learning experiences in the Computer Science programming sequence.   |
| ESL              | Liberal Arts   | Spring | 2022 | Build better connections and better awareness of the current ESL population in Montgomery County. This data could inform curriculum decisions in both non-credit ESL and academic ESL classes.  |
| Nursing          | Health Science | Fall   | 2020 | Exploration of the inter-disciplinary Multiple Patient Simulation (MPS) experience that mimics the actual healthcare environment to prepare students to manage caring for several patients as a team rather than the traditional practice of caring for a single patient. |
| Psychology       | Social Science | Fall   | 2018 | To examine the impact of two student veteran initiatives at the College, a veteran-specific course and veterans' mindfulness retreat.   |
| English          | Liberal Arts   | Spring | 2018 | Conduct research on free families of color in colonial and antebellum-era Virginia to complete a book on the impact of free Blacks on political, social, and economic policies of colonial-era Virginia.  |
| Psychology       | Social Science | Spring | 2017 | To investigate current best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment for psychology programs and develop resources for teaching, advising, and assessment.  |
| Criminal Justice | Social Science | Spring | 2016 | To identify graduates from the Criminal Justice program over the last 45 years who have worked as professionals in the field and invite them to be resources for the program, students, and the College.  |

Figure III-5: Selected sabbatical projects demonstrate the opportunity for and rigor of Faculty research.

**Evidence for Standard III.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.2.a.1. Faculty Contract Appendix M; III.3.a.2. Educational Effectiveness Cycle; III.2.b.1. Faculty Advanced Degrees; III.2.b.2. Faculty Certification by Discipline; III.2.c.1. Faculty to Student Ratio; III.2.c.2. Staff to Student Ratio; III.2.d.1. Faculty Professional Development and Instructional Design Offerings (Example); and III.2.d.2. eLearning 101 course Refresh & Training and Course Design Across Modalities outline; III.2.e.1. Full-time Teaching Evaluation Summary; III.2.e.2. Program/Course Evaluation Process; III.2.e.3. Faculty Promotion Handbook; III.2.e.4. Catalog Review Process; III.2.e.5. Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment (DERCA). III.2.e.6. SENSE 2022 Executive Summary; and III.2.e.7. CCSSE 2022 Executive Summary.

*Programs of Study (Std III.3)*

Both the College website and Academic Course Catalog clearly document degree requirements for students; the Interactive Academic Planner also lists a potential degree schedule based on whether the student is enrolled full- or part-time (III.3.a.5. and III.3.a.6.). The learning outcomes for each program appear in the Catalog immediately before the suggested sequence of courses for the program. Each program is fine-tuned for easy student enrollment and has a corresponding Curriculum Map on file with the Office of Educational Effectiveness (III.v.a.3.). This map aligns Student Learning Outcomes with Program and General Education requirements.

The College tracks program success on many levels. While the College Factbook tracks general trends, such as enrollment by status type and credit hours by division, the Program Excellence and Effectiveness Review (PEER) report disaggregates program data by demographics, student success rates (persistence and retention), Pell eligibility, part-time student status and graduation and transfer rates/destination (III.3.a.1., III.3.a.2., and III.8.a.1.). The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs shares PEER information annually with program coordinators and directors. Data may be used to, for example, evaluate issues of equity and access, such as programs that enroll mostly students who identify as male or students whose diversity data falls more than 20% outside that of the general student population. PEER data might also identify potential obstacles to completion, especially for programs whose time to degree is higher than the College average. Finally, PEER data is discussed during the Program Assessment Roundtable (PAR) process. Sample PEER data appears in Figure III-6.

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|    |                              | Persist to Fall to Spring % | Course Withdrawal % | Grads: Average Years to Complete | Grads as % of Undup. Headcount |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Degree Program</b>        |                             |                     |                                  |                                |
| 2  | Nursing (AAS)                | 56.3%                       | 7.7%                | 6.9                              | 9.6%                           |
| 3  | Liberal Studies (AA)         | 59.2%                       | 6.8%                | 5.6                              | 14.1%                          |
| 4  | Business Administration (AS) | 56.5%                       | 6.7%                | 4.5                              | 16.9%                          |
| 5  | Computer Science (AS)        | 58.4%                       | 6.8%                | 4.4                              | 8.8%                           |
| 6  | Psychology (AS)              | 58.2%                       | 7.5%                | 4.6                              | 11.8%                          |
| 7  | Dental Hygiene (AAS)         | 56.1%                       | 8.4%                | 5.4                              | 7.1%                           |
| 8  | Edu Early Years (AA)         | 57.5%                       | 4.2%                | 4.1                              | 9.1%                           |
| 9  | Engineering Science (AS)     | 59.3%                       | 7.7%                | 5.7                              | 9.8%                           |
| 10 | Radiography (AAS)            | 54.0%                       | 9.6%                | 6.3                              | 3.9%                           |
| 11 | Life Sciences (AS)           | 63.1%                       | 8.8%                | 4.8                              | 7.7%                           |

Figure III-6: An example of program data disaggregated by persistence rate, course withdrawal rate, average years to completion, and graduates as a percentage of unduplicated headcount in a PEER report.

MCCC prides itself on being the community’s college. It recognizes that its student population is very diverse and, therefore, aims to offer a variety of Certificate and Non-Credit Programs and welcomes dual-enrolled students (III.3.a.3.). The College also offers a wide array of non-credit courses, ranging from Fresh Pasta Workshop to Cyber Threat Management, in which students can adopt new skills. In addition, students may take a series of non-credit courses prepare for careers in Real Estate or needing Notary Services. In another example of community engagement, the College offers two different English as a Second Language (ESL) programs aimed at two

different student populations. The College’s for-credit ESL program provides students whose first language is not English or F-1 students with an academic preparatory ESL (English as a Second Language) program. These students take courses in English vocabulary, punctuation, grammar, and writing, as well as reading comprehension, pronunciation, and conversation skills, including listening to and understanding English. MCCC’s six-level non-credit ESL program helps community members improve their basic English communication skills without the stress of exams. Both curricula are overseen by an ESL faculty coordinator and assessed regularly according to the College’s usual program schedule (III.3.a.4.).

**Evidence for Standard III.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.3.a.1. Educational Programs with Enrollments; III.3.a.2. College Factbook; III.3.a.3. Dual Enrollment Program and Data; III.3.a.4. ESL Programs, Services, and Data; III.3.a.5. Program Pathways; and III.3.a.6. College Catalog.

*Resources for Learning (Std III.4)*

The College affirmed that it provides students with resources to support their programs and academic progress, highlighting multiple areas of strength: Advising, Inclusive Syllabi, Library Resources and Online Access. Additional student support initiatives are also detailed throughout our chapter on Standard IV.

- **Advising.** Well-qualified advisors regularly meet with students to review their programs of study, transfer plans (if applicable), and registration selections. Appointments are available in person at both campuses or via increasingly popular virtual meetings. Students can use interactive academic program tools, publicly available on the website, to access program outcomes, course sequences, and Career Opportunities. Transfer partners and Affiliation agreements are easily searchable on Montco’s website via “My Transfer Plan” link. The College has agreements with 36 transfer partners and offers opportunities for students to evaluate their progress toward selected transfer degrees. More detailed and complete information on the College’s wrap-around student advising resources may be found in the chapter on Standard IV.
- **Inclusive Syllabi.** The College’s emphasis on student-centered syllabi is a strength. For example, to support student learning outcomes, the College was accepted into the Racial Equity Leadership Academy (RELA), sponsored by Achieving the Dream. MCCC, one of only 10 colleges selected in the inaugural national cohort, designed a RELA Syllabus Template using the Caring, Fairness and Transformation equity framework. In addition, a RELA Checklist Rubric, which contained questions for examining a syllabus through this equity framework, was created for faculty to use as a post-semester peer or self-assessment tool. A successful pilot led to the implementation of an updated syllabus template. The template included language that allowed students to begin their courses with optimism and a sense of belonging, dispelling preconceived notions about their success potential with the coursework. It also included straightforward explanations of some College policies, such as the relationship between class

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attendance and financial aid, that tried to help students connect educational access to engagement and success. Based upon student responses to the Fall 2023 Student Confidence Survey and slight increases in success rates among at-risk groups within the pilot courses/sections, the Director of Educational Effectiveness has determined that there is continued merit to using equity-focused language in our Day One messaging instrument, the syllabus (III.4.a.2. and III.4.a.3.).

- **Library Resources.** As reported via IPEDS, our Library employs 8.15 FTE staff; it offers 47,868 physical holdings and 161,746 electronic holdings. Both the Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses offer physical library spaces and resources for students, faculty, staff and the public. Along with traditional printed materials, the College hosts a robust online library with digital offerings available to current students and College employees, including eBooks, over 40 academic research databases, and streaming video collections. Librarians are available to students in person or via online chat.

Librarians also teach in multiple areas, including introductions to library resources and services (in the First Year Experience and Reading courses), as invited lecturers in General Education classes about information literacy topics (in English Composition and Communication and Media Studies courses) and to reinforce professional communication within a field of study, such as in Nursing 215 and other program capstones). For each of these categories, librarians have iterated upon information literacy lessons, creating new learning materials and activities in collaboration with the subject specialists while also increasing the scale of participation overall (III.4.a.4. and III.4.a.5.). The Information Literacy Reinforcement series, managed by Librarians, includes an assessment of student artifacts each summer (discussed at length in the chapter on Standard V).

In AY22-23, the Blue Bell library collection underwent the first significant deselection project in many years. First, library staff identified and pulled all materials that had not been used in over seven years. Librarians reviewed the identified materials and determined to keep, replace or send them along to Better World Books (an organization that connects used books at very low prices with libraries, schools, and booksellers operating on tight budgets). Many materials initially donated to the College from private collections in the '60s and '70s were not currently aligned with the curricular needs of our students and were among those identified for deselection. The space created by the first phase of the project freed up shelving that could be repurposed at the Pottstown campus library.

In AY23-24, the library staff continued to weed the Blue Bell collection, this time on condition. Items falling apart or in poor condition were either replaced or recycled. Librarians used the Collection Development Policy to make their determinations. Beginning in AY24-25, the library staff adopted a weeding cycle that ensures rolling deselection, preventing the need for future large-scale projects.

- **Online Access.** MCCC has been educating its community online for more than 20 and, remotely, for more than 30, years. More than 10,000 students take online courses at the College every year; this number ranks MCCC among the top ten online colleges in the state. Virtual courses are taught in multiple online formats: synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid. Each format is defined on the College website, in its Catalog, and at the point of student registration. Students are supported through LMS resources (III.4.a.6.), knowledgeable Information Technology staff, and a 24/7 Helpdesk.
- **Opportunity: Applied Learning.** The Self-Study process identified an opportunity to enhance applied learning within programs, including experiential learning, externships, clinical or other “hands-on” learning opportunities. The College should continue to adapt its offerings to meet the learning goals of the ever-changing and diverse student body. While researching the effectiveness of educational modalities (synchronous online, asynchronous online, face-to-face, hybrid, flex offerings), the College identified this area as an opportunity to enhance the College’s program offerings. Applied learning, while a good fit with the College’s mission and vision, seems underused in many program curricula. Frameworks, including capstone offerings or credit-for-internship courses, could be implemented to expand how students experience learning. The College has already identified a faculty trend of assessing learning outcomes through project-based learning opportunities (see Figure III-7 below). Building on this trend, **the College should enhance applied learning teaching frameworks throughout the curriculum to grow applied learning opportunities.**

| Learning Activities |               |                |          |               |                      |         |      |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------------|---------|------|
|                     | Collaborative | Practice-based | Hands-on | Problem-based | Independent Learning | Lecture | N =  |
| 2021-2022           | 19%           | 1%             | 49%      | 13%           | 4%                   | 14%     | 164* |
| 2022-2023           | 85%           | 11%            | 33%      | 52%           | 85%                  | 85%     | 165* |
| 2023-2024           | 80%           | 30%            | 64%      | 67%           | 75%                  | 98%     | 122* |

Figure III-7: Types of learning activities assigned by faculty members demonstrate a trend towards collaborative, problem-based learning supplemented by recorded lectures.

\*Discipline coordinator submission for course sections

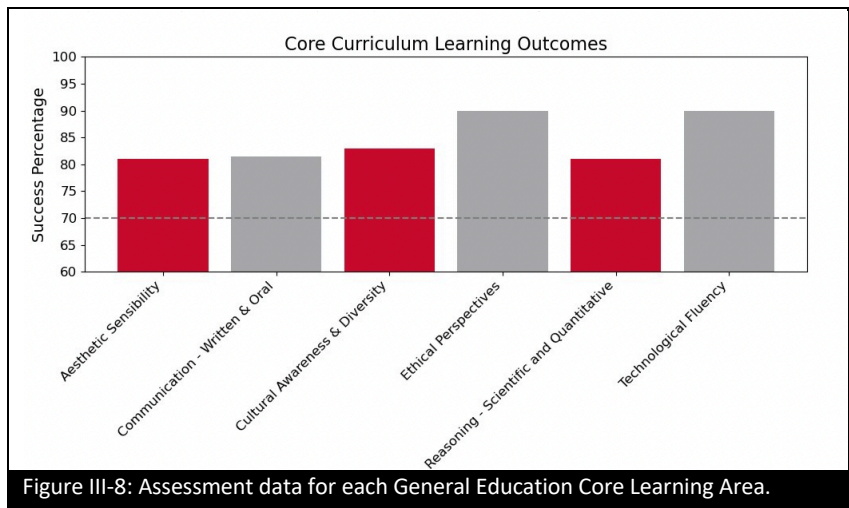
**Evidence for Standard III.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.4.a.1. Degrees and Programs; III.4.a.2. Institutional Syllabus and Syllabus Template; III.4.a.3. Syllabus Compliance Audit; III.4.a.4; Library Resources III.4.a.5.; Information Literacy Instruction for Faculty; and III.4.a.6. Canvas (LMS) Resources for Students.

*General Education (Std III.5.a.-b.)*

Each program, AA, AFA, AS, or AAS, shares a common General Education or “Core Curriculum,” comprising at least 18 credits of designated core coursework outside of their program of study. Developed by Montco’s faculty and revised immediately after the 2015 Self-Study, the Core Curriculum’s six Learning Areas--Communication and Information Literacy, Cultural Awareness and Diversity, Aesthetic Sensibility, Ethical Perspectives, Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning and Technological Fluency--foster the intellectual habits and breadth of academic experiences that are the hallmark of an educated person (III.5.a.1.). Designated Core courses are listed on the College’s website by Learning Area; as of this writing, the College offers 11 Communication and Information Literacy options, 54 Cultural Awareness and Diversity options, 47 Aesthetic Sensibility options, 31 Ethical Perspective options, 17 Scientific and 8 Mathematical Reasoning options, and 12 Technological Fluency options. See Figure III-8 for a summary of SLO assessment data for each Core Learning Area.

Some programs choose to embed Core outcomes when the skills required for a particular Core standard are in a singular designated course with program-specific prerequisites beyond developmental coursework; an example might be the ethical perspectives component of an Elementary Education or Criminal Justice program. Those ethics courses are not open to non-majors, but they fulfill the General Education outcomes. Finally, core “threading” is a program-specific approach that does not use a designated course to meet a Core outcome. Instead, the skills required for a particular standard are found by assembling learning outcomes from different courses throughout the program. For example, our Nursing AAS threads Technological Fluency outcomes throughout its program, since students develop the technical skills for nursing through classroom, lab and clinical settings. These threaded outcomes are clearly designated on a program’s Curriculum Map and assessed according to the General Education schedule (III.5.a.2. and III.5.a.3.).



The Core is a living set of course options. The Curriculum Committee maintains clear guidelines for approving Core courses. The Director of Educational Effectiveness collects and reports on General Education outcomes annually while maintaining the Core assessment calendar (III.5.b.2.). New courses, like the 2023 First Year Experience, which qualified for Technological Fluency, are added as developed and approved (III.5.b.1.).

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Periodically, courses have their Core designation reviewed and removed, due to assessment discussions, changing course outcomes, or low enrollment (III.5.b.3).

### **Evidence for Standard III.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.5.a.1. Core Curriculum; III.5.a.2. Guidelines for Approving Core Courses; III.5.a.3. Curriculum Maps; III.5.a.4. Curriculum Map Project Status Update Tracker; III.5.b.1. List of new general education courses over the past 4 years; III.5.b.2. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment; and III.5.b.3. Educational Effectiveness Roundtables.

### *Graduate Offerings (Std III.6)*

Not applicable; MCCC does not offer graduate or professional programs or coursework.

### *Institutional Review of Third-Party Providers (Std III.7)*

In general, MCCC does not use third-party providers for credit-bearing instruction. However, the College employs a few third-party services to supplement student learning support and provide non-credit training. In these cases, third-party educational providers are subject to appropriate institutional oversight and assessment. For example, the College supplements our in-house faculty tutors with an online tutoring platform to provide all students with access to 24/7 tutorial support services. The College used a satisfaction survey combined with an internal functionality audit of our former service, Tutor.com, to identify areas of need (III.7.a.1.). Tutorial Services recommended to the Purchasing Department that the College use an online tutoring vendor that could provide one entry point for students to access live online tutoring and schedule in-person and online appointments. After an RFP process, in July 2024, Montco transitioned to a new online tutoring platform for students, Brainfuse. Brainfuse offers students a better ability to schedule on-campus and online appointments and “always available” drop-in tutoring. Immediately after the Tutor.com contract expired on June 30, 2024, Brainfuse was implemented on July 1, leaving no lapse in online tutoring support for our students. The College will continue to review tutoring activity across all modalities and use student satisfaction surveys to collect data. Future assessments will closely examine the data to see what type of benefit tutoring has on a student’s success in a particular course.

### **Evidence for Standard III.7**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.7.a.1. Online Tutoring Service Interview Evaluation Matrix.

### *Program Assessment (Std III.8)*

The College’s Program Assessment process is robust, sustainable, and managed on a calendar rotation by the joint efforts of the program’s Faculty coordinator, the Divisional Dean, the Director of Educational Effectiveness and, ultimately, the Office of Academic Affairs.

- Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are developed by the faculty and Dean and reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. After VPAA/Provost approval, PLOs are affirmed by the Student Success Committee of the Board of Trustees and then maintained and publicized in the course catalog and the College website. Faculty coordinators and/or program directors assess PLOs annually (III.8.a.3.).
- Curricular Maps are used to ensure that courses in the program of study and General Education curriculum align with PLOs. Program learning outcomes, whether introduced, reinforced, or mastered, are tracked through this curricular alignment (III.5.a.3. and III.5.a.4.).
- Annual Program Assessment Roundtables (PARs) allow stakeholders to discuss program results and develop any necessary modifications (III.8.a.2.). Stakeholders who meet as part of the PAR process include the Faculty Program Coordinator/Director, Division Dean, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Director of Educational Effectiveness, Institutional Effectiveness Research Director, the assigned Academic Advisor, EEC Divisional Representative, the Registrar, and the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness. Working together, the group reviews and discusses demographic characteristics, course success data for each program, SLOs, historical scheduling patterns, and traditional inflection areas (III.8.a.4.). The Roundtable also compares the program’s student success metrics to other programs at the College using the PEER data report (III.8.a.1.). By making a mandatory, collaborative session part of

## Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

program assessment, the group provides context to identify common barriers across programs, recognize successes, and create more meaningful, short- and long-term action plans that ultimately promote a dynamic student learning environment.

Historically, for example, the Annual Program Review did not include issues such as enrollment and scheduling, student support, and other intervention efforts. Now, however, using the Program Roundtable collaborative team structure, the group can reflect on existing practices and projects within the program to quickly identify successes or areas of concern.

Because the College holds Program Roundtables in the Fall, work on these action items begins immediately; results can be measured and reported at the end of the academic year as part of the annual academic assessment process. The Roundtables' collegewide, inclusive approach to program assessment is an efficient practice and generates achievable actions to support student success while creating a renewed sense of shared ownership of educational effectiveness.

The PAR process takes place over a standard timeline, as follows:

- Program stakeholders meet to review Assessment goals and set new ones for the assessment cycle (PAR Part 1).
- Sponsoring faculty complete an end-of-the-year survey through which data is collected for program outcomes (PAR Part 2).
- Sponsoring faculty complete an End-of-Cycle Summary, synthesizing program outcomes before reporting on and resetting the assessment cycle.
- Disaggregated Program data is reviewed by the AVP of Academic Affairs and distributed to faculty coordinators annually as part of the PEER process.

### Evidence for Standard III.8

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: III.8.a.1. Peer Data; III.8.a.2. Program Roundtables (Sample by Division); III.8.a.3. Program Learning Outcomes Assessment; III.8.a.4. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment; III.8.a.5. Course Assessment; and III.8.a.6. General Education Assessment.

### Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings

The College's institutional priorities are the "Strategic Imperatives" of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

| Ensure Student Learning |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Strengths</b>        |  |
| ✦                       | The College has significantly improved the administration of course and faculty evaluation surveys.              |
| ✦                       | The College uses multiple measures to evaluate effective student learning outcomes and engagement.               |
| <b>Opportunities</b>    |  |
| ▲                       | The College should enhance teaching frameworks throughout the curriculum to grow applied learning opportunities. |



## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

### Introduction

During its Self-Study research, the College confirmed that it has ethical, clearly stated, and mission-driven policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of its students, including accurate and comprehensive information about cost and financial assistance. As an institution with an open admissions policy that reflects its mission to serve a diverse student population and support lifelong learning, MCCC has many processes and support services in place by which students who are not adequately prepared for study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals.

The College also maintains New Student Kickoff days, Weeks of Welcome, a First-Year Experience course, and advisement programs to orient students to MCCC, enhance retention and guide students through their educational experience. The College also has robust policies and procedures regarding the evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits and prior non-academic learning assessment. Student information and records are maintained appropriately, safely, and securely in compliance with Federal Law.

Athletic programs and campus clubs and organizations are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative policies and procedures that govern all other programs at the College. MCCC ensures an appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers, such as Brainfuse (an online tutoring platform that helps the College provide 24/7 tutoring to students) and TimelyCare (a virtual health and well-being provider that helps the College offer anytime/anywhere online counseling to students at no cost to them). The College also completes periodic assessments of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience, including Library Services, Tutoring, Career and Alumni Services, and wrap-around services provided by the Wellness Center.

### Telling Our Story:

#### Making Holistic Student Support a Priority

COVID-19 made MCCC reevaluate how to best connect and provide support to students in a variety of modalities; however, the College's commitment to holistic student support has continued well beyond the pandemic. In December 2022, MCCC opened its comprehensive Wellness Center on its Pottstown Campus. This innovative space provides support services for a variety of essential needs, including counseling, food, sensory-friendly, and health and wellness services, among others. The Wellness Center was funded through a \$1 million Community Mental Health Services Block Grant from Montgomery County. The funds were earmarked by the Commonwealth for community colleges to support students experiencing mental health challenges.

The grant also provided \$100,000 for MCCC's POWER Program. This free program helps individuals in mental health and addiction recovery develop and reach their educational and career goals through a two-credit college course that focuses on college and career preparation skills. Since the POWER Program started in 2006, it has served nearly 600 students. After completing the POWER program, students can participate in the Power Plus program which supports them with academic and workforce placement.

Aligned with the College's holistic approach to student success, the Wellness Center offers comprehensive assistance for individual needs, expanding some of the College's existing programs. The onsite services augment the online services that are available at no cost to all students, which includes live telehealth therapy through their app.

