

MCCS STRATEGIC PLAN 2024



Our Vision

Maine's community colleges will continue to be recognized as essential to the economic mobility and social and civic resilience of the state. The colleges will offer Maine people opportunities for lifelong learning that propels and enriches their lives and communities by providing innovative and relevant educational opportunities. Maine's employers will consistently turn to their community colleges to develop the full potential of their workforce through agile and responsive programming.

Our Mission

To create an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force that is responsive to the changing needs of the economy...

MSRS Title 20-A, §12703

Our Values

Maine's community college **students** deserve the opportunity to learn, grow, and advance their careers in a safe, supportive, and connected environment; where they feel a strong sense of belonging.

Maine **employers** need the skilled, educated, and adaptable talent we develop for an ever-evolving workplace.

The **employees** of the Maine Community College System, our people, are our most valuable resource. We support diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environments that provide employees with a sense of belonging, leading to opportunities to engage in meaningful work, lead balanced and productive lives, and advance their careers.

Our students, employers, and people need the support of a set of **foundational elements** that strengthen the overall system. Through a spirit of innovation and collaboration, we will build partnerships that ensure each student's success and meet the specific needs of employers and the distinct communities we serve. To fulfill our vision, we will need innovative delivery methods, robust information systems, and business models that sustain growth and expansion.

Our Students

Our vision for engaging and supporting Students:

Maine's community colleges will develop relevant, high-quality, affordable, and accessible life-long learning opportunities. The system and colleges will strive to help students achieve their goals by:

- Eliminating barriers to access.
- Promoting student success while supporting social and emotional well-being of our entire community that ensures a strong sense of belonging.
- Building a coordinated system of credentialing options.

Factors affecting our vision:

- Everyone engaging with a community college to learn or advance their career is a "student."
- To attract students, we must offer relevant, affordable, accessible, high-quality programs that meet their unique needs.
- To retain students, we must take a holistic approach to supporting students by creating a welcoming, safe, and vibrant environment where we all uphold a strong sense of belonging for all.
- To stay connected to our students, we must provide life-long learning opportunities that help them reach personal, professional, and academic goals at every stage of their lives.

Our Students

Long-term goals:

- Meet the full financial need for all students.
- Meet students “where they are” and engage them in learning options that lead to life-long engagement with our colleges.
- Build pathways for students connecting early college, short-term training, and degree options, including transfers to baccalaureate colleges.
- Build in-person and on-line support that welcomes and connects all students to resources needed to become healthy and productive.

Strategies over the next 12 months:

- Gain legislative support for funding the Free College Scholarship as permanent program.
- Attract financial resources to sustain Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (MJRP) and Harold Alfond Foundation (HAF) grant-funded programs.
- Implement Pathways at all seven colleges, tangibly connecting early college and short-term programming to degree options.
- Establish a support structure that promotes and advances physical wellness, mental health, and campus safety programming at all colleges.
- Pilot program options that integrate civic engagement into daily learning.

Strategies over the next 24 months:

- Expand financial support from governmental and philanthropy sources to help meet the full financial need for all students:
 - Support legislation that expands Federal Pell Grants to include more support, expanded income qualifications, and short-term Pell.
 - Expand stipends for students in short-term training programs.
- Expand Pathways to incorporate early college to community colleges and community colleges to four-year programs.
- Engage in leadership roles in our broader communities to participate in dialogues relevant to improving student mental health, campus safety, and civic engagement.

Our Employers

Our vision for engaging and supporting Employers:

Maine's community colleges will build deep, lasting partnerships directly with businesses and industry groups to support the delivery of relevant, high-quality, high-demand workforce development options across the state.

From pre-hire training and advanced skill development to credential attainment, our employers will turn to their community colleges to develop a fully educated workforce for an ever-evolving workplace.

Factors affecting our vision:

- The modern workplace is triggering new expectations for both employees and employers.
- Fewer workers and new attitudes toward work are reshaping the workforce. Employees today want meaningful work, work-life balance, and, most importantly, a clear connection between their professional advancement and direct investment in their professional development.
- Employers are under competitive pressure driven by tight labor market conditions and by automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), advanced technology, and other factors. They need workers with ever-evolving skills and must invest in professional development for their existing workers to grow their team from within, remain competitive, and maintain healthy staffing levels of experienced, knowledgeable, and engaged employees.

Our Employers

Long-term goals:

- Serve as the highest quality, integrated partner for workforce development programs, building incentive-based programs for workforce attraction, retention, and advancement.
- Continue to build long-term, value-added relationships with employers that connect industry need with workforce development and training with supportive funding opportunities that sustain skill-based employee attraction, development, and career advancement.
- Share the knowledge gained we have acquired from our experiences, and our consulting partners.

