



**Program application for a Bachelors' of Applied Science in  
Respiratory Therapy**

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## **Part I: Rationale for Proposal**

The mission statement for Metropolitan Community College (MCC) is “Preparing Students, Serving Communities and Creating Opportunities.” The MCC proposal for a baccalaureate program for Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP’s) fully aligns with our District mission since there is a gap in the Kansas City community for training in respiratory therapy. MCC is committed to *preparing the future students who will serve the community* as healthcare professionals on the front line. The respiratory therapy program will *create opportunities* for the citizens in the Kansas City region by advancing education and creating a livable wage for participants. As respiratory therapy needs have increased with the spread of COVID, now more than ever, the community college mission of access and workforce training becomes necessary. The need for a baccalaureate program for RCP’s has grown significantly, both nationally and locally, and MCC is passionate about serving our community by creating this opportunity to prepare our students for a career in this field. In addition to the recommendation from the national respiratory care professional organizations for a requirement of a Bachelor of Science degree for credentialing, the recent COVID health pandemic has now moved the nation into a more urgent state for providing training in Respiratory Care. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the demand for respiratory therapists will grow 21% from 2018 to 2028. Additionally, the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) reports that healthcare is the top industry in the state and that the demand for qualified healthcare providers outpaces supply. The projected possibility of long-term, post-COVID respiratory illnesses has further increased the need. In addition to the demand for new professionals in this field, there will be large numbers of current Respiratory Care Practitioners who will need the additional education to meet the new baccalaureate degree requirements. This will create new demand for education and training in the respiratory care field. The Jobs eQ Occupation Report from the Spring of 2020 (Attachment A) documents the need for Respiratory Therapists. MCC has had many conversations with area K-12 partners who have expressed enthusiastic support for the program. An example of that support is provided in a letter from Dr. Jeremy Bonnesen, the principal and director of the Missouri Innovation Campus (MIC) program (Attachment B). The MIC serves thousands of Kansas City area high school and adult students in their mission of providing career based educational opportunities for students and will be an excellent partner for MCC in this endeavor. With a new class cohort allowance of 27 students, growing to 108 students in the program overall after four years, there will be a vibrant and continual applicant and graduate base for the program.

## **Part II: Evidence of feasibility in collaboration with other institutions**

There are no Missouri community colleges, state colleges, or Universities in the Kansas City area that currently offer a respiratory care baccalaureate degree. Furthermore, MCC has reached out to all area public higher education institutions, and has discovered that there are none who are even planning to offer such a degree. The only Missouri public university within the Kansas

City area is the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC). An acknowledgement communication from the UMKC Chancellor, Dr. Mauli Agrawal is provided (Attachment C) and states that no local collaborative programming is possible. It is for this reason that MCC is pursuing this opportunity alone.

### **Part III: Alignment with Blueprint for Higher Education Goals**

**Attainment.** MCC would be able to provide 27 additional seats for training in the state each year, building to a capacity of 108 students in the program by the fourth year. This will help reduce the shortfall of trained RCP's to the projected workforce need.

**Affordability:** MCC will offer the Respiratory Care Bachelor Degree at the current per hour tuition rate for the district, which is a fraction of the cost of attending a university. The cost per year in tuition and fees at UMKC is about \$20,200 whereas the cost of a year at MCC is about \$4,500. That is less than 1/4 of the cost of our nearest university! In addition, MCC offers many opportunities for financial aid and scholarships to students, making this a financially affordable opportunity for students.

**Quality:** Metropolitan Community College is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. MCC has a Health Sciences Institute which houses the Nursing Program, Allied Health, and Virtual Hospital, all of which have third party accreditation. The Respiratory Care program will work with the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) for the baccalaureate accreditation process. CoARC is a national leader on accreditation standards for Respiratory Care programs and annually reviews program information each year to determine ongoing compliance with their accreditation standards, policies and procedures. MCC will also create and utilize an advisory committee for the program which will consist of medical professionals and licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners to ensure the program is current and relevant to the actual workforce needs. MCC will make a commitment to hire high quality faculty to implement the program and will abide by CoARC standards for the program leadership. MCC is committed to hiring only highly trained personnel who meet the necessary qualifications. Below is a listing of the qualifications for the proposed positions:

*Standard 2.02/2.08:* The Program Director (PD) and the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) must have at least an earned Master's degree from an academic institution accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

*Standard 2.03/2.09:* The PD and DCE must

- \*hold a valid Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential and current state license.