MCCC continues to work with TimelyCare, a leading virtual health and well-being solution in higher education, to offer students free and equitable access to medical and mental health support through the TimelyCare platform. TimelyCare serves as a 24/7 virtual extension of campus wellness center resources to improve student well-being, engagement, and retention.

The Wellness Center creates a convenient, central location for other services, including Veterans Services, the ACT 101 Scholars Program and the Keystone Education Yields Success program. The Wellness Center also houses the College's Stock Up for Success food pantry with refrigerators for produce and dairy products, as well

as freezers. The pantry also includes toiletries and personal care items. The College collaborates with Gwynedd Mercy University on a food insecurity project and receives food from the Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities and Manna on Main Street. The College also works collaboratively to provide support for housing-insecure students.

In 2023, MCCC launched its Food Recovery Program. The program uses excess foods from the College’s Culinary and Baking and Pastry Arts programs to make ready-made meals that are used to stock the food pantry at the Wellness Center. In the fall 2023 semester, the Food Recovery Program donated the equivalent of 937 meals, and the Stock Up for Success Food Pantry saw 218 unique visitors with 979 visits, a 200 percent increase estimated over previous semesters. MCCC’s hydroponic food growing systems supplied lettuce, peppers, and basil at its Pottstown campus.

## Research Findings and Compliance Narrative

### *Admission, Retention, and Success: Financial Information (Std IV.1.a.)*

MCCC recognizes that a college education is an investment and that future and current students need to fully understand the financial components of that investment. The College affirmed that information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds are all readily available on the College’s website (IV.1.a.1.). Additionally, the College’s website provides links to informative videos that walk future and current students and their families through various processes such as applying for financial aid, identifying types of financial aid available, repaying student loans after college, and more.

The College’s website also links directly to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Federal Work-Study is available to all MCCC students who have completed the FAFSA, have financial needs as determined by the FAFSA, and meet other federal financial aid requirements. FAFSA completion rates for MCCC students have been trending upward since 2022, although final 2024 data is not yet available (Figure IV-1).

| Current ISIR Import Year | Count of Current AY Enrolled IDs | Percentage: | Current FAFSA on File |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 2024                     | 3,119                            | 39.33%      | No                    |
|                          | 4,812                            | 60.67%      | Yes                   |
|                          | 7,931                            |             |                       |
|                          | Percentage:                      | 100.00%     |                       |

| Prior ISIR Import Year | Count of Prior AY Enrolled IDs | Percentage: | Prior AY FAFSA on File |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 2023                   | 4,083                          | 40.39%      | No                     |
|                        | 6,025                          | 59.61%      | Yes                    |
|                        | 10,108                         |             |                        |
|                        | Percentage:                    | 100.00%     |                        |

| Prior Prior ISIR Import Year | Count of Prior Prior AY Enrolled IDs | Percentage: | Prior Prior AY FAFSA on File |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 2022                         | 4,260                                | 42.41%      | No                           |
|                              | 5,784                                | 57.59%      | Yes                          |
|                              | 10,044                               |             |                              |
|                              | Percentage:                          | 100.00%     |                              |

At the end of each semester, the Financial Aid Office is required to run the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) process to determine students’ future eligibility for Federal Title IV financial aid. When a student fails to meet the SAP requirement, the College emails the student with instructions for an appeal. This process is also outlined in the College’s Self-Service platform and can be viewed by any student at any time regardless of status.

Students who complete the FAFSA for the award year are automatically considered for Foundation scholarships, and the Federal Work-Study program allows students to earn money by working part-time. At the start of the

Figure IV-1: Percentage (%) of FAFSAs received for unduplicated enrolled degree- and certificate-seeking students, excluding non-degree students. Note: Data from 2024 is not yet final.

COVID-19 pandemic, MCCC received Federal emergency grant funding, and the Foundation received donations of funds earmarked for emergency grant funding. The College awarded Federal emergency grant funding to Pell Grant-eligible students automatically and by application to all other students. Students could also apply to the Foundation for emergency grant funding. The data show that in most semesters, a higher percentage of students

who received emergency grant funding either re-enrolled or graduated. In the spring semesters, the higher number of non-enrollment was related to students opting not to take classes in the summer, which is not a typical semester for academic year enrollment.

Each semester, the Bursar's Office has ECSI, a third-party billing servicer, conduct outreach via email, letter, and text messages to students with a past-due balance. The resolution rate is between 42% and 47%. In Fall 2021, the resolution rate shows as 84% because there was federal emergency grant funding used to resolve some of the past due balances.

The College noted that adaptations made by the Financial Aid office to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic have allowed easier access for students; therefore, these adaptations have continued post-pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, financial aid staff primarily met with students in person by appointment, which only academic advisors and enrollment services staff could schedule. At the start of the pandemic, the Financial Aid Office configured Starfish appointments (a Student Success and Early Alert tool) so that students could schedule virtual appointments directly for general questions and FAFSA filing assistance. This practice has continued even after the return to our physical campuses. Financial Aid staff also now meet with walk-ins. Since September 2023, the Financial Aid Office has tracked appointment modality (virtual/in-person) as well as show rate. The data show that most appointments remain virtual (90% average), and the show rate is 67%.

The College has partnered with Inceptia for Title IV federal financial aid student verification, loan summary dissemination, financial literacy, and student loan repayment outreach to delinquent borrowers. Inceptia is a U.S. Department of Education-approved third-party servicer with over 35 years of experience in financial aid and student outreach for higher education.

Inceptia's Verification Gateway provides a dynamic self-help website that centralizes the U.S. Department of Education's verification process for student federal aid into a single online portal through which students are guided step by step in a secure and user-friendly environment.

In compliance with House Bill 2124 which requires higher education institutions that receive federal loan funding to provide students with an annual notice outlining their total debt obligation, the College uses Inceptia to pull the borrower history report from the National Student Loan Data System and uses that loan history to populate and disseminate student loan summary letters. MCCC students have access to Inceptia's online portal, Student Knowledge HQ, which provides tools and resources that students need regarding student loans for in-school, in-grace, and in-repayment statuses. With the transactional default prevention outreach provided by Inceptia, borrowers are proactively contacted 60-180 days from delinquency to help them resolve their delinquency via repayment, deferment or forbearance; thus, helping the College reduce its institutional cohort default rate (CDR).

Inceptia's Financial Avenue is an online financial education program that provides users with the knowledge and tools to become financially capable. The program meets the requirements of Pa. Code §2302-A which requires institutions of higher education to establish a policy that regulates the marketing of credit cards on campus. Financial Avenue also serves to provide MCCC students with financial literacy education as a component of overall student wellness.

### ***Admission, Retention, and Success: Placement and Support (Std IV.1.b.)***

MCCC's mission is to serve a diverse student population and to support lifelong learning, and our mission is reflected in our open admissions policy. Adherence to this policy also means that some students may not be adequately prepared for the level of study for which they have been admitted. The College affirmed that it has programs and processes in place to identify and support these students. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, admitted students would be placed in appropriate math, writing, and reading courses after completing Accuplacer Placement tests via the College's Testing Center. MCCC advisors would then use placement test scores to place students in appropriate courses. The institution decided to pivot from its Academic Readiness Policy to a holistic placement approach during the COVID-19 pandemic (IV.1.b.1.).

This decision allowed new students to demonstrate academic readiness through a combination of documentation, such as high school course grades, high school GPA, standardized testing scores and/or a holistic conversation with the student's academic advisor. Holistic assessment allows the student to answer a series of questions based on their prior performance, their understanding of their academic history and an advisor's professional judgment. Review of a high school transcript and placement or exam scores are guided by rubrics that have input

from the College’s Reading, English and Math departments. This approach allows the advisor to determine a particular student’s strengths and challenges from a skills perspective to align the student’s prior performance with the skills needed for the student’s program of study. Advisors are also provided areas to ask additional questions and key items to look for when discussing the student’s academic performance. These conversations allow an advisor to determine a pattern of student performance rather than a one-time snapshot of ability.

For example, when assessing reading skills, advisors will assess a student’s approach to reading incorporated into their daily lifestyle. Advisors will also probe into prior course performance and interest in reading and comprehension-intense courses such as courses in history or psychology. Assessment of students enrolled in college-level courses showed similar success rates among students who were placed under the new holistic readiness approach and the old universal placement testing model.

Figure IV-2 below shows that since its implementation in Fall 2020 through Fall 2021, students placed in English 101 through GPA placement and Holistic Placement methods were successful (a C grade or better) at higher rates than students placed in English 101 through more traditional placement testing.

|                                | % of students who completed ENG 101 who were successful (C or better grade) by placement method or pre-req completion |             |            |             |            |             |            |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|                                | Fall 2018   | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019  | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020  | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021  |
| Took ENG010A or 011 (n=52-119) | 79%   | 69%         | 73%        | 72%         | 48%        | 73%         | 56%        |
| Placement Test (n=103-1213)    | 69%   | 63%         | 68%        | 60%         | 58%        | 58%         | 54%        |
| ACT/PSAT/SAT (n=46-489)        | 73%   | 65%         | 74%        | 64%         | 69%        | 55%         | 54%        |
| Transfer (n=7-44)              | 68%   | 76%         | 71%        | 68%         | 59%        | 83%         | 57%        |
| GPA Placement (n=263-865)      | n/a   | n/a         | n/a        | n/a         | 74%        | 68%         | 74%        |
| Holistic Placement (n=101-150) | n/a   | n/a         | n/a        | n/a         | 65%        | 76%         | 69%        |
| <b>Total (n=689-1816)</b>      | <b>75%</b>  | <b>67%</b>  | <b>73%</b> | <b>68%</b>  | <b>70%</b> | <b>69%</b>  | <b>70%</b> |

Combined with feedback from faculty and advisors, the data also highlighted a need for placement testing to appropriately place students in the correct level of reading and English as a Second Language (ESL), a more nuanced determination than the holistic approach can provide. As a result, the College is currently working on an implementation plan to reinstate placement testing for these groups.

Figure IV-2: Percentage (%) of students who completed ENG 101 who were successful (C or better grade) by placement method or pre-requisite completion.

For students who do not demonstrate readiness for college-level courses, developmental coursework in English,

reading, math, and ESL is required. Faculty in these areas have designed developmental courses to make it possible for students to complete both developmental requirements and college-level math and English within the first year, a best practice in supporting student completion. For example, students needing significant developmental work before entering college-level math used to be required to take two semesters of developmental math courses. In 2022, the math faculty re-designed developmental math, making it possible for students to complete developmental math in a single, four-credit course. Students can now complete MAT 080: Fundamentals of Mathematics in one semester, which prepares them for the college-level MAT 106: Math Applications, the course that fulfills students’ Quantitative Reasoning requirements in many programs of study. The average pass rate for MAT 080 since Fall 2023, after the developmental math re-design, is 72%. The average pass rate for ENG 01A Basic Writing between Spring 2021 and Summer 2024 was 51%.

Tutoring is available to all MCCC students and the College’s Tutoring Center has expanded to include virtual tutoring through Brainfuse, in-person tutoring with MCCC tutors, open tutoring sessions, supplemental instruction, and classroom visits. All Brainfuse higher education tutors are certified and reside in the United States. Students can also work with their peers, as the College offers students the opportunity to work as an embedded tutor, peer tutor, peer navigator, or supplemental instruction assistant. Student-athletes have their own designated tutoring provided by the Tutoring Center.

The College has worked to create a system that allows for better intervention on behalf of students in need. For example, the Tutoring Center has implemented Starfish referrals so that teaching faculty, advisors, and other members of the College community can connect students with tutoring support.

Faculty initiate advisor outreach and student connection with support services (including Tutoring and the Wellness Center) by using Starfish Early Alerts. Faculty also use midterm alerts to help students understand their options moving forward with a course at the halfway mark, allowing them to either seek out needed support, make a last push toward the end of the semester, or withdraw from a course (if that is their best option).

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Students on academic probation must meet with advisors to register and are limited to 12 credits in a semester or four credits in a session. This Academic Progression policy is designed to help students focus on fewer classes and help them move back into good academic standing. Suspended students are required to take a stop-out semester, meet with an advisor and connect with Academic Affairs to ensure they are ready to return to the College. The College's Academic Renewal Policy provides eligible students with a one-time-only opportunity to restart their academic records by resetting their GPA and Cumulative Credits Earned for past academic performance once they demonstrate recent success. This policy is designed to reduce barriers to enrollment and progression for students.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is available to all students based on the needs of a course and student cohorts. SI is typically implemented in historically difficult, high-risk courses in consultation with the faculty who teach those courses. It provides enhanced learning for students in a structured setting with sessions facilitated by trained peer leaders who utilize interactive activities and small group discussion. These sessions are supported by course faculty and Tutorial Services (IV.1.b.2.).

The College has many processes in place to help place and assist the student populations listed above. To continue to successfully support all students, MCCC recognizes an opportunity to collect and utilize data to identify and support additional students who may be at risk of not completing a pathway. **Opportunity: The College should work to enhance completion pathway opportunities for identity groups who are at risk of not successfully completing a pathway.**

### *Admission, Retention, and Success: Orientation, Advisement and Counseling (Std. IV.1.c.)*

The College affirmed that it utilizes orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience. Since 2015, the College has utilized different types of orientation support activities to help students succeed, while also recognizing the diverse needs and situations of our student population (including a large part-time and fully commuting population, currently 72%) (IV.1.c.3.). These have included traditional in-person, small group First-Year Experience (FYE) sessions; a 6-module online orientation platform; LMS-based advisor resources for students; large group in-person sessions held on the Blue Bell campus; and small group in-person *Ready, Set, Montco!* sessions. While the College's physical locations were forced to close during the pandemic, onboarding and orientation support services were provided online. Additionally, some programs (both academic and population-supporting) provide supplemental orientations.

Since returning to campus post-COVID-19 in 2022, the Admissions Office has taken the lead on hosting one-day New Student Kickoff orientation events before the start of the Fall and Spring semesters. Building on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pivot, these events now occur in face-to-face and virtual formats, and invitations are sent to all new degree-seeking students. Since the move to holistic advising, the New Student Kickoff events have served as a value-added opportunity for students to engage with each campus and the College community before classes start.

At the start of every semester the College schedules and programs four Weeks of Welcome (WOW), a collaborative program among multiple departments, to help new and returning students prepare for the upcoming semester. For example, in the Fall of 2023, WOW included welcome tables staffed by volunteers who welcomed new and returning students, provided directions to classrooms, answered questions, and handed out copies of Student Handbook Planners; a resource fair giving students an opportunity to learn about MCCC services and resources; a scavenger hunt to help students learn their way around the College's Blue Bell and Pottstown Campuses; and a club fair that highlighted student clubs (IV.1.c.3.).

The College has also worked to improve outreach for dual enrollment students and their families by hosting Dual Enrollment Orientations at its campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown. At these events, students and families learn about the Dual Enrollment program and services available to all dual enrollment students, including Financial Aid, student health and wellness, student support programs, Athletics and Student Life, Career Services and Alumni Engagement, and Library services and Academic Support (IV.1.c.4.).

The goal of the 2023-2027 Strategic Enrollment Plan is to build a broad and seamless onboarding-orientation path available to all new students. This broad approach will build a foundation of information and navigation to both prepare and empower students. This process would begin with a student's acceptance to the College and continue through the advising and registration processes. New Student Kickoff events would continue and be offered more frequently. The experience would also engage students up until the first day of classes, at which

## Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

point Weeks of Welcome and First-Year Experience (FYE 101) would continue to reinforce important information to prepare students. An online resource portal will be created and housed in Montco Connect to be continuously available to both new and returning students.

In 2022, the College developed a new First-Year Experience (FYE 101) course that involves familiarization with college resources, culture, policies, and technology. FYE 101 was piloted during the Fall 2021 semester to students in the College Connections Experience (CCE) program at the Pottstown Campus. This program, supported by a Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education, focuses on helping students build skills and strategies for success and helps students make connections to college programs and resources. Initial data collection after the Fall of 2022 indicated the following positive outcomes: 81.59% of all students who took FYE 101 returned as compared to 73.5% who did not take FYE101; and students who took FYE 101 consistently had higher GPAs in FA22 and SP23 when compared to those who did not take FYE 101 (IV.1.c.5.).

Driven by its mission to best serve its students, MCCC found the continuous evolution of orientation support services to be an opportunity. **Opportunity: The College should continue to improve orientation support activities to help students be successful while also recognizing the diverse needs and situations of our student population.**

In addition to orientation support, MCCC supports students throughout their time at the College.

The College was a recipient of 2013 and 2015 iPASS (Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success) grants that built the foundation of our advising approach. With iPASS, the College worked to focus its advising approach on education planning to help students better select courses and programs of study most relevant to meeting their academic goals; counseling and coaching to connect students to on- and off-campus resources while also allowing advisors to monitor progress and create personalized action plans for student success; and risk targeting and intervention to allow faculty and advisors to better support timely intervention and prevent course failure and program stop-outs.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the College to reevaluate how best to meet students where they are. In a post-pandemic environment, MCCC's advising unit reevaluated its service model to maintain that focus. After exploring several advising frameworks, the advising unit implemented the SSIPP (Strategic, Sustained, Integrative, Proactive, Personalized) advising model based on research from the Community College Research Center.

The overarching focus of the SIPP framework is a holistic approach to student support that allows the advising unit to embrace the virtual advising services that became critical during the COVID-19 shutdown and focus on ongoing support throughout a student's college experience rather than one-time interventions; provide outreach that includes faculty feedback to evaluate risk factors at critical junctures in a student's academic progress; and provide a personalized approach so that that students can receive the supports they need when they need it.

The College's advising unit also reviewed its advisor and student assignment process to better connect students with appropriate advisors and build stronger connections. Before June 2023, advisors were assigned programs based on their preference, specialty, and location (Blue Bell or Pottstown campus). To better align with Academic Affairs divisions, advisors now support degree-seeking students by program division. This change has allowed advisors to focus on a more personalized approach with students. As part of this approach, advisors attempt to review and engage each student in their caseload at least once per semester. This proactive approach provides personalized outreach that can be motivational, informative, or present a call to action when needed.

The College has also implemented text campaigns to help remind students of registration, payment, financial aid, and academic deadlines. The Wellness Center has also implemented Starfish referrals to make sure that teaching faculty, advisors, and other College community members can connect students who have issues with food insecurity. The Starfish intake form also offers an opportunity for students to self-identify as needing support.

Advisors also use Starfish to make referrals to other student supports, including a Career Services referral for students who need help with questions about career path options, a Veterans Resource Center referral for students who are veterans, National Guard/Reserve members, active duty service members, or military spouses and family members, an Academic Affairs referral for students needing help with curriculum and other academic resources, a Financial Aid referral for students needing financial assistance, and a Help Desk Referral for students who need technology assistance (IV.1.c.1.).

The College offers all students the ability to borrow a laptop, webcam, microphone, or other necessary technology for the semester with the ability to “renew” the items if they continue to register. Montco Connect offers students access to support services such as Career Services, Advising, Student Life and Clubs, Registration and Degree planning. Microsoft 365, Zoom, Teams, Canvas and the Help Desk are easily accessible through Montco Connect.

**Strength: The College has markedly improved its use of data to measure student success, particularly data concerning access to advising, financial aid appointments, First Year Experience students, and wellness outreach.** As mentioned above, the College uses Starfish to track and refer students in need of support services. The College also uses data from the Self-Service Student Planning and My Progress tools to help students track, revise, and consider alternative pathways. Advisors focus on first-semester planning in their first meeting with students, but in the second student meeting focus on planning to completion and a student's goals and timeline. Students also now have access to a "Find My Program" tool where a student can view majors and look at the possibilities for careers and transfer options. Lastly, students can use the My Career Plan tool to start by identifying a job of interest and work backward to understand what major best supports their career of interest. The College also publishes full-time and part-time sample course schedules to help students plan their path forward.

At MCCC, the well-being of students is a priority and is one of the College's strengths in ensuring student success. MCCC supports their needs academically, physically, financially, and in pursuit of their career, which the College identifies as a strength. **Strength: MCCC prioritizes well-being as a Student Success Strategy, offering a variety of student support services, academic advising, convenient scheduling (e.g. online, hybrid, in-person) and learning opportunities (e.g. externships, clinicals, performances, etc.) to help students thrive.**

#### *Following Up: Recommendations from the 2015 Self-Study*

One recommendation from MCCC's 2015 Self-Study was that the College needed a college-wide approach focusing on the accessibility of learning materials to satisfy Section 508 requirements as set out in the Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In direct response to this recommendation, the College affirmed that it has made several improvements to its student support resources to meet this goal (IV.6). For example, our Canvas LMS includes Panorama, a built-in tool for ensuring accessibility. The College invested in Yuja, which automatically provides captions and transcriptions of pre-recorded lectures. At the bottom of the College website, there is an option for “Text to Speech” which has multiple functions for students who need translation, audio, or visual support. Translation on the website has 100+ languages available.

As always, our Disability Services department provides support and accommodations to students with documented disabilities and offers training, consultations, and expertise to faculty and staff. Students are provided with reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis to increase access without impacting academic standards.

#### *Admission, Retention, and Success: Completion and Transfer (Std IV.1.d.)*

MCCC is committed to supporting all students throughout their progression at the College and is equally committed to ensuring that appropriate processes are in place so that students can successfully achieve their educational goals, including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement. Because our student population is diverse and complex, the College uses data to track and support different student populations and ensure their success.

Here are a few examples:

- MCCC's Gateway to College Program supports students who are at risk of not completing high school. Students in the program complete their high school degrees at MCCC while earning college credit. The program has had a 70% success rate of student graduation since 2013. Data from MCCC's 2020-2021 Gateway to College cohort shows that it exceeded the national benchmark for one-and-two-year persistence and exceeded the national benchmark for a three-year graduation rate. For the past five

years, MCCC's Gateway to College Program has exceeded four of the qualifying national benchmarks, which has earned the program the Program Excellence Award annually since 2018.

- MCCC's ACT 101 Scholars Program is grant funded and provides free personalized coaching and mentoring, educational planning, tutoring, career planning and outreach to students facing educational, personal and financial challenges. ACT 101 coaches are in frequent communication with ACT 101 students, monitoring student grades and progress alerts in Starfish and following up with every student to discuss a success plan. In the 2023-2024 AY, the ACT 101 Program served 115 students. Of those, nine students graduated or successfully transferred to another institution, 34 renewed with ACT 101, and 61 students registered for courses in the Fall 2024 semester (IV.1.d.2.).
- MCCC's Wellness Center is available to all students and provides a central location for a variety of supports including Veterans Services and the Keystone Education Yields Success program, as well as the College's Stock Up for Success food pantry. Wellness Center staff are also on hand to connect students with additional food and housing resources, internet and technology resources, LGBTQ+ resources, mental health resources, and additional community resources they might need.

The College successfully uses data to track and support student populations, particularly those listed above to ensure their success. It is recommended that these strategies be expanded in support of additional disaggregated populations. Specifically, the College should explore personalization strategies for understanding students' individual educational goals (be they 15 credits and transfer, graduation, or lifelong learning) and crafting targeted retention strategies. **Opportunity: The College should continue to collect and use data strategically to enhance student retention, paying particular attention to the relationship between student activity and student retention to create a support safety net for all.**

Since the 2015 Self Study, the College has worked to improve the processes for dual enrollment students to achieve their educational goals. Dual Enrollment students can complete their degree during high school, continue to degree completion at MCCC after high school, or transfer their MCCC credits to a 4-year college or university. Currently the College's Dual Enrollment program services 37 Partner High Schools and serves over 2,700 students.

