

# BUILDING SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA'S FUTURE ONE STUDENT AT A TIME



**Mountain Empire**  
*Community College Foundation*



2016-17 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



## President's Message

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**F**or more than 45 years Mountain Empire Community College has been building relevant academic and workforce programs, assisting students in reaching their educational goals, expanding the capacity for high-skilled jobs to locate in Southwest Virginia, and partnering with local communities to promote and preserve our region's unique cultural heritage. We ARE building Southwest Virginia's new economy one student at a time.

In July of 2017, I was inspired by the opportunity to serve as MECC's seventh president because of the strong foundation in place, including powerful academic programs and individualized student supports — built by our community leaders, past presidents, staff, alumni, and students. It is an honor to be chosen to be a part of their legacy.

MECC is making transformational changes as a primary driver of workforce and economic development in the region. As the knowledge and skills required to be competitive in today's workplace increase, our students continue to benefit from initiatives supported by the MECC Foundation and our many dedicated donors. MECC is providing the educated workforce the region needs to attract and retain employers, preparing students for current and future job markets.

Through donor support and grant funding, MECC created a cutting-edge power lineman program, providing the opportunity for students to earn as many as eight industry-recognized credentials in a hands-on, short-term program. MECC has also been working to build strong cyber security and technology programs, including drone operations, to train students for the jobs of tomorrow.

We are moving forward at full speed with the vision to increase enrollment, expand program offerings, and enhance services to best align with students, employers, and our region. The College's mission, vision, and values statement were recently updated and we are actively engaged in a strategic planning process. Every area of the college is striving for excellence as we proactively take a leadership role in education and in workforce, community, and economic development.

Thank you for providing the opportunities to make a positive, long-term impact on the lives of our students and in our community through your continued support.

Dr. Kristen Westover  
*President, Mountain Empire Community College*



BUILDING  
SOUTHWEST  
VIRGINIA'S  
FUTURE

ONE

STUDENT  
AT A TIME

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Community College  
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*Scott County*



**Mountain Empire**  
*Community College Foundation*

# Leadership Transitions Continue Progress

**2017** marked a year of significant administrative changes at Mountain Empire Community College with the retirement of the college's president and the selection of the second female president in the college's history.

Dr. Scott Hamilton, who joined MECC as president in 2010, announced his retirement effective July 1, 2017. Dr. Hamilton had previously served as the Dean of Instruction at Eastern Idaho Technical College in Idaho Falls, ID. A native of Illinois, Dr. Hamilton's experience includes

work in the mining industry as well as instruction and administration in high school- and community college-level career and technical education.

During his tenure at MECC, Dr. Hamilton oversaw the renovation of Dalton-Cantrell Hall, construction of new access and entrance facilities, numerous campus improvements, the development of several new career and technical programs, and the college's SACSCOC five-year reaffirmation.

"When I came to MECC I had been told by many people that MECC had a hard-working and dedicated staff who made it their mission to help the people of Southwest Virginia," said Hamilton. "Over the last six and a half years I have found that to be very true. Thousands of lives have been changed through the hard work and commitment to students by the faculty and staff here and I am sure that tradition of service will continue."

A search for MECC's new president began in the spring of 2017. Dr. Kristen Westover, who served as the Vice President for Academic and Student Services at Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville was selected to serve as the college's seventh president. She is the second female to fill the role.

"I've known Kris for nearly a decade. She's a rising star among our nation's higher education executives," said VCCS Chancellor Glenn DuBois. "I'm looking forward to what she has to offer the college and the community."

In her first six months at MECC, she has worked

to establish a revised mission, vision, and values statement for the college as well as led the development of a new strategic plan that will lead the college into the next decade.

Although Dr. Westover has enjoyed more than 25 years of experience in higher education,

she admitted that education was not something she "really enjoyed or embraced" as a child. She dropped out of high school at age 16 and worked in construction and other jobs before taking a factory job. When the plant closed, Dr. Westover eventually enrolled in an evening college course. She became a high school math teacher and was a community college faculty member before taking college administrative positions.

