## Year in Review – Summer 2019

MCO Turns 20! Michigan Colleges Online (formerly known as the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative - MCCVLC) began a pilot project with 12 colleges offering a total of 47 courses on the website in the summer of 1999. [Read about the history of how the collaborative started here.](#)

MCO Goals

1. Provide students access to high-quality distance education courses through an effective interface for sharing courses and students among member institutions.
2. Support colleges' adoption of innovations in online teaching & learning with professional development opportunities, research, and technical services.
3. Provide structure for efficient sharing of high cost and low enrollment programs among colleges.
4. Facilitate the sharing of scarce resources through discounts on collaborative purchases of software/services utilized by member institutions.

The [Michigan Colleges Online (MCO)](#) provides an effective infrastructure for students to enroll in needed courses from other institutions, as they progress through their academic paths. Enrollment growth through the MCO continues to mirror national trends. The Instructional Technology Council (ITC) – an affiliated council of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) – reported in the [2019 ITC Annual National eLearning Report](#) an increase of 4.5% growth of enrollments in online courses comparing fall 2017 to fall 2018. MCO enrollments for the same period had an increase of 6.4%.

MCO Enrollment Trends
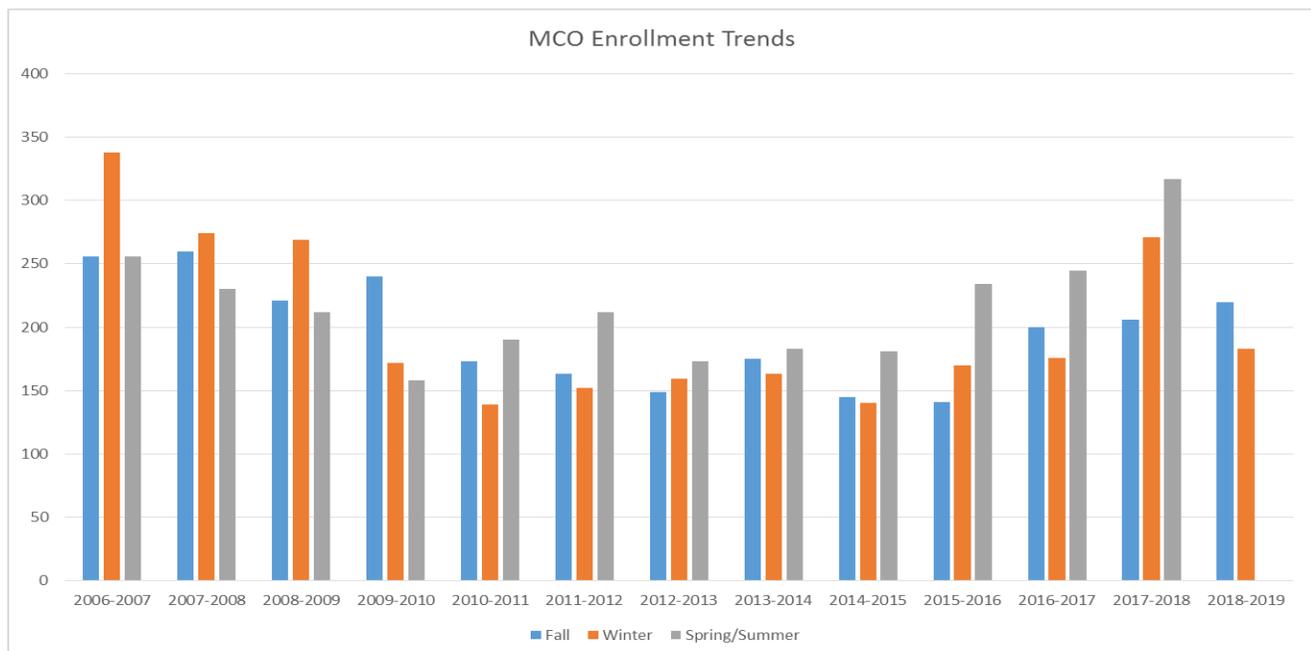
Marketing - Information about MCO services for students is the responsibility of each member institution. The following activities have been completed to assist colleges in their efforts to inform students of the opportunities provided by MCO.