In 2024, the Dual Enrollment Office began piloting a Dual Enrollment Degree Acceleration Program with five high school partners. This program allows high school students to complete up to 30 credits of their associate degree in their junior and senior years, enabling them to finish their degree at MCCC within a year of high school graduation and accelerating their path to transfer or to career. For students interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree, this is a 2-1-2 model, where students take 30 credits through dual enrollment in high school, 30 credits in one year after graduation at MCCC, and the final two years of baccalaureate study at one of MCCC's partner colleges and universities. The College's Degree Acceleration Program provides a structured academic pathway for students. The goal is to also expand access and opportunities to underserved students, ease the transition from high school to college, and organically build matriculation to the College.

The College acknowledges that matriculation is often addressed in Standard III; however, regarding MCCC's dual-enrollment program, areas for improvement lie in student support. **Opportunity: The College should continue to improve the dual enrollment program by working with county dual enrollment partners to provide pathways to graduation, direct support and coaching, advising, and access to services and resources to improve dual enrollment matriculation.**

More than 40.9% of MCCC students successfully transferred to other institutions in the 2022-2023 academic year after earning their associate degrees according to the Clearinghouse. The College has agreements with more than 36 Pennsylvania, four-year colleges and universities (IV.1.d.1.). We also host Transfer Fairs and Preferred Transfer Partner Days to help connect students with four-year college and university representatives. Information about our transfer agreements is available online, and students are encouraged to work with their advisor to make post-graduation plans (IV.1.d.4. and IV.1.d.6.).

MCCC's Office of Career and Alumni Engagement (CAE) offers tools to prospective students, current students, and alumni to help them with their personal development and career advancement needs. Students can make in-person or virtual appointments with a Career Coach to receive help selecting a major or a career path, résumé



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review, help writing cover letters, and support with job searches and interviewing skills. Career Coaches visit FYE 101 to engage with first-year students and have a presence at the College’s WOW orientation events.

With College-wide responsibilities and offices at both the Blue Bell and Pottstown Campuses, the CAE team provides direct support through individual career coaching on various topics from resume writing to salary negotiation. The services provided include, but are not limited to, personal and professional development through career-related skill development, assistance with job and internship search, facilitating career-related workshops/classroom presentations, and hosting recruitment and networking events. In addition to career coaching, on average per academic year, the team hosts 12-14 recruitment/fair events, eight career-related workshops and approximately 60 class presentations.

The CAE team welcomes employer partners to campus for information sessions and special events, provides opportunities for free professional headshots, facilitates goal setting/vision board programming and hosts career discussions live on social media platforms. It manages MCCC’s state-of-the-art career management platform called “Hire a Mustang.” The platform provides an excellent resource for students and alumni to submit career credentials for review and search for job and internship opportunities, in addition to engaging with employers and connecting to various career-intensive resources. From its implementation in late 2020 through the present day, the team has increased usage of the platform, connecting students and alumni to opportunities and resources. (See Figure IV-3 below).

| <b>Career and Alumni Engagement AY23-24</b>     |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Hire a Mustang Impact</b>                    |                                  |
| Individual Student Appointments                 | 1295                             |
| Resume/Cover Letters Reviewed                   | 766                              |
| Unique Logins                                   | 1662 (353 Alumni, 1309 Students) |
| Total Logins                                    | 5969                             |
| Employer Accounts Created                       | 233                              |
| Jobs Posted                                     | 979                              |
| Application to Jobs via HAM*                    |                                  |
| *Most will apply directly through employer site | 107                              |
| Saved Jobs                                      | 335                              |

Figure IV-3: The CAE team measures the impact of a state-of-the-art career management platform called “Hire a Mustang.”

**Evidence for Standard IV.1.**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.1.a.1. Financial Aid Information; IV.1.b.1. Holistic Placement; IV.1.b.2. Tutoring Academic Support; IV.1.c.1. Academic Advising; IV.1.c.3. New Student Orientation and Weeks of Welcome; IV.1.c.4. Dual Enrollment Orientation; IV.1.c.5. First Year Experience; IV.1.d.1. Four-Year Partner Schools; IV.1.d.2. ACT 101 Scholars Program; IV.1.d.3. Trio Upward Bound; IV.1.d.4. Transfer Information; IV.1.d.5. Graduated Student Survey; and IV.1.d.6. Transfer Articulation Agreement (Sample).

***Evaluation and Acceptance of Alternative Credit (Std IV.2)***

Information about transferring credits toward an associate’s degree at MCCC is available on the College’s website (IV.1.d.4.). In the Spring of 2014, the College renewed its transfer of credit policy, in accordance with MSCHE guidelines, and improved related administrative processes. This policy was reviewed and updated in 2020. As per its transfer policy, the College allows up to 75 percent of the total certificate or degree requirements to be met by transfer credit and applies a single policy to all forms of academic credit that is evaluated for equivalency. The transfer policy clarifies procedures for the acceptance of transfer credit, provides criteria regarding the transfer of credit earned at other institutions, reinforces the role of faculty and academic leadership in determining course equivalencies based on student learning outcomes, and addresses all forms of prior learning (IV.2.a.5.). Prior learning includes courses taken at other regionally accredited institutions, nationally recognized examinations such as Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), portfolio assessment and challenge exams, and articulation of credits based on professional certification and training. The College’s transfer policy presents clear procedures for the evaluation of nationally recognized examinations, prior learning experience, and articulation credits, with web links for each (IV.2.a.2.). These links promote transparency,

allowing students to fully review transfer options. The College also has appeal procedures to give students the opportunity to challenge decisions related to transfer credit.

### **Evidence for Standard IV.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.2.a.2. Prior Learning Assessment; IV.2.a.5. Transfer Credit Policy; and IV.2.a.6. Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center.

### ***Student Information (Std IV.3)***

To ensure that student information and records are safely and securely maintained and appropriately released, MCCC adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA"), a federal law that helps protect the privacy of student Education Records (as defined below). MCCC's FERPA Policy affirms the student's right to: (1) inspect and review their education records; (2) seek to amend those records; and (3) limit disclosure of information from their Education Records except in certain circumstances (IV.3.a.2.).

MCCC collects, maintains, secures and destroys student records for the educational welfare and advancement of its students in accordance with its policy (IV.3.a.1.). No one outside the College has access to, nor will the College disclose, any information from students' Education Records without the written consent of its students, except to personnel within the College, to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations providing students financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation functions, to persons in compliance with a judicial order, to persons in an emergency to protect the health or safety of students or other persons, or to individuals and agencies permitted under FERPA. FERPA affords current and former attending and registered students the right to access their Education Records by completing a Student Information Release Authorization Form (IV.3.a.6.).

The College may disclose Directory Information without a student's permission in accordance with the provisions of FERPA, including the student's full name, address, electronic mail address, photograph, telephone listing, date of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance/enrollment, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (members of athletic teams), degrees, honors and awards received, most recent educational agency or institution attended, and enrollment status (full-time or part-time).

Students may choose to withhold Directory Information by notifying the Registrar in writing within three weeks after the first day of classes for the semester in which the withholding of Directory Information is to take effect. Students' requests for non-disclosure will be honored until the student requests its removal. While students may opt out of the disclosure of Directory Information, this right to opt-out does not include the right to refuse to use, or otherwise disclose, a unique student identification number that the College may assign to the student. Regarding former students, the College will honor any valid request to opt-out of the disclosure of Directory Information that is made in the last semester that the student attended the College unless the student later rescinds such opt-out request.

Within the College, school officials who have been determined to have Legitimate Educational Interests may receive Personally Identifiable Information from students' Education Records without students' consent. These school officials may include personnel employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted as its agent to provide services instead of using College employees or officials; or a student serving on an official committee such as a disciplinary or grievance committee. In addition, Authorized Representatives may receive Personally Identifiable Information concerning Federal- or State-supported Educational Programs, in conducting any audit or evaluation, or in engaging with any compliance or enforcement activity in connection with Federal legal requirements that relate to these programs.

FERPA provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their Education Records, to request amendment of the contents of their Education Records, to have hearings if the outcomes of such a request is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they feel the decisions of the hearing panels to be unacceptable. FERPA also provides students with the right to inspect and review the records of disclosure of information from their Education Records.

Students who believe that their Education Records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or that is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights must make a written request to the Registrar, who will

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communicate directly with the custodians of the Education Records in question. If the custodians of the Education Records in question agree with the student's request, then the appropriate Education Records will be amended. If not, the student will be notified, in writing, within 15 business days that the Education Records will not be amended and will be informed by the custodians of the Education Records in question of the right to a formal hearing. A student request for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the Vice President of Engagement and Student Experience who, within 15 business days after receiving such request, will inform the student of the date, place, and time of the hearing. The student may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearing by one or more people of their choice, including an attorney, at the student's expense. In compliance with FERPA, the College provides its students with annual notifications of their rights under FERPA.

The College has processes in place to help protect all College data, ensure the availability and integrity of technology required to run the College (networks, applications, data warehouses, etc.), and comply with laws and regulations governing data privacy and protection (IV.3.a.4.). The College's IT Security Policy outlines compliance standards which address various IT security requirements and follow industry-defined best practices in securing technology and data.

### **Evidence for Standard IV.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.3.a.1. Records Retention Policy; IV.3.a.2. FERPA Policy; IV.3.a.3. HIPPA Policy; IV.3.a.4. IT Security Policy; IV.3.a.5. Privacy Statement; and IV.3.a.6. Student Information Release Authorization Form.

### ***Extracurricular Activities (Std IV.4)***

MCCC has athletic programs, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs at the College. The College supports a collection of over 25 student clubs managed by the Office of Student Life (IV.4.a.6.). The student clubs at the College develop and execute a wide range of events and initiatives such as International Night, physical publications of student work, radio shows, conferences, community service, and club-related field trips. Student club events are supported by club advisors and the Office of Student Life. The Office of Student Life utilizes an online community resource through Montco Connect to connect students to extra-curricular opportunities. Montco Connect hosts an online page for each student club where all students can find, join, and engage with student clubs.

Here are a few examples of MCCC's student clubs and organizations:

- **Art & Literature Magazine:** In 2022, the College's Art & Literature Magazine published its 50th issue entitled, "Resilience and Renewal." The issue's curated work was submitted by MCCC students over two years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the publication of the Magazine for the 2020-2021 academic year, the 50th issue included submissions from that year, as well as submissions from the publication year. "Resilience and Renewal" was recognized by numerous awards, including three awards by the 2022 American Scholastic Press Association.
- **Montco Radio:** Once named WRFM (Radio Free Montco), Montco Radio began as a record-spinning club in the early 1970s. Over the years, the club evolved and began to operate like a radio station, with music and content being broadcast into MCCC's cafeteria on the Blue Bell campus. In 2003, Montco Radio gained an international audience when it began broadcasting online. When the College's physical locations were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, MCCC students pre-record their radio programs and remotely loaded them into the station computer to continue their broadcast schedules during lockdown. Montco Radio hosts an annual Stock Up Rock Out event to raise money and collect donations for the College's food pantries. In addition to collecting food items, the 2024 event raised over \$750 in monetary donations from local supporters and listeners from across the country, including as far as Florida.
- **Drama Club and the West End Theatre Club:** Each semester, the Drama Club at the Blue Bell Campus and West End Theatre Club at the Pottstown Campus produce two performances benefitting the Theatre Arts Merit Scholarship. The productions aim to celebrate student-driven art that pushes the envelope and

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challenges young theatre arts majors toward a professional career. The West End Student Theatre also holds improv sessions, script readings and workshops, as well as open mic nights that bring together the campus and Pottstown community to raise funds and collect nonperishables for MCCC's Stock Up for Success student food pantry.

In addition to the student clubs on campus, MCCC hosts honors societies that are supported by Academic Affairs.

- **Phi Theta Kappa:** Since 1984 the College has hosted an active chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (the International Honor Society for Community Colleges), with active members at both the Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses. The purpose of Phi Theta Kappa is to recognize and encourage student scholarship, offer numerous leadership and service opportunities, promote an intellectual climate for the exchange of ideas, and provide stimulation for continuing academic excellence. To be eligible for membership, students must achieve a 3.5 (or higher) grade point average and have earned a minimum of 12 credits from the College. Both the Blue Bell and Pottstown Chapters of Phi Theta Kappa are ranked 5-star chapters by the organization.
- **Alpha Alpha Alpha (Tri-Alpha):** MCCC became the first community college in the country to host a chapter of the Alpha Alpha Alpha (Tri-Alpha) National Honor Society for first-generation college students in 2020. To qualify as an Alpha Alpha Alpha inductee, students enrolled in an associate's degree program must have at least a 3.2 GPA and have earned at least 36 credit hours towards their associate's degree. Additionally, neither of the student's parents, stepparents, or legal guardians, may have completed a bachelor's degree. MCCC faculty and staff may also be inducted as members of Tri-Alpha. To qualify, faculty and staff must have achieved an overall 3.2 GPA as an undergraduate at the time they completed their bachelor's degree and be willing to serve as mentors for first-generation students.

The Student Government Association is a student leadership opportunity where students elect their peers to serve as advocates for the student body (IV.4.a.2.). As elected representatives, the Student Government Association serves on a variety of College-wide committees including the President's Advisory Council for Equity and Social Justice, the President's Leadership Council, the Student Support Committee, and more. Additionally, Student Government representatives are often asked to represent the College at various on and off-campus opportunities. Another student leadership opportunity that exists at the College is the Student Ambassador program which is a student employment opportunity that is supervised by the Office of Student Life.

The College's athletic teams compete at the NJCAA Division III intercollegiate level, and the College places the highest priority on the overall quality of the educational and athletic experiences. The Mustangs compete as members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Athletic Conference within Region XIX of the National Junior College Athletic Association.

MCCC's Department of Athletics seeks to provide a quality, competitive, and respected athletics program that challenges student-athletes' physical, mental, and cognitive capacity (IV.4.a.3.). Montco Athletics is open to all students to foster and enhance student engagement outside the classroom. The current teams are comprised of three women's, an all-gender, and three men's teams and an additional 20 coaches and administrative staff. Over the past five years, the MCCC athletic teams have gained national attention by winning five conference championships (Eastern Pennsylvania Athletic Conference), two Region XIX championships, two national championships (NJCAAE), a 6th place national finish (NJCAA), and finished as national runner up 3 times (NJCAAE). Student-athletes have displayed their talent on the playing surface with selections to the All-Conference teams (28) and the All-Region teams (24). Student-athletes have also been recognized for their achievements in the classroom (IV.4.a.5.). The NJCAA and EPAC have recognized 95 student-athletes named to the All-Academic teams, respectively.

The College began its all-gender eSports program in the spring of 2020. The Mustangs eSports program is the Athletics' seventh collegiate sport and its first all-gender team. The Mustangs eSports team members compete against colleges nationally as part of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), composed of over 170 member schools with over 5,000 student-athletes. The Mustangs also compete as part of the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports (NJCAAE), composed of more than 60 two-year colleges from across the

country. In 2023, the Mustangs eSports team finished an undefeated season by winning the National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association Esports (NJCAA) championship.

In keeping with the College's emphasis on equity, diversity, and belonging, Mustangs Athletics formed a non-competitive, all-gender cheerleading team in fall 2023. The all-gender team supports other Athletic teams on the sidelines of games and during community-based events.

#### **Evidence for Standard IV.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.4.a.1. Student Handbook; IV.4.a.2. Student Government Association Constitution; IV.4.a.3. Student Athlete Handbook; IV.4.a.4. Student Athletics Data disaggregated by Sport; IV.4.a.5. Student Athlete GPA Data; IV.4.a.6. Clubs and Organizations; IV.4.a.7. Athletic Budget; and IV.4.a.8. Student Activities Fee Allocation (Sample).

#### ***Third-Party Providers (Std IV.5)***

The College consistently evaluates products and services by third-party vendors (IV.5.a.3.). Third-party services are regularly compared to updated products on the market, allowing the College to provide the most up-to-date platforms to support students (IV.5.a.1.).

In the spring of 2024, the College evaluated tutoring platforms and based on that evaluation, moved from Tutor.com to Brainfuse (IV.5.a.5.). The College used satisfaction survey results from students to identify if the Tutor.com services were satisfactory. MCCC's Academic Support team also met regularly with representatives of Tutor.com to share the types of items the College was looking for in our online tutoring provider. Because the College was looking for an online tutoring vendor that could provide one entry point for students to get live online tutoring and schedule both in-person and online appointments, the College decided to take proposals from other tutoring vendors. Tutor.com's contract expired on June 30, 2024, and Brainfuse was implemented at the College on July 1, 2024, leaving no lapse in online tutoring support for our students. MCCC's Tutoring Center tracks student usage of the Brainfuse platform and reviews student evaluations of the platform.

The Wellness Center receives aggregate data about TimelyCare usage from TimelyCare (IV.5.a.4.). TimelyCare tracks the number of students registered for services, the number of unique students using the service, types of appointments, and ratings of both provider and session. The Wellness Center uses this data to determine whether efforts to promote it are effective and whether students benefit from the service. The Wellness Center also tracks what services students are using the most to look for opportunities to expand on the contract for certain services.

#### **Evidence for Standard IV.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.5.a.1. Procurement Policy; IV.5.a.2. 3rd Party Collaborator Contract (Sample); IV.5.a.3. List of 3rd Party Providers; IV.5.a.4. Timely Care Data; and IV.5.a.5. Tutoring Evaluation and Assessment Research Brief.

#### ***Assessment of Support Programs (Std IV.6)***

The College affirmed that it participates in the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience (IV.6.a.1.). For example, academic advisors collect data in Starfish to record points of contact for students, when and whether students attend advising appointments, what modalities students prefer for advising appointments, and any additional feedback students may have regarding their advising experience. This data is then used to modify plans for student outreach.

Enrollment Services uses data from SSRC Zoom and the Monty Chat Bot to create employee service schedules to best distribute coverage to maximize efficiency and ensure excellence in student support services. Signal Vine text messaging is also used to push notifications during peak enrollment times.

MCCC's Office of Career and Alumni Engagement uses data to connect with students and alumni and to see which events gain more student participation or need to be tailored to fit student needs. They also gather data from the Hire a Mustang platform to track student engagement. Starfish data is used to check in with students who have had previous appointments and to connect students with resources.

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Tutoring utilizes the RNL-SSI survey to ask students to rate them on importance and satisfaction levels, on a seven-point scale regarding the availability of tutoring services (IV.6.a.2.). For example, in the 2022 survey, the average rating for importance was 6.42 and the average rating on satisfaction was 6.32 for online tutoring services. The average rating for importance was 6.33 and the average rating for satisfaction was 6.19 for face-to-face tutoring services. The survey also identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses defined by comparing the difference between importance and satisfaction rating and comparing that to a national sample. Relative to the national sample of community colleges of the Eastern region, items where the difference between importance and satisfaction is less than 0.30, are considered areas of strength and items where the difference is above 0.50 are identified as challenges. Although custom items cannot be compared with the results of other community colleges, Tutoring uses this idea as a general reference for judging the College's results on custom items.

The College's Library Services have used survey data to track the usage of library spaces and determine peak times for appointment scheduling with a librarian. As a result, Library Services has pivoted from appointment-only reference during the day with drop-in reference available in the evenings to instead provide drop-in reference during peak times.

MCCC's Wellness Center tracks its involvement in College events, including outreach, engagement, and educational events. The Wellness Center uses this data to track overall engagement and see its reach across the campuses. The Wellness Center also tracks everything that happens at the food pantries on campus, including daily visits to the pantry and how many students are using the service. The Center also tracks how many grocery gift cards are provided, the cost of the food the Wellness Center purchases (versus what is donated), and how many SmartChoice grocery orders are made. This data helps the Wellness Center staff see trends in real time. Additionally, the Wellness Center tracks all Starfish referrals, outreach attempts, and whether the Center successfully engaged with students. This data allows the Center to see trends in the type of referral (mental health versus non-academic needs) and how it is doing with outreach efforts. This tracking also allows Wellness Center staff to look for common concerns that arise many times a semester and plan for the next semester.

MCCC's Athletics Program gathers data from Game Day reports, which measure student-athlete enrollment, academic progress, retention, and graduation rates. The data is then used to connect student-athletes with student support services such as Financial Aid, Disability Services, tutoring and academic support to enhance the overall student experience.

The College's Office of the Registrar uses past, current, and predictive data from AdAstra to provide strategic academic schedule enhancements and recommend schedules based on student trends and success needs.

In addition to using disaggregated data for academic assessment, the College uses data for the overall measurement of the success of "at-risk" students. In partnership with Education Northwest and Benefits Data Trust (BDT), the Connecting College Students to Benefits Study was conducted to examine the experiences of students as they navigate the process of obtaining supportive services and accessing public benefits. Forty-six percent of students reported that they were somewhat or often worried about food running out. The College used this data, which was disaggregated by Pell eligibility, age, gender and other factors, to bolster its food outreach efforts, through increased efforts in requesting and receiving public and private grants support.

### **Evidence for Standard IV.6**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: IV.6.a.1. Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Cycle; IV.6.a.2. RNL 2023 Student Satisfaction and Priorities Results; IV.6.a.3. Healthy Minds 2023-2024 National Comparison Report; IV.6.a.4. CCSSE 2022 Executive Summary; IV.6.a.5. Institutional Effectiveness Research Briefs (Sample); and IV.6.a.6. Sense 2022 Executive Summary.

## Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings

The College's institutional priorities are the "Strategic Imperatives" of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

### Ensure Student Learning

#### Strengths

- + The College has markedly improved its use of data to measure student success, particularly data concerning access to advising, financial aid appointments, First Year Experience students, and wellness outreach.
- + MCCC prioritizes well-being as a Student Success Strategy, offering a variety of student support services, academic advising, convenient scheduling (e.g. online, hybrid, in-person) and learning opportunities (e.g. externships, clinicals, performances, etc.) to help students thrive.

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should work to enhance completion pathway opportunities for identity groups who are at risk of not successfully completing a pathway.
- ▲ The College should continue to collect and use data strategically to enhance student retention, paying particular attention to the relationship between student activity and student retention to create a support safety net for all.

### Expand Community Participation

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should continue to improve orientation support activities to help students be successful while also recognizing the diverse needs and situations of our student population.
- ▲ The College should continue to improve the dual enrollment program by working with county dual enrollment partners to provide pathways to graduation, direct support and coaching, advising, and access to services and resources to improve dual enrollment matriculation.

## **Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment**

### **Introduction**

MCCC measures student learning through intentional, integrative assessment processes. The College designs each degree program to foster the achievement of its educational goals, carefully aligning General Education Core, program of study, and course outcomes. Faculty and program coordinators assess these outcomes regularly, according to calendars set by the Director of Educational Effectiveness; academic outcomes are discussed at Program Assessment Roundtables (PARs) and reported to the College and community annually. In addition, a host of institutional assessments coordinated by the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness supplement the College's Annual Assessment Report. Assessment results, including key indicators of student success such as retention, graduation, transfer and placement rates, inform faculty professional development opportunities, curricular and advising reform, budget development, strategic planning and innovation. The Educational Effectiveness Committee, chaired by the Director of Educational Effectiveness (a faculty role), participates in the College's Faculty Governance structure. The College also periodically audits Educational Effectiveness. Finally, the College reports outcomes data to national benchmarking services, submitting data to IPEDS, MSCHE, and eight independent program accreditors. MCCC participates in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability and the National Community College Benchmark Project.

