



Maine Community College System

NEWS RELEASE

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Enrollment in Maine's Community Colleges Continues Dramatic Growth

Degree seeking enrollment up 5.4%; Total headcount up 6.5%

Board approves FY10 & FY11 state budget request; seeks 4.5% increase both years

Board also approves new Wind Power Technology program at NMCC

SOUTH PORTLAND, ME — Enrollment in Maine's community colleges has grown 64 percent—to 12,316 degree seeking students—since the community colleges were established six years ago. In reporting preliminary 2008 enrollment numbers to the MCCS Board of Trustees at a meeting in South Portland today, MCCS President John Fitzsimmons noted that degree seeking enrollment is up by 634 students over last fall and nearly 4,800 students since the seven institutions made the transition from technical to community colleges in 2003. The number of students entering directly from high school has also continued to grow, up 69 percent in six years and 5 percent this year alone (to 2,111).

“The need for our programs continues to grow, especially during tough economic times,” noted President Fitzsimmons. “I could not be prouder of our colleges and their ability to stretch their resources to serve so many more Maine people who are seeking to upgrade their skills.” At the same time, Fitzsimmons cautioned that the colleges are stretched thin: “This fall, many of our occupational programs are oversubscribed. We are simply unable to serve all those who are turning to us.”

Also at today's meeting, the Board approved a 4.5% increase in both its FY10 and FY11 state budget requests, and it authorized the implementation of New England's first Wind Power Technology associate degree program at Northern Maine Community College.

Enrollment Highlights

The colleges seeing the largest growth in degree seeking students this fall are Central Maine Community College in Auburn (up 8.4% to 2,038), Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield (up 8.3% to 1,512), and Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle (up 7.9% to 809). Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor has seen a 5.1% increase in its degree-seeking enrollment, for a total of 1,661 students.

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Student headcount, which includes both degree and non-degree seeking students, is up 6.5% System-wide over last year and 46% over the past six years. The colleges experiencing the greatest headcount increase are Southern Maine Community College in South Portland (up 10.8% to 5,654) and York County Community College in Wells (up 7.2% to 1,078). Only Washington County Community College in Calais saw an enrollment drop, due in part to a large number of laid-off workers having recently completed retraining at the college. (See attached charts for information on all colleges.)

The enrollment numbers announced today are preliminary, but are not expected to change significantly by the official census date of October 15th.

Approval of preliminary FY10 and FY 11 budget request

At today's meeting, the M CCS Board approved a 4.5% increase in its state budget request for each of the next two years. If approved, the request would result in a roughly \$2.2 million increase in state appropriations in both years of the biennial budget. In approving the preliminary budget, the Board noted that while the requested increases will help address rising energy, healthcare, and retirement costs, they will not fully cover anticipated operating expenses. As a result, the System anticipates having to reduce costs in order to balance its budget.

As M CCS Board Chair Daniel Wathen noted in presenting the budget: "We are painfully aware of both the fiscal constraints facing the state and the enrollment pressures placed on our colleges. This request addresses most of our current needs, but it does not enable us to expand our capacity to serve many hundreds of people across the state who need additional education in order to gain a foothold in this economy."

Approval of Wind Power Technology Program at NMCC

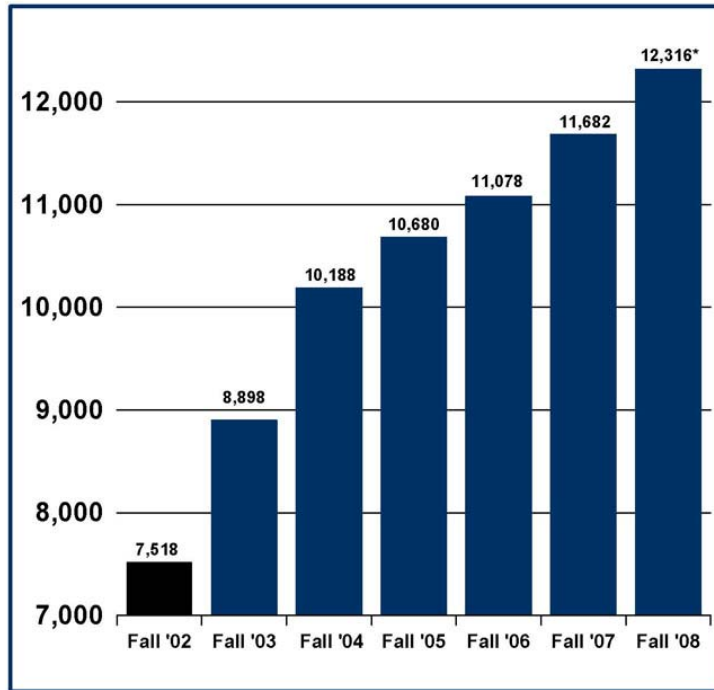
The Board also approved creation of a new two-year associate degree in Wind Power Technology at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle. The program, which will be the first of its kind in New England and one of only a handful of wind technology programs in the nation, will train technicians to operate, maintain, and repair wind turbine generators. According to NMCC officials, entry level wages for wind technicians range from \$18-\$22 an hour and strong demand exists for trained technicians.

In presenting the program for Board approval, NMCC President Timothy Crowley noted: "Given the activity in our region, and the discussion statewide about the tremendous potential for further development of wind power in New England and the Maritimes, this program will meet an immediate and emerging need. We believe the wind power technology program will provide a valuable resource for entities that erect turbines, as well as excellent placement opportunities for future graduates of the College."

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Enrollment charts follow

MCCS degree-seeking enrollment up 64% in six years



**4,798 new students since community
colleges established**

Enrollment Record – 12,316

**Preliminary number*

Maine Community College System

Degree-seeking enrollment (fall 2008)

	Fall 08	1-year increase
MCCS	12,316	5.4%
CMCC	2,038	8.4%
EMCC	1,661	5.1%
KVCC	1,512	8.3%
NMCC	809	7.9%
SMCC	5,162	4.6%
WCCC	320	-13.5%
YCCC	814	5.4%

Total headcount (fall 2008)*

College	Fall 08	1-year increase
MCCS	14,743	6.5%
CMCC	2,447	5.5%
EMCC	2,010	4.5%
KVCC	2,184	5.8%
NMCC	957	.2%
SMCC	5,654	10.8%
WCCC	413	-12.5%
YCCC	1,078	7.2%

**Degree and non-degree enrollment*