

**MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Investment Grant Proposal**  
**July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005**

Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) is very grateful for the opportunity to participate in Achieving the Dream (AtD), and to receive a \$50,000 grant to support AtD planning. The \$50,000 grant will support the “Schedule for Institutional Change” on pages 6-8. The college expects to adjust this plan on an as-needed basis as the Core Team, Data Team, College Council, Strategy Team(s), and local community become aware of additional opportunities and challenges in meeting the needs of low-income students.

**PLAN FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**

MECC will be focusing its attention on development in three areas that will position it to take successful advantage of continued AtD support. They are: Strengthening Institutional and Community Commitment to Change; Creating a Culture of Measurement; and Strengthening Institutional Commitment to Student Success. The activities detailed in the Schedule for Institutional Change will assist MECC in making progress in these three areas.

**Area 1: Strengthening Institutional and Community Commitment to Change**

In the fall of 2004, MECC will begin implementing its newly-adopted strategic plan and the Virginia Community College System’s strategic plan, called “Dateline 2009”. Both strategic plans contain goals and accountability measures for student success. The activities to be funded by the AtD investment grant will contribute directly to the accomplishment of the goals of both strategic plans and will focus the college’s efforts to better serve low-income students.

During the spring of 2004, MECC’s President, his staff, and the Strategic Planning Teams aligned the College’s strategic plan with Dateline 2009. During the summer of 2004, the Core Team is aligning AtD activities with the College’s strategic plan and Dateline 2009. In

August 2004, the three aligned plans and the organization of AtD activities will be presented to the entire college. MECC will use the AtD investment grant to support data collection, professional development, consultants, and travel needed to prepare for the institutional changes that will benefit low-income students.

Activities designed to strengthen institutional and community commitment to change will be led by the President, the President's staff, and administrators, faculty and staff drawn from across the college who will serve on the Core Team, Data Team, and Strategy Team(s). Community involvement will be secured through advisory committees, focus groups, and a task force studying the integration of college/community services. Updates on AtD progress will be discussed at College Council and faculty meetings throughout the year. As the College follows the Schedule for Institutional Change, it will be prepared to submit the application to the Lumina Foundation in May 2005 for funds to implement its plan for improvements.

## **Area 2: Creating a Culture of Measurement**

Over the coming year, MECC will begin implementing three strategic goals that will help the institution develop a culture of measurement. Progress toward these goals will improve the College's effectiveness in carrying out its mission and in meeting the accountability standards of governmental, accrediting, and funding bodies. Assistance from AtD in improving processes for gathering, de-aggregating, and analyzing data will help the College focus attention on the needs of low income students, but also help it do a better job of serving all students.

The measures and expected outcomes for the three strategic goals to create a culture of measurement are included in columns 1-3 in Chart 1 that follows. The fourth column describes how AtD will be contributing to the accomplishment of these strategic goals.

**Chart 1: Strategic Goals for Creating a Culture of Measurement and Data Analysis**

<b>Strategic Goal</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Contributing Work to be Accomplished through AtD Investment Grant</b>
1. Implement a comprehensive assessment and evaluation system for all programs and services.	The annual plan of each functional unit of the college will include measurable goals.	MECC will be an effective and efficient institution in the fulfillment of its mission. (Implement measurable goals with 2005-2006 annual plans.)	Professional development for college personnel on how to use data for program assessment; organization of focus groups to collect data from students and community partners that would be helpful in program/service evaluation.
2. Provide ongoing assessment of student program and service needs and systematic and regular measurement of student learning and student success.	Accountability measures will be identified (retention rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, certifications, job placement, etc.); baseline data and benchmarks/standards will be established.	MECC will have a ‘culture of measurement’ in determining program and service needs and assessing student learning and success. (Implement accountability measures by end of fall 2004 semester.)	AtD assistance in gathering/reporting data by age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level; AtD assistance in developing research agenda related to student persistence, learning, and attainment.
3. Incorporate external requirements as standards of success.	Measures will be drawn from standards specified by SACS, SCHEV, VCCS, Perkins, and other measures as appropriate.	MECC will become accountable to governmental, accrediting, and funding bodies. (Identify applicable standards by end of fall semester 2004.)	AtD will provide assistance with conducting meetings to discuss standards that will be measured departmentally and institution-wide.