### **Telling Our Story:**

#### **Streamlined General Education Core Promotes Pandemic Readiness**

Previous work on General Education renewal also bolstered our readiness. At the time of the 2015 Self-Study, the College's programs embedded a subject-centered General Education Core Curriculum comprising 13 Core Goals and a corresponding 41 Student Learning Outcomes. The impetus for this "Core" renewal grew out of Self-Study suggestions by the College itself in 2015 and by the MSCHE Evaluation Team during the College's accreditation visit in March of that year. While the Evaluation Team "commend[ed] the College's extraordinary emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes and use of the results to modify curriculum and pedagogy," the team suggested that the College evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback. Accordingly, Dr. Vicki Bastecki-Perez, then Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, formally charged the Assessment Committee, then a standing sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee, to review the General Education Core and suggest changes as part of a "closing the loop" process on Core Renewal.

Faculty feedback on the Core Renewal was solicited at various events over a three-year period, most notably at a faculty "World Café" meeting in 2015 and during roundtable discussions led by the Coordinator of Assessment that next year. From the feedback collected at various assessment events, most faculty were interested in simplifying the Core goals. During Spring 2016, the Assessment Committee (now the Educational Effectiveness Committee) used a series of working meetings to arrive at a Core Revision that kept most of the 41 Current Core outcomes intact (albeit reworded slightly) but reduced duplication. This revision changed the faculty's conception of the Core from one centered on academic disciplines to one grounded in student competencies.

Since most Core outcomes remained intact, all programs meeting the General Educational requirements were updated to meet the renewed six-goal Core. The 2016-17 Core Renewal process ensured that General Education courses were approved for at least one of the six Core Learning Areas, taught by a content expert, and met Core SLO through student work aligned with the approved rubric. Part of the Core revisions centered around access and equity for students taking classes online and at the Pottstown campus. The Curriculum Committee affirmed online options for each General Education area. Faculty sponsoring quantitative and qualitative reasoning classes (generally STEM options) and Information Literacy options (public speaking options) were asked to ensure online availability, which at the time was controversial. Assessment processes ensured parity with traditional face-to-face courses, allaying faculty concerns. In the end, however, the College's insistence on access and equity during the Core Renewal process and its use of its assessment mechanisms to ensure parity served it well during the pandemic. Necessary online offerings in all General Education areas were established well before March 2020.



## Research Findings and Compliance Narrative

### *Clearly Stated Learning Outcomes (Std V.1)*

MCCC measures student learning through an integrative process that involves the assessment of outcomes at the General Education Core, program of study, and course level.

- General Education Core.** Institutional benchmarks for student achievement are set and measured through the College’s General Education Core goals and corresponding assessment plans. The College’s Educational Effectiveness Committee oversees creating and periodically revising rubrics for each of the six Core goals: Oral and Written Communication, Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning, Aesthetic Sensibility, Cultural Awareness and Diversity, Ethical Perspectives, and Technological Fluency. Although not a stand-alone General Education Core Goal, Critical Thinking is assessed in tandem with these six (V.1.a.1.) See Figure V-1 for a sample rubric listing learning outcomes (V.1.a.2.). The Director of Educational Effectiveness collects General Education Core outcomes data from sponsoring faculty members annually. In addition, the Graduated Student Survey reports data on General Education Core outcomes.
- Program.** Program outcomes appear in both the course catalog and on the College website. Curricular maps are used to ensure that course and General Education Core Outcomes align with Program outcomes. Program outcomes, whether introduced, reinforced, or mastered, are tracked through this curricular alignment. Annual Program Assessment Roundtables (PARs), described earlier in this chapter, allow stakeholders to discuss results and necessary modifications, which the Director of Educational Effectiveness then documents and communicates.
- Course.** At the course level, the College offers clearly articulated statements of student-learning outcomes in its standard course outlines of record, known as Act 335 forms. Students may link to the standard course outline directly from the course description on the web and at the time of registration through the portal. For each of its 551 courses, the College links to an ACT335 form containing a course outline approved by the college’s curriculum committee, affirmed by the board, and revised at least every 5 years. A course assessment calendar ensures that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are measured for every course the College offers.

| Quantitative Reasoning General Education Rubric   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Framing Language:</i> Students demonstrate logical reasoning, rational investigation skills, and the ability to solve problems in authentic contexts in mathematics, as appropriate to the program of study. |   |  |   |
| <b>1. Organization and Interpretation of the Data or Assumptions.</b>   | Lists data but is disorganized and/or some data points are missing. And/or interpretation of the data or assumptions is missing or severely flawed.                         | Data or Assumptions is/are organized but organizational improvements could be made in regards to showing patterns and trends.    | Organizes data or assumptions to reveal similarities, differences, or patterns related to the focus.  |
| <b>2. Application/Investigation of a Problem</b>  | Does not apply the appropriate method to solve the problem and/or makes incorrect assumptions about the mathematical models. -or- the specific method cannot be determined. | Quantitative methods are being applied though some errors are present in the model or the investigative process                  | Investigative approach and/or modeling of the problem was applied appropriately without error.  |
| <b>3. Representation and Interpretation of Model and Solutions</b>  | Interpretation of the model and the solutions is inaccurate and/or process demonstrated is unrelated to the problem set.  | Models and their interpretations are accurately presented with a clear outline of the process. Some minor errors may be present. | All of the models and their solutions are thoroughly and accurately explained and solution sets and their interpretation are supportive of the data and outcomes.             |
| <b>4. Accuracy and Final Results</b>  | Calculations and results are full of inaccuracies and errors.   | Calculations and results are accurate, consistent and appropriate to the context of the problem.                                 | Calculations and results are accurate, consistent, appropriate to the context of the problem, and provide evidence of a complete and thorough interpretation of the solution. |

Figure V-1: Quantitative Reasoning is assessed using a faculty-developed, College-wide rubric.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

The College describes how these outcomes work together through its Curriculum Maps, which crosswalk course and General Education outcomes to Program outcomes (V.1.a.3.). The Curriculum Maps list how Program outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and mastered over a student’s course of study. See Figure V-2 for a snapshot of one portion of the Nursing AAS Curriculum Map.

|   |   |  |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Nursing A.A.S.</p> <p>Program Outcomes - Upon completion of this program, graduates will be able to:</p>   | <p><u>NUR 115</u><br/><u>Concepts of</u><br/><u>Nursing II: Caring</u><br/><u>for Adult Client with</u><br/><u>Acute/Chronic</u><br/><u>Illness</u></p> | <p><u>NUR 116</u><br/><u>Concepts of</u><br/><u>Nursing III: Caring</u><br/><u>for Children and</u><br/><u>Child-bearing</u><br/><u>Families</u></p> | <p><u>NUR 215</u><br/><u>Concepts of</u><br/><u>Nursing IV: Caring</u><br/><u>for the Adult Client</u><br/><u>with Complications</u><br/><u>associated with</u><br/><u>Acute and Chronic</u><br/><u>Illness</u></p>   | <p><u>NUR 216</u><br/><u>Concepts of</u><br/><u>Nursing V: Clinical</u><br/><u>Decision-making</u></p>  | <p><u>NUR 217</u><br/><u>Concepts of</u><br/><u>Nursing VI: Caring</u><br/><u>for the Client across</u><br/><u>the Lifespan</u><br/><u>Experiencing</u><br/><u>Life-threatening</u><br/><u>Needs</u></p>                              | <p><u>NUR 218</u><br/><u>Transition to</u><br/><u>Professional</u><br/><u>Nursing Practice</u></p>   |
| <p>Demonstrate clinical reasoning and judgment using the nursing process, in the delivery of safe, effective, evidence-based care in a variety of environments. (NLN competency: Spirit of Inquiry)</p> | <p>R</p> <p>SLO 1 &amp; 5 Exam questions, skill testing, clinical evaluation tool, simulation, discussion questions, evaluation of active learning</p>  | <p>R</p> <p>SLO 1 Exam questions, skill testing, clinical evaluation tool, simulation, discussion questions, evaluation of active learning</p>       | <p>R</p> <p>SLO 2, 3 and 4 Clinical evaluation tool, Discussion, Evaluation of active learning assignments, Evaluation of reflective journal, Exam questions, Simulation evaluation, Skills Testing, Research assignment grading rubric, Teaching-learning rubric</p> | <p>R</p> <p>SLO 2, 3 and 4 Discussion, Evaluation of active learning activities, Legal/ethical paper grading rubric, Research paper grading rubric, Simulation Evaluation</p> | <p>M</p> <p>SLO 2, 3 and 4 Clinical Evaluation tool, Discussion, Evaluation of active learning activities, Evaluation of reflective journal, Exam Questions, Research assignment grading rubric, Teaching-Learning grading rubric</p> | <p>M/A</p> <p>SLO 2, 3 and 4 Evaluation of active learning activities, Exams questions, Simulation evaluation of self and others, Leadership/Trends/ Research paper grading rubric, Simulation evaluation-function as a leader, Skill performance and preparation evaluation</p> |

Figure V-2: The Nursing AAS uses a Curriculum Map to demonstrate how Program Outcomes relate to course outcomes throughout the assessment lifecycle and how outcomes are introduced (I), reinforced(R) and mastered(M). If student artifacts (A) are used to assess mastery, they are noted.

General Education outcomes and options are also indicated on each program’s Curriculum Map, along with a total credit count. Even if a course embeds a General Education Core Outcome within its program outcomes (a good example might be the Computer Science AS embedding the College’s Technical Fluency requirement within its program of study), the program must still meet the 18-credit minimum number of General Education credit hours. As part of their approval process, all faculty requesting new or updating existing programs and courses must document how the proposal advances the College’s Strategic Plan.

**Evidence for Standard V.1**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: V.1.a.1. General Education Core Curriculum; V.1.a.2. General Education Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes; and V.1.a.3. Curriculum Maps.

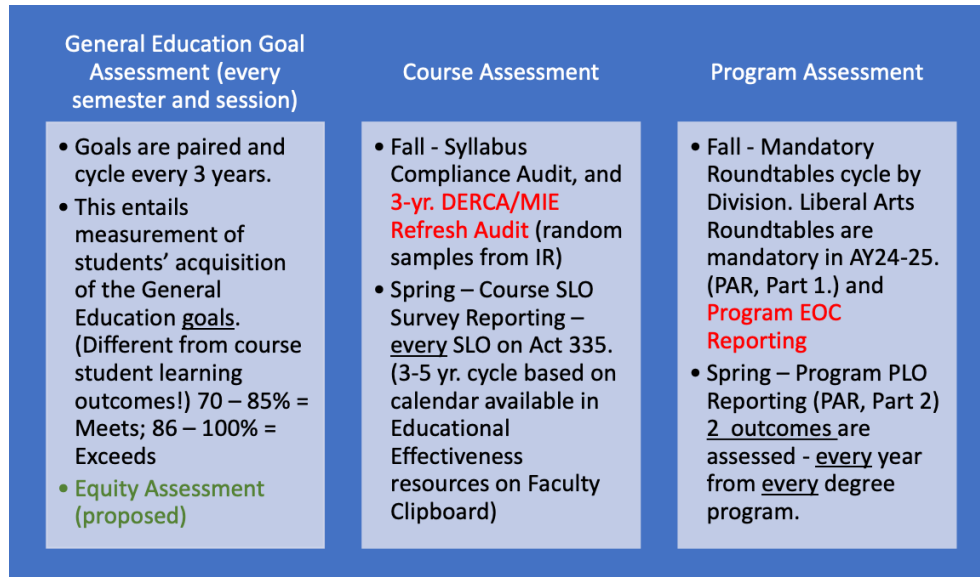
**Organized and Systematic Assessment (Std V.2)**

The Self-Study process affirmed that the College supports an organized, sustainable, systematic assessment of all SLOs according to published calendars:

- annually for all General Education course SLOs,
- annual PLO outcomes assessment (two every year from every degree program),
- on a three-year cycle for the six General Education core goals,
- every three to five years for course SLOs, according to an Educational Effectiveness calendar,
- on a four-year PAR cycle for all programs of study and
- through periodic external accreditation.

While faculty conduct the assessments, the data is aggregated and reported to the College community through the Director of Educational Effectiveness. Faculty and staff may always review assessment data on the Faculty

Clipboard (for General Education Core, program of study, and course assessment) or the College’s Data Hub (for Institutional data and survey results). Figure V-3 illustrates the College’s academic assessment components.



The College sets defensible benchmarks for its SLOs and PLOs. All learning outcomes are approved through the College Governance Committees or, for academic support units, through the appropriate Vice Presidents, with direct input from the Educational Effectiveness Committee.

Each course in the College’s portfolio follows a standard course outline of record (known as the ACT 335 form) that documents the course description, pre-requisites, measurable student learning outcomes, sequence of topics, learning

Figure V-3: Three areas, General Education, Course, and Program, comprise the College’s academic assessment. Each component has its own calendar.

activities, and the course assessment plan (also known as “the course evaluation method”) (V.2.b.1.). Learning outcomes are available to the entire College community; students may link to the standard course outline directly from the course description on the web and portal. In most cases, faculty members expect that 70% of students will meet a given course outcome, although the benchmark may be higher for selected outcomes (for example, if the outcomes need to meet benchmarks set by external accreditors, such as those in the Health Sciences). The faculty selected 70% as a baseline indicator of satisfactory student learning, documented in the College’s Comprehensive Grading Policy, which was updated through the College’s Shared Governance process during AY21-22. MCCC’s Institutional Grading Scale, which is part of the policy, provides numerical equivalencies for grades and shows 70-76 is the range for C. Since a grade of C is also the lowest transferable grade, an external benchmark supports this baseline (V.2.a.1.).

For courses designated as General Education or Core courses, the learning outcomes that meet a specific Core goal are also noted on the course outline form. Each semester, faculty members submit course syllabi for division-level review against the course outline and track assessment results, which are then reported on an internal Frevvo form. Figure V-4 shows the most recent assessment results for each General Education goal, with goals assessed on a rolling three-year cycle.

Other benchmarks include tracking the types of learning activities that students are asked to complete. For example, the College’s latest data shows a significant shift towards active learning approaches. The following table provides a snapshot of the learning activities and types of measures used in connection with course delivery in AY23-24. Several trends regarding different learning activities used for assessment emerged over the past three years:

| General Education Core Goal                        | Meets or Exceeds |
|--|------------------|
| Aesthetic Sensibility                              | 81%              |
| Reasoning - Quantitative and Scientific (averaged) | 81%              |
| Ethical Perspectives                               | 90%              |
| Cultural Awareness and Diversity                   | 83%              |
| Communication -- Written and Oral (averaged)       | 81.5%            |
| Technical Fluency                                  | 90%              |

Figure V-4: The College assesses its General Education goals on a three-year cycle. The table shows the average assessment results for each General Education goal from AY20-21, 21-22, 22-23.

## Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

- **Increase in Collaborative Learning:** Collaborative learning activities grew significantly, from 19% in 2021-2022 to 85% in 2022-2023, and while it slightly decreased to 80% in 2023-2024, it is still a dominant method.
- **Rise in Practice-Based Learning:** Practice-based learning has seen a consistent increase, starting from just 1% in 2021-2022, growing to 11% in 2022-2023, and jumping to 30% in 2023-2024, reflecting a stronger emphasis on real-world applications.
- **Steady Growth in Problem-Based Learning:** Problem-based learning has increased each year, from 13% in 2021-2022, to 52% in 2022-2023 and up to 67% in 2023-2024, showing a growing focus on critical thinking and real-world problem-solving.
- **Dramatic Growth in Independent Learning:** Independent learning surged from 4% in 2021-2022 to 85% in 2022-2023, slightly dropping to 75% in 2023-2024. This variance suggests a significant shift toward self-guided learning methods, some of which may be explained by the increase in online/hybrid learning since the Spring of 2020.

Other assessments show a shift away from traditional quizzes and exams towards written assignments, class participation, presentations, and projects, which reflects a broader transformation in teaching and assessment at the College. As active learning activities like collaborative, problem-based, and hands-on approaches become more prevalent, evaluation methods have evolved to measure student engagement, creativity, and problem-solving rather than just memorization or recall.

- The increase in written assignments and projects indicates a focus on deep learning, requiring students to apply concepts, engage in research, and demonstrate critical thinking.
- The rise in presentations and class participation suggests that communication, collaboration, and active engagement are becoming essential components of the learning process.
- The growing reliance on independent learning activities and problem-solving correlates with the trend toward projects and written assessments, where students are assessed on their ability to work autonomously and think critically.

Overall, these trends suggest that teaching and evaluation are becoming more student-centered, focusing on diverse forms of engagement, practical application, and deeper learning experiences. The trends in both learning activities and evaluation methods reflect a strong influence of academic assessment data-driven decision-making and targeted faculty development in the areas of scaffolded and inclusive instruction as well as authentic assessment (V.2.c.1.).

Strong transfer and core-to-core agreement demonstrate the strength of the College's program outcomes and their consonance with the standards of our four-year partner institutions. With 36 four-year partnerships, the College offers students multiple pathways to transfer success, including:

- **Dual admission agreements** guarantee admission to students who maintain a specific GPA,
- **Program-to-program agreements**, which document a particular college's promise to accept MCCC credits earned towards a specific degree,
- **Core-to-Core or General Education agreements** document a particular college's promise to accept the General Education credits embedded in a specific MCCC degree.

The College also aligns program outcomes with county needs and student career goals. Each program page, which lists both learning outcomes and transfer opportunities, follows that information, when appropriate, with County workforce information. Figure V-5 illustrates the College's transparency about career opportunities.



To communicate the success of its programs, the College clearly posts links to its Factbook, persistence rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and job placement rates for graduates via the Student Outcomes web page, which also references the College’s economic impact (V.2.b.2.). Finally, the College also evaluates how effective students think the College was in advancing their educational goals. MCCC’s Graduated Student Survey was administered to 1278 students who graduated during the academic year 2023-2024. The online survey link is embedded in graduation communication from the Registrar’s Office and is sent to students following the completion of Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters. There were 376 responses, which equals a 29.4% response rate. The majority (85.01%, n=312) of participating students reported fully accomplishing their educational goals (s). Reasons for lack of and/or partial fulfillment of goals included changing subject preferences, course scheduling issues, and waiting for acceptance in a chosen field of further study or targeted professional position (V.2.c.3.).

The Self-Study process affirmed that the College conducts organized and systematic assessments in all areas of student learning. The College’s Information Literacy Reinforcement Assessment provides a good example of excellence in this area. Information Literacy is part of the Communication core goal (Communication and

Information Literacy), one of six goals of the College’s general education core curriculum. As such, past perceptions relegated information literacy as a set of skills primarily taught, learned and assessed in English and Public Speaking/Communications courses with classroom instructors who worked with library faculty. In AY23-24, the College’s Librarians conducted an Information Literacy Reinforcement Assessment. In this iteration, the librarians limited artifact solicitations to instructors of program courses designated for information literacy reinforcement. In total, 219 artifacts were considered.

Students demonstrated highest scores for Relevance and the lowest on Citations. While the highest and lowest categories remained consistent from the AY22-23 assessment, these AY23-24 scores were lower. This decrease was likely affected by several factors, the most significant being the scope of artifacts selected for this assessment; the evidence may more accurately depict the state of student information literacy.

An average score of 0.981 for Citations confirms the findings of past years, that students: “attempt to cite sources and mostly succeed, but do not always follow a standard model of documentation.” Reviewers frequently commented that students struggled to make proper in-text citations, or did not include in-text citations at all. Librarians advised classroom instructors to address this underachievement by:

- Providing more visualizations of in-text citation processes to teach students to value crediting sources at the granular level throughout the body of the assignment.
- Requiring that in-text citations be complete in early drafts so that the final draft does not represent the first time that some students are debuting attribution in the body of the text.
- Breaking a final project into its developmental stages with frequent check-ins by instructors, librarians and tutors.

Librarians continue to incorporate these findings into their communications with the teaching faculty. Essentially, the library successfully increased opportunities for meaningful assessment of students' research beyond the introductory stages. This example is just one of dozens of assessment projects carried out by faculty and qualified professionals each academic year.

MCCC's Program Assessment Roundtables (PARs) institutionalize collaboration, discussion and teamwork as part of the annual program assessment process. Program stakeholders, including the Program Faculty Coordinator or Director, Division Dean, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Director of Educational Effectiveness, Institutional Effectiveness Research Director, the assigned Academic Advisor, EEC Divisional Representative, the Registrar, and the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness work together to review the program.

In the roundtable meeting, they discuss demographic characteristics, course success data for each program, historical scheduling patterns, and traditional inflection areas; the Roundtable also compares the Program's student success metrics to other programs at the College using the PEER data report. By making a mandatory, collaborative session part of program assessment, the group provides context to identify common barriers across programs. The PAR process also recognizes successes and creates more meaningful, short- and long-term action plans that, ultimately, promote a dynamic and meaningful learning environment. Because the Program Roundtables are held in the Fall, work on these action items begins immediately; results can be measured and reported at the end of the academic year as part of the annual academic assessment process.

The Program Assessment Roundtables' College-wide, inclusive approach is a strength; PAR discussion generates achievable actions to support student success while creating a renewed sense of shared ownership of educational effectiveness. **Strength: Through the Self-Study Process, the College affirmed that well-established and sustainable assessment processes are a strength, as are Program Assessment Roundtables (collaborative, oral, academic program review meeting by division--a group conversation rather than solely a written report).** The College affirmed that repeatable regular assessments are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate measures of student achievement regardless of instructional modality (RoA9). In addition, most assessment data is used during specific conversations throughout the assessment cycle.

As part of its Self-Study process, the College highlighted a few additional innovative and effective assessment practices, including:

- The annual syllabus compliance audit ensures regular faculty publication of learning outcomes and helps students become aware of academic policies. The 22-23 data show that 82% of syllabi contained all suggested elements. Reminder emails to faculty were used to nudge faculty towards the use of the College Syllabus template and improve compliance.
- The General Education Core assessment reports have indicated that faculty are using more authentic assessment methods and measures across the Core Curriculum.
- Curriculum maps are verified with faculty program coordinators every year to ensure their accuracy.
- The Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment process ensures that two program learning outcomes are assessed per year through diverse methods, including clinical program evaluations, examinations, portfolios, and capstones, while Program Academic Roundtable sessions identify potential issues that may have arisen since a program's last annual program review, on a four-year cycle.
- The College's Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE) and its Distance Education Rubric for Course Instruction (DERCA) ensure all courses measure outcomes rigorously, regardless of delivery modality.
- Our Annual Assessment Report, always published to the Faculty Clipboard by Opening Day, and housed in the College's Data Hub, contains live links to ongoing assessment projects, analysis summaries, and reported data.

**Opportunity: However, when researching assessment evidence, the College found that data hosted via the Faculty Clipboard interface, which houses much of the College's academic assessment information, was difficult to navigate. This site could be redesigned.** Its direct links to reported data make assessment transparent but not as user-friendly as possible. Though academic needs are communicated well, more

opportunities/times for faculty to meet to discuss assessment data would allow better collaboration and more granular approaches to closing the loop.

The Director of Educational Effectiveness also maintains a calendar of course assessments. She sets a regular and repeatable College-wide schedule with highly enrolled and Core courses assessed annually and program-specific and other courses assessed on a rolling, three- to five-year basis.

### **Evidence for Standard V.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: V.2.a.1. Comprehensive Grading Policy; V.2.b.1. ACT 335 (Sample); V.2.b.2. Lightcast Economic Impact Infographic (Example); V.2.c.1. Educational Effectiveness Annual Report 2022-2023; V.2.c.2. President Leadership Council Agenda Report out for Education Effectiveness Annual Report Presentation; V.2.c.3. Graduated Student Survey Data; V.2.c.4. Student Outcomes Data; V.3.a.1. Program Assessment - Example -SRT; and V.3.b.1. Program Roundtable - Example Computer Networking and Cyber Security.

