

*The Difference Is*  
*You*



**Mountain Empire**  
*Community College Foundation*



**2014–2015**  
**Report to the Community**





# President's Message



**Dr. Scott Hamilton**  
*President, Mountain Empire  
Community College*

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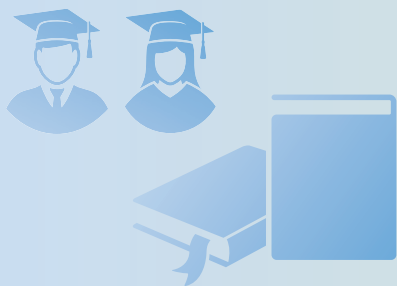
**A**s I talk with community leaders and friends, I am deeply gratified that most experienced a personal connection with Mountain Empire Community College during this past year. One out of 20 residents of our service region took credit or noncredit courses at MECC in 2014–2015. Many others were members of our college family through their involvement as board members, program advisors, alumni, volunteers, parents of students, frequent users of our facilities, or as past employees.

Most people know who we serve and why our work is important because of the wide reach of MECC in the community. Each year, more people who are connected to the college also become financial supporters because they understand the limitless potential of the college in serving students. They know that MECC's future is increasingly dependent on community investment as state support does not keep pace with student needs.

I am grateful to you, our community friends and donors, for making the difference in unlocking the unlimited potential of our faculty and students in 2014–2015. Your investments gave us the tools to meet new challenges. Your investments opened doors and removed barriers. Your investments created new opportunities that would not have been possible with only state support.

I know that Mountain Empire Community College has you to thank for much of the progress that we have made over this past year. I am grateful for your confidence and for changing the lives of our students today and in the future. Because you are making a difference in this institution, I can never say thank you enough.

## MECC KEY FACTS



Headcount Enrollment

**3,620**

WORKFORCE TRAINING  
PARTICIPANTS

**1,083**

**528**  
GRADUATES

Dual Credit Enrollment

**983**

COLLEGE TRANSFER

**25%**

CAREER/TECHNICAL

**38%**

OTHER

**36%**



### DRONE TECHNOLOGY

MECC is always on the lookout for innovative ways to get young people interested in high-demand technology careers and to provide options for workers transitioning out of the mining industry. Emerging interest in unmanned aerial systems (UAS), or “drones,” presents a unique opportunity to do both.

Regardless of whether or when a vibrant drone technology industry springs up in southwest Virginia, the skills needed to design, manufacture, assemble, program, and fly unmanned aerial vehicles are taught within existing MECC programs, including Computer Aided Drafting & Design; Electromechanical Technology (Advanced Manufacturing Technology); Computer Networking Technology, and others.

High School students in the 3D design strand of MECC’s summer Governor’s School program illustrated this multi-disciplinary connection by designing drone components using CADD software, producing them with a 3D printer, and collaborating with Computer Networking faculty to make them fly.

Also this summer, MECC offered an Introduction to Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) course, the first of its kind to be offered at a Virginia community college. The course, offered again this fall, covers the history



*Above: Students in MECC’s summer Intro to UAS course test fly drones they built during the course.*



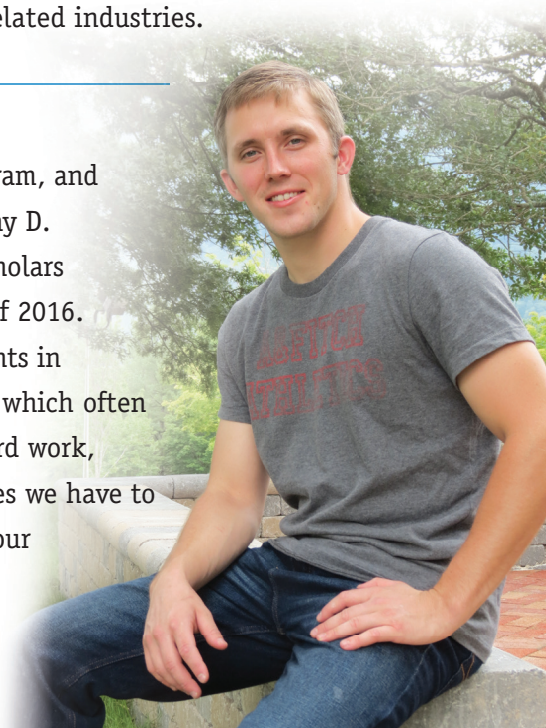
*Left: Governor’s School student displays a drone designed, built, and flown by participants in this summer’s 3D Design strand.*

of unmanned aerial flight, aircraft mechanics, and UAS law, and culminates in students building and flying their own drone.