- \*have a minimum of four years' experience as an RRT with at least two years in clinical respiratory care

- \*have a minimum of two years' experience teaching either as an appointed faculty member in a

CoARC accredited respiratory care program or as a clinical instructor/preceptor for students of such programs

\*complete the CoARC key personnel training program.

**Research and Innovation:** Respiratory care organizations locally and across the nation support the baccalaureate degree as the entry level minimum standard citing the respiratory therapist should be a mid-level provider able to function as a physician extender. Because of this, there is a strong demand for research to be an essential part of the Respiratory Therapist (RT) curriculum. The baccalaureate program will allow time and space for this to take place. MCC students will be provided the necessary time and practice for learning the essential skill of research in the field. The curriculum will be coordinated with educational experts and RCP's in the field to ensure appropriate and relevant training, and comply with the Higher Learning Commission and CoARC standards.

**Investment, Advocacy and Partnerships:** MCC is uniquely positioned to meet the workforce demands and offer this opportunity for students successfully. The proposed baccalaureate program at MCC will build upon existing relationships with area medical providers to provide clinical opportunities for students. Additionally, these rich relationships with our medical partners will provide MCC students with opportunities to attend professional seminars taught by Respiratory Therapists. Our medical partners can provide equipment and supplies to the program and will be important resources for faculty referrals to the program. Healthcare organizations continually ask community colleges to help develop a pipeline of skilled workers. MCC is ready to support this effort. There are many medical organizations who have expressed a willingness to support MCC in implementing the program. Letters from Truman Medical Center and Children's Mercy Hospital (Attachment D) demonstrate the energy and excitement of our local medical partners to support MCC efforts in this program.

#### **Part IV. Evidence of Institutional Capacity:**

**Academic Quality:** MCC has been a proven educational institution for delivering high quality training in the medical field for many years. At this time, there are already 20 certificate and degree programs offered through MCC. These programs require a high level of reporting and proven, demonstrated success outcomes. Almost all are required to have a secondary accreditation in addition to the regular Higher Learning Commission accreditation process. The RT baccalaureate degree would meet the same rigor as the other programs and would follow the practices, policies and procedures which have proven success in other MCC allied health programs. Additionally, the District would comply with all CoARC accreditation standards.

The RT program would be housed at the MCC Health Services Institute (HSI), which is the primary home for healthcare training programs for the District. The HSI was remodeled in 2010 and the labs provide state-of-the-art training facilities for allied health students. Within the HSI, there is an accredited Virtual Hospital. In addition to the Virtual Hospital, there are

other hands-on learning areas which create a simulated clinical environment where students use real clinical equipment and tools to practice patient care scenarios (Attachment E). MCC also has well established student support systems that accompany the instructional programs. These include financial aid support, enrollment assistance, dedicated allied health academic advising, resume development, HSI computer lab and printing use, tutoring, and extensive library and research access. The existing MCC partnerships with medical facilities in Kansas City provide excellent avenues to recruit and retain high level faculty who have expertise in Respiratory Care. The curriculum for the program will be developed in cooperation with CoARC standards, advisory councils, RT Faculty, and experts in the RT field and will align with required outcomes for the degree. The graduates of this program will be prepared to practice in areas of research, management, and clinical and outpatient education.

One unique aspect of the MCC proposal is that MCC has fostered a strong relationship with Raymond Hernandez, an RT instructor and Dean at one of the first community colleges successfully implement an RT Bachelor’s Degree (Skyline College). His expertise has proven invaluable in assisting the District with a realistic and detailed framework in planning for a successful RT program at MCC. He serves as the New Program Chair for community colleges in the Coalition for Baccalaureate and Graduate Respiratory Therapy Education, [www.cobgrte.org](http://www.cobgrte.org), and has been an active Respiratory Care Practitioner and instructor for many years. Mr. Hernandez will serve as an excellent resource for the District in the development of the program.