"It was through the community college experience that I began to realize I could aspire to more and could do more and be more, and that I wasn't stuck in what I was in; that it was up to me to change," Westover said. "I believe that my story can encourage our current and potential students at MECC to think beyond their current life situation and work toward a better life."



*Dr. Scott Hamilton (right)*



*MECC's seventh president,  
Dr. Kristen Westover*



# MECC TOP 150

Among  
Community  
Colleges  
Nationwide

## *The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program*

**MECC has been named one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation** according to The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

The college is eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence to be awarded in the spring of 2019. The Prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges and recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning; certificate and degree completion; employment and earnings; and access and success for minority and low-income students.



MECC was named a top 150 finalist out of a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide in October 2017. The college will participate in additional staff interviews and submission of additional student outcome data. The top ten finalists will be named in May 2018.

"MECC values and measures student performance related to learning outcomes, progression through academic programs, success in completing credentials, and ensuring those outcomes are equitable across diverse sectors of our student population. I am excited that the college has been recognized for our exceptional outcomes that empower citizens for better lives," said Dr. Kris Westover, President at MECC.

## Thank You, Donna Stanley

**MECC Foundation Executive Director Donna Stanley retired in May 2017 following 24 years of service to Mountain Empire Community College and its students.**

During her tenure, Stanley grew the MECC Foundation to hold the largest endowment in the Virginia Community College System. She will be recognized by the Virginia Community College System in April 2018 with the Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy.

Stanley credited the Foundation's success to God, the communities the college serves, her staff members, past college presidents and members of the foundation board. She noted that one of the most rewarding aspects of her job was in building strong relationships with the college, students,



community members, alumni, staff, and individuals who have strong ties to the region but now live elsewhere.

"It was extremely gratifying for me to be associated with all of these wonderful people," Stanley said. "It has changed my life for the better, made me feel optimistic about the future, and it should raise the bar for what everyone thinks is possible for this region."

Following Stanley's retirement, MECC Foundation Board Member Bonnie Elosser agreed to serve in an interim director role until December 31, 2017. Amy Greear, who has served as the college's Community Relations Coordinator since 2012, has been appointed as the Interim Director of Institutional Advancement effective January 3, 2018.

## Joe Fuller, Leader in Philanthropy

**Joe Fuller of Nickelsville was recognized by the Virginia Community College System with the 2017 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy.**

Fuller has dedicated his life to bettering his community. Retiring from CSX in 1988, he devoted his time to fostering the growth and progress of Scott County. He served as a member of the MECC Foundation Board of Directors for two terms (1991–1997) and continues to support special events of the college. In 2012, the Rotary Club of Scott County renamed its existing MECC Foundation Scholarship in Joe's honor.

In addition, Fuller was instrumental in establishing a new Rotary Club of Scott County in November 1988. He served as charter club president and continues to be very active in club and district activities. He received a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow award in 1989 and a Skelton Fellow Award of Rotary District 7570 for year 2004–05. Fuller served as President of the Scott County Chamber of Commerce from 2002–03 and has served as



*Joe Fuller, second from left.*

Treasurer for the past 12 years.

"Because of Joe Fuller's generosity and hard work, more students are receiving help in meeting their educational expenses, and they have more options for working in their local community. Joe's mission and much of his life's work has been creating a better life for others," said MECC President Scott Hamilton.

## Dr. Amanda Graham, Alumnus of the Year

MECC's 2017 Outstanding Alumni of the Year is Dr. Amanda Graham, a licensed professional counselor and 2001 graduate of Mountain Empire Community College.

Graham, a native of Lee County, received her Associate of Arts and Sciences degree in General Studies from Mountain Empire Community College in 2001. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Lincoln Memorial University, her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Kentucky, and a Doctor of Education degree in Counseling Psychology from Argosy University in Sarasota, Florida. Dr. Graham is a National Certified Counselor, a certified Substance Abuse Counselor, and a certified Master Addiction Counselor.



Graham credits the caring professors at MECC for inspiring her to continue her education.