### ***Use of Disaggregated Assessment Results for Improvement (Std V.3)***

MCCC consistently uses the results of assessment for improvement, taking advantage of disaggregated data. Below are some selected examples of how the college uses its assessment data for each of the items listed under Standard V.3, although these are not the only examples of the College meeting this criterion.

- **Assisting students in improving their learning; Reviewing and revising academic programs and support services.** The Sound Recording and Music Technology (SRT) and Mass Media Production (MMP) programs, share a Program Director. When preparing for the Program Assessment Roundtable, a review of disaggregated student success data revealed that SRT 104 Introduction to Sound Recording Technology, which is a course shared by both programs, was a bellwether of student success. SRT students, however, consistently outperformed MMP students. A drill-down on the course's SLOs showed that the course builds upon a foundation in ProTools (digital audio workstation software). At the Roundtable, further analysis determined that the disparity was due, in part, to course sequencing. SRT students took SRT 104 and MUS 140 (Introduction to Digital Music Technology) in their first semester, two courses that work together to provide a strong foundation in ProTools. By contrast, MMP students took SRT 104 later in their program and did not take MUS 140. Therefore, they were disadvantaged because they did not have that same reinforcement. To address this disparity, SRT 104 was modified to include audio-visual integration, and the MMP program has currently proposed a modification to move SRT 104 earlier in the program's course sequence. In addition, the faculty coordinators of both programs are collaborating to enhance interdisciplinary experiences and resources. These changes aim to improve student outcomes and broaden the skill set of all students in both programs (V.3.a.1.).
- **Improving pedagogy and curriculum; Planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services.** At a Computer Networking and Cybersecurity roundtable, the faculty coordinators put forward course updates (i.e., prerequisites, content, etc.) as well as program updates (i.e., course sequencing changes, the introduction of new electives, etc.). These changes made the program more relevant. Other concerns were focused on resources. The coordinators stressed the need for a new full-time faculty position in networking. The coordinators also relayed the need for new equipment for the networking and hardware labs. Based on their recommendations, the College created a budget line for a networking faculty (filled in Summer 2023) and used funding from Perkins and a grant from the Department of Defense to upgrade lab equipment. The net result of these changes has been increased enrollment in the program (V.3.b.1.).
- **Planning, conducting, and supporting professional development activities (V.3.d).** Based on feedback from those completing the eLearning 101 course (required per the Union contract before newly hired faculty members can teach online or hybrid classes), the Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT) recommended that the College refresh the training. In 2023-2024, the eLearning 101 course underwent a three-year refresh, which coincided with the College changing its learning management system from Blackboard to Canvas. The course was added to the IDT agenda; leadership recommended that the subcommittee and instructional designers consider professional development around synchronous online and hybrid modes of teaching in addition to asynchronous online pedagogy.

The College did not offer synchronous online courses until the pandemic. The IDT subcommittee met and worked alongside the instructional designers to include all learning modalities (online synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, flex, and face-to-face) into this professional development course and make suggested updates by faculty feedback from previous eLearning 101 courses. After several months of brainstorming, the course was renamed “Course Design Across Modalities” (CDAM) to emphasize that faculty would know how to design and deliver their courses no matter what modality. CDAM also included a designated week explicitly focused on synchronous online and hybrid to help prepare faculty for these modalities. In addition, it incorporated bonus modules that allowed faculty members to engage with the material but not be required for course completion. The revamped course also incorporated more step-by-step instructions on course builds in the new learning management system (Canvas), working to reduce the cognitive load of material via headers, videos, and callouts and adjust the emphasis placed on specific topics from previous eLearning 101 courses. CDAM is delivered by Instructional Designers once each semester; the Director of User Success and Learning Technologies manages the course and its outcomes (V.3.d.1. and V.3.d.2.).

**Strength: The College found that assessment training was a strength, as full- and part-time faculty have many opportunities to attend professional development programs** that focus on assessment and continuous improvement, including those concerning student learning theory, engagement, assessment, integration of tech tools, and course design. There are also faculty information sessions regarding student wellness and accessibility resources. The introduction of Directed Development (specific programs that all faculty attend on Opening Day, such as “Active Learning” and “10 Tips for Improving a Canvas Course,” have also been successful). This work is also supported by the appointment of a full-time teaching faculty member as the Director of Educational Effectiveness, a position added after the 2015 Self-Study.

- **Reviewing and revising academic programs and support services.** The Nursing program, which is the highest enrolled program at the College, began a significant program overhaul in the 2021-2022 academic year. At the end of 2022-2023, the program director and faculty utilized assessment data to make key modifications aimed at improving student success. Two program learning outcomes were assessed: incorporating nursing knowledge to meet the healthcare needs of diverse communities and demonstrating clinical reasoning and judgment in delivering safe, effective, evidence-based care. The assessment data revealed high levels of student achievement, with 93.75% of students achieving satisfactory grades on a community health project and 90% meeting the required scores on simulation rubrics.

However, while these results are high, it was discovered that concurrent courses (NUR 215-216 and NUR 217-218) produced significant content overlap, giving an unfair advantage to students who repeated the first courses over those who were not able to do so, which unfairly influenced admission to the Nursing clinical rotations. To address this issue, the program faculty revised the 200-level courses to eliminate the content overlap, ensuring a more equitable structure for all students. In addition, the program updated its webpage and automated the clinical registration process.

To confirm the effectiveness of the modifications, the program faculty conducted detailed assessments of student performance across multiple areas in the 2023-2024 academic year. They evaluated five key areas for each outcome, using tools such as the Simulation Rubric, e-portfolio Rubric, and Clinical Evaluation Tool. The results showed regular high performance, with more students scoring between 92.8% and 100% in various categories such as communication, informatics, and professional nursing practice. These consistent results across multiple cohorts indicate that the curriculum modifications effectively improved student success and accessibility. The program plans to continue using the assessment tools and periodically review them to identify trends and make further adjustments (V.3.c.2.).

The College also assesses its non-academic student resources. For example, our Wellness Center monitors the number of student visits to the College’s 24/7 medical and mental health resource, TimelyCare, and tracks student visits and post-interaction ratings (V.3.c.4.). From 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023, the College saw 656 total registrations to this free wellness service, 1292 visits, with an average post-



interaction rating of 4.9 out of 5.0. More information on student resource assessment appears in our chapter on Standard IV.

- **Improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates.** The College meets with faculty program coordinators annually to discuss disaggregated program data via its Program Effectiveness and Excellence Review (PEER) process. It uses student achievement data, disaggregated by relevant populations, to help interpret educational effectiveness by program. This data is distributed to program coordinators annually, followed by a meeting to discuss new ways of using program demographic and success data. Demographic and student success data can provide valuable insights into the learning experiences of students by helping educators tailor course outcomes to better meet their needs. For example, the College uses PEER data to examine whether factors like gender, socioeconomic status, or first-generation status might impact student performance. It also can use this data to offer supplemental instruction to support student success.

By using the demographic and student success data that is provided in the PEER Data discussions to inform their teaching practices, educators can create more inclusive and equitable learning environments that better meet the needs of all students. For example, one year of PEER data could be used to examine and make changes to programs with higher-than-average completion times or programs in which diversity data fell outside the diversity of the entire student population by more than 20%. In 2023, data regarding student success in all program-required courses was disaggregated so that curricular changes could be addressed if necessary. Some new reports were added to allow discipline coordinators to examine highly enrolled course success rates. **Opportunity: Although the College has made great strides over the past decade in creating a regular process to use data disaggregated by student population for curricular improvement, more can be done. In particular, the College should continue to enhance its assessment methodology to discover more ways to shape curricular improvements based on disaggregated SLOs and multi-year analysis of PEER assessment data.**

- **Implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.** The College's Enrollment Summary dashboard uses disaggregated data to forecast student academic needs. The dashboard, which is updated regularly, allows College administrators to manage budgetary requirements and see growth or decline in student populations, enabling them to be nimble in their responses to demographic needs.

**Opportunity: The College should place additional emphasis on disaggregating student outcomes by demographics and characteristics to identify student populations with equity gaps.** When exploring whether institutional outcomes actively address the practical needs of its communities, the College found that its answer was a strong "yes." However, post-COVID, some areas of outreach previously emphasized, such as outreach to Pottstown-only students, minority male students, or the neurodiverse, declined, sometimes because of fewer County resources or a change in institutional focus. For example, the Summer Bridge program supported neurodiverse students transitioning from Special Education in high school (age 21) to college, but it has since been discontinued. In another example, the strong emphasis on pathways for dual enrollment students, while successful, may have inadvertently de-emphasized scheduling considerations for senior citizens and other adult learners. During interviews conducted by working group members, adult learners were identified as a "missed opportunity" regarding programming. Long-term employees of the College remembered the existence of the Meridien Club for adult learners, with a dedicated space on campus for such students to gather.

**Opportunity: While the College does a good job of publicizing its numerous assessments, including the Annual Assessment Report, the PARs, and Syllabus Compliance Audits, the College found that it could extend the discussion of assessment data beyond those conversations to involve the faculty at large in assessment conversations, perhaps by modifying the PARs process.** Faculty who are not directly responsible for leading a program expressed a need to set aside specific times to discuss the findings in assessment data. Though student needs are communicated well, faculty could have more opportunities to collaborate on discipline-specific improvements. This expansion of communication seems like the logical next step in the college-wide discussion of assessment data.

### **Evidence for Standard V.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: V.3.a.1. Program Assessment - Example -SRT; V.3.b.1. Program Roundtable - Example Computer Networking and Cyber Security; V.3.c.2. Nursing Program Revision; V.3.c.3. Transition Tutor.Com to Brainfuse; V.3.c.4. TimelyCare Data; V.3.d.1. eLearning 101-course Refresh & Training/Course Design Across Modalities; V.3.d.2. Professional Development Week Schedule (Sample); V.3.e.1. Academic Affairs Budget Process/Allocation to Academic Programs and Services; V.3.e.2. Perkins Allocation Process and Budget (Sample); V.3.f.1. Consumer Information; V.3.f.2. President's Monthly Report; V.3.f.3. Board of Trustee Minutes; V.3.f.4. Annual Year in Review; V.3.g.1. Retention Report (10 years); V.3.g.2. Graduation Report (10 years); V.3.g.3. Transfer Report (10 Years); V.3.g.4. Ensure Student Learning KPIs; V.3.g.5. Peer Data (Sample); V.3.h.1. Curriculum Committee Minutes (Example); V.3.h.2. Board of Trustee Student Success Committee Minutes (Example); and V.3.h.3. Educational Effectiveness Committee Minutes (Example).

### *Institutional Review of Third-Party Providers (Std V.4)*

The College does not outsource its assessment of student learning outcomes to third-party providers.

### **Evidence for Standard V.4**

N/A.

### *Periodic Assessment of Assessment Processes (Std V.5)*

MCCC's Governance Structure institutionalizes the Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC) as the standing body that reviews how the College's assessment policies and processes are working. The EEC, which is faculty-led and meets monthly during the academic year, is charged with monitoring the three levels of academic assessment:

- General Education Core Assessment (based upon approved Core rubrics).
- Program Assessment (Division-based PARs and PLOs)
- Course Assessment (Syllabus Compliance and ACT 335 Learning Outcomes)

The EEC's work is both tactical (ongoing) and strategic (forward-planning). The Committee reviews the effectiveness of assessment rubrics, discusses any needed changes to the College-wide assessment process, and approves assessment plans for new programs and courses, as the minutes demonstrate. The EEC works in tandem with the Curriculum Committee to ensure the integrity of the College's academic offerings. Below are examples of how the EEC and the Director of Educational Effectiveness revise and improve assessment processes in each area.

- **General Education Core rubrics.** The Assessment Task Force of the EEC periodically updates the rubrics used to assess Core courses. For example, recently, the Task Force reworded the criteria for Standards 3 and 5 of the Technological Fluency Core Rubric. After revising the rubric, the Task Force held a listening session to discuss the revision with colleagues who teach courses approved for the goal, then moved the revision to the EEC for approval and implementation.
- **Program Assessment.** One recent addition to the Program Assessment process is the End-of-Cycle Assessment table, added in 2023. This report summarizes changes over the multi-year cycle of PLO assessment. In addition, the document allows faculty coordinators to set and plan future goals.
- **Course Assessment.** The Director of Educational Effectiveness periodically responds to Faculty requests for standardized syllabus language to enhance course-level effectiveness. One recent improvement coming out of faculty discussions was the circulation of standardized syllabus language regarding Academic Integrity and the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence, which faculty now have the option to include.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Another EEC accomplishment was the EEC’s complete overhaul of the faculty training course, Assessment 101, “A Journey through Assessment.” Members of an EEC Task Force worked throughout the fall and spring semesters to review the former training course for new faculty. The EEC ultimately transformed it into a more interactive four-module course that was integrated into the New Faculty Orientation process and made available to all faculty in 2023.

Periodically, the College engages a consultant to audit its own assessment processes, following best practices. The recent 2023 Educational Effectiveness audit report ensures accountability, efficient and effective scaling of assessment measurements, and enhances the culture of student learning and success (V.5.a.1.). While the auditor praised the College’s faculty for engaging in a wide-ranging assessment of learning outcomes, some of the 2023 recommendations included:

- Creating a single course outcomes report format, regardless of whether the course is scheduled for course assessment, PLO assessment, or general education assessment, to streamline the process and ensure that each includes both a faculty reflection section and an action plan (V.5.a.2.).
- Implementing the new End of Cycle report (EOC) will help put PLO assessment in one place, making it easier for faculty to see assessment results at a glance. The College has already implemented this recommendation. (See Figure V-7 below.)
- Aligning the schedule of the Program Roundtables with each program’s End of Cycle PLO assessment reports.

The audit report also supports the opportunity suggested in Standard V.2 concerning the expansion of faculty discussion of assessment data.

| YEAR | PLO # | Results of modification   | Follow-up   |
|------|-------|---|---|
| 2021 | 3     | We added FYE 101 to create a new Technical Fluency option for LIB students, as well as addressing Action Item 2 from the 2020 PAR roundtable, “Reduce years to complete through additional data analysis.” For the past four years, I had been exploring how to expand the Tech fluency electives in the LIB program while adding a first-year experience requirement (see PAR Part 1 2020, Question 3). I was successful in adding FYE 101 as a requirement in the LIB program, which does both.   | Between 29% to about 32% of LIB students earn D, F, and Withdrawals grades during their first academic year. The addition of a required FYE course could increase student success.<br><br>Adding FYE 101 supports students’ ability to plan their curricular pathways through to graduation and/or transfer and, possibly, increase academic success and persistence. Ideally, our students should complete Liberal Studies in 2- 4 years, depending on part-time or full-time status. Additional help with collegiate jargon, expectations and time-management skills might assist students in finishing the program sooner.   |
| 2022 | 4     | Added a 3-credit Global Perspectives program elective, in direct response to participation in an external program review of the Delaware County Community College Liberal Arts program plus an internal report on History course enrollments (see History Professor Anna Raskin’s report from April 2021). Our community college peers all require a Global or non-Western elective. Most of our peers include many more Humanities electives than our program requires. (See the Curriculum Modification paperwork from 2021 for detailed data.) | Updated program outcomes and catalog language to encompass FYE 101 and to clarify enrollment options for students (at the suggestion of the Curriculum Committee). The revised outcomes are:<br>1. Communicate effectively in writing and speech;<br>2. Solve problems using mathematical concepts and scientific reasoning;<br>3. Analyze ideas about intellectual heritage, artistic expression, the natural and physical world, human behavior, and the use of information and technology;<br>4. Examine global perspectives and diverse cultural values;<br>5. Apply ethical perspectives to inform decisions; and<br>6. Think critically across disciplines and with respect to one’s own educational goals. |

Figure V-7: A new End-of-Cycle Assessment Table (EOC) was added to the College’s educational effectiveness reporting as a result of a recommendation in an external audit of our processes. Above is a section of the EOC from the Liberal Studies program.

**Evidence for Standard V.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: V.5.a.1. Report of the Assessment of the Educational Effectiveness Process (External Audit) and V.5.a.2. Presentation on Assessment Results.

## Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings

The College's institutional priorities are the "Strategic Imperatives" of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

### Ensure Student Learning

#### Strengths

- ✦ The College assesses programs through well-established and continuous processes.
- ✦ MCCC offers full- and part-time faculty many opportunities to attend professional development programs that focus on assessment and continuous improvement.

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should continue to enhance its assessment methodology to discover more ways to shape curricular improvements based on disaggregated SLOs and multi-year analysis of PEER assessment data.
- ▲ The College should place additional emphasis on disaggregating student outcomes by demographics and characteristics to identify student populations with equity gaps.

### Enhance Employee Experience

#### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should extend the regular discussion of assessment data to the faculty at-large at a set time.
- ▲ The College should redesign its Faculty Clipboard to be more user-friendly.

## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

### **Introduction**

The College's planning processes, resources, and structures fulfill its mission and goals while aligning with each other. The College's institutional objectives, both College-wide and in individual units, are clearly stated and accessible on the College's website. These objectives link to the College's mission, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are then used for planning and resource allocation. The College's planning and improvement processes incorporate assessment results and provide for inclusive participation by constituents. These processes are documented and communicated. For example, the College transitioned to a new Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, and developed a new Equity Statement by outlining a method, incorporating assessment results, and including participation from Faculty Governance, the Student Government Association, the Board of Trustees, the President's Leadership Council, the President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice, and the College community via Coffee and Conversation.

Financial planning and budgeting processes are evidence-based, aligned and linked to the College's strategic plan and mission. Fiscal and human resources, as well as the physical and technical infrastructure, support the College's operations wherever and however its programs are delivered. For example, the College successfully and efficiently adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of all employees, students, and visitors upon their return to MCCC's physical locations. MCCC conducts independent audits annually to confirm its financial viability and addresses any potential concerns cited during the audit process. The College has strategies to measure and assess the institutional resources required to support its mission and goals and completes periodic assessments of its planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

### **Telling Our Story:**

#### **Prioritizing Health and Safety in MCCC's Physical Locations**

MCCC's ability to adapt and innovate was notably evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leveraging its strategic priorities, the institution reallocated resources, embraced technology, and implemented safety protocols to ensure uninterrupted student learning and safeguard the health of the campus community. Over \$8.4 million was invested in safety enhancements, funded significantly by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERS I and II) funding, demonstrating a commitment to proactive resource management. Specific measures included upgrading HVAC ventilation systems, installing touch-free water filling stations, and providing publicly accessible personal protective equipment (PPE). Industrial hygienists were engaged to monitor health conditions, existing staff were trained in advanced cleaning protocols, and specialized sanitization products were procured to maintain safe facilities. Deep cleaning practices became standard, exemplifying the institution's adaptability and resilience under challenging circumstances.

In the early days of the pandemic, air quality and air purification became essential to creating a healthier indoor workspace. The College contracted to install bipolar ionization throughout both campuses. Using a combination of bipolar ionization technology and bringing additional outside air into buildings was the technique the College used to neutralize airborne particles like bacteria and viruses, thus reducing the likelihood of someone getting COVID-19 or other airborne diseases. In addition to making major HVAC modifications, the College purchased clear plexiglass moveable panels to place between individuals that would require close contact with others. MCCC also removed shared tables in most classrooms and purchased Learn2Chairs, which allowed for social distancing measures and gave students their personal space.

The College's Health Science and Science programs were the first to return to campus and the first to participate in the new health and safety protocols. MCCC identified the Human Resource Department (HR) as the central point of contact for all employee and student inquiries during the pandemic. The HR department published regular updates to the College community and responded to individual questions or issues. In addition to HR support, the College entered a partnership with Pennoni, an engineering consulting firm, that supplied the College with industrial hygienists. The industrial hygienists were stationed at a central location on campus to check temperatures and document the buildings that contractors, employees, and students would be entering. Building

entrances were limited and all individuals entering a building required a wristband before entry. As more of the College community began to return, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as surgical and N-95 masks and hand sanitizer was made available at all building entrances to anyone entering the campus.

Most meetings moved to Microsoft Teams or Zoom to avoid personal contact throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and many meetings continue to be offered online or have an online option today, providing flexibility for meeting attendees and improving meeting attendance.

## **Research Findings and Compliance Narrative**

### *Institutional Objectives (Std VI.1)*

The College affirmed that student success and institutional achievements are a result of its continued commitment to adaptation and institutional improvements. These commitments are reflected in the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, which outlines how the College will continue to best serve its students, employees, community members and partner organizations with a plan that is grounded in MCCC's mission and values and that focuses specifically on equity and a culture of belonging.

The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan serves as a touchstone from which all other institutional planning processes follow. The main components of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan focus on who we are as an institution, what our change efforts are, and how we will measure our change efforts for accountability to stakeholders. Change efforts are centered on the College's three stakeholder groups: students, employees, and the larger Montgomery County community. With a focus on these three groups, the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan outlines three imperatives – to ensure student learning, to enhance employee experiences, and to expand community participation. Each of the three imperatives outlined in the strategic plan contains sustainable objectives and direction for assessment. Under the imperative to ensure student learning, the College seeks to maintain sustainable objectives to ensure student learning by monitoring information on the academic successes of all students to close achievement gaps, assess the overall first-year student experience to identify opportunities to better prepare learners to complete their education pathway, and to use course analytics to implement course-based initiatives that improve student learning outcomes and course completion rates (VI.1.a.2.). Particularly for its adult learners, the College also strives to connect academic programs to careers and deliver a direct path to meaningful employment and sustainable wage careers, with an emphasis on delivering student experiences that reflect valued workforce skills. Through completion of degrees and certificates, students are prepared to meet employer demands for skills mastery. The College's workforce development programs lead directly to work-ready credentials that are aligned with regional workforce development needs such as the IT Apprenticeship Academy and manufacturing.

Under the imperative to enhance the employee experience, the College works to maintain sustainable objectives to enhance the employee experience by enabling a culture of leadership and engagement supported through open communication and collaborative problem solving; implementing a training and development strategy to expand professional development opportunities in support of our students, communities, and career path opportunities; and assessing and seeking input on training topics that are in need and of interest for employees. MCCC implements succession planning programs for employee areas, utilizing strategic recruiting and pipeline development programs, and deploying knowledge capture and transfer methods that align with succession planning objectives.

Under the imperative to expand community participation, MCCC seeks sustainable objectives to expand community participation by securing relationships that support the region's workforce and economic development environment, delivering training programs and career pathways responsive to the needs of employers and participants, and providing community-centered networks to ensure students and Alumni can connect to professional opportunities in diverse career fields. The College also works to identify resource partners to sustain its work by prioritizing partnerships that promote student learning or employee advancement opportunities such as Merck Day, where students of all majors can learn about career options and potential pathways at Merck pharmaceutical company, or the College's partnership with the YMCA that provides gym and childcare facilities. These partnerships contribute to regional economic advancement and strengthen existing relationships that build upon shared objectives and values to achieve common community goals.

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Using College-wide, inclusive processes, the College updated its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and its 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan with broad input from all community stakeholders. The Strategic Plan was developed through a transparent process where students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees and community partners helped determine how the College would evolve to best serve its students, employees, and communities well into the future. The Strategic Plan also aligns with *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*, which contains Montgomery County's goals and a future land use plan and guides overall growth and development in the county. Based on the feedback from open forums, the new Strategic Plan ensures that equity is woven into the fabric of MCCC's culture and is infused into its mission and values. As part of the conversation surrounding its development, the Board of Trustees endorsed an expanded Equity Statement, itself the result of an inclusive conversation that allowed all members of the College community to re-examine and improve our previous 2019 student statement. All other unit plans stem from the College's Strategic Plan (VI.1.a.4.).