- MCO has developed and shipped rack cards to each college for use in their advising centers.
- MCO presents webinars designed to help both faculty and advisors learn more about how they can utilize the MCO with their students.
- The MCO Representatives Advisory Council (comprised of the distance education administrators at each college) suggested using videos on college video screens across campuses to increase awareness. MCO has created marketing videos that are now available for use at member institutions. Colleges are using the videos on screens in and around advising centers, student commons areas and libraries.

MCO Collaborative Programs Initiative – The MCO infrastructure provides an opportunity for colleges to collaborate and offer high-cost, low-enrollment programs in a cost effective manner by sharing curriculum and students. Currently, seven community colleges (Bay, Grand Rapids, Kellogg, Lake Michigan, Lansing, Mid-Michigan and St. Clair) are part of the MiRIS Consortium that utilizes the MCO to run several programs. In July 2016, the MCCA became the fiscal agent for the MiRIS Consortium. MCO provides administrative and technical support. This past year, the following activities were accomplished:

- A MCO/MiRIS Registration Procedures Manual was developed to guide new college members as they begin enrolling new students in the collaborative programs.
- At the end of 2017-18, with the final auditing of the Collaborative Programs account, each college will realize a gain of $3,937 for the year. This was a net gain distributed to each college after all expenses were paid.
- Grand Valley State University completed their last cohort in the MRI program in August 2018 and officially departed from the consortium.
- St. Clair County Community College and Bay College officially started with students in the MRI program during summer 2018 semester.
- Updates were made to the Memorandum of Understanding that reflect the current financial process and also clarified procedures when a member leaves the consortium. Addendums for each program were also updated for the 2019-20 academic year.
- MRI Technologist Program – is the oldest program in the MiRIS Collaborative, starting the ninth cohort in May 2019.
  - The MRI program's job placement rate is 99%, 87% completion rate, and 81% first attempt board pass rate for the past five years.
  - The 2018-19 MRI (8th) Cohort had 27 students graduating this summer. Half of the students have jobs lined up or are already working.
  - The 2019-20 MRI (9th) Cohort began with 31 students on May 6, 2019.
  - The MRI program's job placement rate is 99%, 87% retention rate, and 83% first attempt board pass rate for the past five years.
  - The MRI Program hosted a site review by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) in March, 2018. The Program received a three-year continuation of accreditation award in November 2018.
  - The Collaborative Programs hired a new Clinical Coordinator for the MRI and CT programs. This position was required as a condition of the JRCERT program accreditation. Amanda Morgan started on June 1, 2019 and will be managing all of the clinical sites across the state and assisting students in those clinical settings for both the MRI and CT programs. Amanda was a former clinical instructor for the program.
  - Computed Tomography (CT) Technician is a certificate program of 30 credits, offered to Radiographers, Nuclear Medical Technicians, and Radiation Therapists. The program began a

soft start in Winter/Spring 2018 with Mid-Michigan Community College taking the lead and 4 students admitted. The Advisory Board agreed at their June 2018 meeting to move the CT program as part of the MRI program. This is a certificate option within the MRI program for many of the students that come with some scanning experience.

- Electroencephalogram Technology (EEG) Technologist is a certificate program with the option to complete an Associate degree. Lansing Community College was the lead institution for the soft launch start in Winter/Spring 2018 with 13 students admitted.
    - In February 2019, MCCA hosted a site team visit from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) to accredit the new Neurodiagnostics Technologist (EEG) program.
    - In May 2019, the CAAHEP Board met and approved a five-year initial accreditation award. This is the first consortium accredited in Neurodiagnostics Technology by CAAHEP. CAAHEP has asked the collaborative members to speak at the next EEG Commission of Accreditors (CoA) meeting to discuss our model.
    - The first cohort of EEG students – from the soft launch - graduated May 9, 2019 with 7 students; all 7 have jobs. One student has already passed the board exam.
    - The 2019-20 cohort will begin in the fall. Twenty-six (26) students participated in the new student orientation on July 11, 2019.
    - Due to industry requirements that all EEG Technologists have an Associate Degree, the member colleges are now getting calls from registered technologists reaching out to finish their associate degrees. Member institutions are providing experiential learning credit and assisting students who need the required general education credits for the associate degree.