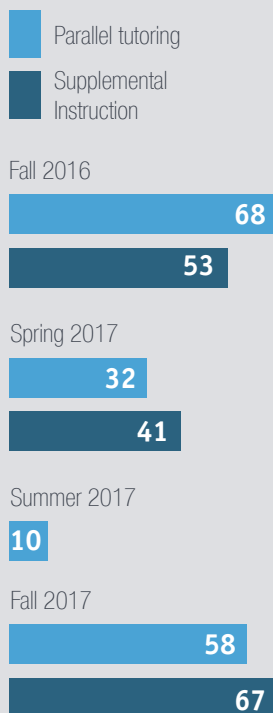
"MECC not only gave me the confidence to complete my education, but also gave me strength to set higher, reachable goals for myself. Not many colleges can offer that."

Dr. Graham was recognized with a Mentor Fellowship from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Minority Fellowship Program in 2013, and was inducted into Psi Chi, the Psychology Honor Society in 2002. She also serves on the Lincoln Memorial University Psychology Advisory Committee and is an active volunteer in her community.

Dr. Graham and her husband, son, and daughter reside in Pennington Gap.



## Students served



## Total individuals involved



## Average pass rate



## Average Retention rate



# Tutoring Programs Build Student Success

## The Parallel tutoring program has been a successful initiative by the MECC Foundation since 2009.

Students who are served by the Parallel program would not otherwise receive tutoring or academic advising. MECC's primary tutoring program is a 100% federally funded grant, Student Support Services, which serves low-income and first-generation students in specific degree programs. Without the Parallel tutoring program, students who do not meet the federal guidelines, as determined by the Department of Education, would be left without access to tutoring or other support services.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a peer-led supplementary class for Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, and Statistics.

These challenging courses can derail a student's progress toward a degree, particularly in health care majors. SI has proven

### Parallel tutoring program success data

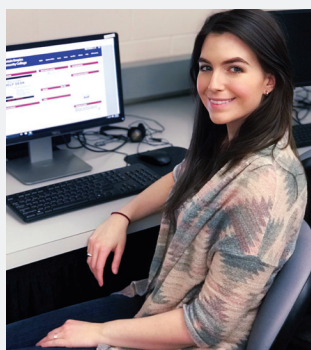
Semester	Students Served	Pass Rate	Retention Rate	Subjects Tutored
Fall 2016	68	76%	69%	88
Spring 2017	32	80%	75%	41
Summer 2017	10	73%	56%	11
Fall 2017	58	79%	69%	70

successful in increasing course pass rates and semester-to-semester retention of participating students. The MECC Foundation has funded SI since 2007. One of the advantages to SI is that all professors have offered extra credit for regular attendance to these peer led sessions.

The 2016–17 school year included this success data for the SI program:

- Fall 2017 saw expansion of the current SI offerings to include Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, and Statistics, which resulted in a 92.5% pass rate and an 89% retention rate. There were 67 students served.
- In Spring 2017, only BIO 101 and 102 were offered, with 41 students served, an 83% pass rate and a 59% retention rate.
- In Fall 2016, only BIO 101 was offered, with 53 students participating, an 80% pass rate and a 64% retention rate.

"As a returning student already in possession of a bachelor's degree, access to free tutoring and support services would otherwise be unavailable to me without



Lori Mullins, SI and parallel participant

the Parallel and SI programs," participating student Lori Mullins explains. "I am currently enrolled full time and am pursuing a degree in the medical field, which is a new and differing path from the one I was on previously. I have been met with several challenging courses along the way. After seeking one-on-one tutoring and SI, these programs have not only helped me to succeed in these challenging courses, it has helped me excel in them as well."

# High-powered Workforce Development Opportunities

**MECC Student Derrick Watkins decided to enroll in MECC's Power Lineman Program because he wanted a long-term career. He wasn't disappointed.**

With a high demand for power lineman workers, Watkins received a job offer with an Electrical Contractor before he had even completed the 15-week training.

"It's a really good program. I joined it looking to build a career. I just got a job offer from Davis H. Elliott. I would encourage anybody to do this program."

