

Dear colleagues,

Prior to our All College Assembly tomorrow, I want to share a commentary that I submitted to our local media outlets today. I believe it sets the tone for what our college is about — community and connection. I wholeheartedly believe that there's no campus more committed to community and its students than ACM.

The commentary also shares five ways we've tied our mission to actions. None of the actions referenced are possible without our stellar faculty and staff. Thank you for the many ways you make these actions and countless others possible.

With gratitude,
Dr. B

***For the Good of Others: ACM Begins its 63rd Academic Year**

Later this month I'll have the privilege of welcoming new and returning students to Allegany College of Maryland. It will be the last time I greet students at the start of the semester, given my January 2025 retirement. In their faces, I'll see what I always see: hope. Hope for better lives. Hope for a fresh start. Hope for communities near and far.

Our community gave us our start. In 1961, the Allegany County Board of Education and our County Commissioners jointly formed Allegany Community College, our name of yesteryear. Because of our community's overwhelming response to affordable education and a visionary president, Dr. Robert S. Zimmer, we outgrew our starter home in the George Washington Carver High School downtown. It was our community that made it possible to construct our campus on Willowbrook Road.

Our young college believed then, as we do now, that we're all in this together for the benefit of one another. I hope you've felt that sense of community and connection if you've graced our campus. In my experience, there is no campus more committed to its community and its students than ACM.

That commitment — in challenging or prosperous times — enables us to do more with less for the good of others. This approach will no doubt continue with my successor who will be chosen this fall. Like me, they'll be guided by our board of trustees and our faculty and staff through a true shared governance process. My successor will take pride, as I do, in how ACM connects its mission to action. Five of these "actions" include the following:

- More individuals took online and in-person classes this summer compared to last summer. We saw a 6.4% increase in what's known as FTE. FTE or Full-time Equivalent translates our full-time and part-time headcount into a single number, so we can compare apples to apples each semester. For us, an increase in FTE shows a willingness of students to invest in higher education.

- Continuing Education and Workforce Development enrollment increased by more than 10% since the last fiscal year. This means that we're meeting their needs as people choose from an array of short-term workforce training programs, professional development opportunities, and lifelong learning classes.
- We're predicting strong enrollment numbers this fall and continued growth over fall 2023 enrollment data. This potential growth means that more students will attend classes online, in person, or a combination of both. We see this increase as students and their families recognize the promise and the payoff of a college education.
- Our community service and civic engagement programs reached new heights. We estimate that more than 2,000 faculty, staff, and students contributed roughly 20,000 community service hours at 449 community engagement events. Although we're continuing to tally service hours, that's a 7% increase over the previous year.
- We've added new credit and workforce programs and industry certifications. Not only do these degrees, certificates, and certifications like the new transfer degree and certificate in engineering – automated manufacturing technology offer more opportunities for students, they support our community's growth and the demand for skilled workers. All of this leads me back to the debt of gratitude Allegany College of Maryland has for our community. We extend our appreciation to our vibrant community of employees and retirees, current students, alumni, donors, grantors, and business and agency partners that makes ACM possible. We thank our 22,886 graduates who made ACM their college of choice, be it two or 63 years ago like Margaret Wigfield Pennington and the late Mary Louise Jones, Class of 1963. You set us apart from other institutions. In this academic year and in countless more, we'll continue to act with gratitude for you and for the good of our community.

Dr. Cynthia S. Bambara
President
Allegany College of Maryland