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A New Era, A Renewed Commitment (July, 2003)

Maine Community College System

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Maine Community College System
Reach higher.

A NEW ERA



A RENEWED COMMITMENT

// We all share the same vision: to give this and future generations of Mainers the opportunity to live, work and follow their dreams in our great state. A keystone to achieving that vision is providing *all* of our citizens with access to higher education. This is the promise and very purpose of community colleges: to make higher education — America's vehicle for mobility and opportunity — accessible to all who aspire to it. //

— JOHN FITZSIMMONS, *President*

JULY 2003



A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF MAINE

ON MARCH 31ST, 2003, Governor John Baldacci signed legislation converting Maine's seven technical colleges to community colleges and establishing the Maine Community College System. This landmark legislation brings to Maine an educational option that exists in at least 45 other states: affordable, accessible, two-year community colleges.

In July 2003, as Maine's seven Technical Colleges assume their new names and a broader mission, we launch a new era in higher education in Maine. This document lays out our values and goals as we begin the journey of broadening access and opportunity for the people of Maine.

As we launch Maine's Community College System, our promise to Maine is to carry forward those traditions that have been the hallmark of our institutions: our dedication to building a world-class workforce for Maine; and our commitment to providing a student-centered learning environment — one which enables students to find and nurture their talents so they can live and prosper in Maine.

As with any significant public endeavor, the success of our Community College System rests not only on our employees and trustees. It requires the commitment and involvement of all our partners, and the broader community of Maine, if it is to fulfill its great promise.

Please join with us in building a Community College System that is second to none.

— John Fitzsimmons
President, Maine Community College System

OUR MISSION

The mission of Maine's Community Colleges is to provide broad access to higher education, to prepare Maine citizens for career and transfer opportunities, and to enable lifelong learning. The Community Colleges meet the workforce needs of the state's employers, respond to the changing needs of Maine's economy, and promote local, regional and statewide economic development.

// Since the creation of the associate in arts program at Maine's technical colleges, we have seen a twenty-five percent increase in the number of graduates continuing their education. Most importantly, we see changes in the perspective of our students towards higher education. It has become the norm for our seniors to go on to college. As a guidance counselor, half the battle is won. //

— STEPHEN J. CLARK
Director of Guidance
Edward Little High School

OUR VALUES

ACCESSIBLE & AFFORDABLE

We embrace the community college ideal that college should be accessible and affordable to all who aspire to it and are willing to work hard.

STUDENT-CENTERED

We believe that all people have innate potential and can achieve their aspirations if provided support and individual attention.

MAINE'S PARTNER FOR A STRONG FUTURE

We are committed to serving the educational, economic and social needs of our state and local communities, and being a partner in building a stronger Maine.

QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Building on our 57-year history, we are committed to delivering a high quality, results-oriented education; responding to changing needs; and being accountable to the public.

OUR GOALS

11,000 COLLEGE STUDENTS BY 2010

Increase degree enrollment to 11,000 students by 2010 (from 7,500 in Fall '02), and grow credit and non-credit courses and customized training. The Community Colleges will focus on: a) increasing the number of high school students going on to college; and b) helping adults access college by offering flexible, part-time schedules and necessary support services.

EXPAND CAREER PROGRAMS FOR A CHANGING ECONOMY

Expand career programs to meet Maine employers' changing workforce needs, and incorporate advanced technologies. Address areas facing acute shortages, and industries targeted in Maine's economic growth strategy.

EXPAND LIBERAL STUDIES OFFERINGS

Expand associate in arts offerings to enable students to focus their academic curriculum to meet their education and transfer goals. Add courses in the arts and sciences to assure a strong academic foundation for *all* students (career students and associate-in-arts majors).

INCREASE 2-YR/4-YR TRANSFERS

Increase student transfers to four-year institutions through advising, expanded transfer agreements, and innovative partnerships.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Strengthen student support services, including academic advising and developmental programming, and partner with Adult Education providers to promote success for students entering college with diverse academic needs and aspirations.

