



## Coffee with the President Notes

Dr. Curt Freed, President

November 21, 2024, 12:00 p.m. via Webex

- 1) Participants: 36
- 2) Curt Freed explained some of the distinctions between Coffees with the President, President's Brownbags, President's Staff meetings, and College Council. While sometimes duplicate information is shared in these forums, each meeting type serves a different purpose.
  - a) Coffees with the President and President's Brownbags started prior to the pandemic as live gatherings. Coffees with the President were informal "meet and greet" gatherings and Brownbags gave an opportunity to provide information, have open dialogue, and share announcements. During the pandemic, these gatherings transitioned to virtual meetings, which increased attendance significantly. Curt stated that while he has a list of topics to share, Coffees and Brownbags are still meant to be a place for open dialogue. Notes are now provided following these gatherings so that those unable to attend will stay informed.
  - b) President's Staff includes Curt's direct reports. President's Staff meetings are more formal and have official agendas and minutes. The minutes, which are shared with all staff, include a synopsis of discussions and decisions, along with reports by members of President's Staff.
  - c) The College Council is a group representing departments from across the institution, as well as student leaders. The Council was created to serve as a formal mechanism for shared governance and disseminating information. The College Council will serve as means to provide input when the college faces major decisions (e.g., significant budget cuts).
- 3) Curt thanked Vanessa Pursley and everyone who helped make the Thanksgiving meal a success.
- 4) The Colorado Department of Higher Education designated Morgan Community College and several other institutions as "First Generation Serving Campuses" in honor of the Colleges' service to students whose parents did not complete a bachelor's degree. There is currently no financial benefit to receiving the recognition (in contrast to being named as a Hispanic Serving Institution, which opens grant opportunities).
- 5) The Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) selected the Colorado Community College System's Central Library and its thirteen college libraries to receive their prestigious Project of the Year Award. Curt congratulated April Amack on her contributions to this project. April thanked the staff and faculty who supported the effort.
- 6) BAS Updates
  - a) The BAS in Business Administration and Management was approved by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). A search is in progress for an additional Business Faculty.
  - b) The BAS in Education with an endorsement in Technology Education has also been approved by the HLC. Taylor Schneider, who created the program, shared that this degree helps prepare those who wish to teach CTE skilled trades (a broader scope than what was formerly called "Industrial Arts"). The HLC approved the program without requiring a substantive change request or site visit, which was expected to take another six months or more. The college is now preparing to launch the program sooner.

- c) A BAS in Elementary Ed, with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education is in the pipeline for approval. Jamie Hochanadel is heading up this program's development. It is currently going through a peer review process by individuals from university teacher preparation programs. It will then go to the Colorado State Board of Education for review, after which it will be submitted to the HLC for accreditation.
- 7) MCC is working with the Morgan County School District Re-3 to create a "College Now Pathway" program that would allow high school students to earn an associate's degree by the time they graduate from high school. Advising would begin in eighth grade, with classes starting in ninth grade. Additional school districts are interested, as well.
  - 8) The Strategic Enrollment Management team met November 20 to discuss advising, including how to improve advising of concurrent enrollment students. Curt would like to see concurrent enrollment students choosing classes that don't simply "fit a slot in their schedule," but are more targeted to their interests and desired career pathway.
  - 9) HR Updates:
    - a) Curt welcomed Michael Swank, the new Vice President of Administration. Before coming to MCC, Michael worked as the Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer of the Wyoming College Commission. Prior to that, he worked for the Wyoming legislature. Tracy Schneider will retire from her Vice President of Administration and Interim Controller position the end of December.
    - b) Curt congratulated Jennifer Thistle, who was promoted to a new Dean of Health Sciences position. He noted that the role was created to provide additional support to the health sciences programs, as well as work on new program development.
    - c) Cathy Pacheco Ogle will transition from Director of Career Services to Director of Secondary Transitions December 1.
  - 10) Construction Updates:
    - a) Center for Skilled Trades and Technology: The front doors and siding around the top of the building have been delayed due to supply chain issues, but otherwise the building is nearing completion.
    - b) Wray Center: The State Board approved that MCC can spend up to \$870K from reserves to remodel the building. The project is in the final stages of architectural design. Renderings should be available in early December. After this, the project will go through code review, and then go out to bid.
    - c) Safety and Security Project: Bids were due November 20. Three bids were received, and one will be selected prior to Christmas.
  - 11) Gifts to the MCC Foundation are encouraged on Colorado Gives Day, December 10. A portion of gifts given will be matched. Gifts can also be given to the MCC Foundation through the Colorado Combined Campaign, which is a state-employee giving program. MCC's Colorado Combined Campaign will be open through December 13.

- 12) A Career and Internship Research Fair will be held 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in Poplar Hall on November 21.
- 13) A STEM Seminar Series event, “Clearing the Air: How Carbon Capture is Shaping our Future” with Dr. Max Pisciotta will be held November 21 from 6-7 p.m. in Bloedorn Lecture Hall.
- 14) A Bring Your Dog to Work Day will be held November 22.
- 15) CACE Events
  - a) A Juried Art Show and Sale at 300 Main will open November 21 and close December 19. An Artists Reception will be held on November 21 from 4-7 p.m.
  - b) A Third Thursday Artwalk will be held November 21 from 4-7 p.m.
- 16) Additional discussion on the proposed “College Now” program with Fort Morgan High School:

Brady Michel expressed concern about whether ninth grade students possess the maturity to take college level courses, and the possibility of poor grades remaining on their transcripts. Curt noted the program is very structured and has a built-in “on-ramp” to the college experience to promote their success. Joe Boman shared that during the first two years (ninth and tenth grades), classes will be taught by MCC faculty/instructors on site at the high school. The first semester will include an orientation class for no credit, as well as Accuplacer testing for reading and writing. The second semester will include two courses, music or art appreciation, plus Computer Information Systems (CIS 1018). In year two, courses branch out a bit and include classes such as Psychology. In years three and four, students can come to the MCC campus and take more rigorous courses in math and science, etc. The program will include significant support within a cohort model, such as advising, tutoring, and mandatory meetings for parents. Joe noted that this program can be helpful in enabling students to move out of poverty.

Becky Geltz noted that if concurrent enrollment students get poor grades, this may impact scholarships or admittance to a college. However, once they are admitted, only the credits transfer, not the grades, so their university GPA will not be impacted. Curt Freed discussed the concept of a “student’s right to fail.” He noted that faculty/staff perspectives can range from “not caring if a student fails,” to “doing whatever it takes to prevent a student from failing.” Curt stated that MCC has a vested interest in the College Now program, and the last thing MCC wants to do is set up a student to fail. He feels the process built into the program will help students succeed.

Brady shared that at CSU they had a “repeat/delete” option, where a student could repeat up to nine credits, and the poor grades could be replaced with the better grades. Maria Cardenas stated that if a student repeats a class, MCC counts the higher grade. In addition, if a student has been gone for two years or more, and then returns and successfully completes six credit hours, they can submit a one-time “Academic Renewal” form to forgive up to 30 credits. Gary Dukes stated that in this situation, the poor grades are expunged. Kenne Bauer noted that in general, grades are listed on transcripts with an (I) for include or an (E) for exclude. Only the included grades factor into the GPA. Curt noted it would be worth following up with the System to see if there is a way to remove the “exclude” grades from a transcript.