Given this existing expertise, MECC is well positioned to respond quickly to potential future drone industry needs. In the meantime, drones provide a great tool to attract new students into disciplines that meet the needs of the existing employers in advanced manufacturing and related industries.

### Brian Fields ELECTROMECHANICAL TECHNOLOGY

Brian Fields, of Norton, is a student in MECC’s Electromechanical Technology program, and maintains a 3.921 GPA. He was the 2014–15 recipient of the Patton Wise & Dorothy D. Slemp Scholarship, served as a student speaker at the MECC Foundation’s 2015 Scholars Recognition Night, and expects to complete his Associate Degree in the summer of 2016. Fields hopes to take advantage of internship opportunities offered to many students in MECC’s Electromechanical Technology program by Eastman Chemical in Kingsport, which often leads to full time employment for program graduates. He credits his success to hard work, persistence, and a positive attitude. “To get where we want to be in life, sometimes we have to be willing to do the thing that makes us most uncomfortable. And when we face our fears and conquer them, that’s when we feel most satisfied with life.”



# You Open Doors and Remove Barriers

## Great Expectations: Opening Doors for Foster Youth

Mountain Empire Community College removes barriers to success, and celebrates students who succeed — especially those who face huge obstacles. Gary Hall has been in and out of the foster care system throughout



Gary Hall, Great Expectations participant and 2014–15 AutoWorld-MECC Golf Classic Scholarship recipient.

his life. He first entered the system at the age of two when both of his parents died. He reentered it while in his teens after the grandparents who were raising him died within a month of each other. He left the foster care system at the age of 17.

It's safe to say the odds were stacked against Gary. Foster children have a nearly 50%

high school dropout rate, and only 3% earn a college degree. The rate of incarceration of former foster youth dropouts is also alarmingly high (20%). Gary entered MECC with no family support, and no transportation. He walked the three miles from his home to the campus to

attend classes, regardless of the weather.

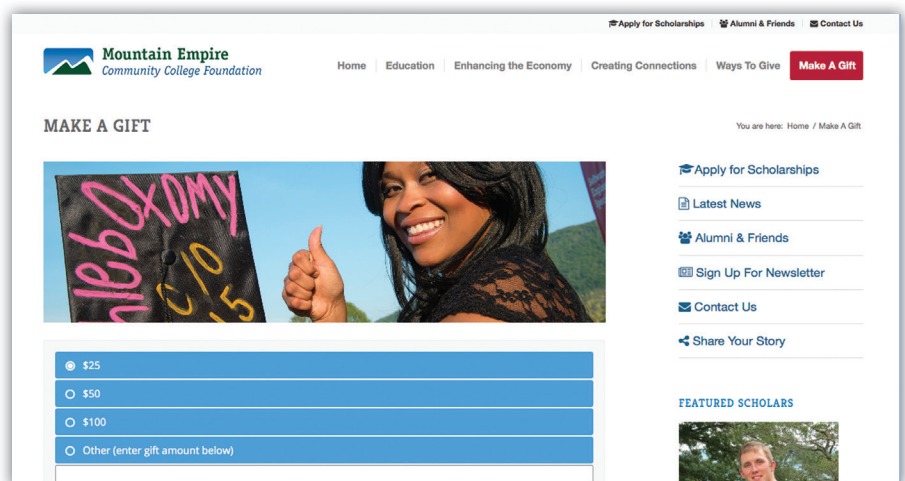
Fortunately, Gary found a support system in MECC's Great Expectations program, which provides coaching and other supportive services to foster youth. The program helps students overcome barriers to higher education, including housing, transportation, childcare, and financial emergencies. Seed funding for the Great Expectations program was provided by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education. Starting this fall, private gifts to the MECC Foundation will ensure the continuation of the program.

Hall credits Great Expectations with helping to meet his immediate needs so that he could focus on academics. More importantly, he cites the atmosphere of the program as invaluable to participants. "Great Expectations sets a specific tone for students...one of real, tangible optimism," which is often hard to come by for former foster youth.