**Area 3: Strengthening Institutional Commitment to Student Success**

The College’s strategic plan includes four goals to strengthen institutional commitment to student success. The measures and expected outcomes for the four goals are included in columns

1-3 in Chart 2 below. The fourth column describes how the contributing work to be accomplished through AtD will assist with the accomplishment of these strategic goals.

**Chart 2. Strategic Goals for Strengthening Institutional Commitment to Student Success**

<b>Strategic Goal</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Contributing Work to be Accomplished through AtD Investment Grant</b>
1. Provide quality programs that are responsive to the needs of the service region and produce graduates who are successful in the workplace and/or at senior institutions to which they transfer.	Each associate degree program plan will measure student outcomes against benchmarks/standards and identify strategies for improvement.	MECC will increase its student retention rates, graduation rate, transfer rate, and student and employer satisfaction rates. (Implement measures with 2005-2006 annual plans; achieve expected outcomes by 2008-2009)	AtD will provide faculty development in addressing student outcomes and plans for improvement.
2. Provide quality student services that are responsive to the needs of current and prospective students	Conduct an in-house survey of students.	90% of students will give satisfactory rates of student services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, library resources, testing, financial aid, food services, books and supplies, extracurricular activities, and childcare). (Develop survey in 2004-2005, implement in 2005-2006, achieve expected outcomes by 2008-2009)	AtD will permit the assessment of needs of prospective students currently not served
3. Develop a coordinated, frequently evaluated student advising system that ensures quality services are available which complement the new online system.	Revised Advising System will include intervention measures for at-risk students.	Student retention rates will increase for at-risk student groups, leading to increased graduation rates. (Develop plan in 2004-2005, achieve expected outcomes by 2008-2009)	AtD will assist MECC in identifying intervention measures for at-risk students and in developing intervention plan.

<b>Strategic Goals (continued)</b>	<b>Measures (continued)</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes (continued)</b>	<b>Contributing Work to be Accomplished through AtD Investment Grant (continued)</b>
4. Create career planning and job placement services that will become a regional model for Southwest Virginia.	Logs of student use of online and onsite resources; surveys of students and employers.	Related Title III measures will be achieved; i.e., increased use by students and employers of resources. (Achieve expected outcomes by 2007-2008)	AtD will provide opportunities to identify additional “best practices” in career planning and job placement.

### **Budget**

The attached plan and budget for the investment grant will aid MECC in its commitment to achieve its vision of helping all students attain their educational goals. During the process of implementation of this project, the college will engage in an intensive identification and self-assessment of barriers to and strategies for student success. MECC looks forward to critically evaluating data about its policies, programs, and student outcomes and to using the data that is gathered to plan for the systemic and lasting changes that the College plans to begin implementing in the summer of 2005.

**MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Schedule for Institutional Change**

	<b>June 2004</b>	<b>July 2004</b>	<b>August-September 2004</b>
<b>CORE TEAM</b> (assisted by Coach)	<p><b>Attend Summer Institute</b></p> <p>Initial meeting with coach, additional phone conference with coach/core team (Suarez)</p> <p>Develop preliminary work plan for activities when return to MECC campus (core team)</p>	<p><b>Expand team, conduct preliminary planning</b></p> <p>Expand the Core Team to include members of Student Success Committee (Winebarger – June 23 completion)</p> <p>Select members for the Data Team (Fisher – June 23 completion)</p> <p>Plan for “roll out” of AtD at College in-service August 17 (Suarez and staff – July 23 completion)</p> <p>Determine institutional priorities/integration of AtD in strategic plan; develop incremental annual goals for highest priorities (Suarez and staff – July 23 completion)</p> <p>Develop preliminary work plan and budget for 2004-2005 activities; send preliminary application to coach to review; approval of work plan and budget by core team (Stanley – July 12 completion)</p> <p>Submit investment grant application (Stanley – July 15)</p> <p>Determine processes for grant administration from Foundation (President’s staff – late July, early August)</p>	<p><b>Announce, promote AtD commitments and work plan at MECC</b></p> <p>“Roll out” AtD during second day of Fall in-service; discuss measures of effectiveness identified in strategic plan (President’s Staff/Coach - August 17)</p> <p>Identify professional development needed to support AtD planning and best ways to offer this training (and work to identify consultants) (President’s Staff/Coach - August 30)</p> <p>Review research proposal from Data Team for securing student, faculty, staff, and community input (President’s Staff/Coach - August 30)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine how to lead/manage focus groups</li> <li>- Determine which focus groups are needed</li> <li>- Determine if surveys are needed</li> <li>- Review literature/seek information about colleges/practices to benchmark for high success rates in serving low-income students</li> <li>- Finalize policies for awarding stipends to employees assigned to special AtD planning functions</li> </ul>
<b>IR/IE Office</b> (assisted by JBL Assoc.)		<b>Examine college data systems for ways to accommodate AtD data needs (begin working with VCCS to secure database needed for project)</b>	Begin providing 2002 and 2003 cohort data to JBL Associates
<b>DATA TEAM</b> (assisted by Data Facilitator)		Participate in the regional training on data analysis and interpretation in Raleigh, NC (Fisher, Lee – July 30)	<p>Identify stakeholders (internal and external) as part of research design (Fisher and Data Team – August 16)</p> <p>Identify a process to review existing policies as part of research design (Fisher and Data Team – August 16)</p> <p><b>Begin data work with help from Data Facilitator</b></p>
<b>Other Teams/ Work Groups</b>		Develop consensus on how low- income community groups will be surveyed/needs assessed, involved in planning – expand mission of Volunteerism Development Task Force? (President’s staff)	
<b>College Council</b>			Role of College Council in AtD will be reviewed at August/ Sept. meeting; updates monthly

	<b>October-November 2004</b>	<b>December 2004</b>	<b>January – February 2005</b>
<b>CORE TEAM</b> (assisted by Coach)	Continue analysis and planning	Finalize plans for January In-service presentation(s) and professional development activities	<p><b><i>Announce AtD findings at In-service; describe process for determining five priorities (Suarez &amp; Core Team - January 4-5)</i></b></p> <p>Conduct AtD professional development activities planned during fall (Introduction to Evidence Based Program Evaluation?) (January 4-5)</p> <p>Continue to collect input from inside and outside the institution (January – February)</p> <p>Attend Strategy Institute (January)</p> <p><b><i>Convene Retreat for Core Team, Data Team, College Council after Strategy Institute to determine up to five priorities to be addressed through AtD and to determine strategies to be further explored; charter Strategy Team(s) (President’s Staff – late Jan/early February)</i></b></p> <p>Strategy Teams begin setting up appointments to visit other colleges/gather strategy information, or invite consultants to campus to plan strategies</p>
<b>IR/IE Office</b> (assisted by JBL Assoc.)			Submit Fall 2004 cohort data to JBL Associates
<b>DATA TEAM</b> (assisted by Data Facilitator)	Continue qualitative data analysis and interpretation	<b><i>Deliver draft report on quantitative data and institutional policies to Core Team (December 15)</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy teams begin exploring effective practice, attend Strategy Institute</i></b>
<b>Other Teams/Work Groups</b>	Continue assignments from Core Team	Continue assignments from Core Team	Continue assignments from Core Team
<b>College Council</b>	Provide monthly update on AtD	Provide monthly update on AtD	<p>Provide monthly update on AtD</p> <p>Begin incorporating AtD in annual planning</p>