Thanks to an MECC Foundation application for a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, MECC was able to establish the only training opportunity for power lineman workers in far Southwest Virginia. Now training its third cohort of students, MECC has established partnerships with power industry employers to equip participants for entry-level employment as apprentice and utility line workers.

The \$950,000 grant supported start-up costs of the program, including hiring faculty, purchasing vehicles, and educational supplies.

"It's a career that you can get into that will equal what you can get with a four-year degree in wages," said Jeffery Boggs, power lineman instructor. "It's a career that is in big demand. I've been doing this for 30 years and there has never been enough linemen to go around. I don't see that changing, mainly because everyone can't do this. You have to be mentally tough and physically tough to do it. Being able to deal with heights and deal with high voltage, it's not for the faint of heart."



*Derrick Watkins, powerlineman participant*

## FAST FACTS

### **Cohort 1 (July to November 2017)**

- 14 students enrolled
- 10 of 14 qualified as low-to-moderate income
- 10 earned NCCER Power Line Worker 1 certification
- 3 earned Class A Commercial Drivers License (CDL) credentials
- All 14 were employed within a month of completion

### **Cohort 2 (November 2017 – March 2018)**

- 19 students enrolled

### **Cohort 3 (begins April 2018)**



*MECC president, Dr. Kristen Westover, meets the climbing challenge.*



# Lee County Endowed Scholarship Progress

**A grassroots effort to support Lee County graduates with scholarship funding to attend MECC is making great strides toward a goal of raising \$30,000.**

The Lee County Endowed Scholarship Committee recently formed to assist Lee High and Thomas Walker High School graduates. The group hopes to raise enough funds to establish the only scholarship dedicated to Lee County students attending MECC.

An anonymous donor has offered to match all donations up to \$30,000 that are contributed to the fund. The group, which includes Chair Cynthia Kinser, Wandaleen Adams, Leah Herring, Chris Jones, Donna Lock, Rita McCann, Diana Pope, Jason Sturgill, and Shirley Watson, has already raised several thousand dollars.



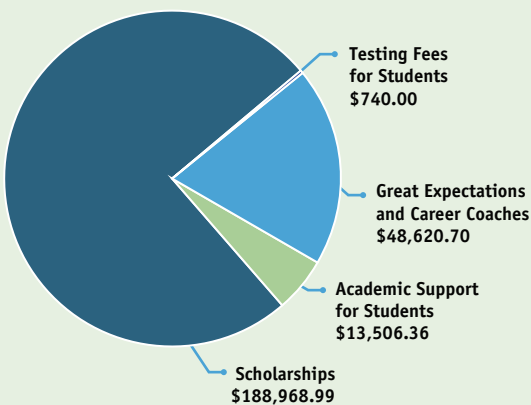
“The Lee County Scholarship is a vital step in bringing new industry into Southwest Virginia,” said volunteer Jason Sturgill. “In order to revitalize Southwest VA, we must attract new businesses and new industries. These companies want a young workforce that is trained and capable of performing at a high level in the jobs of tomorrow. By having a scholarship designed for graduates of Lee County Schools, we remove one of the biggest obstacles of higher education in SWVA today which is financing. The students selected to receive this scholarship can begin their post-high school education without the extra burden of financing.”

To donate to the Lee County Endowed Scholarship fund, visit [www.meccfoundation.org/lee-county-endowed-scholarship/](http://www.meccfoundation.org/lee-county-endowed-scholarship/).