MCO Open Education Resources (OER) Initiative – The MCO OER Initiative seeks to increase student success, decrease student costs and foster inter-institutional sharing through the usage of open educational resources. The following activities were completed this year with the help of the MCO OER Steering Committee which includes college staff from all 28 community colleges.

- The MCO OER Repository - a space for faculty to search for, share and create instructional resources. The group has received training and began curating OERs for sharing on the MCO Repository. The chart below shows the repository activity since the launch in November 2016:

Overview

Shared	Saved	Downloaded	Aligned	Evaluated	Submitted	Authored	Remixed
297	280	16	0	2	55	42	2
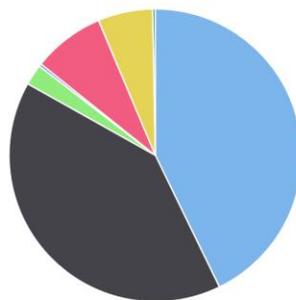
Shared   Saved   Downloaded   Aligned   Evaluated   Submitted   Authored   Remixed

- Collected OER usage information to gauge adoption and savings for students. For 2018-2019, the total estimated savings to students was $7,476,600. This is an increase of 29% over the reported 2017-2018 savings. For the past three years, Michigan community colleges have saved their student an estimated $15,872,700 in textbook costs.

**Open Educational Resources
Estimated Textbook Savings for
Students at Michigan Commnity Colleges**

Period	Savings
Fall 2016	$1,523,200
Fall 2017	$2,273,200
Fall 2018	$3,175,200
Winter 2017	$1,197,800
Winter 2018	$2,123,700
Winter 2019	$3,114,500
Sum 2017	$382,500
Sum 2018	$895,700
Sum 2019	$1,186,900
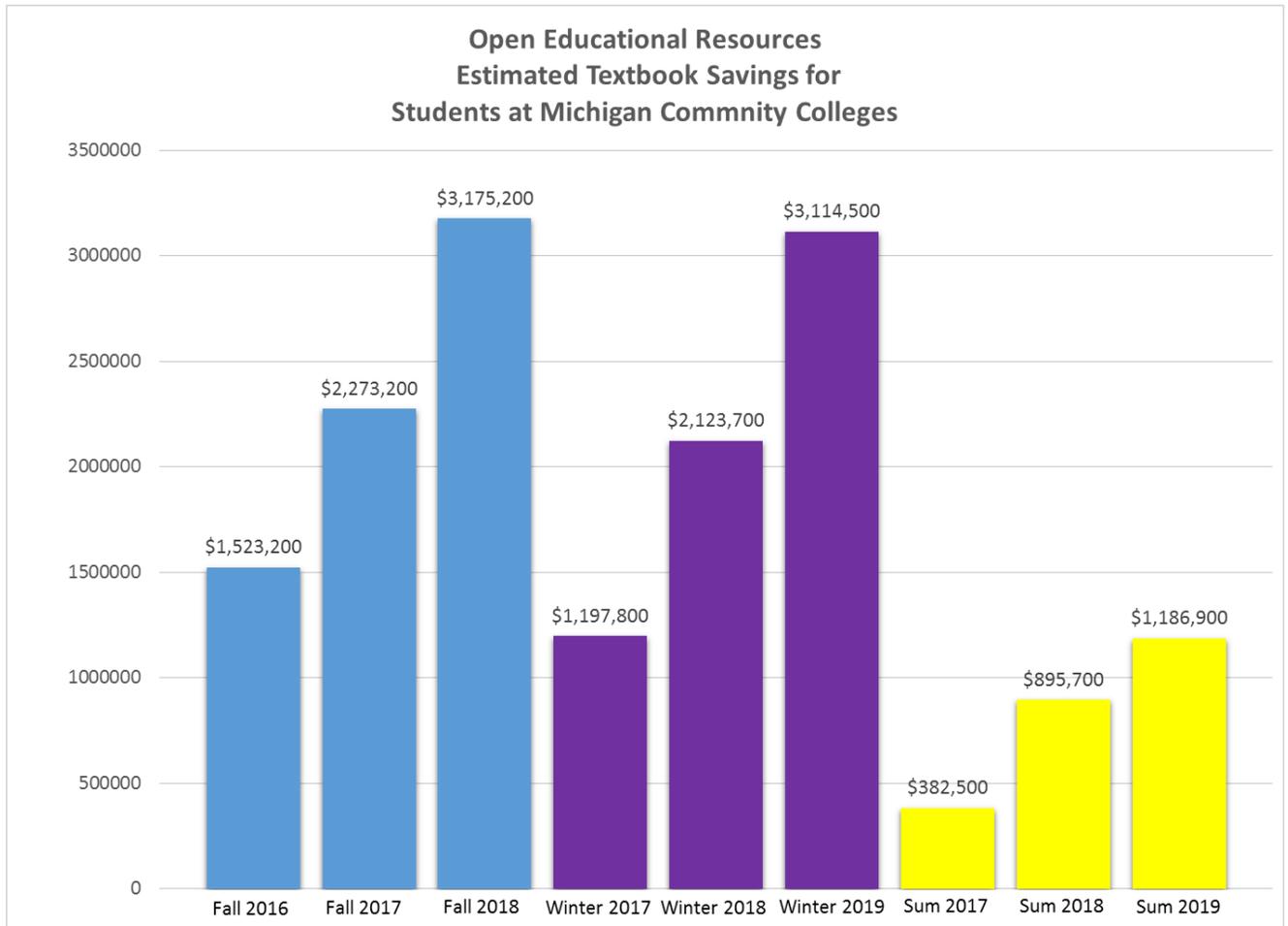
- **Usage/Savings by College –** The chart below shows the number of courses, number of students impacted and the total estimated savings for students by college. The table compares OER activity from Fall 2018, Winter/Spring 2019 and Summer 2019. Currently, eighteen community colleges participate in the OER Usage report.

