

Middlesex Community College
FY02 Mission Priority Implementation Plan Final Report
Executive Summary
July, 1, 2002

Despite devastating world events and extreme budget challenges Middlesex Community College made outstanding progress toward the accomplishment of its FY2002 Mission Priority Implementation Plan. As a college community, we are committed to identifying and responding to the diverse educational needs in our service area; providing the academic, enrollment and student development support services needed by our students, and contributing to the economic development of our region. We are especially proud to report that, throughout this difficult year, members of our college community identified and implemented creative, cost-efficient solutions to difficult challenges thus allowing us to continue to meet the needs of a growing student population and to address evolving local workforce development needs in an era of diminishing fiscal and human resources. The college's excellent progress toward the accomplishment of its Board of Higher Education Mission Priorities is documented in the FY02 Mission Implementation Plan Final Report. This document lists the needs identified in our service area for each of the six focus areas defined by the Board of Higher Education, the initiatives designed to address these needs, their related indicators, baseline data, target results and actual outcomes.

Notable Mission Priority Implementation Accomplishments

In 2001-02, Middlesex Community College successfully built on its past record of outstanding accomplishment, especially in the areas of teaching, insuring access to underserved student populations, providing excellent student support services, supporting K-12 education and workforce development. In recognition of the vital role played by technology in achieving institutional purposes, this year the MCC Board of Trustees designated it as an area of special emphasis. The following synopsis of notable mission priority implementation accomplishments highlights some of the ways that technology has been effectively utilized to support our students and to achieve organizational goals.

Middlesex Community College continued its efforts to incorporate the appropriate use of technology as a means of

addressing the variety of learning styles represented in our student population and to increasing access to higher education. 16 additional faculty members were trained to develop on-line courses bringing the institutional total to 48 faculty trained, 21 new on-line course titles were developed bringing the institutional total to 59 and 104 on-line course sections were offered to MCC students in 2001-02. These courses generated 1682 student enrollments. The college also successfully completed its migration to the Blackboard Learning Management system. Last year 156 Middlesex Community College class sections used Blackboard as part of their instructional design..

In addition, 132 faculty have now been trained to incorporate technology into the delivery of classroom instruction and 68

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faculty have incorporated its use in their classes on a regular basis. The Fall 2001 college-wide professional day entitled “Technology: Enhancing the Classroom and the Workplace” was well received by over 290 college faculty and staff. Over 90% of the participants rated the presentations as useful and expressed their satisfaction with the quality and variety of the workshop offerings.

Investments were made in technology to support several important college teaching and learning initiatives. Two classrooms were equipped to support the incorporation of technology into the teaching of accounting and a UNIX lab was equipped to offer a comprehensive, non-credit UNIX training program for low income residents using equipment donated by SUN Microsystems. Through these initiatives, the college was able to respond to industry needs by incorporating technology into its accounting curriculum in all sections of 7 accounting course titles offered in 2001-02 and enrolled 30 students in a UNIX training program. To date, 18 students have completed the program and are trained UNIX Systems Administrators.

Significant workforce development accomplishments can also be reported. Last year, despite much sharper increases in unemployment rates than anticipated, The Career Place served 6600 clients, posted 2980 jobs, placed 1100 individuals and successfully implemented technology to provide better service to its clients. 63 disabled individuals were served through new adaptive technologies designed to increase the accessibility of its job search and career development services. 43 of these individuals were placed in jobs. In addition, academic programs to respond to specific, local workforce needs were

developed or expanded. Examples include a Direct Support Certificate program for staff working with mentally retarded clients; UNIX System Administrator training; and a model program to assist paraprofessionals, teachers on waivers and other non-traditional applicants to successfully complete the Massachusetts Communications and Literacy Skills tests in preparation to become teachers in the Lowell Public School System.

In 2001-02 the college also continued its exemplary work with local school systems in their efforts to prepare students to be successful on MCAS tests. 280 high school students were served in 4 school systems. The college’s work in this area has been honored by a number of awards. MASS Insight Education recently presented the 2002 Rennie Award to Middlesex Community College for establishing effective and transforming partnerships with public school districts. In 2001, MASS Insight designated the Lowell-Middlesex Academy Charter School as a Vanguard School and described it as a model for successful fundamental change and in 2000 the Edgerly School Leadership Award was presented to the Lowell-Middlesex Academy in recognition of its standing as one of the five most improved schools on state-wide MCAS testing.