While at MECC, Hall maintained a 3.958 GPA and was a 2014–15 recipient of the MECC Foundation's AutoWorld-MECC Golf Classic Scholarship. He graduated with a transfer degree in General Studies. He will attend UVA Wise this fall on a full academic scholarship, and hopes to eventually work for NASA. Gary's success has been an inspiration to MECC employees, and to Great Expectations students and supporters statewide.

## New Website and Online Giving Capabilities

It is now easier than ever to support Mountain Empire Community College scholarship and academic programs with online giving at our new website. Just go to [meccfoundation.org/give](http://meccfoundation.org/give). The site is easy-to-use and your information is secure. If you prefer, you can reach us by phone or mail — 276.523.2400 or Mountain Empire Community College Foundation, 3441 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. We are *always* happy to hear from you.





## FEATURED SCHOLARS



### Leah Giles

#### GENERAL STUDIES

Leah Giles, of Big Stone Gap, graduated from Union High School in 2014. Not certain of her career plans, she decided to attend MECC

to seek a transfer degree in General Studies, which allows her to explore her interests and career options while getting general education requirements out of the way. She was the 2014–15 recipient of the MECC Foundation's Bruce K. & Patsy Y. Robinette Scholarship. She expects to complete her Associate Degree next spring and transfer to a 4-year institution.



### Alex Garnett

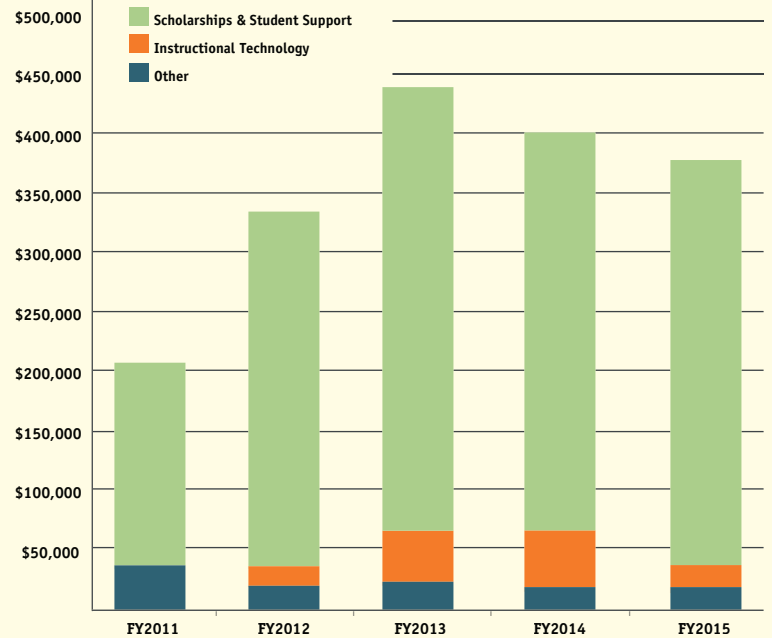
#### COMPUTER NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY

Alex Garnett, a 2014 graduate of Gate City High School, was the 2014–15 recipient of the MECC

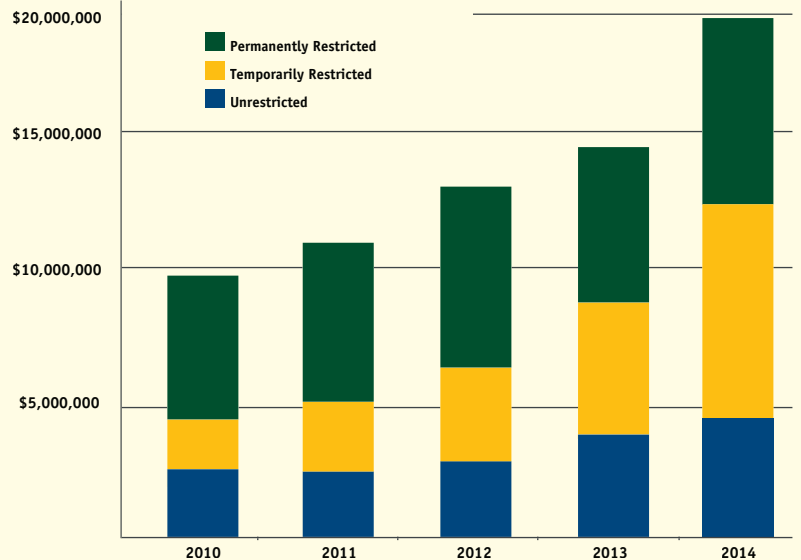
Foundation's Nalco Foundation Scholarship. Alex chose to attend MECC because it was close to home and offered a variety of two-year programs designed to lead directly to employment. His interest in computers led him to major in Computer Networking Technology. He found that participation in extracurricular activities, such as the Student Diplomat program and the Student Government Association, helped him to become familiar with the college community and eased the transition from high school to college. He expects to complete his Associate Degree next spring and pursue a career in computer repair.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### Support to the College



