

ACM Family,

Thank you for your continued dedication throughout the semester. Remember to take a moment to breathe and enjoy the changing of the leaves.

Faculty/Staff Focus

We're surrounded by dedicated colleagues who go above and beyond to support ACM and our students every day. I invite you to nominate a faculty or staff member who deserves recognition for their outstanding contributions. Please keep your nomination to three sentences or fewer and email it directly to me.

Bedford County Chamber of Commerce 2026 Award Celebration

It was an honor to attend the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce Award Celebration last night. I was grateful to spend the evening with many ACM colleagues and numerous education, business, and community partners.



Congratulations to Landon Defibaugh for Recognition from the Bedford Chamber

Please take a moment to congratulate Landon Defibaugh, who has been selected as Volunteer of the Year by the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce.



Dragons on the Lake Fundraiser

A special thanks to Renee Douthitt and the 21 ACM faculty/staff who participated in the YMCA Dragon Boat Race Fundraiser. The ACM Odyssey Team had a great time of fellowship and memories (with only a few sore muscles).



Annual Fall Employee Engagement & Satisfaction Survey

The annual faculty/staff survey has become an important way for us to listen, learn, and act on your feedback. The survey will remain open through midnight, Friday, October 2, 2026, and can be completed anywhere you have internet access:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACM_EmployeeSurvey_2026

Enrollment

Fall 2026:

Total students: Up 4.5% over Fall 2025

FTE: Up .6% over Fall 2025

Board of Trustees Meeting Notes from September 21, 2026

- Continuing Education & Workforce Development Renovation: Architect Dan McDougal shared that the new design features flexible classrooms and enhanced natural lighting.
- Welding Fume Extractor Project: The Board accepted a \$310,750 bid from R.H. Lapp for the welding portion to ensure Rural Maryland Council funds are fully utilized by December 31.
- Food Auxiliary Fund Support: Operating funds of \$48,556 were approved for transfer to cover this year's Food Service Auxiliary deficit.
- Sustainability Fee Fund Transfers: FY26 net sustainability fee revenues were approved for transfer to the Plant Fund, specifically \$203,145.02 for Cumberland campus projects (chiller/RV AC, elevator modernization, roof restoration, and workforce building renovations) and \$5,831.96 for Bedford campus projects.
- Updated Residency Policy: In line with new state legislation signed by Governor Moore, spouses and children of first responders who died in the line of duty now qualify for in-state tuition benefits. The policy also received structural cleanups and administrative updates.
- Flexible Bereavement Leave: Based on employee feedback, bereavement leave can now be taken on a non-consecutive (intermittent) basis, giving staff greater flexibility to handle estate and family responsibilities over time.
- Performance Accountability Report: The annual Maryland State Performance Accountability Report was officially approved by the Board.
- NEW Associate of Science in Multidisciplinary AI: The Board approved this exciting new degree to prepare students with foundational, ethical, and career-ready AI skills for our rapidly growing workforce.

League for Innovation Excellence Awards

Stay tuned for information about the nomination process for the League for Innovation Excellence Awards.

FY2028 State of Maryland Budget

As we prepare for the FY28 budget, I wanted to provide the campus community with updates on the State of Maryland's FY28 budget. Earlier this month, the State shared that they anticipate a deficit of about \$3 billion, with wider gaps projected in the coming years. Two dozen Cabinet-level agencies were instructed to prepare budgets with up to a 10% reduction. This fiscal pressure will likely extend to the County level, with increased costs being shifted from the State to the County. I have had conversations with the Maryland Secretary of Budget and Management, Jake Weissmann, who has shared that the next five years will be extraordinarily difficult with tough decisions at every level. To ensure continued transparency and open communication, I will keep the ACM community updated throughout the legislative session on matters related to ACM and the budget.

A Reader Commentary

The following link is to a September 2026 Reader Commentary, submitted to the Cumberland Times News by ACM President David Jones and FSU President Shadow Robinson.

[Reader Commentary](#)

Grant update

Allegany College of Maryland has been awarded a \$200,000 Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Planning Grant to support the creation of a regional CDFI serving Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties. The initiative will focus on expanding access to financial resources and investment opportunities that strengthen businesses, support community development, and encourage long-term economic growth throughout Western Maryland.

Campaign Update

Last week, we publicly launched a comprehensive five-year campaign, Inspire Hope. Empower Tomorrow., with the goal of raising \$65 million to advance opportunities for students, strengthen our campuses, and invest in the future of the communities we serve. The campaign encompasses both the ACM Foundation and the Bedford County Regional Education Foundation.

We hope you will join us in supporting the future of ACM. [Learn more about the campaign.](#)

A Gift for You

As a gift to the ACM family, a free ACM-branded shirt will be provided to all faculty and staff. They will be available for pickup at the campus store starting October 1, 2026. Please note that this gift is provided by a donor with private funding, with no College funding utilized. Thank you for all you do to support our students (and promote ACM). Pre order a shirt here: [Free T-Shirt Request for ACM Employees](#)



SAVE THE DATE:

- a. Campus Visit by Congresswoman Delaney
Wednesday, October 7th (time TBD)
- b. Sophie Powell Pantry Dedication
Thursday, October 22nd at 3 pm (Pantry)
- c. State of the College: Empowering Our Future
Friday, October 23rd at 1 pm (Zimmer Theatre)

Upcoming Events

- Tues, October 14, Tri-State College Night, Gymnasium, 6 p.m.
- Mon, October 19, Board of Trustees meeting, Welcome Center, 4 p.m.
- Fri, October 23, State of the College, Zimmer Theater, 1 p.m.
- Tues, October 27, PTK Induction Ceremony, Theater, 6:30 p.m.
- Tues, November 10, Cumberland Campus Open House
- Sat, November 14, Bedford Campus Open House, Bedford Campus
- Mon, November 16, Board of Trustees meeting, Welcome Center 4 p.m.

- Thurs/Fri, November 26 & 27, Thanksgiving Break, college closed
- Mon, December 7, Board of Trustees meeting, Welcome Center, 4 p.m.
- Thurs, December 10, All college staff meeting, Theater, 9 a.m. Holiday reception, 12 p.m.
- Fri, December 11, Commencement, Gymnasium, 7 p.m.

Be My Guest

Please join me for an informal conversation over a cup of coffee, tea, or water. Whether you have a question, would like to share an idea, discuss a concern, or simply stop by to say hello, I look forward to connecting with you.

Dates

- September 25
- October 9
- October 23

Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: President's Office

On A Personal Note:

October has always been one of my favorite months, and I find myself energized by the crisp air and the sense of renewal it brings to campus. I hope you'll take a moment to step outside and recommit to the goals that matter most to you.

With ACM Pride,
David