## Financial Summary 2016–2017 Academic Year

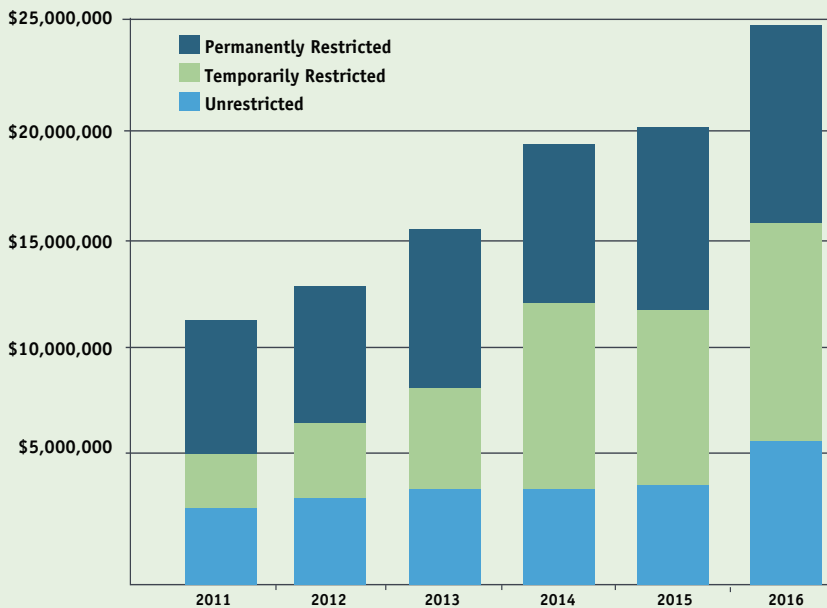
### Investment in Educational Services

Total 2016-17 investment \$251,836.05



### Endowment Growth

Balance as of June 30, 2017 \$24,764,552.53



# Building on a Legacy: Auto World Golf Tournament

**John Morrissey established a legacy of service and commitment in his community during the 30 years of owning and managing Auto World of Big Stone Gap.**

When Morrissey sold his business to Johnson City resident Chantz Scott in late 2016, he made sure that the transition would allow the new owner to continue building on that legacy.

For more than 20 years, Auto World has served as the primary sponsor of the Mountain Empire Community College Foundation Auto World Golf Tournament. The tournament has raised thousands of dollars and assisted hundreds of students with financial support to pursue their educational goals.

“We truly love MECC. It means a lot to the local people. It is huge for the economy here. It is a great way for people to earn an education, get started on their career track at an affordable price, and not have to go too far. I’ve had a lot of scholarship recipients come in and personally thank me and some of them have bought a vehicle.”

Scott says when he took over ownership, continuing support for the college was an easy decision.



*John Morrissey (left) and Chantz Scott*

“We are very grateful and proud to continue this. You want to get involved in the community when you get here. Auto World and MECC have a great name. I felt it was important to continue that relationship and to invest in our community.”

Both Morrissey and Scott will continue serving on the golf tournament advisory committee. They hope to build on the success of past tournaments in 2018.

“MECC has helped the community,” added Morrissey. “It provides good jobs for people and great growth opportunities for young people and lowers the burden for families with the cost of an education. . . I’m proud to support our students.”

A photograph of a young woman with dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a grey t-shirt with the MECC logo in pink and blue. The background is a solid light blue color.

MECC FOUNDATION SCHOLAR

**“My goal** is to complete the two year RN program at MECC and become a Registered Nurse. Scholarships have helped me because I don’t have to worry about my parents having to worry about paying for all the costs and other expenses that are part of this program. To those that donate to the scholarship fund, thank you very much. You’ve made going to college possible for me.”

— MECC Student Haley Brickey  
Twin Spring



# THANK YOU

**to our many generous donors**

*The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following people, organizations, and businesses who contributed from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.*

## **Benefactors Club (\$10,000.00 Plus)**

C. Bascom Slemp Foundation  
Community Trust & Investment Company/  
Pikeville  
Lambda Alpha Epsilon  
Mrs. Jill B. Quinley  
Mr. Mike Thomas  
Virginia Foundation for Community  
College Education  
  
Estate of Carol Buchanan

## **Loyalty Club (\$5,000.00 to \$9,999.99)**

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*continued on page 12*



## MECC FOUNDATION SCHOLAR

### **“My goal for this semester**

is to pass all my classes with a B or higher to work my way up to the occupational therapy program at Southwest Community College. Scholarships are like a reward. It’s a boost of confidence to help me pursue my career,”