MCCC's 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan was used as an opportunity to guide near and long-term physical plant development that is thoughtful, intentional, and based on data, considering a variety of factors such as the impact of COVID-19, utilization of existing buildings, access to recreational spaces, and opportunities for multi-use or hybrid spaces. The authoring team gathered input from MCCC's leadership and incorporated feedback from several open community forums that included industry partners (VI.1.a.3.). The College found the inclusive processes utilized to develop both the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and the 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan to be a strength. **Strength: The College developed a well-received 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan using broad community input and review.**

### Evidence for Standard VI.1

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.1.a.1. Organizational Chart; VI.1.a.2. Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Cycle; VI.1.a.3. Budget-Planning Resource Allocation Process; VI.1.a.4. Units Plans Align with 2023-2027 Strategic Plan; and VI.1.a.5. ROI & Student Success Metric Template (Impact Analysis).

### *Documented and Communicated Planning and Improvement Processes (Std VI.2)*

The College effectively communicates its strategic planning to all levels of the institution. MCCC's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan, as well as all College policies and procedures, are publicly available and easy to access on the College's website. Monthly Presidential Reports use easy-to-understand color-coding to align with the 2023-2027 plan and highlight achievements according to the institutional imperatives outlined by it (VI.2.a.3.). An example of this color-coding method is highlighted in Figure VI-2 below.

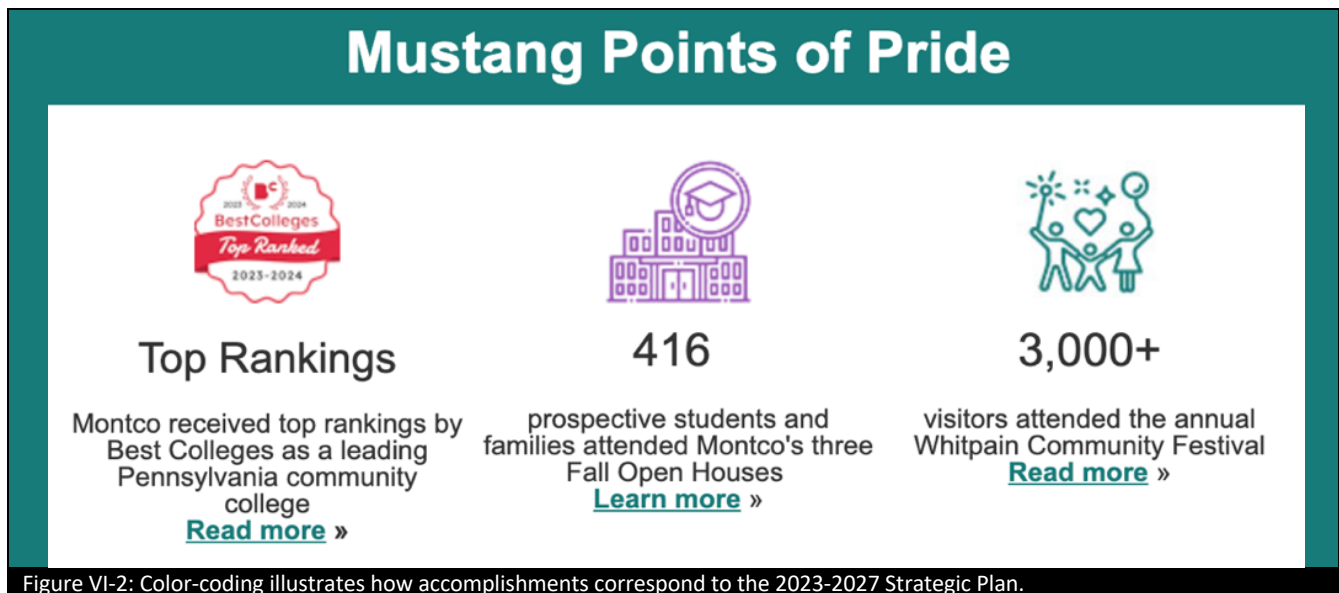


Figure VI-2: Color-coding illustrates how accomplishments correspond to the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

*Following Up: Recommendations from the 2015 Self-Study*

One recommendation from MCCC's 2015 Self-Study was that the College must make clear how its multiple planning documents are interrelated and find ways to communicate a more coherent set of plans to the College and external community. In response to this recommendation, the College set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that align with the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. These KPIs are updated annually and then shared with the Board of Trustees and the College community (VI.2.a.2.). The College also publishes Annual Reports that provide a summary of major accomplishments during each academic year (VI.2.a.1.). Many of the highlights of the Annual Reports draw from monthly President's Reports. Both types of reports are color-coded to match the 2023-2027 Strategic plan and highlight achievements according to the institutional imperatives outlined by that plan. (See Figure VI-2 above.)

The College's Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public, both in person and online, and meeting minutes and agendas are made available via email through the office of the President. This transparency of communication helps ensure that updates and goals are regularly reported. College Governance Committee meetings are open to anyone in the College community. Governance meeting agendas are circulated via email before every meeting and meeting minutes are available via the Faculty Clipboard.

During its development, the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was presented and discussed by each of the College's Governance Committees, the Student Government Association, the President's Leadership Council, and the President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice multiple times before being presented to and discussed by the Board of Trustees. The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was also discussed during Coffee and Conversation, which is open to all members of the College community.

New employee orientation materials introduce new employees to the Strategic Plan and provide instructions for how to access College-related information. All employees in supervisory roles complete the Supervisory Effectiveness Program. The program is designed to orient new supervisors to the College community, explain role(s) and responsibilities, and provide opportunities for connecting with other supervisors on campus.

Each program within the College's four divisions – Business and Professional Studies, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, and STEM – provides reports on learning outcomes for General Education Core Goals and program goals are addressed and assessed. Reports are available for all academic years since 2001. The College utilizes the Montco Data Hub as a central repository for reports and College data supplied by the Business Intelligence (BI) and Institutional Effectiveness (IE) teams. The Hub contains a resources tab where employees can access folders that house data reports, internal and external survey results, and other analytical assets. The Hub is readily available to all employees at the College and includes a discussion tab where employees can discuss various topics. Hub administrators provide a new topic featured monthly during the academic year. While other data is still available by request, faculty and staff appreciate the ease of access the new Data Hub offers, making it a strength. **Strength: The College has developed a Data Hub that serves as a central repository for reports and data analytics that are available to all employees.**

Additionally, in alignment with the Strategic Plan, Human Resources, Finance, and Government Relations periodically send out information about initiatives that impact employees such as extra days off, employee celebrations, health premium holidays, benefits information, changes in tax regulations, and new government regulations.

The College completes the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) institutional survey every year. The VFA includes three types of reports: six-year outcomes (completions, transfers, persistence); two-year outcomes (fall to spring retention, completions, transfers, and reaching of credit threshold); and developmental education progress measures. The College's participation in this institutional survey reflects its commitment to measuring the student-centered goals outlined in the 2017-2022 and 2023-2027 strategic plans. The National Community College Benchmark Accreditation Report highlights the College's accomplishments concerning MSCHE standards and demonstrates that our planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are



sufficient to fulfill our mission and goals, to continuously improve access and improve programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

The color-coding and visual representation of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan has proved effective in simplifying interrelated initiatives and goals across the campus community. Because of this, the College recognizes an opportunity to extend this process to other areas of campus planning. **Opportunity: The College should continue to visually demonstrate how updates and changes align with the College's Strategic Plan.**

**Evidence for Standard VI.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.2.a.1. Annual Year in Review; VI.2.a.2. Strategic Plan KPIs (Updated Annually); VI.2.a.3. President's Monthly Report; VI.2.a.4. President's Leadership Council (Example); and VI.2.a.5. Research Brief (Example).

**Financial Planning and Budgeting Process (Std VI.3)**

The College has a clear financial planning and budgeting process, and resource allocations support the College's mission and goals. The College has a 2023-2027 Financial Strategic Plan (FSP) that establishes multiyear goals or targets, articulates strategy and philosophies to achieve desired outcomes, and aims to reverse the trend of fiscal health deterioration no matter the climate (VI.3.a.3.). The FSP creates an objective mechanism to define and measure the College's financial goals. These financial goals remain in service of achieving the goals outlined in MCCC's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and the 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan.

To continue to produce clean audits and an investment grade Moody's rating, the FSP has four imperative goals, which are, in turn, driven by five financial strategies. The goals of the FSP aim to position the organization for stability in the near term, sustainability in the long term, and prosperity in the future. The four goals are to balance the budget, level the cash burn rate, establish balance sheet funding, and create an annual review of MCCC's financial performance process. (See Figure VI-3.)

Each strategy within the FSP has a collateral impact on other goals, so the College focuses on implementing the strategy to achieve the larger goal and support the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. By connecting strategy to goals, the College recognizes that the goals of the FSP, regardless of financial statement, are all connected to the overall fiscal health of the organization.

| Goal                            | Strategy 1                 | Strategy 2                 | Strategy 3               |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Balance the budget              | Budget Management Strategy | Cash Management Strategy   | Risk Management Strategy |
| Level cash burn                 | Cash Management Strategy   | Investment Strategy        | Debt Management Strategy |
| Establish balance sheet funding | Debt Management Strategy   | Budget Management Strategy | Risk Management Strategy |

Figure VI-3: An excerpt from the Financial Strategic Plan aligning financial goals to designated strategies.

The College provides financial training for employees in supervisory roles through its Supervisory Effectiveness Program. Budget management training is also available to employees through an internal Finance and Business Office Resource site.

The annual budget process, which includes discussion and recommendations for tuition and fees from the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees, begins in March with the College's annual budgets approved in the June meeting of the full Board upon the recommendation of the Finance and Institutional Risk committee. These meetings are open to the public. The Board of Trustees By-Laws determine the responsibilities of Board members, including the Treasurer who works closely with the Vice President for Finance.

The institution has a budget and planning process that incorporates community involvement. The process is clearly documented with direction given regarding priorities. All cost center administrators can submit their budgets within the guidelines provided and provide recommendations for any new initiatives for which they would like to request funding. The College President is provided discretionary funds that she can use to support new initiatives. Additionally, the grants department is available to research grant opportunities that support new initiatives.

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Below is an overview of the College's budget and planning process (VI.3.a.7.):

- The annual budget process begins with a review of enrollment trends and then considers other data points, such as high school graduation rates, new credit programs, grants revenue, anticipated Montgomery County allocation, anticipated State of Pennsylvania allocation, and other revenue sources.
- The projected enrollment numbers, which are shared College-wide, are used to develop the revenue portion of the budget. The expense budget is then built using negotiated salary estimates, anticipated insurance costs, anticipated utility costs, existing contract cost escalation, and supplies. Based on this information, tuition and fees rates are proposed in February or March. Once that information is available, it is shared with the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee and the Board of Trustees as a preliminary budget in March or April. In June, the Board of Trustees approves the final budget broadly shared in Coffee and Conversations, Board of Trustee committees, and the Full Board committee, which includes any new tuition and fees rates.
- The enrollment management plan is tied to the College's Strategic Plan and is connected to both the financial plan and the academic plan. Enrollment management planning strategies include enrollment and retention targets in support of the College's Strategic Plan (VI.3.a.6.). With the support of the institutional effectiveness department, enrollment management planning outcomes are assessed and analyzed annually.
- The institution's financial plan ties to the College's Strategic Plan and is connected to the enrollment management plan and the academic plan. The College's financial plan is reviewed by the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees and is shared with the College community.

Notably, the College's Board of Trustees elected not to raise tuition for five years after local funding was implemented through a dedicated millage in 2017; therefore, the College has been able to keep tuition and fees low while not impacting the overall operation of the College. The College also did not raise tuition and fees during the COVID-19 pandemic, opting instead to use available federal funding to balance its budget. Post-pandemic, once there was no longer HERRF funding available, the College was not able to balance its budget. The 23-24 budget preparation process included a 9.2% (\$1.81M) budget cut made to non-salary lines, and some positions were eliminated as staff left them, while others were held unfilled as the College resized the organization to align with enrollment. During this process the Vice President for Finance provided regular reports to the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees, updating the Board on progress toward closing the budget gap through cost containment strategies. The College opened a \$10 million line of credit for the 24-25 fiscal year, and tuition and fees were raised.

The College has a well-defined plan to balance revenue and expenses that has been reviewed by the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees (VI.3.a.4.). It is anticipated that the College will have a balanced budget in FY25-26. The College has a three-pronged approach that will move it into an acceptable range for the Composite Financial Index (CFI) ratio:

1. Release the restriction of \$16.1M for athletic fields.
2. Decrease the liability associated with Retiree Medical coverage.
3. Reduce long-term debt as the College uses free cash flow to pay bond debt following the schedule.

The \$16.1M restrictions for athletic fields were lifted by the Board of Trustees in 2024. Retiree medical, more formally known as Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), totals \$63.9M in liability. The College has sunset this benefit; therefore, this liability will continue to shrink year over year. Long-term debt was reduced by \$11.7M between FY23 and FY24. The College will not acquire new debt as construction has been suspended until liabilities return to an acceptable range. As such, the College expects similar eight-figure reductions to the long-term debt in future years. These liability reductions drive each of the sub-ratios that comprise the CFI. The College has completed a full financial strategy to balance each of the financial statements improving net income, cash burn, and total equity.

The College has a clear financial planning and budgeting process, and resource allocations support the College's mission and goals. In service of continuing to produce clean audits and an investment grade Moody's rating, the

College's 23-27 Financial Strategic Plan aims to position the organization for stability in the near term, sustainability in the long term, and prosperity in the future. Because of this, the College recognizes its financial leadership and planning as a strength. **Strength: Despite budget challenges, the College provides clear leadership and a strong financial plan through 2027, in addition to a history of clean, unmodified audits.**

While the College recognizes its strong financial planning as a strength, many colleagues have expressed a need for more visibility about how budget targets are developed beyond senior leadership, which may mean adding financial training to faculty and staff so that the FSP makes sense as appropriate to their role. Currently, revenue from high instructional cost course fees is not tied to those departments; training in understanding the FSP and corresponding budget process would help faculty and staff understand why that revenue is not immediately considered when straight-line budget cuts are utilized, making increased transparency an opportunity.

**Opportunity: The College should continue to increase transparency around decisions and processes regarding budgets in consultation with stakeholders.**

### **Evidence for Standard VI.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.3.a.1. FY25 Capital Budget; VI.3.a.2. FY25 Operating Budget; VI.3.a.3. Financial Strategic Plan; VI.3.a.4. Deficit Reduction Plan; VI.3.a.5. Financial Working Group Mission Statement; VI.3.a.6. Current Enrollment and Enrollment Goals Dashboard; and VI.3.a.7. Budget Development Process.

### ***Resources and Infrastructure (Std VI.4)***

The College possesses and demonstrates fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure needed to support program operations wherever and however they are delivered. The College's financial, human resources, capital, facilities, and technical infrastructure plans are interrelated. Both campuses are provided with the financial, staffing, facilities, and technical support needed to operate their online platform offerings. Both campuses receive support based on student enrollment and the physical plant. Both campuses have benefited from significant campus renovations over the past decade, as well as increased student support services that support student wellness. Both campuses operate day and evening, providing support through 7:00 p.m. each evening, Monday through Thursday. In addition to on-ground course offerings, other services provided include admissions, advising, enrollment services, financial aid, commencement, tutoring, and wellness support. Both campuses have clubs and on-ground activities that support student engagement.

There are no differences in the support provided to our branch campus. There are, however, differences between the campuses with the Blue Bell campus having a 500-seat theater and the Pottstown campus having a Challenger Learning Center. The expense analysis of related expenses can be found in our evidence repository.

### **Evidence for Standard VI.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.4.a.1. Facilities Master Plan 2023-2033; VI.4.a.2. Facilities Master Plan 2012-2022; VI.4.a.3. FY 2025 Blue Bell Campus Budget; VI. 4.a.4. FY 2025 Pottstown Campus Budget; and VI.4.a.5. Technology Systems Assessment.

### ***Decision Making and Accountability (Std VI.5)***

The College has a clear and consistent process for institutional decision-making that begins with departmental leadership and moves through the College's channels to senior leadership and the President's Cabinet. The College's organizational charts provide the College's decision-making structure in a clear and user-friendly way, which assists with transparency about decision-making responsibility and accountability. Information regarding the College's leadership and decision-making processes is also addressed in Standard VII.

The senior leadership team includes the College's Vice Presidents and Chief of Staff who meet every other week. Topics for decision-making are explored at these meetings and then shared at the President's Cabinet, which meets two-to-three times per month. During the President's Cabinet meetings, topics such as institutional planning, strategies, priorities, policy development and revision, and other items that support the College's institutional effectiveness, mission, and vision are discussed. Some items discussed at the President's Cabinet are then shared and discussed at the President's Leadership Council (PLC). The PLC meets quarterly and is co-chaired by the Director of Educational Effectiveness (faculty) and the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness (administrator).

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The PLC's charges are outlined in the Faculty Contract and include the following:

- To systematically assess educational and institutional goals against the College's Strategic Plan.
- To use assessment results to advance educational effectiveness and institutional improvement.
- To communicate results to all stakeholders.
- To collaborate with Faculty Governance Committees to advance student success.

Membership of the PLC includes the President (non-voting), the co-chairs (Director of Educational Effectiveness and Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness), the chairs of the Faculty Governance committees, the Vice Presidents, the Faculty Union President, the President of the Student Government Association (SGA), the Staff Union Co-Presidents, the Director of Equity, Diversity, and Belonging, a Department Coordinator, and at-large members. All PLC meetings are announced to the College community via email along with an agenda and online meeting link. These meetings are also publicized via the College's webpage as part of the President's Calendar for the academic year. The agenda for each meeting includes reports from the SGA President and the Faculty Governance committee chairs. Other agenda items include, but are not limited to, sharing College data and assessment results, strategic planning (both institutional and unit plans) along with plan metrics such as key performance indicators, policy development and revision, and other topics for discussion as they are identified. All PLC meetings are open to the public and a diverse representation of members of the College community attend including students and members of the Board of Trustees.

In addition to the PLC, the College has leadership councils such as the President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice (PACESJ) and the Provost's Academic Affairs Council. PACESJ centers equity, diversity, and belonging as an important part of the College's decision-making processes. The Academic Affairs Council creates a space for the College's academic deans and assistant deans, as well as additional parties that report to the Provost to discuss academic initiatives and to explore resource allocation within the Academic Affairs Unit. The Vice President of Finance's departmental directors meet regularly as a working group to provide collaborative input and feedback in the decision-making process.

All the groups mentioned thus far flow information to the Board of Trustees committees and the full Board. The Board of Trustees, as per its by-laws, has decision-making authority and accountability as appropriate and consistent with College policies. All Board Committee and full Board meeting agendas and minutes are published on the College website and distributed to every employee by email.

### **Evidence for Standard VI.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.5.a.1. Guide to Ethics of Governance: Standards of Good Practice; VI.5.a.2. Senior Leadership and Cabinet Unit Responsibilities; and VI.5.a.3. President's Coffee and Conversation Presentation (Example).

### ***Comprehensive Planning (Std VI.6)***

The College demonstrates comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and derives from the College's Strategic Plan (VI.4.a.1.; VI.6.a.2.; VI.6.a.3.; VI.6.a.4. and VI.6.a.5.). The College has two campuses located in distinctly different areas of Montgomery County. For example, 24/7 Wall St. identified MCCC's Blue Bell campus as being situated in one of Pennsylvania's most affluent suburbs, while the Pottstown campus is situated in an economically disadvantaged river borough. The Blue Bell campus was opened in 1970, and the Pottstown campus was opened in 1996. In addition to its two campuses, the College delivers credit courses at local high schools and non-credit courses at local companies. MCCC also has a significant online presence, offering academic programs, courses, and student support and services.

From 2013 until 2022, the College's Culinary Institute was located in Towamencin Township. The Institute closed in 2022 at the end of a 10-year lease. In 2023 and 2024, the Culinary Arts and Baking and Pastry programs utilized the cafeteria facilities on the Blue Bell campus to teach culinary courses. Beginning in the fall of 2024, the Culinary Arts, Hospitality, and Baking and Pastry programs began to offer all laboratory courses in the newly opened Hospitality Institute, located on the Blue Bell campus.

Our Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses each have a library, food and beverage options, a fitness center, eSports offerings, art galleries, game rooms, wellness centers, advising, student services centers, and lounge areas. The College's Facilities Master Plan 2023-2033 includes reviews of both campuses and recommendations for

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

additional plans and new construction, as well as extensive information regarding deferred maintenance and an approximate cost for each recommendation. The College's technology plans include an IT Strategic Plan, a detailed IT Infrastructure Plan, and a detailed IT Security Plan. All technology upgrades, leases, contracts, and new purchases are funded through the College's operating and capital budgets from technology fees assessed to students, as well as public and private grants.

Over the past decade, the College has invested over \$100 million in facilities renovations at both the Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses. These investments aligned with the College's previous 10-year Facilities Master Plan. For most projects, 50% of the project was supported by Commonwealth funding and the other 50% through local support by floating institutional bonds. The 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan provides an extensive review of both campuses and includes recommendations with costs and, in many cases, photos showing problems that need repair or replacement. The Facilities Master Plan 2023-2033 was informed by a space utilization study that concluded that the College had adequate space for instruction, student support services, and student gathering spaces. The study identified opportunities for enlarging some classrooms to permit more experiential learning, as well as opportunities for outdoor classroom spaces.

Each year the facilities department has \$1 million allocated for facilities maintenance. In addition, each year the College sends a request to the State of Pennsylvania through the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges for capital project funding. In FY25, the College requested a 20-million-dollar capital investment from the State of Pennsylvania to be paid out over 10 years for deferred maintenance. Over the past several years, those requests have resulted in the renovation and additions at the Blue Bell campus to the Health Sciences Center; renovations to College Hall, which houses the library, student support services, and administrative offices; renovations to Parkhouse Hall, which is a primary academic building; and the Science Center and Theater. At the Pottstown campus, the first floor of the South Hall building has also been renovated, and the building at 140 College Drive has been renovated to house the College's Challenger Learning Center. In the summer of 2024, the College completed an emergency capital project to rebuild the retaining wall adjacent to the Manatawny Creek on its Pottstown campus and used the opportunity to provide additional green space for the campus. Within the last two years, the College purchased the Hanover Building in Pottstown, increasing the Pottstown Campus to four buildings. This building is currently undergoing maintenance upgrades and houses the Pottstown Children's Discovery Center.

The College owns all its buildings. The Blue Bell campus is located on 186 acres that are owned by Montgomery County, which leases the land to the College for \$1.00 each year. The College has debt service for the building renovations that have occurred over the past decade. MCCC has a facilities use agreement that permits community organizations and community members to rent space on its campuses. The College leases space on the Pottstown Campus to the Children's Discovery Center with an annual review and renewal. The College carries fire, liability, and cybersecurity insurance. Insurance contracts are reviewed annually through the College Insurance Broker and then annually presented to the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees followed by the full Board for approval.

The College uses third-party providers for campus safety on the Pottstown campus; however, those officers report to a Campus Safety Supervisor located on the Pottstown campus. The College also uses an after-hours contact center to extend its on-ground technical service help desk to provide 24x7 tech support. This call center answers common questions and creates a ticket for specific questions which are then resolved by a College employee.

For Talent Management professional development training, the College uses LinkedIn Learning along with both in-person and virtual professional development programs provided by the College. The College has two food service contracts, one that supplies food to Montco Markets located on both the Blue Bell and Pottstown campuses and the other that provides quick service, made-to-order food in Parkhouse Hall and the Health Science Center on the Blue Bell campus. When contracts expire, the procurement office works with the various departments to review the new contract and look at other potential organizations that provide the same service. Before a contract is signed, if over the Presidential approval authority, it is reviewed by the Finance and Institutional Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees and then sent to the full Board for approval per College policy.

