



Maine Community College System

NEWS RELEASE

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Maine's Community College President Delivers Biennial Report to Joint Convention of Maine Legislature

AUGUSTA, ME — MCCS President John Fitzsimmons told lawmakers today that the state's community college system has grown dramatically in its first four years, providing thousands more Maine people with access to higher education. "We built it and they came," he told the 123rd legislature in his biennial [State of the Community College Address](#).

But Fitzsimmons cautioned legislators that much work remains to be done. He noted that nearly a half million working age adults in Maine do not hold a college degree and that half of the state's high school graduates still do not enroll in college directly after 12th grade. He urged lawmakers to continue to focus on and invest in workforce development: "After all our community colleges have achieved," he told the assembly, "we still have only scratched the surface of both need and demand for our programs."

Fitzsimmons, who has served as President of the Maine Community College System since 1990, previously served as the State's Commissioner of Labor. In his speech, he stressed the enormous and growing need to expand access to higher education in Maine. Citing recent findings from the Governor's Community College Advisory Council, he noted: "Maine employers need 6,000 workers each year with the skills earned at the community college level, but we only have the capacity to graduate about 2,000 of those students."

The Maine Community College System is comprised of seven community colleges and nine off-campus centers. Nearly 26,000 students are served each year in one or two-year programs, credit and noncredit courses, and customized training. Additional information about the Maine Community College System is available at <http://www.mccs.me.edu/>.

Fitzsimmons initiated and led the call for establishing a true community college system in Maine. Under his leadership, enrollment in the former technical colleges has nearly tripled, a seventh college has been added in York County, career programs have been expanded, transfer agreements have been strengthened, and liberal studies programs added.

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