



3. History, Mission & Goals

It is important to recognize the heritage and history of Muskegon Community College as it looks to the future. Stated below are the history and mission of the College, taken from the College's current web site. The College is currently working on a new Strategic Plan, which will be adopted in 2010.

History of the College

"Muskegon Junior College was established by the Muskegon Board of Education in 1926 and was housed on the third floor of what was then the new Muskegon Senior High School. It was a pioneering effort, since only four other two-year institutions existed in Michigan at the time.

By 1934, enrollment of both the College and the high school had grown beyond the capacity of a single building. The Junior College, therefore, moved into the former Hackley School in downtown Muskegon across from Hackley Park (now the Board of Education Building).

It was appropriate that the College should occupy the old Hackley Building, which had been presented to the public schools of Muskegon by Charles H. Hackley after fire had destroyed the original Central School. The city's First Citizen believed that a community was obliged to offer its youth the kind of training which would enable them to earn a good livelihood and at the same time contribute to the well-being of the community.

At the time of its move into this facility and for 17 years after, Muskegon Junior College was primarily geared to those students intending to complete at least four years of college. Muskegon's reputation in this field of the "college transfer" program was an enviable one, and continues to be so today.

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Then in June of 1951, after an enabling act by the Michigan Legislature, the name and educational scope of the College was changed. “Muskegon Junior College” became “Muskegon Community College”, thereby reflecting the expanded nature of the College’s programs.

They were broadened to serve a larger number of students with a wider variety of interests. Courses were added in retailing, the vocations, the technical fields, public health, and the trades. These courses enabled young men and women to prepare themselves for a specific field of employment in two years of training beyond high school. There was no shrinking of the transfer program, only an expanded curriculum to serve a large segment of the community.

In the post World War II years, enrollment climbed quickly and the Community College “campus” had to grow accordingly. The Muskegon Board of Education, which still operated the College, utilized available space in many of its buildings, and rented other community facilities when enrollment exceeded the capacities of those buildings.

By the early 1960’s, enrollment had topped 2,000 and the College was operating full-time at Hackley, Vanderlaan, and Wilson Schools and part-time at eight other locations. The time had come for another step in the development of the college.

The Board of Education formed a Special Citizens Committee to study the entire program and make recommendations. The Committee proposed that the College be separated from the public school system, that a county-wide community college district be created, that a board of trustees be elected to plan, build, and operate the school, and that millage be voted in sufficient amount and for enough years to build and operate the College.

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In April of 1963, the country overwhelmingly approved the recommendations of the committee and elected the first Board of Trustees. The elected board went to work immediately and by September of that year had purchased the 111-acre campus on which the College exists today.

Alden B. Dow and Associates was named architect and by the summer of 1965 drawings were completed and construction begun. The Vocation-Technical Wing was completed and occupied in the fall of 1966 and the following September the entire complex was placed in service. Formal dedication ceremonies were held in October 22, 1967, with Dr. Ashley Montagu, one of the world's foremost anthropologists, delivering the dedicatory address.

The first addition to the new campus was the Frauenthal Foundation Fine Arts Center, completed in 1968 and named for the Muskegon industrialist whose gift had made the Center possible – A. Harold Frauenthal.

When the new district was created, the name of the college was changed to Muskegon County Community College; but in the spring of 1969, at the request of the Board of Trustees, the State Board of Education approved changing the name once again to Muskegon Community College. With an enrollment over 5,000 students, the College exists today in the eighth decade of service to area citizens.

January 1995 opened a new era of educational opportunity with the completion of the Center for Higher Education on the campus of Muskegon Community College. The Center houses upper level courses and programs offered by Ferris State, Grand Valley State, and Western Michigan universities.

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These institutions, along with Muskegon Community College, have formed a “consortium” to coordinate offerings to meet the needs of West Michigan residents. In 2001, the center was renamed the James L. Stevenson Center for Higher Education in honor of the MCC President who conceptualized and tirelessly guided the project to its successful completion.

The 90,000 square foot facility represents about one-third the size of the main building and was constructed to complement existing architecture. Attached to the main building near the Technical Wing, the James L. Stevenson Center for Higher Education contains the latest in communication technology with all its 35 rooms connected via fiber optics for voice, video and data transmission. In addition to housing the educational programs of the consortium member institutions, the Center is also the new home for MCC’s Media Center and Graphic Design program.

For years, Muskegon County was in desperate need for a cutting-edge career tech facility for high school students. The college and the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District collaborated and proposed a plan whereby the college would build the facility on its property and the MAISD would lease and operate it. In 2002, the good citizens of Muskegon County approved the necessary millage, and in January 2004, the Career Technology Center opened its doors on MCC’s campus. The facility boasts geo-thermal heating, a wind-powered generator and many other high-tech features.

MCC continued its push for 21st-century facilities when, in January 2006, it opened the Hendrik Meijer Library Information Technology Center (LIT). The LIT offers students and the community the latest in communication capabilities, including wireless Internet access, state-of-the-art library facilities/technologies and classrooms, and an Internet café. The 42,000 square foot facility has three levels overlooking the woods and creek, and offers special services including interlibrary loan, photocopy machines, group study rooms, a quiet reading room, a

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workstation for visually impaired persons, and both group and individual orientations.”

Consistent with its Master Plan of 2000, the College continued to seek improvements to the existing facility by planning major improvements to the organization and delivery of student services. Culminating in a major renovation project in 2009, the MCC Student One-Stop relocated key student services to the first floor at the main entrance, making it convenient for students to successfully complete all registration, counseling, admissions, and financial aid functions related to attending MCC.

This project also included the relocation of administrative offices to the former library at the center of campus. The second floor of the former library was completely remodeled for administrative offices and Board of Trustees functions. The third floor of the former library was also remodeled to serve as the Student Success Center. An elevator was added to link all floors of the former library building with barrier-free access.

The rooftop of the former library, used as a concrete plaza since the building was constructed, was transformed into the Outdoor Learning Center: a rooftop garden with plantings, walks, benches and lighting to provide an inviting place for gathering with others.

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Vision Statement of the College

*“Building our community’s gateway to opportunities....
Creating the first and best choice for success.”*

Mission Statement of the College

“Muskegon Community College, an associate degree-granting institution of higher education, is a center for lifelong learning which provides persons the opportunity to attain their educational goals by offering programs that respond to individual, community and global needs. To fulfill its mission, MCC is committed to:

- 1. Prepare students for successful transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and enable students to pursue higher-level degree opportunities through our local partnerships with university programs.*
- 2. Prepare students in critical thinking, communication and long-term learning skills for the changing challenges of the future.*
- 3. Develop technical and vocational skills necessary to enter and/or advance in the technologically sophisticated workplace of the 21st century.*
- 4. Provide for the assessment and/or improvement of learning skills and attitudes necessary for a successful educational experience.*
- 5. Meet the unique educational, cultural, and societal needs in the community through special courses, seminars, and exhibits.*



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6. *Respond in a rapid fashion to the ever-changing educational and training needs of local and regional business and industry.*
 7. *Stimulate intellectual curiosity, promote humanitarian values and enhance the general educational experiences necessary for persons to function as effective citizens.*
 8. *Create an atmosphere where diversity is acknowledged and encouraged.*
 9. *Provide comprehensive student services that are conducive to student learning and satisfaction in all facets of the college experience and appropriate to an open door community college.”*