A detailed list of IT expenditures is developed each year in preparation of the IT budget and a determination of the technology fees proposal. A review of all software to determine utilization and/or ongoing value to the institution is also made before the preparation of the IT budget. The IT department has a planned replacement cycle based on

equipment type. Laptop computers are replaced every four to five years and IT infrastructure, such as switches, routers, and servers, are replaced at the end of equipment life. The College has moved to a Bring Your Own Device program for students, which has significantly reduced the number of computer labs on both campuses. The College provides loaner laptops for any student who indicates that they have a need. Many of the student loaner laptops have been funded through the College's Foundation.

### **Evidence for Standard VI.6**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.6.a.2. Information Technology Strategic Plan; VI.6.a.3. Deferred Maintenance Plan; VI.6.a.4. President's Leadership Council Agenda; and VI.6.a.5. Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

### ***Financial Viability (Std VI.7)***

The College is financially viable. An annual independent audit confirms financial viability with a clean, unmodified audit. A shared spreadsheet is used by auditors, the controller, and lead accountants to answer any audit questions as an independent auditor reviews financial documents. Audit results are presented at November meetings of both the Finance and Institutional Risk subcommittee and the full Board of Trustees. All meetings are open to the public and meeting minutes are shared.

Fiscal responsibility remains a cornerstone of the institution's operations, as evidenced by its consistent record of financial accountability (VI.7.a.6.). The College participates in an annual independent audit performed by Maher Duessel. Each November the auditor's report is shared with the Board of Trustees. Public review of these audits during Board of Trustees meetings ensures a high level of financial oversight and stakeholder confidence (VI.7.a.1.). This track record reflects the institution's dedication to sound financial stewardship and strategic resource allocation.

From FY2015 to FY2024, the institution received unmodified opinions during its independent audits, demonstrating adherence to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the absence of material misstatements. While management letters were issued in FY2017 and FY2018, findings, significant deficiencies, and material weaknesses were confined solely to FY2017. These issues were promptly addressed through targeted corrective actions, underscoring the institution's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

In FY21, the College received a management letter regarding the quarterly reports for the student aid portion of HERRF. The College was updating the reports more frequently than quarterly and the dates did not align with the end of the calendar quarter. In response to the management letter, the Financial Aid Department adjusted its internal reporting timeline to ensure quarterly reporting requirements were met. The financial strategic plan for the College contains a multi-year budget through FY27. This budget shows that the largest year-over-year increase is salaries. To help balance these increases, the multi-year budget keeps non-compensation budgets flat and increases tuition at a minimal rate that offsets the increase in expense. The College is also working to diversify revenue streams and continues to include space rental and increased grant and foundation support to help increase revenue.

In January of 2025, the College preserved the A1 rating it has maintained since 2018. This external endorsement is the result of rigorous scrutiny from a neutral and detached organization, which speaks to MCCC's overall health, effectiveness, and commitment to continuous improvement. The College's A1 rating is a result of rigorous self-assessment and demonstrates to stakeholders that it meets or exceeds rigorous financial standards and complies with accreditation entities, bankers and lenders, and state or local sponsors. MCCC's A1 rating is not only a recognition of achievement, but a strategic advantage that positions the College for sustained success, growth, and impact within the higher education landscape.

### **Evidence for Standard VI.7**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.7.a.1. Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes; VI.7.a.2. Financial Ratio & Composite Financial Index; VI.7.a.4. Debt Service; VI.7.a.5. County of Montgomery's Budget and Appropriation; VI.7.a.6. External Audit Report Summary (10 years); VI.7.a.7. Pennsylvania Department of Education Budget; VI.7.a.8. Bond Rating; and VI.7.a.9. Auditor Management Letter (Example).

### *Assessment of Institutional Resources (Std VI.8)*

The College conducts an ongoing evaluation of its institutional resources so that it may remain solvent to best support the College's work toward fulfilling its mission and goals. During the development of the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, work began on the College's new financial plan (VI.6.a.3.). This plan included the efforts of the Vice President of Finance, the President's Cabinet and Senior Leadership, the President, the Board of Trustees' Finance and Institutional Risk Committee, and the full Board of Trustees. Throughout the process, the Vice President of Finance presented the preliminary 2023-2027 Financial Strategic Plan (FSP) at public meetings for transparent information dissemination and to provide opportunities for feedback. The 2023-2027 FSP establishes multiyear goals or targets, articulates strategy and philosophies to achieve desired outcomes, and aims to reverse the fiscal trends created by enrollment declines in recent years. These financial goals remain in service of achieving the goals set forth in the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and the 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan (VI.6.a.3., VI.4.a.1. and VI.4.a.7.). Regular updates regarding the FSP have been provided to the College community at Coffee and Conversation sessions as well as public Finance and Institutional Risk Committee and Board of Trustees meetings.

The College has a well-established and documented institutional effectiveness assessment cycle that supports the College's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. The College implements nationally developed assessments as well as internally developed research projects to assess the experiences of students and employees. One such example is the implementation of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (RNL-SSI). Institutional Effectiveness has implemented the inventory on a biennial basis since 1997.

Results from this assessment are presented to a wide range of campus constituencies. Results are then utilized in the development of the College's strategic plan and the assessment criteria for the plan. Furthermore, the results have been utilized in departmental planning such as the Academic Advising redesign (for more detail see the Standard IV Chapter of this report). The redesign shows the evolution of advising at the College and the cycle of continuous improvement. Another such example is the use of the Healthy Minds Study, to guide the College's efforts to address wellness and holistic student support services which included the planning, development, and resource allocation for the Wellness Center. Lastly, the College utilizes the Modern Think survey to assess the employee experience at the College and campus climate. Results from this survey then informed the Strategic Employee Workforce Plan, which is tied to the utilization of both human and financial resources.

Another prime example of data-driven investment is the institution's focus on infrastructure and technology. Upgrades to learning spaces, faculty development programs, and student support services reflect a commitment to aligning resources with strategic goals. The institution employs a comprehensive assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of resource allocation and its impact on institutional goals. Outcomes such as program efficacy, student retention, and graduation rates are carefully analyzed to ensure that investments yield measurable benefits. Feedback loops engage stakeholders at all levels—students, faculty, staff, and external partners—creating a dynamic process for refining strategies and maintaining alignment with the mission.

Recent assessments highlighted opportunities for strengthening employee engagement and well-being. In response, the institution expanded professional development programs, enhanced workplace flexibility, and invested in tools to support work-life balance, reinforcing its strategic focus on Enhance Employee Experience.

### **Evidence for Standard VI.8**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion. The evidence used to demonstrate compliance is listed under previous standard criteria (see VI.4 and VI.6).

### *Assessment of Planning and Institutional Improvement (Std VI.9)*

The College participates in the ongoing periodic assessment, planning and resource allocation, which informs and guides resource development, sustainability, and institutional renewal (VI.4.a.1.). This is achieved through the College's strategic planning process. The College's new strategic plan was developed through community forums and campus meetings such as Coffee and Conversation. Annual Report Cards were developed to assess the metrics tied to the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan and were shared annually with the College and the Board of Trustees.

The current 2023-2027 Strategic Plan includes key performance indicators (KPIs) as assessment metrics for the three pillars. These metrics were developed through ongoing dialogue across the College. The KPIs are the

## Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

assessment measures for the current strategic plan and are updated on an annual or biannual basis depending on the type of supporting data needed. The College developed these KPIs to align with MSCHE AIU and criteria. They are available on the College's website. All unit plans crosswalk to the College's Strategic Plan to achieve the objectives of the plan. Unit and department plans are used to inform resource allocation during the College's annual budget development process.

The College conducts an annual assessment of the Institutional Review Board which includes reviewing regulatory compliance, an environmental scan and the benchmarking of best practices, and policy revision to demonstrate how the College fulfills this criterion on a smaller, yet important scale due to the impact on faculty and administrator led research projects at the College.

### Evidence for Standard VI.9

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it by the following evidence: VI.9.a.1. Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes (Example); VI.9.a.3. Educational Effectiveness Cycle; VI.9.a.5. ROI Report - Impact Analysis (Sample); VI.9.a.6 Academic Affairs Plan Update December 2024; and VI.9.a.7. Strategic Enrollment Plan Update December 2024.

### Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings

The College's institutional priorities are the "Strategic Imperatives" of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

#### Ensure Student Learning

##### Strengths

- ✦ The College provides clear leadership and a strong financial plan through 2027, in addition to a history of clean, unmodified audits.

#### Enhance Employee Experience

##### Strengths

- ✦ The College has developed a Data Hub that serves as a central repository for reports and data analytics that are available to all employees.

##### Opportunities

- ▲ The College should continue to visually demonstrate how updates and changes align with the College's Strategic Plan.
- ▲ The College should continue to increase transparency around decisions and processes regarding budgets in consultation with stakeholders.

#### Expand Community Participation

##### Strengths

- ✦ The College developed a well-received 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan with wide community input and review.



## **Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

### **Introduction**

The Community College Act of 1963 (Act 484 of 1963) has been codified as Article XIX-A of the Public School Code of 1949. Sections 1904-A and 1905-A outline the specific responsibilities of the Board of Trustees who govern Montgomery County Community College. In accordance with that Act, MCCC is governed by a fifteen-person Board of Trustees, whose members are appointed by the Montgomery County Commissioners to six-year renewable terms. The Board sets policies that shape curriculum, student access and success, and College administration; approves and monitors annual operating and capital budgets; sets tuition and fees; hires and evaluates the President; oversees property management; and approves contracts with outside vendors. It also certifies that accreditation standards are met and communicates changes in accredited status, as needed. Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez, the President of the College, is appointed and authorized by the Board to carry out the day-to-day operations of the College and execute institutional policies.

Beyond the Board level, the College's governance structure integrates faculty, students, administrators, and staff. The Faculty Union, via a contract negotiated between the administration and Union leadership, sets out faculty involvement in the governance of the College and stipulates both the number, terms of service, and membership of the four Governance Committees. The Student Government Association (SGA), authorized by the Board, provides leadership, guidance, and oversight to all student clubs and assures timely responses to issues raised by the student body. The SGA is also responsible for the distribution and approval of activity fee funds earmarked for student programming.

### **Telling Our Story:**

#### **Revised Governance Structures Highlight Collaboration and Transparency**

MCCC's Shared Governance model engages representative stakeholders across its community in institutional decisions that directly impact student success. Historically, this all-College Governance structure has stood in place of a more traditional Faculty Senate. By making Shared Governance "tree up" to the President's Leadership Council, the College advances strategic initiatives and delivers feedback with expediency, first to the President and then to the Board of Trustees.

Since the College's Shared Governance process is unique, the 2015 Middle States Evaluation Team reminded the College to document the integrated governance structure and provide well-defined roles to improve the sustainability and success of its model. In 2019-2020, the Shared Governance model was updated to include even more stakeholder input and to better align with current practice and changes made to the Middle States Standards. The Governance Committees are now the:

- Curriculum Committee (CC), formerly named the Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee
- Student Support Committee (SSC), formerly named the Student Life Committee
- Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC), raised to governance status from a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee
- Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT), combining the former Information Technology All-College (ITACC) and Distance Education Committee (DEC)

The Faculty Union, via the 2022-2026 Faculty Contract, worked with the administration to codify faculty involvement in the governance of the College and stipulated the number, terms of service, and membership of the four Governance Committees. The Faculty Contract also added a requirement for a full-time, tenured faculty member at the rank of Professor to serve on each Committee and codified compensation for Faculty chairs of each committee. A formalized President's Leadership Council, a Faculty Governance Council, and a visual representation of the College's governance model were also added to the Faculty Contract.

These changes, which were made to the Faculty Governance Committees based, in part, on recommendations from the 2015 Self-Study process, show how a previous area in need of improvement has progressed based on

the assessment process. In fact, the Self-Study Working Group 7 identified it as an area of **Strength: The College refined its governance structures to support its mission and vision.**

Changes to the Board of Trustees subcommittee and meeting structures, some of which occurred during the pandemic, highlight another value of the College's governance and leadership processes: transparency. Since the 2015 Self-Study, the Board has worked to welcome additional stakeholder comments. The College now has a public meeting policy (Board of Trustees Policy 2.9) and allows open subcommittee meetings. It also permits any community stakeholder to communicate with the Trustees.

During the pandemic, the Board's agenda was busy, not only with operational pivots but also with the hiring a new College President. While the Board had no choice but to meet virtually during the closure of our physical campus, Board Chairperson Frank Custer approved continuing a virtual Board Meeting option upon the College's return to physical locations. This decision not only initially ensured health and safety measures, as masks were still required, but also resulted in dramatically increased community participation in Board meetings. Greater participation now provides more transparency for employees and students on topics related to institutional decision-making.

Board Chairperson Custer also reduced the Board's standing subcommittees, merging Finance and Institutional Risk. The subsequent Board Chairperson, Varsovia Fernandez, saw additional overlap in topics being presented or addressed between committees. She then merged Student Success and Institutional Strategy and Visioning. The remaining subcommittees (Executive Committee, Student Success and Finance and Institutional Risk) reflect the work of the Board to reduce redundancy and bring a larger group of Trustees together to discuss topics connected to each committee's charter. In both instances, this change resulted in a modification to the Board's by-laws, which required full Board approval before the official reorganization could take place.

Board Chairperson Custer was also responsible for approving the initial change in the long-standing Board meeting schedule. The Board formerly met during the first week of each semester, which Chairperson Custer argued did not show a commitment to the mission of the institution, as College leadership was wrapped up in committee discussions instead of supporting students. Chairperson Custer moved those early semester meetings to later in the month. Chairperson Fernandez continued the Board's schedule reform, reducing the total number of Board meetings from ten to eight. She approved starting the Board meeting schedule in October and February to continue the focus on student success and to give the College a realistic time frame to prepare new data month to month. A virtual Board book, another innovation fast-tracked by the pandemic, is currently circulated a week before Board meetings, which also provides the College with an easily referenced digital archive.

The College's administrative strengths of collaboration, collegiality, and adaptability were particularly evident during COVID-19. For example, the College signed a Memorandum of Understanding with our Support Staff Union, ensuring that no full-time support staff members were laid off or furloughed in return for flexible work assignments. Full-time support staff members agreed to perform duties outside of their usual job descriptions; some helped with health and safety measures, some supported students, and others were assigned varied responsibilities, as needed. Also, Faculty Union leadership and the Administration saw value in delaying formal, full Faculty Contract negotiations for a year; both sides agreed to a one-year contract extension. During this time, the Union continued its "Meet and Discuss" sessions with administrative leadership to make practical changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement when clarifications were needed. **Strength: As evidenced by a successful COVID pivot, the College demonstrates effective processes, planning and leadership.**

## Research Findings and Compliance Narrative

### *Governance (Std VII.1)*

The College affirmed that MCCC's shared governance structure is transparent and clearly articulated. The College has four internal Faculty Governance Committees that allow for collaborative and transparent decision-making about academic offerings and student programming. In 2022, the College's President codified two advisory groups – the President's Leadership Council (PLC) and the President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice (PACESJ) – to help identify areas for continuous improvement aligned with the College's strategic priorities. The President appoints the members of the PACESJ committee based on recommendations from each Governance Committee chairperson, and in a manner that ensures representation from all classifications of

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

employees at the College. Membership of the President’s Leadership Council is outlined in the Faculty Contract (VII.1.a.2.). Meetings are held periodically throughout the academic year (not to exceed 4 meetings per year) and are open to the public. College employees are encouraged to attend either in person or online with agendas distributed to the College community via email.

Each of the Faculty Governance Committee’s membership composition, committee charges, appointment cycles, terms of service, election processes and compensation are outlined in the Faculty Contract (VII.1.a.2.) and are outlined below in Figure VII-1.

- The Curriculum Committee (CC) is charged with ensuring integrity, rigor, and coherence of academic programs (new, modified, and deleted), including general education core and discipline courses; making recommendations on academic policies and other related matters brought forth; and collaborating with the President’s Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- The Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC) is charged with organizing systematic assessment by faculty, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and program goals; advising faculty on consideration and use of assessment results to improve educational effectiveness; empowering faculty via access and training to use data to inform student success and institutional improvement; and collaborating with the President’s Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- The Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT) is charged with ensuring consistent, equitable, and inclusive learning environments, regardless of instructional modality; leveraging teaching and learning technologies to improve student success (access, retention, persistence, and completion); assuring the quality of information technology tools and practices; making recommendations on academic and information technology policies and other related matters brought forth; and collaborating with the President’s Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- The Student Support Committee (SSC) is charged with ensuring a coherent and effective support system that enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success; making recommendations on student policies and other related matters brought forth; and collaborating with the President’s Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to student success.

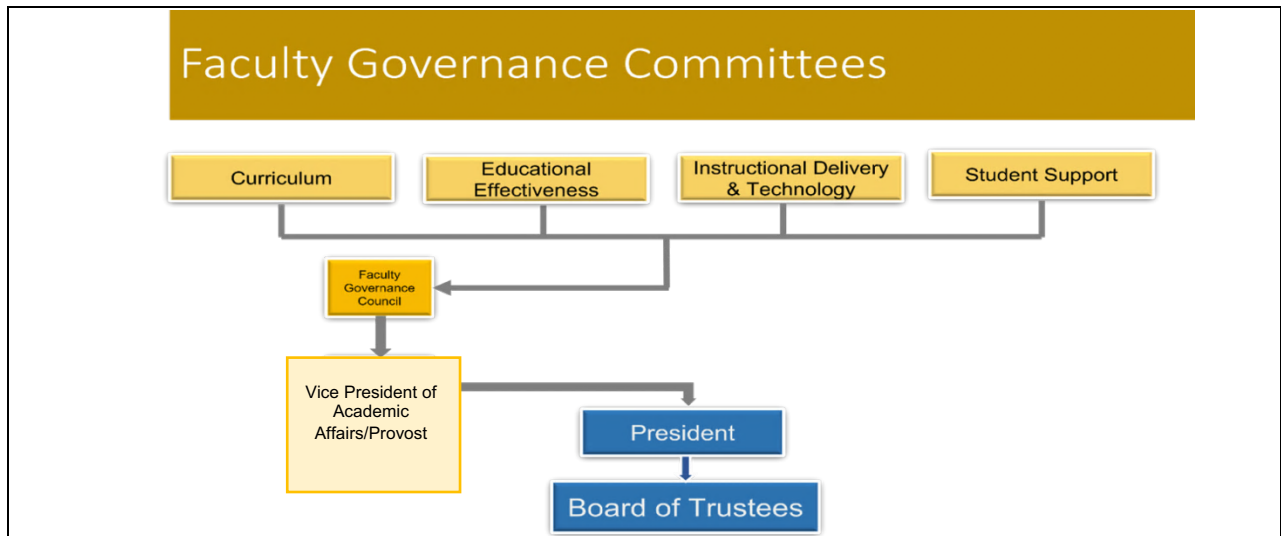


Figure VII-1: The Faculty Governance Structure includes four committees: Curriculum, Educational Effectiveness, Instructional Delivery & Technology, and Student Support.

The Faculty Chairperson of each Governance Committee, along with the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost, the Vice President of Engagement & Student Experience, the Faculty Union President, and a part-time faculty member who serves on the Faculty Union Executive Committee serve on the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost's Faculty Governance Council. This Council is charged with formulating, monitoring, and assessing goals and key performance indicators (KPIs); productively resolving issues/concerns; and using a candid platform to litmus test the academic enterprise.

### **Evidence for Standard VII.1**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: VII.1.a.1. Board of Trustees By-Laws; VII.1.a.2. Faculty Contract (Appendix D); and VII.1.a.3. College-wide Organizational Chart.

#### *Governance Accountability (Std VII.2.a.)*

MCCC's governing body plays a crucial role in ensuring that the College fulfills its mission and goals. The Board of Trustees hires and evaluates the President who, in turn, oversees the operations of the institution. Additionally, the Board of Trustees confirms strategic initiatives and key performance indicators (KPIs) (VII.2.a.1). To effectively accomplish this objective, the Board has three standing committees that meet monthly and review reports from leadership, faculty and administration, and support staff. Since MCCC's 2015 Self Study, the Board has restructured its subcommittees to better align with the College's strategic plan for enhanced efficiencies and improved operations. The current committees for the Board are the Student Success, Finance & Institutional Risk, and the Executive Committee. Each Board committee has a charter that outlines the work and responsibility of that committee for the calendar year.

#### *Independence and Integrity (Std VII.2.b.)*

The College's Board of Trustees is the institution's legal governing body, and it derives its authority from the Community College Act of 1963, Act 484 P. L. 1132, its amendments and supplements, as well as the PA Public School Code ACT 1949 Article 19a. The Board operates in accordance with the requirements of that Act and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation (VII.1.a.1). The Board consists of no less than seven and no more than 15 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Montgomery County for six years or until the successor is appointed per the requirements of the Community College Act of 1963.

#### *Operates Freely (Std VII.2.c.)*

The Board is committed to integrity, good faith, fair dealing, and professional accountability, as stated in its conflict-of-interest policy. It approves all College policies, which are publicly available on the College website and pertain to the mission and goals of the College, academic affairs, student success, and administration, as well as to the Board's own operations. The Board receives a monthly report from the President, organized by the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, and an annual Year in Review with media clips. It also receives 2023-2027 Strategic Plan KPIs. The Board uses those reports to assess the effectiveness of the institution and its leadership on an ongoing basis. All members of the Board complete a self-assessment annually administered through ACCT. Board members must disclose potential conflicts of interest to the State Ethics Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through its website.

#### *Oversees Appropriate and Effective Policies (Std VII.2.d.)*

The Board of Trustees oversees, at the policy level, the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs, the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management (VII.2.a.1, VII.2.d.2 and VII.2.d.3).

The College has an Academic Program Advisory Committee (APAC) whose purpose is to assist in ensuring quality, relevant, coherent and innovative curricula, as well as connection to the broader community and access to public and private funding sources. Each academic cluster or program may establish an APAC. APACs are comprised of experts in the respective discipline(s) who by majority represent external constituencies/key stakeholders. These non-governing bodies provide counsel/advice to the faculty and administration without legislative authority or compensation.

Following the Board's Policy Development Policy, a policy is defined as a concise, formal, and mandatory statement of principle which provides a framework for decision-making and a means by which the College mitigates institutional risk. Policies support the College's mission and values for the foreseeable future and should, therefore, change infrequently. All policies follow standard guidelines and are reviewed and approved by the Board. For the development of a new policy, representatives of the College work with the Chief of Staff to complete a New Policy Request Form and review the process for presentation of the proposed policy to the Board of Trustees. Current policies are systematically reviewed every five (5) years or more frequently as required by changes in status, regulation, or practice. The review cycle for policies is tracked by the Office of the President and managed by the Chief of Staff.

Before the start of a new Board meeting cycle, the Chief of Staff updates the President's Cabinet on policies due for review in the upcoming academic year. The Chief of Staff reports to the Board annually on all policies that were reviewed. When it is time for a policy to be reviewed, leadership considers the internal needs of the College, changes within the legal landscape, and student needs. The policy up for review is redlined to denote recommended changes, shared with the appropriate stakeholders internally for feedback, and then reviewed by the College's Legal Counsel (as needed). Prior to ratification of the policy, the Board of Trustees reviews and approves all recommended changes. Once the policy is approved, the College updates its website and communicates the updated policy to necessary stakeholders.