### Endowment Growth



## FOUNDATION KEY FACTS

STUDENTS RECEIVING SCHOLARSHIPS

**413**

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AWARDED

**\$299,956**

STUDENTS RECEIVING DREAMKEEPERS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

**50**

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN PARALLEL TUTORING PROGRAM

**164**

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

**195**

STUDENTS RECEIVING GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL TUITION ASSISTANCE

**33**



# You Bring Opportunity

## Strategic Investments Keep Healthcare Program on Cutting Edge

Despite fluctuations in the southwest Virginia economy, the healthcare sector has proven itself to be one of the most consistent employers in the MECC service region.

To ensure that local healthcare providers continue to have a reliable pool of well-trained prospective employees, the college, the MECC Foundation, and healthcare industry representatives have worked together to make strategic investments in MECC's many healthcare training programs. These investments ensure that our healthcare students continue to have access to state-of-the-art technology and clinical experiences, and—most importantly—be job-ready when they graduate.

MECC works diligently with its industry partners to stay on top of new developments in order to ensure that our programs stay relevant and meet regional training needs. For instance, the college recently added a Health Information Management degree program to address training needs resulting from the industry-wide conversion to electronic health records, and has initiated work on a new healthcare simulation



laboratory that will serve multiple clinical programs. The MECC Foundation has played, and will continue to play, a primary role in securing the resources necessary to make these kinds of improvements.

Health industry engagement with MECC programs extends beyond technology investments to include ongoing input into program content and scholarship support for students. The MECC Foundation frequently receives charitable gifts from healthcare employers and related entities to support students in healthcare programs. The Foundation recently received one such gift from the Lonesome Pine Hospital Auxiliary. This group of hospital volunteers made a \$10,000 gift to create a new endowed scholarship. The Lonesome Pine Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship, like most others administered by the MECC Foundation, will be awarded based on financial need and other donor-selected factors.

### HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS

#### Health Sciences (Clinical)

- Computer Tomography (CT)
- Emergency Medical Services/Technician
- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Nursing Assistant
- Nursing – LPN
- Nursing – RN
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Phlebotomy
- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Radiography
- Respiratory Therapy

#### Allied Health (Non-Clinical)

- Administrative Support Technology
- Medical Office Specialist
- Clinical Research Coordinator
- Funeral Services
- Health Information Management
- Medical Office Coding & Procedures
- Medical Records Technician
- Medical Transcription
- Pharmacy Aide







## New Program Offers Pathway to Network Security Certifications

As technology becomes more sophisticated and society becomes more dependent on technology for day-to-day transactions, the risk of cyber-attacks and data breaches continues to grow. Agencies that are entrusted with private or sensitive information must invest in well-trained security personnel in order to stay ahead of constantly evolving threats from hackers with illicit intentions.

Computer Networking Technology is one of MECC's largest and most successful associate degree programs. It continually produces skilled professionals to fill regional IT workforce needs. The program holds the prestigious Cisco Networking Academy designation and gives students an opportunity to earn several industry-recognized certifications. The Computer Networking Technology program provides students with an introduction to security issues, but MECC has recognized a need to expand its offerings to better address IT security workforce needs throughout the region.

In early 2016, MECC will begin offering a new Network Security Career Studies Certificate to provide recent graduates of the Computer Networking Technology Associate Degree program and other experienced IT professionals with an opportunity to upgrade their network security skills. The MECC Foundation recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Dominion Foundation to support curriculum development costs and equipment for the new program.

The Network Security Career Studies certificate will consist of three intensive and accelerated courses, taught in sequence one night each week. Each course will last approximately 16 weeks. The full nine-credit program is designed to be completed in one year. The program will also align with King University's Bachelor's in Information Technology/Cyber-Security Concentration, providing students with an opportunity to transfer and complete a four-year degree. For more information, contact Fred Coeburn at [fcoeburn@mecc.edu](mailto:fcoeburn@mecc.edu).