College	Fall 2018				Winter/Spring 2019				Summer 2019		
	# of Courses	# of Students	Total Cost Savings		# of Courses	# of Students	Total Cost Savings		# of Courses	# of Students	Total Cost Savings
Alpena											
Bay	29	1634	$163,400		28	1475	$ 147,500.00		11	249	$24,900.00
Delta	8	662	$66,200		9	699	$ 69,900.00		6	332	$33,200.00
Glen Oaks					6	93	$ 9,300.00		1	20	$2,000.00
Gogebic	20	597	$59,700		11	240	$ 24,000.00				
Grand Rapids	32	5362	$536,200		35	5413	$ 541,300.00		29	2513	$251,300.00
Henry Ford											
Jackson	10	460	$46,000		6	341	$ 34,100.00		4	284	$28,400.00
Kalamazoo Valley											
Kellogg	4	359	$35,900		17	1037	$ 103,700.00		17	1037	$103,700.00
Kirtland	12	692	$69,200		12	556	$ 55,600.00		5	131	$13,100.00
Lake Michigan											
Lansing	52	5968	$596,800		57	5604	$ 560,400.00		38	1788	$178,800.00
Macomb											
Mid Michigan	13	3283	$328,300		17	2246	$ 224,600.00		12	415	$41,500.00
Monroe											
Montcalm					6	272	$ 27,200.00				
Mott	14	1513	$151,300		14	1175	$ 117,500.00		10	466	$46,600.00
Muskegon	4	507	$50,700		7	651	$ 65,100.00		2	45	$4,500.00
North Central Michigan											
Northwestern Michigan	30	2040	$204,000		47	2099	$ 209,900.00		17	393	$39,300.00
Oakland											
Schoolcraft	10	853	$85,300		13	1343	$ 134,300.00		13	927	$92,700.00
Southwestern Michigan										3	62	$6,200.00
St. Clair County	20	1065	$106,500		17	999	$ 99,900.00		8	162	$16,200.00
Washtenaw	21	6355	$635,500		22	6612	$ 661,200.00		23	2968	$296,800.00
Wayne County											
West Shore	9	402	$40,200		9	290	$ 29,000.00		8	77	$7,700.00
Totals	288	31,752	$3,175,200.00		333	31,145	$ 3,114,500.00		207	11,869	$1,186,900.00

- Hosted the second MI OER Summit – September 21, 2018. The Summit, sponsored by the MCO and hosted by St. Clair County Community College, is a statewide event focused on collaboration, networking, sharing and learning about Open Educational Resources (OER). Keynote was delivered by Chris Gilliard speaking on OPEN education and social justice.