—MECC Student Justin Clark  
Big Stone Gap

#### **Sustainers Club (\$250.00 to \$499.99), continued**

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Kingsport Times-News  
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Bob’s Market  
Boone’s LLC  
Dr. & Mrs. Robert E. Botts  
Broadwater Trading  
Company  
Mrs. Sylvia A. Brown  
Ms. Theresa Bryant  
Buchanan Pump Services  
& Supply Co  
Mr. & Mrs. William Buckles  
Dr. Carol A. Burkart

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

Ben and Dotty Allen  
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The Dog S'Paw	Tempur-Sealy International
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The First Lady Day Spa	
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## Buccaneer Scholarship Donors

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. The mascot of the former Big Stone Gap High School was the Buccaneer. 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 graduates of Powell Valley High School. Since then, 52 graduates of either the former Powell Valley or Union High Schools have received renewable scholarships to attend MECC. As of June 30, 2017, a total of \$100,475 in scholarships had been awarded to students, including \$11,800 for 2017–2018 awards. In addition to those funds, the Buccaneer Scholarship Committee had raised an additional \$11,125 in unrestricted scholarship funds and had received gifts for nine endowed scholarships, valued at \$410,725 by June 30, 2017.

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

The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the following people, organizations, and businesses who have contributed to the Buccaneer Scholarship family of funds since its inception. Those who have given from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 **are noted in bold.**

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## MECC FOUNDATION SCHOLAR

**“My goal** is to become a geriatric RN in a long-term care facility. Without scholarships, I would not be able to pay tuition, books, gas, transportation. It has really helped me. You don’t know how you have touched some of us at MECC. Without your help, I would not have been able to continue the program. Your donation has helped us understand the importance of paying it forward and helping others in their time of need.”

—MECC Student *Belinda Scott*  
*Pennington Gap*



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## Mountain Empire Community College

3441 Mountain Empire Road  
Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219

Phone 276.523.2400, Fax 276.523.8297  
[www.mecc.edu](http://www.mecc.edu)



## Mountain Empire Community College Foundation

3441 Mountain Empire Road  
Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219

Phone 276.523.7466, Fax 276.523.7485  
[www.meccfoundation.org](http://www.meccfoundation.org)

Mountain Empire Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award the associate degree. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404.679.4500 for questions about the accreditation of Mountain Empire Community College. Normal inquiries about the institution, such as admission requirements, financial aid, educational programs, etc., should be addressed directly to the institution and not to the Commission's office. Degree programs are approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, and are also approved for listing in the U.S. Office of Education directories for participation in various federally-sponsored programs of student aid and educational assistance. The College is authorized by the Veterans Administration to certify students to receive veterans' benefits and is approved by the Department of Health and Human Services for students who receive Social Security and Vocational Rehabilitation benefits. The Respiratory Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care. The Nursing program is approved by the Virginia State Board of Nursing and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850, Atlanta, GA 30326). The Practical Nursing and Nursing Assistant programs are approved by the Virginia State Board of Nursing. The Emergency Medical Services Technology program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The Phlebotomy program is approved by the National Phlebotomy Association. The Computer Aided Drafting & Design Technology, Technical Studies/Welding, Computer Manufacturing Technology/Electromechanical Technology, and Computer Manufacturing Technology/Industrial Electronics are accredited by the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE).

Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) is an open entry institution. Its mission is to provide quality higher education and workforce training programs and services that are financially and geographically accessible and meet individual, business, and community needs. The following pathways exist: Allied Health, Arts & Music, Business, College Transfer, Construction, Education, Engineering, Environmental, Health Sciences, Manufacturing, Public Safety, and Technology.

MECC is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and education opportunity. No person shall be discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices, or access to and participation in, programs, services, and activities with regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law.

Harassment of an individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission has no place in a learning or work environment and is prohibited. Sexual violence has no place in a learning or work environment. Further, MECC shall work to eliminate violence in all its forms. Physical contact by designated system, college, and university staff members may be appropriate if necessary to avoid physical harm to persons or property.

Lack of English skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation. In order to eliminate barriers, we take appropriate measures to assess each student's ability to participate and benefit through placement testing and counseling. Based on the assessment and counseling, students are then provided with campus services or a referral to community services to be better prepared for successful participation.

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