

For Immediate Release

SOMERSET COUNTY CAMPUS OF ALLEGANY COLLEGE OF MARYLAND
TO CEASE FULL-SERVICE OPERATIONS

SOMERSET, Pa. – The Somerset County Campus of Allegany College of Maryland, which has faced steep declines in enrollment and revenue losses that are projected to continue, has announced that it will cease full-service operations June 30, 2017.

The trend, which has caused significant loss for the Cumberland, Md.-based institution in recent years, has persisted in spite of increased marketing efforts, reductions in operating expenses and the introduction of new academic programs.

After an extensive review of options for the local campus, ACM has concluded that, as a publicly supported college, it can no longer endure such losses and will not offer credit classes at the Somerset County Education Center after the spring 2017 semester, which opens Jan. 18.

ACM started offering academic programs in Somerset County in response to an invitation by community leaders to make higher education opportunities more readily available to area residents.

The local community college, which has served area residents since 1989, has seen enrollment plummet more than 50 percent in the last half-dozen years due to increased competition in higher education online and in the classroom.

In addition, Somerset County has invited a Pennsylvania based community college to serve its citizens, negating the need for ACM's educational services.

Due to continuing enrollment declines and revenue shortfalls, ACM's Board of Trustees directed that necessary actions be taken to eliminate further losses and to ensure sustainability of the institution for the future.

"This has been a difficult process," said the board's chair, Kim Leonard, "but the decision was based on extensive data and projections and is necessary to ensure the continued viability and strength of our institution."

ACM administrators expressed profound regret that they could no longer continue as before at the Somerset County Education Center. Since moving there in 1994, and with the support of numerous partners, ACM has developed the Glades Pike site into a multi-building campus serving the community.

"Allegany College of Maryland can no longer operate a full-service campus in Somerset County under the current environment," said ACM's president, Dr. Cynthia Bambara.

“ACM has provided accessible, quality and affordable higher education in Somerset County for over 25 years and has impacted thousands of lives during this time,” she continued.

“We are committed to working closely with the students, faculty, staff and community leadership in Somerset County during this time of transition.”

Bambara said a process to accommodate affected college employees beyond June 30, 2017 is currently under consideration.

“ACM employees have done an amazing job of promoting the opportunities at the Somerset County Campus and of engaging our students,” she said. “ACM-Somerset employees will receive individual consideration for placement in open positions for which the employee is qualified throughout other college locations.”

Operations continue at the Bedford County Campus, in Everett, and at the Garrett County Nursing Site, in Oakland, Md., as well as at the Cumberland campus.

“While plans are in place to close the Somerset County Campus, it is important to note that services to the citizens of Somerset County will continue,” Bambara stated. “The college will continue to embrace the citizens of Somerset County and provide services where possible.”

ACM-Somerset began in fall 1989 with evening classes in Somerset Area High School. To accommodate growing student enrollment and to more fully address higher education needs of the community, the local college established daytime operations with relocation to the current site.

The Somerset County Campus of ACM has graduated well over 750 students. Thousands of county residents have been served in ACM credit and continuing education courses and programs.

ACM-Somerset students who need further credits to complete their academic program beyond the spring semester are encouraged to continue their studies at other ACM locations.

Those seeking assistance in making future plans are encouraged to contact the Somerset County Campus at 814-445-9848, extension –6100. Information is also available at www.allegany.edu.