## New Chemical Process Operator Program

MECC is building on its existing partnership with Eastman Chemical in Kingsport to offer a new Career Studies Certificate program designed to prepare graduates for employment in chemical testing, processing, and manufacturing. The average entry-level hourly wage for these occupations nationwide is \$16, with practically unlimited growth potential. The Chemical Process Operator program is a one year, 29-credit hour program whose competencies align with high-demand occupations at Eastman. For students wishing to seek an Associate Degree, the program also aligns with MECC's existing Electromechanical Technology Degree program, also developed in partnership with Eastman.





# Thanks to You

*The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following people, organizations, and businesses who contributed from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.*

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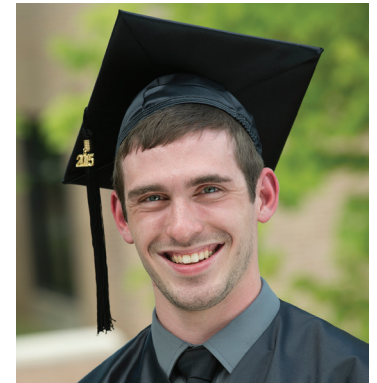
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*The following individuals have made arrangements to include the MECC Foundation in their estate plans, named the college as a beneficiary of life insurance, or made a gift of paid-up life insurance.*

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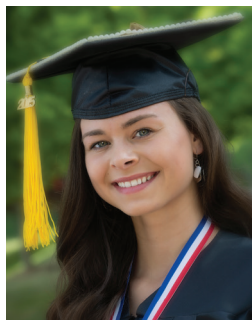
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The MECC Foundation is providing special recognition to generous Big Stone Gap High School alumni and community friends for cumulative support of the Buccaneer Scholarship, named for the mascot of the former Big Stone Gap High School. A group of alumni created the Buccaneer Scholarship in 2003 to honor the legacy of their alma mater, which closed in 1959, and to benefit students of Powell Valley High School. Since then, 34 graduates of either Powell Valley or Union High Schools have received \$1,500 renewable scholarships to attend MECC. As of June 30, 2015, a total of \$63,037 has been awarded to students, and the Buccaneer Scholarship Committee has raised over \$281,365 for annual and endowed scholarships.

Members of the Buccaneer Scholarship Committee include Roger Daugherty, Committee Chairman; Nancy Hagy Chiles; W. "H" and Callie Anne Coughlin Clark; Jack Howard; George Litton; Bill Locke; Roy Laster; and Nancey Edmonds Smith. Big Stone Gap alumni and the Buccaneer Scholarship Committee were recognized in 2012 as the recipients of the VCCS Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy.

*The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following people, organizations, and businesses who have ever contributed to the Buccaneer Scholarship family of funds. Those who have given from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 are in bold.*

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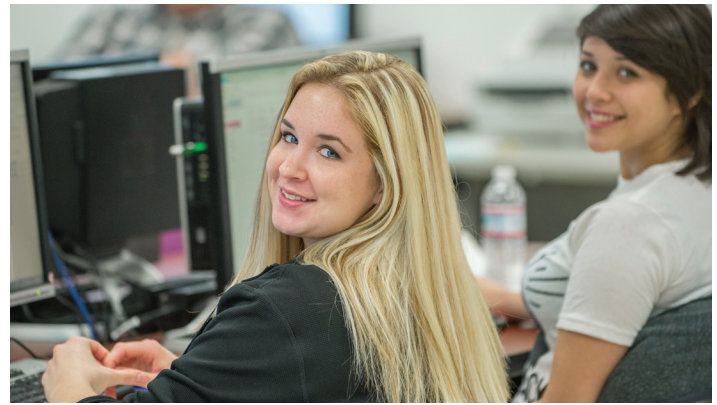
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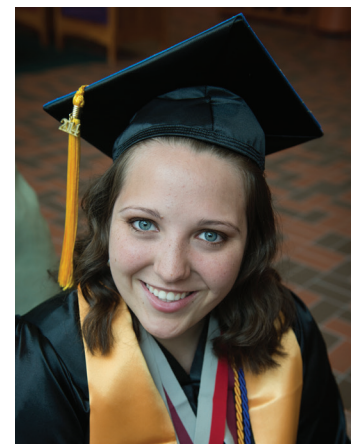
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