

The Triple Value of ACM: Transforming Students, Society, and Taxpayer Investment

A commentary by Allegany College of Maryland President David R. Jones

As president of Allegany College of Maryland and an Orioles fan, I am passionate about higher education and baseball alike. In baseball, it is rare to see a triple play—a play that combines skill, timing, and teamwork to create extraordinary value on the field.

At Allegany College of Maryland, we deliver our own version of a triple play—providing exceptional value simultaneously to students, society, and taxpayers.

A recent economic impact study by [Lightcast](#) confirms this assertion, what many have long understood: ACM is a vital investment that pays dividends across our community. With an annual economic impact of \$95.8 million, our college supports one out of every 39 jobs in our service area.

Value to Students: A Life-Changing Investment

The first element in our triple play directly benefits students. Those who invest in an ACM education contribute \$30.1 million in tuition, books, supplies, and foregone earnings. In return, they gain \$103.0 million in increased lifetime earnings—\$3.40 for every dollar invested, with an annual return rate of 19.6%. This substantially outperforms the average S&P 500 return of 10.1% over the last 30 years.

Beyond financial returns, our students benefit from career-focused programs developed in response to employer needs, personalized instruction with experienced faculty, hands-on training with state-of-the-art equipment, and industry certifications that provide immediate career advantages. Whether choosing transfer, career-ready, or workforce pathways, Allegany College of Maryland provides the fastest, most affordable route to career success in our region.

Value to Society: Building Community Prosperity

The second element benefits society broadly. Maryland invested \$65.8 million in ACM and will receive an estimated \$182.7 million in added state revenue over students' working lives, plus \$5.4 million in social savings—a return of \$2.90 for every dollar invested.

This impact reaches throughout our community. Our operations generate \$28 million in economic impact supporting 581 local jobs, our graduates contribute \$64.1 million in added income supporting 888 jobs, and students who relocate to or remain in our area add \$2.8 million to the local economy annually. Additionally, our faculty, staff, and students donated nearly 20,000 community service hours last year.

Education correlates with positive lifestyle changes that generate these savings through improved health, reduced judicial activity, and decreased need for public assistance. The social benefits of ACM equal a present value of \$188.1 million. This includes \$117.2 million in added student income, \$42.4 million in added business income, \$23.2 million in added income from college activities, and \$5.4 million in social savings.

Value to Taxpayers: Public Investment That Pays Dividends

The third element provides direct value to taxpayers. Total taxpayer benefits amount to \$18.0 million, the present value sum of the added tax revenue and public sector savings.

ACM creates a continuous cycle of economic returns. We partner with local industry to strategically align tax dollars with workforce needs and ensure that public investment is both efficient and productive.

Our "triple play" of value stems from our commitment to responsive workforce development and business support. Continuing Education and Workforce Development enrollment increased by more than 10% since last year. Strategic partnerships with local businesses align training directly with industry requirements, while new programs support business attraction and expansion throughout our region.

ACM serves as a critical partner for businesses by providing a skilled talent pipeline, connecting employers with qualified graduates, and developing specialized training that supports business competitiveness. Our total economic impact equals approximately 2.0% of the total gross regional product.

Looking Forward with Gratitude

Allegany College of Maryland's "triple play" of value creates a solid foundation for sustainable regional prosperity now and for generations to come.

When I think about what makes ACM unique, I believe that it's our students and their ability to dream as big as the mountains that surround us. Providing students of all ages with education, support, resources, and encouragement makes our beloved institution a standout investment.

As our students inspire us, our gratitude extends to those beyond our college. We appreciate our federal, state, and county governments who prioritize our institution; the many schools, healthcare providers, businesses, nonprofits, and agency partners who mentor our student interns and nurse externs; businesses and organizations who offer volunteer opportunities, hire our graduates, and collaborate with us; and the thousands of alumni, community groups, foundations, and individuals who support and recognize our regional impact.

If you have questions about our college or would like to discuss how ACM can further support our region's economic development, please contact my office at 301-784-5272.