**Fiscal Stability:** The college is fiscally responsible and adheres to all requirements for audits and for demonstrating financial stability. The District is the oldest public institution of higher education in Kansas City, Missouri and was the first community college in the state. This long history demonstrates the stability of the district to persevere through various world events, local economic disruptions, enrollment variations, natural disasters, and most recently, a global pandemic. The District finances the majority of its operations through tuition and fees, the local property tax levy, state aid and federal programs. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, the District has recorded the portion of its revenue by amount and percentage from various sources as follows:

**Table 1.0: Funding Sources for Metropolitan Community College**

Source	Amount	Percent of Budget
Property Taxes	\$36,500,000	27.2%
State Revenue	\$30,800,000	23.0%
Tuition and Fees	\$24,000,000	17.9%
Federal Revenue	\$20,900,000	15.6%
Other	\$21,700,000	16.3%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$133,900,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1.0 highlights the balance among the district revenue sources and is another example of the fiscal stability of the organization. Recently, MCC was approved for a bond issuance in the amount of \$42,700,000. The bond was awarded to address the programmatic needs of the District and to enhance the existing infrastructure. Therefore, a portion of these funds can be allocated to assist the District in the development of the RT program.

The District is also just beginning a large campaign for student scholarships and student programs. Our community and alumni have long supported MCC students, and the District anticipates another solid showing from supporters in this next campaign cycle. MCC has, and continues to maintain, a balanced budget despite recent reductions in revenue sources. This demonstrates the District’s ongoing ability to maintain a healthy fiscal profile.

**Administrative Support:** As with all instructional programs at MCC, the organizational structure within the district provides a strong level of commitment needed for successful implementation and operation. MCC is fully committed to the RT program. Administration and staff support have been identified and will be put into place upon approval. The table below identifies those employees who will support and lead the program.

<b>Table 2.0: Identified Positions to Support the Program</b>
Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer for the MCC District
President, Penn Valley (host campus) – Health Sciences Institute
Vice President, Penn Valley
Dean of Instruction and Student Services, Penn Valley
Director of Allied Health
Allied Health Administrative Assistant
Director of Medical Services
Program Coordinator of Respiratory Care (proposed)
Respiratory Care Program Full-Time Faculty (proposed)
Respiratory Care Program Adjunct Faculty (proposed)
Lab Specialist (proposed)

**Budget:** The district has made a commitment to support the program if approved and has identified fiscal and other resources for implementation and operations. The proposed operational budget is identified in Table 3.0 and was developed in comparison with other Respiratory Care Program budgets across the nation along with MCC tuition and fee information.

**Table 3.0: Proposed Budget for Respiratory Care Program at Metropolitan Community College**

	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>
<b>REVENUE:</b>				
District Resident Fee	109,782	219,564	329,346	439,128
Program Lab Fee	10,800	21,600	32,400	43,200
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>120,582</b>	<b>241,164</b>	<b>361,746</b>	<b>482,328</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Full-Time Faculty	160,000	160,000	270,000	270,000
Part-Time Faculty	25,000	25,000	66,328	66,328
Part-time Staff	9,000	9,000	12,000	12,000
All Benefits	60,000	60,000	100,000	100,000
Supplies - Instructional	12,000	12,000	7,000	7,000
Equipment	52,000	52,000	15,000	15,000
Dues and Membership	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Travel and Conventions	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Mileage	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>482,328</b>	<b>\$482,328</b>
<b>Revenue less Expenses:</b>	<b>(209,418)</b>	<b>(88,836)</b>	<b>(120,582)</b>	<b>0</b>

The MCC RT program is projected to be self-sustaining by the fourth year of the program. The program revenue and expenses are reflected in the table above, accounting for an additional cohort of 27 students each year until year four, for an eventual total of 108 students in the program.