The college also continued its commitment to K-12 education through a number of other important initiatives including the teacher preparation activities previously described; the creation of a plan which has been funded by the Lowell Public Schools to enroll and support special needs students in the BRIDGE Alternative Middle School which is operated by the college; the expansion of the BRIDGE program enrollment from 30 to

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43 students; and the completion of a Strategic Technology Plan for the BRIDGE program which has been presented to the Lowell Public School System for funding consideration.

Providing outstanding student support services and efficient enrollment processes remains an essential college priority. The college's efforts in this arena are exemplified by the following notable accomplishments in 2001-02.

MCC students, faculty and staff were dramatically affected by the terrorist attacks on America on September 11th. Within days, the college community identified the need for education, forums for discussion from a wide variety of perspectives and viewpoints and opportunities for action. In response, a collection of 10, free outreach activities and events was designed and offered to members of the college community and local area residents. 420 Middlesex students, 150 high

school students, 544 faculty and staff members and 150 area residents attended these events. The first event of the series was held only 8 days after the attacks. This "One World" series continued throughout the academic year.

In addition, new and expanded state-of-the art, on-line, real time enrollment services were made available to MCC students. Last year the capacity to pay tuition bills on-line, to register for non-credit courses, and to access their up-to-date degree or certificate program requirements was made available. In 2001-02, 5547 students used technology mediated enrollment services to apply to the college (1501 applications and 848 quick admits), pay their tuition bills (315 payments), complete the financial aid process (1118 students), and register for classes (1765 students). 94.5% of surveyed students utilizing these services rated them as satisfactory. In addition, the college responded to 2947 on-line information requests.

Targets to be Achieved:

Middlesex Community College achieved 59 of its 68 FY02 target outcome measures and made significant progress on all of its 17 mission priority initiatives. Of the 9 target outcomes not yet met, 4 initiatives were not funded by the Board of Higher Education and 1 was changed at the request of the Massachusetts Department of Education to meet a newly identified, urgent need for learning disabilities awareness training for Department of Transitional Assistance caseworkers. The following is a summary of the target outcomes that have not yet been attained as well as an analysis of the progress made by the college on the accomplishment of the related initiative, the reasons for not meeting the target and the institution's action plan.

Initiative: Beta Site for ACT Center Computer-Based Career Development Courses

Target Outcomes Met: 1500 course titles are available and 6 companies signed contracts for services

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: 98 enrollments in ACT Center Courses – Target was 100 client enrollments.

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Short-term, on-line instruction is still an unfamiliar learning modality for many clients of The Career Place.

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Action Plan: (1) Provide opportunities for clients to sample ACT Center on-line courses (2) ACT Center courses are now eligible for federal dislocated worker funding. The Career Place can now refer eligible clients to this training resource.

Initiative: Increase Services to Support the Unemployed

Target Outcomes Met: The Career Place served 6600 clients and posted 2980 jobs

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: The Career Place placed 1100 clients in jobs – Target was 1200

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Many of the clients served by The Career Place were laid off from managerial and technical jobs – 47% of The Career Place clients have a bachelors degree or higher. Unfortunately, the new jobs being created in the local area are entry-level service positions.

Action Plan: Increase the number of industry specific job fairs provided at The Career Place that focus on managerial and technical positions.

Initiative: Direct Care Workers for the Mentally Retarded

Target Outcomes Met: 29 students enrolled in the MCC Direct Support Certificate program; 12 agencies participated in the local initiative and a regional plan to sustain and support the local initiative was documented

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: 14 students were awarded Direct Support Certificates in 2002 – Target was 20.

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Need for additional ESL instruction and developmental course work, lack of work release time and agency support and personal issues (for example; pregnancy, expired visas, health problems)

Action Plan: (1) Recommend curriculum changes to address student academic skill levels and ESL needs (2) Create a program admission path that encourages the completion of developmental coursework prior to program admission. (3) Involve students with the MCC Student Success Program for support services (4) Encourage the Department of Mental Retardation to promote work release time for program participants (5) Work with agencies to identify a few skilled supervisors to support students through the certificate program

Initiative: MCAS Preparation

Target Outcome Met: 280 students from 4 school systems used the Academic Systems Interactive Mathematics Instructional Software and/or the mathematics self-paced instruction

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: (1) No students participated in the intensive 15-week Academic Systems Self- Paced, Individualized Mathematics Instructional Model (2) No high school students at risk of dropping out as a result of not passing MCAS participated in a GED or developmental education intervention option

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Neither initiative was funded by the Board of Higher Education

Action Plan: Seek funding source

Initiative: ABE Services for Non-Native Speakers of ESL

Target Outcome Met: 149 ESL students were served through the PAC program.

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: Although the Board of Higher Education did not fund any additional PAC sections, 149 ESL students were served using MCC resources. The target was to serve 120 students with MCC funds and 150 students if additional funding were available from the BHE; No ESOL students enrolled in intermediate or advanced coursework.

Reason For Not Achieving Targets: The Board of Higher Education did not fund either initiative.

Action Plan: Seek funding source.

Initiative: Adult Basic Education – Learning Disabilities

Target Outcomes Met: 10 ABE practitioners participated in a Learning Disabilities Workshop, 19 ABE practitioners enrolled in Reading Theory I, and 8 ABE practitioners enrolled in Reading Theory II

Target Outcomes Not Yet Met: No trainers were developed to train ABE practitioners to identify and work successfully with adults with learning disabilities. Target was 4 trainers.

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Initiative was postponed as a result of a new, urgent priority identified by the Massachusetts Department of Education for learning disabilities awareness training for Department of Transitional Assistance caseworkers. Instead, 70 Department of Transitional

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Assistance caseworkers were trained. MCC appropriately postponed this initiative at the request of the Massachusetts Department of Education.
Action Plan: The implementation schedule for this initiative will be revised in collaboration with the MDOE.

Initiative: Supporting Home Schooling Families

Target Outcomes Met: 14 courses were offered to home-schooling children, 21 Saturday and Summer camps for children enrolled 260 children, 100% of home-schooling families reported satisfaction with the

quality of the courses provided, and 90% of the families reported satisfaction with the quality of the camps provided for their children.
Target Outcome Not Yet Met: 37 home-schooled children generated 50 course enrollments. Target was to serve 50 children.
Reason for Not Achieving Target: Recent increase in the number and variety of courses and programs available to home-schooled children.
Action Plan: 100% of home-schooled children with an identified need were served. The college plans to continue this support service as long as it remains fiscally reasonable.

Significant Institutional Challenges

We are very proud to report that although Middlesex Community College was faced with a number of significant challenges, the college community accomplished most of its FY2002 Mission Priority Implementation Plan. Examples of the challenges faced include, a drastic reduction in the college's state budget allocation, the state-wide hiring freeze and early retirement program, increased enrollments, the lack of funding from the Board of Higher Education to support Adult Basic Education, ESL and MCAS initiatives, a dramatic increase in the local unemployment rate for managerial and technical personnel in the local region and a re-prioritization of Adult Basic Education initiatives by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

- The Middlesex Community College state budget allocation was cut by almost \$1.5 million when adjusted for fixed costs such as inflation and collective bargaining.
- Throughout the year, the college had to continually reassess its priorities and organizational design in response to employee turnover and retirements as a result of the state wide hiring freeze and the early retirement plan.
- A sharp rise in the area unemployment rate during the Fall semester led to a significant enrollment increase for the Spring 2002 semester (9%). The Massachusetts unemployment rate increased from 2.6% in August 2001 to 3.9% in August 2002 to 4.7% in April 2002. The college met the challenge of continuing to provide outstanding coursework and services to these students despite diminished fiscal and human resources.
- In our local area, most lay-offs occurred in managerial and technical positions. Unfortunately, most of the new job development occurred in the service sector and in entry-level positions.
- No funding was available from the Board of Higher Education to support planned programming in the areas of MCAS support for local school systems, ESL instruction and Adult Basic Education.

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- The Massachusetts Department of Education identified a new, urgent need for learning disabilities awareness training for Department of Transitional Assistance caseworkers and asked the college to postpone the “train the trainer” initiative designed to train more Adult Basic Education practitioners to work successfully with adults with learning disabilities and to substitute the learning disabilities awareness training required by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance.

Summary

Middlesex Community College is pleased to submit its FY02 Mission Implementation Plan Final report to the Board of Higher Education. The college’s mission priorities are the result of a careful planning process focused on areas of interest to the BHE and in areas in which the college was seeking to grow. A comparison of the original baseline data submitted and the results described in this report documents tremendous institutional development and growth during very difficult budget times. We are proud of the accomplishments of the college community and the institution’s enhanced capacity to meet the needs of our students and our communities as a result of the efforts of our talented faculty and staff.