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President, Montcalm Community College  
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Thank you so much for hearing our voices today. My name is Stacy Young. I am in my third year as president at Montcalm Community College and have worked in higher education for nearly 25 years.

MCC is a small rural Community College, built in 1965 on farmland donated to the college. We are about an hour northeast of Grand Rapids, in the middle of Montcalm County. Our average student drives 30 minutes to attend the college. Fifty percent of our students this semester chose to take their classes virtually. Prior to the pandemic that was around 10 percent. Of the 28 community colleges, we are considered one of the small 8, with average enrollments of about 1,500 students each semester.

There's no doubt you have heard about the national enrollment challenges. After 10 years of declining enrollments, MCC has increased enrollment every semester for the past two years.

There are three primary ways MCC brings in revenue – State appropriations, property taxes/millage, and tuition/fees. We are grateful for our support in the community and from the state of Michigan, but we believe strongly that growing our enrollment is important to the long-term growth and sustainability of the college.

However, there are some differences between business and colleges. We do not have the ability to increase our prices. In fact, our tuition rates remain one of the lowest in the state of Michigan at \$115 per contact hour for in-district students and \$218 per contact hour for out-of-district students.

Like many, the cost of doing what we did a year ago is going up. For example, we are experiencing increased energy costs, such as the price of gas to run our snowplow trucks and mowers. We anticipate that inflation will push up employee salaries, insurance costs continue to increase and the higher cost of building materials is forcing us to reconsider imperative upkeep and maintenance on our aging facilities and infrastructure. Our staff is lean, many of us wear many hats, it is hard to imagine how we could be much leaner. As an example, I am personally responsible helping with contact tracing and Health Department communications due to the global pandemic. For these reasons, the state appropriations are essential to our sustainability.

As I said, we are working hard to help ourselves, by continuing to trim budgets, manage expenses, and grow enrollment, but with the continuing increases in expenses it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a balanced budget that meets the needs of those in the communities we serve.

Results of a recent economic impact study conducted by an independent firm on behalf of the college showed that MCC influences both the lives of its students and the regional economy through higher education. During the study year, MCC added \$53.7 million in impact to the college's service area economy. This impact supported 949 regional jobs. Ultimately, one out of every 88 jobs in the MCC service area is supported by the activities of MCC and its students. Of course, this helps support the vibrancy of the state as a whole.

The COVID pandemic brought renewed emphasis to the need to expand reliable and affordable broadband and internet access in rural areas, including Montcalm County. Results of our most recent community perception survey showed that 26% of respondents do not have internet access at home. That number is staggering. During the pandemic, like many, we used federal COVID dollars to support this as much as possible, including distributing federal dollars directly to students so they could invest in their own technology. In addition, we extended Wi-Fi into our parking lots, invested in technology so expensive software typically only available on campus could be accessed in student's and employee's homes, and as soon as possible we reopened areas for students to come to campus to work. While

many other colleges and universities kept students off campus, we were one of the first to offer in-person classes to our students because we are small and could put CDC COVID mitigation measures in place. In Montcalm County, part of the issue is the ability to pay for internet, but another big issue is having quality, dependable service. In fact, we have a board member who struggles to have a good connection because of where he lives.

Another area in which community colleges are vital is providing college-level classes to high school students as they work to get ahead on their higher education. At MCC, we offer both dual enrollment and early college.

We continue to see increases in our participation in dual enrollment, which allows students to take college-level courses while still in high school and receive both high school and college credit. Since 2019, the number of dual enrolled students has increased by more than 70%. Some of these students travel to one of MCC's campuses to take classes. In addition, we partner with many of our area high schools to deliver classes at their schools. About five years ago, we placed mobile education carts in many of the high schools because they simply didn't have the technology available to deliver college-level courses. These carts include a laptop computer, large monitor, camera, microphone, document camera and other technology at a total cost of about \$8,000 per furnished unit. This allows us to run dual enrollment classes online for two or three small high schools at the same time because they rarely have enough students to fill a class.

In 2021, the eighth class of Early College at Montcalm Community College students graduated. Thirty students earned a certificate or degree in addition to their high school diploma. Our students continuing in the program are also doing very well. Our Spring 2021 SAT testing data was the best since the program's inception, with a cumulative average of 1,113 compared to the state average of 996. This is the third consecutive year our students have performed above the state average.

Another way we have supported our community and responded to changing workplace needs is through our apprenticeship program. This provides specialized training for jobs in high-demand, high-wage fields. Many companies sponsor employees to participate in the apprenticeship to enhance their skills, which strengthens the company's workforce. All apprenticeships include credit coursework and on-the-job-training. All registered apprentices earn our Apprenticeship Certificate (30 credit hours) as part of their training. This certificate does not have set coursework because we customize it for every employer.

A second example of reacting to our community's needs is our work to establish a "grow your own teacher" program with area schools. Over the past few months our team has worked with superintendents to start students in their junior and senior years in high school to take education classes through Montcalm Community College and then continue after high school. After they reach 60 credit hours, they can become substitute teachers, filling a needed gap in our county. We are partnering with Davenport University to help students complete their bachelor's degree.

Finally, we were grateful for the opportunity to serve students who worked on the front line during the early months of the COVID pandemic through Futures for Frontliners and we were excited for the opportunities that Michigan Reconnect provided.

One of our Michigan Reconnect students was part of our pilot for the MCC Express Conductor Program. This program pairs MCC students with a mentor (known as a conductor) who is there to assist them throughout their time at MCC. As a 55-year-old mom of three children in college, who had never

attended college herself, Julie DeJohn was thrilled that she was accepted into Michigan Reconnect and that MCC paired her with a conductor to provide the support she needs to be successful in college. She has repeatedly told us that she would not have been able to attend college without the support she has received through both Michigan Reconnect and MCC Express. I could tell you more, but thought it would be best for you to hear it directly from her.

#### Video

What I hope you takeaway about MCC today is that we are small, but we consider size to be our advantage. Community colleges have a big role in our communities to quickly respond to educational needs, which holds true at MCC as we work to fulfill our mission of “Transforming lives through quality education.”

Thank you for your time today.

# Economic **IMPACT** summary



Reporting the impact of Montcalm Community College on the regional economy and the benefits generated by the college for students, taxpayers, and society

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020



MCC supports **949 jobs** or **one out of every 88 jobs** in its service region.

For every tax dollar spent educating students attending MCC, taxpayers will receive an average of **110% back** over the course of the students' working lives.



**4.9**

Benefit-cost ratio for students  
Every \$10K invested returns \$49K in earnings



**\$12.6 Million**

College spending impact  
Payroll, other spending, and ripple effects

**1.1**

Benefit-cost ratio for taxpayers  
Future tax-revenue, and government savings

**\$600K**

Student spending impact  
Relocated/retained student spending, and ripple effects

**5.6**

Benefit-cost ratio for society  
Future earnings, tax-revenue, and private savings

**\$40.6 Million**

Alumni spending impact  
Higher earnings, increased business profit, and ripple effects

MCC Alumni support **720 jobs** in the region



**\$53.7 million**  
Total income added in the region

or **.8%** of region's **GRP**

**\$127.5 million**  
In future earnings, tax revenue, private savings



Montcalm Community College