	<b>March 2005</b>	<b>April 2005</b>	<b>May-June 2005</b>	<b>July 2005</b>
<b>CORE TEAM</b> (assisted by Coach)	Core team to receive recommendations from Strategy Teams (March 25 )  Incorporate AtD plans into annual planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes	Integrate Complete Lumina Implementation application (Stanley - April 25)  Incorporate AtD plans into annual planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes		Receive Implementation Grant  Begin overseeing implementation of action plan  Repeat the process to deepen the “culture of evidence” and address goals of AtD
<b>IR/IE Office</b>  (assisted by JBL Assoc.)	Help Data Team review Fall 2004 Cohort data			
<b>DATA TEAM</b> (assisted by Data Facilitator)	<i>Finalize and submit quantitative data analysis to Core Team</i>			
<b>Other Teams/Work Groups</b>	Division planning retreats will incorporate professional development on “evidence based” program evaluation  Continue assignments from Core Team	Continue assignments from Core Team	Continue assignments from Core Team	
<b>College Council</b>	Provide monthly update on AtD  Incorporate AtD plans into annual planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes	Provide monthly update on AtD  Incorporate AtD plans into annual planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes	Provide monthly update on AtD	

**PROPOSAL BUDGET**

**ACHIEVING THE DREAM: COMMUNITY COLLEGES COUNT**

**Round One Investment Grant: July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005**

**Name of Organization: Mountain Empire Community College**

BUDGET CATEGORIES		REQUESTED LUMINA FOUNDATION SUPPORT			TOTAL LUMINA FDN. SUPPORT	TOTAL NON-LUMINA FOUNDATION SUPPORT		TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET
		Year 1				In-Kind	Other Funds (MECC CASH)	
<b>1</b>	<b>PERSONNEL COSTS</b>							
	a. Stipends for College Personnel	\$6,000			\$6,000			\$6,000
	b. VCCS contract personnel to set-up database	\$2,000			\$2,000			\$2,000
	c. Temporary wage employees	\$10,800			\$10,900			\$10,900
	d. Fringe Benefits (7.65% FICA for temporary wage employees only)	\$826			\$826			\$826
	<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL</b>	<b>\$19,626</b>			<b>\$19,626</b>			<b>\$19,626</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>DIRECT COSTS</b>							
	a. Office Expenses (Itemize)	\$2,000			\$2,000			\$2,000
	b. Rental/Purchase (Itemize)	\$681			\$681			\$681
	c. Travel (Itemize)	\$18,693			\$18,693		\$600	\$20,293
	d. Meetings/Conferences	\$4,000			\$4,000			\$4,000
	e. Consultants	\$5,000			\$5,000		\$2,000	\$7,000
	<b>TOTAL DIRECT</b>	<b>\$30,374</b>			<b>\$30,374</b>			<b>\$32,974</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>PROJECTED INTEREST INCOME</b> (Grants that exceed \$500,000)							
<b>4</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>			<b>\$50,000</b>		\$2,600	<b>\$52,600</b>

**BUDGET NARRATIVE**

**1. Personnel Costs (\$19,626)**

Stipends for college personnel given special assignments to support AtD planning. Also includes wages and FICA for short-term and contract personnel to conduct focus groups, administer surveys, set-up database for Virginia AtD colleges, and provide clerical support.

**A. Stipends for College Personnel** **\$ 6,000**

Faculty and administrators will be assigned supplemental responsibilities for conducting literature reviews and gathering information on best practices at other colleges, summarizing findings and disseminating information to college employees.  
(Stipends amounts to be determined based on assignments)

**B. Contract personnel to establish database using VCCS Data** **\$ 2,000**

MECC and the four other AtD community colleges plan to contribute \$2,000 each toward a \$10,000 contract to set-up a database using VCCS data to be used by data committees at each college.