As part of the review process, policy revisions are identified as substantive or non-substantive. Substantive revisions require the policy to be presented to the Board and include recommended changes. Non-substantive revisions do not require Board approval, as these revisions focus on corrections to campus or building names, updates to phone numbers or e-mail addresses, or updates to the name of the position(s) or department(s) overseeing the procedures within the policy.

The College recognizes its clear and consistent process for policy development and review as a strength. **Strength: The College maintains a clear and consistent policy and procedure review.** The Board approves all College policies and procedures while assigning authority and accountability for the development of policies and procedures to the President, her staff, and the four Governance Committees. Some of these policies provide guardrails and a framework for how College-wide decisions are made and implemented. (E.g. Procurement Policy, Records and Retention Policy, and Conflict of Interest Policy [for Board and Employee]) Policies are reviewed every five (5) years or more frequently as required by changes in regulation, law, or practice, which aligns with the Board's policy development procedures.

### ***Ensures Strong Financial Management (Std VII.2.e.)***

The Board of Trustees abides by published duties and responsibilities. In accordance with the Community College Act of 1963 (the Act) and the PA Public School Code ACT 1949 Article 19a, these responsibilities are specifically assigned to the Board as related to the fiscal viability of the institution:

- to hold, rent, lease, sell, purchase, and improve land, buildings, furnishings, equipment, materials, books, and supplies [Section 6.2];
- to enter into contracts for services required to effectuate the purposes of the Community College Act of 1963 [Section 6.3];
- to accept and receive gifts of real and personal property, federal, state, and local monies and grants, and to expend the same [Section 6.4];
- to exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as are necessary to carry into effect the purpose of the Community College Act of 1963 [Section 6.8].

The Board of Trustees acts and enters into contracts in the name of the College and submits an annual budget for consideration and approval by Montgomery County. Montgomery County provides partial operating expenses and monies for capital projects through a dedicated millage collected annually, subject to Montgomery County Commissioners' approval. The Board supervises expenditures and conducts business affairs, ensuring that the College complies with local and Federal laws.

## Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Board policies and processes ensure that financial resources are managed responsibly and transparently, and by promoting a culture of accountability and collaboration across the College. The Board streamlined its Personnel, Finance and Risk committees into one Finance & Institutional Risk committee. This change was made to allow the committee to make informed decisions about interrelated topics. In 2022, the Vice-President of Finance organized an advisory group of Budget Managers to provide feedback, develop training and clarify expectations of the role of budget manager. Leadership regarding the financial stability of the College is recognized as a strength.

**Strength: The College demonstrates strong fiduciary engagement and responsibility.**

### *Appoints and Evaluates the Chief Executive Officer (Std VII.2.f.)*

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to appoint the President and to ensure that the Chief Executive and Chief Educational Officer of the College performs all duties in accordance with policies adopted by the Board. The Presidential Evaluation Policy (2.4) provides a framework for these responsibilities: to oversee the drafting of the President's contract; to present the contract to the full Board for review and approval; and to appoint and fix the President's salary (VII.2.f.1.). The President's annual evaluation is facilitated by the Board Chair (VII.2.f.3). The Board Chair, in collaboration with a third party, synthesizes the results (VII.2.f.1.). For the past three years, ACCT has been contracted to support this work for the Board.

### *Good Practice of Board Governance (Std VII.2.g.)*

The College's Board of Trustees is committed to setting an example for the entire College community by adopting and adhering to a set of standards for good practice to guide ethical governance of the College. To fully realize this commitment, the Board has adopted the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Guide to Ethical Governance as Board Policy 2.5.

### *Impartiality of Governing Body (Std VII 2.h.)*

The College's Board of Trustees is the institution's legal governing body. The Board establishes the necessary policies for operating the College and has all the powers, duties, and obligations set forth in the Community College Act of 1963, its amendments and supplements. Board members must meet statutory requirements under the Pennsylvania Ethics Act. The By-Laws of the Board of Trustees include a conflict-of-interest policy that states that Trustees shall serve without compensation (VII.2.h.1. and VII.2.h.2.).

Additionally, in accordance with the Board's Conflict of Interest Policy (2.8), each Board member is obligated to disclose any personal interest they may have in any matter pending before the Board. Any member having such an interest must refrain from participating in any decision about such matter. When a vote is taken, the Trustee who has a conflict shall publicly announce it and disclose the nature of the conflict.

### *Institutional Autonomy (Std VII.2.i.)*

The College affirmed that the Board of Trustees supports the Chief Executive Officer (the President) in maintaining the autonomy of the institution. The Board approves all College policies while assigning authority and accountability for developing policies and procedures to the President, her staff, and the shared Governance Committees. Some of these policies provide guardrails and a framework for how College-wide decisions are made and implemented. Some of these policies include the Procurement Policy, the Records and Retention Policy, and the Conflict of Interest Policy.

## **Evidence for Standard VII.2**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: VII.1.a.1. Board of Trustees By-Laws; VII.1.a.2. Faculty Contract (Appendix D); VII.1.a.3. College-wide Organizational Chart; VII.2.a.1. Board of Trustees Duties; VII.2.a.2. Board of Trustees Public Meeting Policy; VII.2.d.2. Board of Trustees Review Program Deletion; VII.2.d.3. Board of Trustees Review Program Revision; VII.2.d.4. Board of Trustees Finance and Risk Committee Minutes (Example); VII.2.e.1. Board of Trustees Budget Approval (Example); VII.2.e.2. Board of Trustees Finance & Risk Committee - monthly financial statement review (Example); VII.2.f.1. Board of Trustees Minutes Approval of President's New Contract; VII.2.f.3. President's Evaluation Policy; VII.2.g.2. Board of Trustees Orientation; VII.2.h.1. Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest Policy; VII.2.h.2. Board Conflict of Interest Form from the States Ethics Commission; and VII.2.i.1. Board Duties and Responsibilities.

### *Autonomy and Support of Chief Executive Officer (Std VII.3 a.- d.)*

MCCC's Chief Executive Officer (the President) is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the Board of Trustees and does not chair its governing body (VII.3.a.1.). The Board ensures that the Chief Executive and Chief Educational Officer of the College performs all duties in accordance with policies adopted by the Board (VII.2.f.1). The process adopted by the Executive Committee and the Presidential Evaluation Policy (2.4) provides a framework for these evaluative responsibilities (VII.2.f.3.).

MCCC's President has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with MCCC's mission (VII.3.b.1 and VII.3.b.2). Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez became the College's sixth President in May of 2020. Prior to her presidential inauguration, Dr. Bastecki-Perez served as the College's Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Allied Health and Physical Education, and Director and Professor of Dental Hygiene. She began her academic career as an Assistant Professor and Senior Clinical Supervisor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine for nearly a decade before finding her home at MCCC. She holds certificates from the University of Pittsburgh, Dental Assisting and Oral Hygiene, and a B.S. in Education from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She started graduate coursework through the Edinboro-Oxford Experience study abroad program at Exeter College, Oxford University, before earning an M.Ed. and Ed.D. in Instructional Design and Technology from the University of Pittsburgh. She was named a Distinguished Alumna by Edinboro University in 2000 and the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in 2010.

The College President oversees the development and implementation of the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, which is approved by the Board of Trustees. She staffs the College and prepares the College's budget for the Board of Trustees' action. She is responsible for procuring resources from the state and other community funding sources and she reports to the Board of Trustees and oversees all areas of the College, including Governance Committees and Advisory Committees (VII.3.c.1). The President's Senior Leadership Team monitors and guides the development and implementation of College-wide policies and operations (VII.3.d.1.). The President's Senior Leadership Team consists of the Vice President of Finance, Chief of Staff, the Vice President of Administrative Services, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost.

### **Evidence for Standard VII.3**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: VII.3.a.1. Board of Trustees Minutes - President's Appointment; VII.3.b.1 Presidential Biography; VII.3.b.2. President's CV; VII.3.c.1. President's Job Description; and VII.3.d.1. Senior Leadership Team.

### *Administration and Organizational Structures (Std VII.4.a-d.)*

The President is assisted by a Senior Leadership team consisting of a Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost who oversees all academic divisions, Educational Effectiveness, Student Engagement and operations of the Pottstown campus; a Vice President of Administrative Services who oversees Human Resources, Information Technology, Administrative Services, Campus Safety, and Facilities Management; a Vice President of Finance who oversees all financial operations and public and private grants, Enrollment Services and the Foundation; and a Chief of Staff who oversees Strategic and Enrollment Marketing; Institutional Effectiveness; Government Relations; Veterans Services; equity, diversity, and belonging; and the Montco Cultural Center (VII.4.b.1.). All members of MCCC's administration have credentials and experience consistent with the College's mission and their roles, as well as the skills, time, and resources required to perform their duties (VII.4.b.2.).

The College's organizational structure is clearly documented and clearly defines reporting relationships at the senior level (VII.4.a.1. and VII.4.b.1). Senior leadership organizational charts are shared with the College's constituents annually and are available electronically via Microsoft Outlook and Montco Connect. When changes are made in our system of record, Colleague, the changes are automatically updated/changed in the organizational chart. Because the College recognizes the importance of having clearly defined and documented roles, it recognizes an opportunity to ensure that changes continue to be clearly communicated and that updated organizational charts be made readily available to employees. **Opportunity: The College should continue to update, communicate, and circulate organizational charts and job descriptions.** For a process to become part of the College's fabric, it needs to be able to operate independently of the actions of one, often long-tenured, employee. As a result of Working Group conversations, the College found that habitual key practices, often

performed by individual employees, should be documented, so that no one is confused if an employee retires or resigns. Communication about process updates and staff changes are needed not only for succession planning purposes but also so that faculty and staff can understand current roles and assume new responsibilities, if required. **Opportunity: The College should provide more transparency and regularly document important processes and procedures, particularly when there are changes to critical functions (positions, roles, restructures, duties, etc.) at the College.**

### *Engagement with Faculty and Students (Std VII.4.e.)*

The College affirmed that operational and strategic decision-making is collaborative, transparent, and aligned to support the needs of students, employees, and the community while advancing MCCC's goals and objectives. The College engages in strategic and goal planning processes that are collaborative and considerate of students, faculty and staff needs. A strategic planning committee is identified by the President and is comprised of stakeholders at various levels internal and external to the College. The strategic plan identifies goals and objectives that span a three (3) to four (4) year period and are related to student success, college operations and external partnerships. The strategic plan and its strategies are approved by the College's Board of Trustees.

Through the Institutional Effectiveness Office, the College conducts/participates in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (RNL-SSI), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Healthy Minds Study, and the EDUCAUSE Student and Faculty Technology Survey (ETRAC) to determine student needs and engagement. This data is then added to a summary dashboard, shared on Montco Connect (the College's Internal Portal), in the Montco Data Hub, the Institutional Factbook, and in the Educational Effectiveness Reports.

Since 2009 the College has participated in the Modern Think Higher Education Insight Survey sponsored by the Chronicle of Higher Education and Modern Think, LLC. These results are shared with Executive Leadership and the Strategic Planning Committee (as needed) for insight into employee experiences, needs and engagement. The last Modern Think Institutional Questionnaire was submitted on March 31, 2024. The College uses the results to understand key themes identified through responses from the campus community. The College then can make improvements and changes where appropriate based on the data provided.

The governing body, leadership and administration work collaboratively to support the development, implementation, and sustainability of educational, workforce and cultural experiences through various means:

1. **Resource Allocation:** The College has dedicated employees, facilities, and resources to support the programming and administration of student support programs and cultural programming. Employees are divided into divisions and departments to support operational and strategic priorities.
2. **Programs and Events:** The College offers a variety of cultural programs and educational programming for students and the community.
3. **Professional Development & Growth:** The College's leadership engages in leadership development, professional growth opportunities and in developing strategic partnerships necessary to advance and scale student success. The College offers tuition reimbursement, flex work, internal professional development and supports external professional growth opportunities. In 2024, the College restructured Faculty Success and the Instructional Design Team under Employee Development and Talent Management to prevent operational redundancies and to better align development needs with interests of the College. Annually, the College holds Opening Day for Faculty, Professional Development Week for all employees, Division Day for Academic Affairs, Employee Recognition, Mid-Year Celebration, and Administrators' Professional Development Day.

The College's leadership, administration, and faculty collaborate to ensure that academic programming is dynamic and relevant. The College recognizes this as a strength. **Strength: Employee collaboration among leadership, administration and faculty ensures that academic programming is dynamic and relevant to meet student, industry and community needs.** The College has established relationships with various external stakeholders to grow engagement and promote life-long learning. Specifically, the Dual Enrollment and Government Relations areas provide opportunities for our partners to engage with the College community.



### *Evaluation of Administrative Units (Std VII 4 f.)*

Each administrative unit reports on its progress towards achieving goals outlined in the College's Strategic Plan by measuring assigned KPIs (VII.4.f.1.). For example, KPI data is reported to the Vice President of each unit and is used as part of the monthly President's report to the Board.

The 2015 Visiting Evaluation Team suggested that the College continue to develop specific assessment measures in educational support areas. The administrative department assessment process and cycle was recently revised to align with the College's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. During AY2023-2024, the College finalized the new administrative unit plans to establish outcomes that supported the three pillars of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. For example, the Vice President of Finance creates a multiyear Strategic Plan to ensure the College's fiscal stability. This 2023-2027 Finance Strategic Plan (FSP) establishes multiyear goals or targets, articulates strategy and philosophies to achieve desired outcomes, and creates an objective mechanism to define and measure these goals. The FSP is scored annually against assessment outcomes such as the reduction of debt service and the level of cash burn. The 2023-2027 Information Technology Strategic Plan aligns the College's strategies with IT's own; it then lists both guideposts and success indicators for each. For example, the IT Plan seeks to "increase the transformational value of data and analytics resources" in support of the College's goal to "Enhance the Employee Experience." The listed success factors include the ability of employees to access data independently according to their role. In another example, the 2023-2033 Facilities Master Plan necessarily aligns with the outcomes of the Information Technology and Facilities Deferred Maintenance Plans. It also references the progress of the Strategic Plan explicitly. The plan discusses the third imperative, "Expand Community Participation," and recommends that to be "in-and-of the community," the College should prioritize outdoor recreational and learning opportunities and campus access via walking trails. It also measures success against the previous Facilities Master Plan.

The next step in this process was developing an evidence-based program review for non-academic departments. These reviews focus primarily on student success and ROI metrics to support the Strategic Imperative: "Ensure Student Learning." The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Director of User Success and Learning Technologies, and the Senior Director of Employee Development and Talent Management met with College leadership and created an Impact Analysis process and corresponding reporting template. The Impact Analysis process includes the data and assessment review, reflection on the achievements of the prior strategic plan, and development of goals and performance indicators that support the current strategic plan. A total of nine non-academic areas are undergoing this process during AY2024-2025. Each year, additional departments will be identified to complete this process. The Impact Analysis process is tied to the annual administrator performance goals, developed by College leadership and cascaded to administrative units.

### **Evidence for Standard VII.4**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: VII.4.a.1. College-wide Organizational Chart; VII.4.b.1. Senior Leadership Organizational Chart; VII.4.b.2. Senior Leadership CVs; VII.4.c.1. Faculty and Administrators with Credentials; VII.4.d.1. Administrator's Job Descriptions (Example); VII.4.e.1. President's Leadership Council; VII.4.e.2. Student Leadership & Involvement Weeks of Welcome; VII.4.e.3. General Faculty Meeting (Example); VII.4.e.4. President's Advisory Council on Equity and Social Justice; and VII.4.f.1. Unit Plans align with 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

### *Periodic Assessment of Governance, Leadership, and Administration (Std VII.5)*

The Board of Trustees performs a self-assessment annually administered by the Association of Community College Trustees (VII.5.a.1). The College also participates in Modern Think, some data from which is used to assess leadership performance. MCCC also has a process in place for the regular assessment of administrators, staff, and faculty (VII.5.a.3). The College's governance model, outlined in the Faculty Contract, is designed to engage stakeholders in institutional decisions that directly impact student success. This process has two key components to affect participation, Faculty Governance Committees and President's Leadership Council, which use simultaneous and collaborative approaches to advance strategic initiatives to the President and then on to the Board of Trustees. Governance is guided by trust, transparency, inclusiveness, honesty, accountability, and integrity. Governance Committees include administrative and faculty representation, and some committees include students and staff. Faculty positions are elected positions with renewable terms.

**Evidence for Standard VII.5**

The College affirms compliance with this criterion and demonstrates it with the following evidence: VII.5.a.1. Board of Trustees Self-Assessment; VII.5.a.2. Presidential Evaluation Policy; VII.5.a.3. Administrator’s Evaluation Process; and VII.5.a.4. Modern Think Survey Multiple-Year Comparison.

**Strategic Imperatives Mapped to Findings**

The College’s institutional priorities are the “Strategic Imperatives” of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Key strengths and opportunities are mapped to corresponding Strategic Imperatives.

| <b>Ensure Student Learning</b>   |
|--|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✦ As evidenced by a successful COVID pivot, the College demonstrates effective processes, plans and leadership.</li><li>✦ The College maintains a clear and consistent policy and procedure review.</li><li>✦ The College demonstrates strong fiduciary engagement and responsibility.</li></ul> |

| <b>Enhance Employee Experience</b>   |
|--|
| <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✦ The College refined its governance structures to support mission and vision.</li><li>✦ Employee collaboration among leadership, administration and faculty ensures that academic programming is dynamic and relevant to meet student, industry and community needs.</li></ul> <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▲ The College should continue to update, communicate, and circulate organizational charts and job descriptions.</li><li>▲ The College should provide more transparency and regularly document important processes and procedures, particularly when there are changes to critical functions (positions, roles, restructures, duties, etc.) at the College.</li></ul> |

## Brief Glossary of Terms and College Usage

- ACT 335 Forms:** Taking their name from the State legislation that requires them, ACT 335 forms are standard course outlines of record that contain a course description. The College has added information to the course outlines to assist parity across course sections, including prerequisites, measurable student-learning outcomes for that course, sequence of topics, learning activities, and course assessment plan.
- Curriculum Committee (Curriculum):** One of the four Faculty governance committees of the College charged with ensuring integrity, rigor, and coherence of academic programs (new, modified, and deleted), including general education core and discipline courses; making recommendations on academic policies and other related matters; and collaborating with the President's Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- CCSSE:** Acronym for Community College Survey of Student Engagement, a nationally normed survey administered to community college students that asks questions to assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are correlated highly with student learning and student retention.
- Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics:** A transactional reporting tool that supports day-to-day data analysis.
- CROA:** Acronym for Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics.
- Curriculum:** College usage for the All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee.
- Decision Support Systems:** A general term for College technology that uses data analysis to assist in making informed decisions. Information Technology offers all decision-makers tools that include user-driven reporting systems, performance dashboards, and sophisticated analytics.
- DERCA:** Acronym for Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment.
- Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment (DERCA):** This rubric is a tool designed by the Educational Effectiveness Committee 1) to inform faculty of best practices of online education; 2) to enable faculty to review online courses to improve them; 3) to ensure compliance with external accreditation standards and 4) to provide the application of sound instructional design principles to online course design and development that benefits both the student learning experience and the faculty instruction experience.
- Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC):** One of the four governance committees of the College, charged with organizing systematic assessment by faculty, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and program goals; advising faculty on consideration and use of assessment results to improve educational effectiveness; empowering faculty via access and training to use data to inform student success and institutional improvement; and collaborating with President's Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- EDUCAUSE.** A nonprofit association of IT leaders and professionals committed to advancing higher education.
- Ellucian Colleague system (Colleague):** The College's Enterprise Resource Planning software. A suite of software applications that integrates admissions, student, financial, and planning information.
- Governance Committees:** Montgomery County Community College has four Faculty Governance Committees comprised of representatives from the faculty, student leadership, and administrative staff, that discuss policy, procedures, and curricular matters to make recommendations to the Leadership Cabinet. The Faculty Union Contract specifies the exact membership of each of these four committees. The four committees are the Curriculum Committee (Curriculum), the Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT), the Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC) and the Student Support Committee (Student Support).
- Governmental Accounting Standards Board:** The GASB is the independent organization that establishes and improves standards of accounting and financial reporting for U.S. state and local government.
- Instructional Delivery and Technology Committee (IDT):** One of the four governance committees of the College, charged with ensuring consistent, equitable, and inclusive learning environments, regardless of instructional modality; leveraging teaching and learning technologies to improve student success (access, retention, persistence, and completion); assuring the quality of information technology tools and practices; making recommendations on academic and information technology policies and other related matters; and collaborating with President's Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to learning.
- LASSI:** Acronym for Learning and Study Strategies Inventory.

- Leah Meyer Austin Award:** Achieving the Dream's Leah Meyer Austin Award recognizes outstanding achievement in supporting student success through the creation of a culture of evidence, continuous improvement, systemic institutional change, broad engagement of stakeholders, and equity, with particular attention to low-income students, first-generation college students, and students of color. Austin, whose visionary leadership shaped the development of Achieving the Dream, is the former Senior Vice President for Program Development and Organizational Learning at the Lumina Foundation.
- Learning and Study Strategies Inventory:** A 10-scale, 80-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will and self-regulation components of strategic learning.
- Key Performance Indicator:** A quantifiable measure used by an institution to evaluate its success or the success of a particular activity.
- KPI:** Acronym for Key Performance Indicator.
- Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE):** A tool through which instructors map instructional hour equivalencies to online interactions. It also allows instructors to evaluate their use of best practices, types of online interaction, and use of assessment tools.
- MIE:** Acronym for Matrix of Instructional Engagement.
- Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory.** This assessment measures student satisfaction and priorities, showing how satisfied students are as well as what issues are important to them.
- PACESJ:** Acronym for the President's Advisory Council on Equity & Social Justice. Council members, who include students, faculty, staff and community members, "serve as a strategic advisory committee that focuses on continuous improvement efforts within institutional priorities, with a specific focus on those tied to equity, diversity, social justice, and student-centered values"
- PASSHE:** Acronym for Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.
- Pearlstone Grant:** Named in honor of founding Trustee Gladys Pearlstone, these funds support Faculty Development at the College and are available by application.
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE):** The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE is comprised of 14 universities that are publicly owned and governed by the commonwealth.
- POWER Program:** Acronym for Partnership on Work Enrichment and Readiness. The POWER Program helps individuals in mental health recovery to successfully develop and reach their education and career goals through a two-credit college course that focuses on time management, basic computer skills, study skills, public speaking, college success skills, career assessment, resume writing, and professionalism.
- President's Leadership Council:** The President's senior staff, Faculty Governance Committee Chairs, Faculty Union President, and other leaders designated in the Faculty Contract, who meet quarterly to systematically assess educational and institutional goals against the College's Strategic Plan, to use assessment results to advance educational effectiveness and institutional improvement, to communicate results to all stakeholders, and to collaborate with Faculty Governance Committees to advance student success.
- SGA:** Acronym for the Student Government Association.
- SENSE:** Acronym for Survey of Entering Student Engagement.
- Student Support Committee (Student Support):** One of the four governance committees of the College, charged with ensuring a coherent and effective support system that enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success; making recommendations on student policies and other related matters; and collaborating with President's Leadership Council to advance strategic initiatives, particularly those related to student success.
- Survey of Entering Student Engagement:** An assessment of students in developmental and 100-level Math and English courses structured around six benchmarks: Early Connections, High Expectations and Aspirations, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Effective Track to College Readiness, Engaged Learning, and Academic and Social Support Network.
- VFA:** Acronym for Voluntary Framework of Accountability.
- Voluntary Framework of Accountability:** The principal accountability framework for community colleges with measures defined to encompass the full breadth of the community college mission and the diversity of students' goals and educational experiences.
- WEDnetPa:** Acronym for the Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania.