

Middlesex Community College
FY04 Strategic Implementation Plan Final Report
Executive Summary
July 15, 2004

Middlesex Community College made outstanding progress toward the accomplishment of its FY04 Strategic 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 support services needed by our students, and contributing to the economic development of our region. We are especially proud to report that members of our college community identified and implemented creative, cost-effective solutions to difficult challenges, allowing us to continue to meet the needs of a growing student population and 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 FY04 Board of Higher Education Strategic Implementation Plan is documented in this report.

Notable Strategic Implementation Plan Accomplishments

In 2003-04, Middlesex Community College continued to build on its record of outstanding accomplishment in regional workforce development, K-12 and higher education partnerships, and the cost effective use of resources. College faculty and staff designed and implemented innovative coursework to meet the needs of our local economy; expanded access to higher education through successful collaborations with Salem State College, Fitchburg State College, The University of Massachusetts Lowell, Northern Essex Community College, North Shore Community College and the Lowell and Woburn Public School Systems; generated \$164,408 in savings and improved our telecommunications and technology infrastructure, classroom technology resources, and administrative computing capacity.

Middlesex Community College continues to be a leader in workforce development. The Career Place, operated by MCC, participated in Governor Romney's new Jobs First Initiative and placed 1685 Massachusetts residents in jobs; registered 508 professionals for high stakes testing and certification in ASE Automotive Safety, Social Work, Transportation Security Administration, Registered Dietician, and Paraprofessional Teacher Assistant through its ACT Test Center; registered 103 employers as members of The Career Place and entered into customized agreements to provide a wide range of education and training, professional development and outplacement services with 23 area employers. A catalog of over 3,000 ACT on-line workforce development courses was also made available on the MCC Bedford and Lowell Campuses.

This year, the college also met the workforce development needs of our region by expanding the capacity of its nursing program by 29% by enrolling its first part-time, evening Nursing class and admitting a second class to begin the program in September 2004. In addition, the MCC Extended Education Consortium conducted a needs assessment to identify specific technology-enhanced courses required by local employers; identified and trained MCC faculty to develop customized coursework and designed and piloted 4 courses for M/A-COM, the Mass Biotechnology Council, area hospitals and the Billerica Public School system. Contracts are in place with 8 employers to design and deliver additional customized technology-enhanced classes. In response to this

growing demand for customized technology-enhanced courses, the college also trained 8 additional faculty members in this pedagogy.

In 2003-04, Middlesex built on its successful history of collaboration with our K-12 and higher education partners. Examples of successful collaborations this year include the following initiatives. (1) 2,921 Lowell High School students participated in one of the 8 grant programs that brought a total of \$2.6 million in educational resources and support services to Lowell. 423 of these students passed both the English and Math MCAS exams and 199 seniors were admitted to a college or university by June 2004. Professional development workshops were provided to 190 teachers and 270 paraprofessionals from Greater Lowell. (2) 213 students enrolled in Salem State College bachelor's degree completion programs, teacher certification and graduate level courses on Middlesex campuses and transfer articulation agreements in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Criminal Justice were finalized. (3) MCC collaborated with North Shore and Northern Essex Community Colleges and Fitchburg State College to form the SEEM Collaborative, a Liberal Arts and Science transfer program in elementary/special education for working paraprofessionals modeled on the MCC-Fitchburg State College transfer articulation agreement, that enrolled 26 students in its first year. (4) Lowell Connections, a program designed to prepare students who applied to attend the University of Massachusetts Lowell, but had not yet met their entrance requirements to be successful in the university environment, served 225 students in

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FY04. 60 of these students have already achieved their goal and will be enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the fall. To date, over 240 Lowell Connections students have successfully transferred from Middlesex to UMass Lowell.

The cost-efficient use of resources is a long-standing priority at Middlesex. In 2003-04 the college was able to generate \$164,408 in savings and improve our telecommunications and technology infrastructure, classroom technology resources, and administrative computing capacity. Long distance service costs were reduced by 4 cents per minute generating an annual savings of \$50,000; an upgrade to the college's Wide Area Network improved system reliability and speed and netted an annual savings of \$30,804; implementing voiceover IP lines in the new Federal Building yielded a one time savings of \$37,000 in telecommunications provisioning costs and provided higher quality phone lines; the production of CD ROM versions of the academic catalog yielded a savings of \$28,067 over hard copy printing costs and allows the college to keep its catalog more up to date; and the use of on-line resources as the college's primary personnel advertising outlet resulted in \$18,537 in savings.

MCC continued to implement new technology to support academic and student service initiatives and to enhance organizational efficiency. In 2003-04 the college implemented a secure wireless network to expand access to the network for instructional, student support and administrative purposes to an additional 20 classroom and instructional spaces on campus. The Human Resources Office developed and implemented the capacity to pay part-time employees by direct deposit. They also developed and pilot tested new part-time employee budget and expenditure functionality in SCT Banner to help cost centers manage their part-time staff budgets. Student placement testing was made more efficient through the implementation of WritePlacer. 2,345 entering students were placed into an appropriate beginning level writing course electronically and were able to receive their placement results immediately after completing their exam for the first time in 2004. The Enrollment Services Division, in collaboration with the MCC Technology Center, conducted several business process reviews to

assure the most effective use of staff time and available technology in order to provide the best possible enrollment support services. These reviews resulted in the development of a streamlined transfer credit award process, a more efficient selective program review process, and the design of a system to track student communications during the college-wide "Drop for Non-Payment" process. To date, 1,256 students were awarded transfer credit and 509 selective program applications were reviewed using the new processes.

As a result of statewide Early Retirement Incentive Programs and hiring freezes, Middlesex Community College has undergone a dramatic decrease in staffing levels over the past several years while student enrollments have increased. In order to continue to serve our students and our community, the college reorganized the academic affairs, student support and administrative affairs areas of the college into two divisions to accommodate the retirement of the Vice President for Student Development and placed a special focus on leadership development. In 2003-04, the Dean for Academic Resources and Instructional Technology and the Associate Dean for Professional Development and Instructional Technology participated in the Massachusetts Community College System Leadership Development Initiative and 19 administrative staff and faculty participated in the second year of the Middlesex Community College Leadership Development Institute.

Middlesex is committed to supporting student achievement and launched a major research initiative designed to help us understand the barriers to success experienced by our students. In 2003-04 activities included a review of community college student success literature; the development of a list of potential barriers; the administration of a study designed and conducted by graduate students from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government; the implementation of a pilot study testing the impact of several potential barriers at MCC, and the design and development of an in-depth research project to be conducted during the 2004-05 academic year.

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Targets to be Achieved:

Middlesex Community College achieved 67 of its 69 FY 04 target outcome measures and made significant progress of all of its 12 strategic priority initiatives. The following is a summary of the target outcomes that have not yet been attained, 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: The Career Place

Target Outcomes Met: 7 contracts were entered into with employers for on-line education and training services; 16 companies entered into contracts for training, outplacement services and professional development; 5 collaborative initiatives were formed with local businesses and/or community based organizations; and 1685 local residents were placed in jobs.

Target Outcomes Not Yet Met: 1 local employer was assisted in identifying their training needs and in applying for Division of Employment and Training Workforce Training Grants. Target was 3.

Reason for Not Achieving Target: Improved economic conditions led many employers to focus on revenue producing activities rather than on generating workforce-training grants.

Action Plan: During FY05 The Career Place will continue to offer assistance to companies for identifying their training needs and in applying for Workforce Training Grants.

Initiative: Middlesex Community College - Woburn Public Schools Partnership

Target Outcomes Met:

32 paraeducators were enrolled in courses offered on-site; and an operational plan to provide expanded educational services in Woburn leading to increased participation in higher education was documented.

Target Outcome Not Yet Met: Many MCC-Woburn partnership goals and priorities were agreed upon and documented. Overall partnership goals, implementation strategies and time frames are not yet finalized.

Reason for Not Achieving Target: An aggressive school building program limited the availability of key members of the Woburn School Department to actively participate in this initiative during the Spring semester.

Action Plan: The Planning Committee will meet in the fall to agree upon the overall goals, implementation strategy and priorities.

Significant Institutional Challenges

We are very proud to report that in spite of significant institutional challenges, the college community accomplished 97% of its FY2004 Strategic Implementation Plan Goals. Examples of the challenges faced include a reduction in the college's state budget, the continuation of a hiring freeze, increased enrollments, and the completion of an institutional self study in preparation for our New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation visit in October 2004.

- The Middlesex Community College state budget allocation was reduced by 20.5% between FY01 and FY04 from \$19.4 million to \$15.5 million.
- The college's credit headcount increased by 12% between FY01 and FY04 when it reached record numbers of 11,711 and the FTE enrollment increased by 18% peaking at 5076. During this same period of time, the number of full time faculty and staff decreased by 14%.
- 138 faculty, professional staff and administrators were actively engaged in conducting an institutional self study in preparation for the college's October 2004 New England Association for Schools and College's accreditation visit.

Regional Collaborative Actions Among Public University, State, and Community College Campuses

By collaborating with our colleagues in the Massachusetts system of public higher education Middlesex was able to expand access to baccalaureate degree programs in Massachusetts, improve the quality of education on our college campuses, support K-12 education, and enhance our technology infrastructure. Significant collaborative activities conducted in FY04 include the following:

- **Middlesex Community College was one of only 13 colleges nationally, and the only community college, selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to be a Cluster Leader for its Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Project.** In FY04 Middlesex led a cluster of colleges including Holyoke, Northern Essex, Valencia, and Iowa Western Community Colleges, Salem and Fitchburg State and Pine Manor College who

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collaborated to create an evolving, interdisciplinary community of practice to further the scholarship of teaching and learning on our campuses. 15 full time MCC faculty members are actively engaged in the initiative and have conducted and disseminated significant research designed to assess the quality of student learning in their classes. In June, 2004 70 cluster members attended a three day MCC Carnegie Summer Institute to enhance their capacity to design, conduct and analyze research focused on assessing the impact of specific classroom practices and pedagogies on student learning.

- Through the **MCC-Salem State Partnership** 3 baccalaureate degree completion programs, and teacher certification and masters degree level courses were made available on MCC campuses; 213 students enrolled in Salem State courses at MCC and 3 transfer articulation agreements were finalized.
- **MCC partnered with North Shore and Northern Essex Community Colleges and Fitchburg State College** to form the SEEM Collaborative, a transfer program in elementary/special education for working paraprofessionals. The program was modeled on the MCC-Fitchburg State College transfer articulation agreement and enrolled 26 students in its first year.
- The **MCC-Fitchburg State College Career Ladder** program completed its fourth year of providing professional development and teacher certification courses leading to the completion of a baccalaureate degree at Fitchburg State College for paraprofessionals working in the Lowell Public School System. As of the summer of 2004, 33 students have earned degrees or certificates at MCC, and 20 have earned Bachelor's degrees at Fitchburg State College. 14 additional students are expected to complete their degrees in 2005. A minimum of 12 program graduates have already been hired as teachers in the Lowell Public School system.
- **MCC, Salem State and the City of Lowell** worked collaboratively to design and offer IDEAL, a training program for preschool teachers and childcare providers within the City of Lowell funded by the Department of Education. The program includes tracks leading to a Certificate in Child Development Associate, an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education and an Educational Studies Bachelor's degree program and is offered free to eligible students. 56 IDEAL students have earned a non-credit Child Development Certificate, 38 have earned Associate degrees in Early Childhood Education at MCC, and 28 have transferred to the Educational Studies Bachelor's degree program at Salem State College.
- **Lowell Connections**, a program designed to prepare students who applied to attend the **University of Massachusetts Lowell**, but had not yet met their entrance requirements to be successful in the university environment, served 225 students in FY04. 60 of these students have already achieved their goal and will be enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the fall. To date, 241 Lowell Connections students have successfully transferred from Middlesex to UMass Lowell.
- MCC hosted the **Massachusetts Education Computing Conference** in May 2004 in our new Federal Building. More than 75 faculty and staff employed in the Massachusetts public higher education system participated in a variety of workshops designed to improve their technical skills and increase their awareness of new technologies and software applications.
- MCC upgraded its Wide Area Network, improved its Internet access reliability, created the capacity to support other state entities, and generated \$30,804 in savings by connecting to the **University of Massachusetts** high speed MITI network.

K-12 Collaborative Activities

Middlesex has a long history of successful K-12 partnership programs with our local school system. Highlights of initiatives undertaken in FY04 are listed below.

- In 2003-04 the college was instrumental in securing funding and administering 8 grant programs that brought a total of \$2.6 million in resources and support services to Lowell High School. Of the 2029 students served, 423 have already passed MCAS and 199 have already been admitted to a college. In addition, the number of Lowell High School seniors who applied to attend MCC by July 1st following their graduation increased by 58% between 2003 and 2004. These programs included (1) **Student Connections**, a drop out prevention and re-entry program with bilingual and bicultural staff members who worked with 569 students. Of these students, 69 passed both the English and Math MCAS and 23 were admitted to a college. 100 teachers participated in professional development workshops. (2) **Gear-Up Massachusetts** provided academic support, tutoring, college awareness, after school programs, parents outreach and MCAS preparation to 153 students. 56 of these students passed both the English and Math MCAS exam and 14 teachers participated in professional development workshops. The median grade earned in Algebra by students who

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participated in an intensive Gear Up Algebra class was 86 compared to 73 for a matched sample of students not enrolled in the program. (3) **Gear-Up MCC/UMass Lowell** provided college and career awareness, MCAS preparation, tutoring, mentoring, parent outreach to 1600 students and provided professional development activities to 76 teachers. (4) The **Heath Careers Opportunity Program** served 53 minority students interested in health care professions. 31 of these students passed both the English and Math MCAS exam and 45 were admitted to a college. (5) The **Massachusetts Educational Opportunity** program served 19 minority and economically disadvantaged students interested in entering a health profession by providing basic skills instruction in math, science and English. All of these students passed their Math and English MCAS exam and 6 were admitted to a college for Fall 2004. (6) **Educational Talent Search** worked with 484 first generation college students to foster academic success, high school completion and college enrollment. Of these students, 212 passed both their English and Math MCAS exams and 109 were admitted to college. (7) **Upward Bound** prepares potential first generation college students to complete high school and continue their education. In FY04 they served 51 students. 36 of these students passed both the Math and English MCAS exams and 16 were admitted to a college. (8) The **Student Conflict Resolutions Experts** program teaches Lowell High School students to peacefully resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

- The Lowell School department asked MCC to design and operate **BRIDGE**, a Middle School for behaviorally disruptive students. In FY04, BRIDGE enrolled 47 middle school students who were in danger of being expelled from the Lowell Public School system. 80% of these pre-expulsion students earned promotions to the next grade level.
- MCC is the only community college approved to operate a charter school of the Massachusetts Department of Education. In FY04, the **Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School** enrolled 100 high-risk students who had dropped out of an area high school, achieved a 92% pass rate on the English and Math MCAS exam and awarded 32 high school diplomas.
- 31 students who attended the **MCC Pathways to Success Program**, an MCAS transition program for Class of 2003 students, passed MCAS and earned a high school diploma.
- 23 older youth who participated in MCC **BEST** grant activities in FY04 earned their GED. An additional 61 students who participated in the **Out of School Youth** grant program earned their GED; 35 enrolled in the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School; 33 enrolled at Middlesex or a vocational institution; and 57 secured employment.
- Through the **MCC-Woburn Public Schools Partnership**, 32 paraeducators enrolled in credit professional development coursework offered by MCC on site in Woburn and evening credit courses offerings at Woburn High School attracted an additional 73 enrollments.
- Middlesex is also an active participant in The **Boston Area Technology Education Consortium** with UMass Boston, Bunker Hill and Roxbury Community Colleges, the Boston Public Schools and the Metro School to Work Consortium to create seamless pathways for students from high schools to community colleges and four-year schools; to meet emerging technology needs of the workplace, to use National Skill Standards to standardize curriculum; and to create articulations and professional development opportunities. In FY04, 6 one-week workshops for teachers at the consortium schools were designed on the following topics: Wireless Technology, Java Programming, Microcomputer Applications, Security, Technology Case Studies, and How to Develop a Skill Standards-Based Course. These workshops will be offered at Middlesex Community College during the summer of 2004. 25 teachers enrolled in the 3 workshops held in June 2004. In addition, 3 Reusable Learning Objects and 5 new courses were developed.

Summary

Middlesex Community College is pleased to submit its FY2004 Strategic Implementation Plan Final Report to the Board of Higher Education. The college's strategic initiative priorities were the result of a careful planning process that focused on areas of interest to the BHE and 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 outstanding institutional development and growth during an extremely demanding year. 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.