**C. Short-term hourly or contract research personnel** **\$10,800**

1. Temporary research personnel will conduct focus groups, administer surveys, convert data to useable formats, and manage data collection processes  
 $\$12 \text{ hourly wages} \times 675 \text{ hours} = \$8,100$
2. Temporary clerical support will be secured to prepare documents for AtD planning.  
 $\$9.00 \text{ hourly wages} \times 300 \text{ hours} = \$2,700$

**D. Fringe Benefits** **\$ 826**

FICA for hourly research and clerical personnel ( $\$8,100 + \$2,700 = \$10,800 \times 7.65\% = \$826$ )

**2. Direct Costs (\$30,374)**

**A. Office Expenses** **\$ 2,000**  
Supplies (\$500), printing (\$1,000), and copying (\$500)

**B. Rental/Purchase** **\$ 681**  
Publications

**C. Travel**

**\$18,693**

**1. Travel to July 28-30, 2004 Meeting for Data Team, Raleigh-Durham Airport - \$1,075**

2 persons X \$100 lodging per night X 3 nights = \$600

2 persons X \$45 per diem X 3 days = \$270

632 miles round trip to Raleigh X \$.325 per mile - \$205.40

**2. Travel to January 2004 Strategy Institute - \$6,867**

5 persons X \$125 lodging per night X 4 nights = \$2,500

5 persons X \$600 airline tickets = \$3,000

5 persons X \$45 per diem X 5 days = \$1,125

5 persons X \$20 ground transportation = \$100

Mileage to Tri-Cities Airport = 120 miles X \$.325 X 2 vehicles = \$78

Parking at Tri-Cities Airport - \$8 per day X 4 days X 2 vehicles = \$64

**3. Travel to Other Community Colleges to Benchmark Best Practices in increasing success of low income students – \$4,901**

5 persons X \$100 lodging per night X 2 nights = \$1,000

5 persons X \$600 airline tickets = \$3,000

5 persons X \$45 per diem X 3 days = \$675

5 persons X \$20 ground transportation = \$100

Mileage to Tri-Cities Airport = 120 miles X \$.325 X 2 vehicles = \$78

Parking at Tri-Cities Airport - \$8 per day X 3 days X 2 vehicles = \$48

**4. Travel In-state for Database Planning - \$886**

At least one in-state meeting (probably in Richmond) will be conducted with contract personnel to plan for the creation of a database using VCCS data

2 persons X \$100 per night X 2 nights = \$400

2 persons X \$42 per diem X 3 days = \$252

Mileage to Richmond; 720 miles X \$.325 per mile = \$234

**5. Consultant Travel - \$4,720**

Consultants will travel to the MECC campus to offer professional development to employees, or to consult on AtD strategies.

5 persons X \$75 lodging per night X 2 nights lodging = \$750

5 persons X \$600 airline tickets = \$3,000

5 persons X \$38 per diem X 3 days = \$570

5 persons X \$40 per day rental car ground transportation 2 days each = \$400

**MECC CASH CONTRIBUTION (not direct cost item to Lumina Foundation)**

Travel for Mark Snyder, MSA Consulting Group to present session on

Student Success at MECC Inservice, August 16, 2004  
Airline ticket, per diem, lodging, estimated at \$600

**6. Other Local Travel - \$244**

Mileage to collect data and conduct AtD planning meetings with community leaders and other potential funding partners

750 miles X .325 per mile X \$244

**D. Meetings/Conferences \$ 4,000**

Meals, refreshments, or other costs for conducting AtD meetings and retreat on or off campus.

**E. Consultants \$ 5,000**

To prepare the college for AtD, professional development opportunities will be planned for college staff throughout the year on topics which may include: best practices for increasing retention and success of low-income students, using data in program planning and evaluation,

10 days of consulting X \$500 per day = \$5,000

**MECC CASH CONTRIBUTION (not direct cost item to Lumina Grant)**

**Consulting fee**

Mark Snyder, MSA Consulting Group, to make presentation on Student Success at MECC Inservice, August 16, 2004; consulting fee of \$2,000

**3. GRAND TOTAL LUMINA FOUNDATION \$ 50,000**

**TOTAL MECC CASH SUPPORT \$ 2,600**