PROVIDE AFFORDABLE ACCESS

Maintain affordable tuition and increase scholarships to assure that Maine's Community Colleges are within reach of most Maine citizens.

HIGH STANDARDS, HIGH QUALITY

Build a high-quality community college system, as measured by student outcomes, employer satisfaction, accreditation standards, and other measures.

TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?

As technical colleges, Maine's colleges had most of the features and attributes of community colleges. Under the broader community college mission, these features will be strengthened and expanded. Here are some key areas that will change.

TRANSFER PREPARATION NOW PART OF MISSION

The Technical Colleges had transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities, so those students who wished to continue their education could transfer their credits. As community colleges, transfer preparation will be a core aspect of the colleges' mission — along with career preparation. More students will enter with the express goal of preparing to transfer into a baccalaureate-granting college. Advisors will assist students with their academic and transfer plans, to facilitate a smooth transition.

MORE ACCESSIBLE ADMISSIONS AND COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

In general, admission to a Technical College was program-based; that is, applicants were admitted if they met the prerequisites of the program they wished to enter (some programs have strenuous admissions criteria). As community colleges, students may be admitted to the college before selecting or qualifying for a program of study. Academic assessment and advising, developmental courses, tutoring and partnerships with Adult Education will be strengthened and expanded to assist those in need of additional preparation.

MORE DIVERSE PROGRAMS AND COURSES

The Technical Colleges offered the programs (one and two-year) and credentials (Certificate, Diploma, AAS, AS and AA) offered by community colleges. (The AA in Liberal Studies was added in 1999.) As community colleges, offerings in career and liberal studies disciplines will be expanded. Courses will be added — particularly in the arts and sciences — to provide more options and flexibility in the curriculum.

A MORE DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION

Most of the students who enrolled at the Technical Colleges had determined their career goals and were focused on preparing for a career. As community colleges, the colleges will serve career-focused students, those preparing for transfer, and those still developing their goals. The colleges are likely to attract a more diverse student body — in terms of goals, age, ethnicity, and background. More women, working adults, and part-time students are likely to enroll.

// Children of the 21st century will need at least two years of post-secondary education. //

— NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR YEAR



ABOUT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

There are over 1,100 public and private community colleges in the U.S.

Public community colleges enroll 42% of U.S. undergraduates

Associate degrees represent 80% of community college credentials awarded nationally

More than half of community college students are first-generation college students

The majority of community college students are in-state residents

Students of lower socio-economic status are much more likely to attend a two-year college before going to a four-year college

Nationally, three out of four college freshmen over age 23 attend community colleges

Community college graduates typically stay in their state and communities after college

Community colleges serve a large adult population, including laid-off workers and others seeking a career change

The average age of community college students is 29

While most community colleges began with a focus on either career programs or transfer preparation, today, all but a few offer both career and transfer programs

WHY A COLLEGE-EDUCATED CITIZENRY IS VITAL TO MAINE'S FUTURE

MORE COLLEGE GRADUATES NEEDED Jobs requiring an associate degree or higher are increasing at nearly twice the rate of growth of lower-skill jobs. Despite the economic downturn, many industries—health care, hospitality, behavioral health, precision machining, construction and other fields—are facing shortages of skilled workers.

RISING SKILL REQUIREMENTS Advanced technology and global competition have pushed up job requirements of entry-level workers: many jobs that once required a high school diploma and on-the-job training now require one or two years of college.

ECONOMIC GROWTH DEPENDENT ON SKILLED WORKFORCE Access to a skilled workforce is one of the top needs of existing employers, and a key requirement of businesses seeking to locate or expand their operations.

RETRAINING MAINE'S DISLOCATED WORKERS In the past two years, over 16,000 Maine workers have lost their jobs. Most of these workers are facing a job market with outdated skills and little or no advanced training for today's jobs.

