MCC Board Elects New Officers, Approves Long-Range Plans

(Bradenton, Aug. 15, 2007) – In its annual organizational meeting held Aug. 15, the Manatee Community College (MCC) District Board of Trustees elected Venice resident Steve Harner the board chair and former U.S. Rep. Dan Miller of Bradenton the vice chair. Both were appointed to the board by former Gov. Jeb Bush in July 2005.

Along with wife Janis Payne, Harner owns and operates the Crow’s Nest Marina Restaurant. Harner also serves on The Foundation for MCC board and was its president from 2002 to 2004. Other boards on which Harner has served include the Untied Way and The Venice Foundation. The recipient of several community service awards, he was inducted into the Sarasota County Video Archives Hall of Fame in 2003.

Miller, U.S. representative from the 13th District, left the U.S. Congress in 2002 after serving 10 years, a self-imposed term limit. A successful business entrepreneur and teacher, he was a resident fellow at Harvard University in 2003. He served as a trustee for Manatee Memorial Hospital for four years.

Trustees approved a 2007-10 Strategic Plan presented by Dr. Thomas Cleary, vice president of planning and institutional effectiveness. The Strategic Plan identifies 12 issues and four strategic priorities and emphasizes student success and student retention.

12 Strategic Issues 2007-2010
- Competition (with public and private colleges)
- Inflation (housing, utilities, insurance, books, gas)
- Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding (state funding expected to drop)
- Distance learning
- Critical job shortages
- Excess hours legislation (proposed legislation would increase tuition for students taking more than 72 credit hours)
- Funding (unfunded enrollment growth)
- Student retention
- Advising
- Demographics (number of high school graduates in area expected to rise next year but to decline for the next four years)
- Program mix (77 percent of MCC students in advanced and professional programs)
- Technology. (MCC considering expanding distance learning program to offer online degrees).

4 Strategic Priorities 2007-2010
- Student learning and development: Provide excellence in education and support services to promote student success
- Technology and communication: Use technology to promote student success, faculty and staff development and operations excellence
- Finances, fundraising and facilities: Maximize and manage fiscal and capital resources
- Human resources: Recruit, develop and retain an exemplary faculty and staff to preserve MCC’s reputation for educational excellence

A five-year Capital Improvement Program request was approved by trustees to pave the way for seeking state PECO funding for renovations, remodeling and new construction totaling almost $50 million from 2009-2013.
A projected $16.8 million will be requested for new construction including a science and nursing classroom/laboratory at MCC Venice. The estimated $8.9 million project is anticipated to begin, if funding is available, in 2010.

Another new construction project included in the $16.8 million request is for a classroom/laboratory building that will be the second building at MCC Lakewood Ranch. The Legislature has approved $920,000 for planning, and a request is pending for a donation of five acres from Schroeder-Manatee Ranch, which donated the original five acres of land for the existing Center for Information and Technology.

Proposed remodeling projects expected to cost $18 million include the Library at MCC Bradenton where remodeling is scheduled to begin in the 2008-09 fiscal year. The Gym and Technology buildings at MCC Bradenton and the Library and Student Services buildings at MCC Venice are slated for remodeling later in the five-year schedule.

MCC’s plan foresees the need for $14.4 million for renovations to infrastructure, building and site upgrades that include replacing roofs, air-conditioning system upgrades and storm water drainage systems at MCC Bradenton and MCC Venice.

The expected impact of state revenue shortfalls on the community college system was reported by MCC President Dr. Sarah H. Pappas from a recent meeting of the community college system’s Council of Presidents with Florida Senate staff members and Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottkamp.

Kottkamp acknowledged that community colleges, which receive funding from the state based on the previous year’s enrollment, experience a “double whammy” when state funding is cut.

Although MCC’s above-average enrollment growth will somewhat ease the impact of immediate anticipated cuts, long-term unfunded growth cannot be sustained, Pappas said.

Gov. Charlie Crist is expected to order cuts of 4 to 10 percent in state agencies’ budgets. Although community colleges are not considered state agencies, a significant portion of colleges’ funds is from state revenues. A three-week special legislative session, to begin Sept. 18, is expected to provide more definitive answers about what cuts will be required.

Results of recent student surveys, reported by President Pappas, reflect that student satisfaction with the MCC experience is at an all-time high point.

In the 2007 survey, graduating students rated MCC above 90 percent in 18 of 21 categories, and 97.2 percent of respondents said they would recommend MCC to others.

The Noel-Levitz survey compared MCC students’ satisfaction ratings with national results and showed that MCC consistently rates above the national average. The highest satisfaction rating for MCC students was in a component that stated that they are “able to experience intellectual growth here.”

The Foundation for MCC Inc., the College’s private fundraising arm, 10-month report for the period ending July 31 was presented by Peg Lowery, Foundation executive director. The report included a total endowment portfolio of $45.8 million; a new endowment established by former MCC Board of Trustees Chair Francis “Rip” DuPont and his wife, Linda; and an all-time participation record by MCC employees.

A total endowment portfolio of $45.8 million is still shy of the goal of $50 million by fiscal year end of September. The $50 million goal was established in recognition of the college’s 50th anniversary.

One of several endowments thus far includes a $50,000 equipment fund endowed by former Board of Trustees Chair Francis I. “Rip” duPont and his wife, Linda. A state matching fund program will increase the duPonks’ gift to $83,000.
An all-time record was set in the Foundation’s employee fundraising campaign this year. Seventy-nine percent of MCC employees contributed $53,501, compared to 6 percent of employees who participated six years ago.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held Sept. 19 at MCC Lakewood Ranch.