

ACM Family,

Greetings from Annapolis. I had a productive day yesterday and look forward to a breakfast that includes Governor Moore and additional meetings today, as well as meeting with our elected officials during a return trip to Annapolis on Monday and Tuesday.

Faculty and Staff Focus

Submissions requested.

Join me in celebrating our dedicated, talented faculty and staff members. I invite you to nominate someone who deserves recognition for their outstanding contribution. Please limit your nomination to three sentences or fewer and email it directly to me.

Imagine 2031 – A Roadmap to Prosperity

It was an honor to participate in TGCC's PACE 2026 sessions, Imagine 2031 – A Roadmap to Prosperity in Annapolis. This year's program brings together state leaders, regional partners, and industry experts to discuss transformative initiatives shaping the future of Western Maryland. I was part of a small panel to share the stories and measurable impact of the Senator George C. Edwards Fund, showcasing how strategic investments are driving job creation, business expansion, and long-term growth across the region. Being included among this distinguished group of speakers is a privilege, and I look forward to contributing to the dialogue as we collectively envision a prosperous future for our community.

Maryland Transfer Intensive

I am pleased to share that the work of the Maryland Transfer Initiative between ACM and FSU is ongoing. With the support of the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Aspen Institute, our partnership continues to work to ensure that transfer opportunities for students are affordable, timely, and barrier-free. Throughout the past year, challenges have been identified, measurable goals established, and redesign initiatives are being implemented, along with strategies being put into place. Thanks to Jennifer, Kurt, Miha, Scott, and others for representing ACM to support our students.

Budget

As I shared in my communication earlier this week, the FY27 State Budget is still very preliminary and subject to change throughout the legislative session. After the budget was released on Wednesday, a BRFA (Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act) was implemented, meaning our increase (and the increase for all community colleges) is capped at 3%. For ACM (as of today), it would mean the following:

FY27 Operations: \$9,397,435 (representing an increase of 3% or \$273,711)

FY27 Small Colleges: \$1,655,954 (representing an increase of 3.2% or \$50,570)

FY27 Appalachian Grants: \$360,000 (level funding from FY26)

I will continue to keep you updated as I learn more later this week and next week in Annapolis.

Friendly Reminder

There will be an All College Assembly on **January 28**. I want to ensure that our discussion reflects the most current information. During this assembly, representatives from CBIZ (our employee benefits broker) will also be in attendance to provide an overview of our medical/Rx projections for FY27 and the possible impact on the FY27 budget.

Special All-College Assembly

Date: Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Location: Zimmer Theatre

Virtual Option: Zoom link available upon request

Carnegie Classification

I am pleased to announce that ACM has been selected to receive the 2026 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. This is a prestigious designation that is awarded to universities and colleges that demonstrate constant, extraordinary commitment to their community. A special thanks to Diane McMahon for her leadership in this effort, along with Kurt Hoffman, Erin Yokum, Lori Sadlier, Tonya Shepherd, Danean Mullenax, and Dione Clark-Trub.

President's Vision In Action

At the recent All College meeting, Dr. Diane McMahon has been presented with the President's Vision in Action award in recognition of her tireless efforts to promote community engagement for our students and college community.

REACT - Robotics and Engineering in Allegany County Together, Inc.

A special thanks to the numerous ACM faculty and staff who volunteered their time to support this competition last weekend at ACM. Your hard work and commitment made this incredible experience of bringing STEM innovation to life.

Communication Feedback

As president of ACM, I welcome your feedback on my communication—both in terms of email frequency and relevance—as well as my visibility on campus. My goal is to maintain open, meaningful communication and to be present by walking around our Cumberland and Everett campuses, as well as our education sites, to connect with faculty, staff, and students. To add a little fun to your day, the first five people to reply to this email will receive a free Queen City Scoop ice cream coupon. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Grant Highlight

Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion

ACM has been approved for a second year of Behavioral Health Workforce Hub funding totaling \$634,225. Building on last year's successful pilot, this renewal expands "Mind-Body Skills" sessions in the K-12 school system, adds new parent workshops and school presentations, and introduces "Mindful Reset" wellness programming for educators and community members.

Legislative and Budget Update

The 449th session of the Maryland General Assembly is convening in Annapolis from January 14 to April 13, 2026. Addressing the significant state budget deficit will likely dominate the session this year.

I want to share a few key dates related to the FY27 State budget:

- **Jan. 26-27:** MACC Trustee Leadership Conference.
- **MACC Legislative Committee:** I participate in this weekly meeting to discuss legislation that will impact ACM and Maryland Community Colleges.

Enrollment

Headcount is down 2.3% and FTE is down 2.7%. Early College is reflected. While our enrollment is down slightly compared to last spring, I am encouraged that both our headcount and FTE are up by over 17% in a five-year comparison to spring 2021.

Board of Trustee Meeting Schedule

The Board of Trustee meeting schedule is listed below. As always, everyone is invited to attend, and anyone with questions can expect full transparency.

February 23, 2026

March 16, 2026

April 13, 2026

May 11, 2026

June 15, 2026

August 17, 2026
September 14, 2026
October 19, 2026
November 16, 2026
December 7, 2026

[On a personal note](#)

Earlier this week, we celebrated National Popcorn Day, which is a highlight on my calendar every year. Anyone who knows me knows how much I love popcorn and enjoy a bowl several days per week. It's simple, nostalgic, and always hits the spot.

Let it snow, let it snow, let it stop!
David Jones