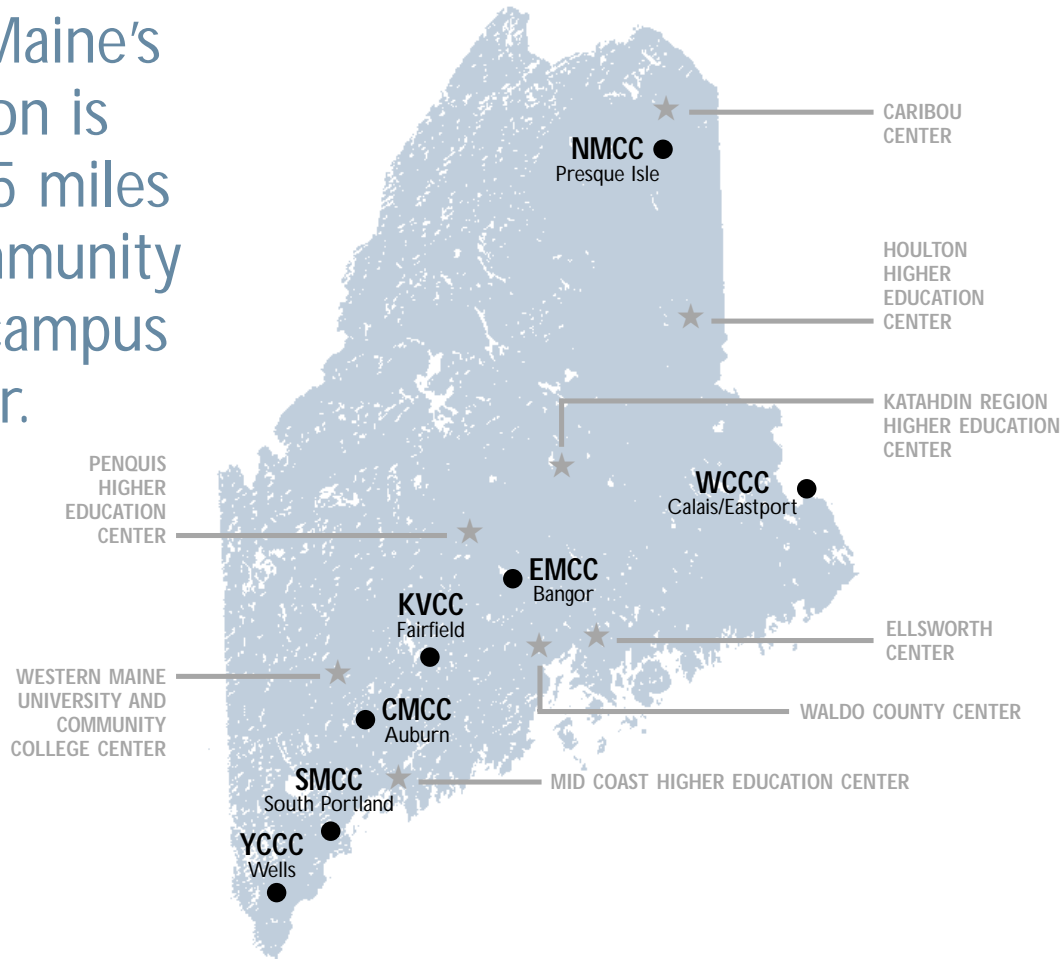
AGING WORKFORCE Maine industries are confronting an aging workforce, while population levels are expected to remain flat. Dislocated workers, immigrants, and young entrants to the workforce will be needed more than ever to build a strong economy.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES In an increasingly complex world, it is essential that Maine have an educated citizenry aware of global issues, tolerant and respectful of cultural and ethnic diversity, and actively engaged in their communities and civic life.



SUCCESS IS NEAR.

92% of Maine's population is within 25 miles of a community college campus or center.



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