Strategies over the next 12 months:

- Implement the information systems necessary to track training and education acquired through all providers in a single student record that aggregates an employer's entire frontline workforce.
- Increase engagement with existing, or help create, industry-based collaborations that are relevant to the state's highest needs (housing/construction, education, healthcare).
- Complete ideation and requirement definitions for an AI platform that supports matching employer workforce development needs with industry-based training options at scale.
- Further identify employer partner thought leaders to build exemplary programming strategies that inform and catalyze our program efforts.

Strategies over the next 24 months:

- Transition to a matrix model in the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce, aligning industry specific specialists to support regional coordinators to deepen employer-, industry- and sector-based partnerships.
- Build and test an AI platform that supports matching employer workforce development needs with industry-based training options at scale.

Our People

Our vision for engaging and supporting our employees:

The system and the colleges will attract and develop a diverse and passionate team committed to finding new ways to build an educated, skilled, and adaptable labor force. To do so, we will offer a combination of competitive compensation, professional development, and flexible work environments-- respecting every voice in our community.

Factors affecting our vision:

- Our employees are talented and committed to their various roles in engaging and supporting the students we serve. They are also connected to the businesses and industries that employ our students.
- We must be proactive and responsive in both addressing the needs of our valued employees and attracting new employees to join us in meaningful work.
- Workforce attraction and retention requires a commitment to equitable compensation, an intentional work-life balance, and transparent paths toward professional growth supported through professional development.
- We must support innovative approaches and ensure that each employee has an equal opportunity to participate and grow personally and professionally.
- Our vision to develop new leaders is consistent with our vision to engage students in lifelong learning to achieve their goals.

Our People

Long-term goal:

Build a diverse workforce, reflective of our communities, with:

- Compensation commensurate with peers in the Northeast.
- Passion for student success and workforce development.
- The flexibility needed to succeed in all aspects of life.
- Access to nationally recognized professional development.
- Clear and transparent opportunity for professional growth.

Strategies over the next 12 months:

- Objectively assess the competitiveness of MCCS current compensation, using a total compensation assessment.
- Negotiate collective bargaining agreements that more fully reflect the changing circumstances of our work and employment conditions.
- Complete an employee engagement survey.
- Expand leadership and professional development funding, incentives and other opportunities that build participation in professional growth.
- Modernize a classification system that supports clear, transparent, and equitable job classifications and earning categories.

Strategies over the next 24 months:

- Transform the business model and secure funding that provides essential resources to assure objective and sustainably competitive compensation for all classifications of employees.
- Examine systems and opportunities that objectively reward superior performance.
- Execute a plan for enhanced engagement built on the results of the employee engagement survey.
- Continue to expand leadership and professional development funding and incentives that build participation in professional growth.
- Implement a classification system that supports clear, transparent, and equitable job classifications and earning categories.

The Foundational Elements

Our vision for creating foundational elements for success:

There are three foundational elements that support the success of our students, employers, and people: facilities, partners, and approaches to business operations. By investing in these foundational elements, we will strength the foundation by which our students, employers, and people can succeed.

Facilities:

Maintain modern, high-quality learning and administrative facilities. To that end, the system and colleges will strive to provide the resources needed to continuously renew learning facilities with innovative program delivery options, consistently maintain and renovate our buildings, and steward environmentally responsible campuses.

Partners:

Embrace partnerships with other education institutions, student support organizations, and government agencies that advance our mission and vision. Through these partnerships, we will be more effective and efficient in delivering an "educated, skilled and adaptable labor force that is responsive to the changing needs of the economy."

Approach:

Adopt a business model responsive to the realities of today's economy. To that end, the system and colleges will build a portfolio of funding sources that support a predictable financial base and embrace information management as a critical link to student success and the development of a fully educated workforce for our employers.

The Foundational Elements

Goals:

- Sustain modern teaching and administrative facilities with zero negative environmental impact.
- Lead the engagement of our partners in workforce development to sustain an integrated and effective series of programs and support systems that enable the ongoing development of a world-class workforce.
- Transform the business model to support sustained growth and quality programming across all offerings.

Strategies over the next 12 months:

- Evolve a higher education capital planning funding model in collaboration with Maine's other public institutions of higher education.
- Assess the environmental impact of MCCS and develop potential strategies for reducing our negative impact on our environment.
- Partner with recognized co-leaders in workforce development with the shared goal of expanding funding opportunities.
- Implement the Anthology SIS suite of applications.
- Explore business models that provide long-term funding for growth and high-quality programming.

Strategies over the next 24 months:

- Expand partnerships with recognized co-leaders in workforce development with the shared goal of increasing funding opportunities.
- Evolve and build support with state leadership, the federal delegation and business leaders to fund with public and private partners a sustainable capital investment program for Maine's public institutions of higher education.
- Implement a business model that provides funding for growth and high-quality programming.