- o Over 190 faculty, administrators and staff from K-12, MI community colleges and four-year institutions attended
- o Eighteen breakout sessions
- o Discipline-specific roundtables
- Planning the third MI OER Summit for October 18, 2019 at Delta College. Keynoter is Jess Mitchell speaking on OER and breaking down barriers to educational access.
- Faculty Conversations **-** This past winter semester, the MCO offered seven OER Faculty Conversations focused on specific disciplines and featuring faculty utilizing OER in their classes. This year's focus was on courses that are part of the Michigan Transfer Pathway Programs and included instructors from both two and four-year institutions. The following faculty shared their strategies and answered questions from the participants:
  - o Economics - Christian Nelson (Bay College)
  - o Public Speaking - Claire Sparklin (Washtenaw Community College)
  - o Abnormal Psychology – Susan Harvey (Delta College)
  - o Calculus I & II – Matt Boelkins (Grand Valley State University) & Larry David (Washtenaw Community College)
  - o Physics – Rod Price (Kellogg Community College)
  - o Sociology – Jean Ramirez & Aliza Robison (Lansing Community College)
  - o Social Work – Lisa Blackford (Northwestern Michigan College)
- Participated in MHEC OER Summit last fall with a team from Michigan including K-12, community college and 4-year institution members. The outcome of the Summit is the creation of a MI OER Network with a mission to support institutions and organizations in the fair and equitable use of open education resources for all learners in the state**.** The network includes all educational institutions within the state (K-12, community colleges and public and private 4-year institutions). The goals of the network include:
  - o Research
  - o Advocacy/Communication/Network and Sharing
  - o Professional Development

  The group is currently working on an organizational structure for the network. They have completed environmental scans of 4-year public and private institutions. Community College scan is already done. This information will inform the future professional development activities of the network.

MCO Accessibility Community of Practice – The MCO created a listserv for the community members to share questions and successes. The MCO also facilitates monthly conversations focused on accessibility best practices regarding digital materials used at Michigan community colleges. During the 2018-19 academic year the Community has discussed the following:

- LMS Accessibility
- Math Course Accessibility
- Blackboard Ally Accessibility Checker
- Third Party Vendor/Website Accessibility
- Captioning Options
- UDoIT Accessibility Checker
- REV Captioning Services/Simple Solution Demonstration
- Readspeaker

Additionally, the MCO created an Accessibility Resource Guide for Faculty, that can be used/handed out during Fall conference sessions, which explains why accessibility is important and links to resources that can help faculty when developing digital materials for their classes.

MCO Professional Development series – The following webinars were offered during 2018-2019 to faculty and staff. They were recorded and archived [here.](#)

- Blue by Explorance for Online Course Evaluations
- OER 4 Sale
- An Advisor's Guide to Michigan Colleges Online
- Measuring the Impact of OER Initiatives: An Assessment Framework
- MCO OER Repository Group Manager Training
- Using AI-Supported Technology in Online Courses to Improve Student Critical Thinking & Writing
- Pisces Online Collaboration Tool
- Publishing your OER using a Print-on-Demand Service

Additionally this past year MCO hosted a three-day, hands-on workshop provided by Amazon Web Services. Chief Information officers and their staff participated in the **Architecting in AWS** during May 20 – 22, 2019. This course covered the fundamentals of building IT infrastructure on AWS and was designed to teach solutions architects how to optimize the use of the AWS Cloud by understanding AWS services and how these services fit into cloud-based solutions. Based on feedback, more opportunities will be planned for next year.

Collaborative purchasing discounts – Michigan community colleges often find that by leveraging their combined purchasing power, it's possible to obtain advanced technologies at reduced cost. Michigan Colleges Online has negotiated preferred pricing on products and services from the following vendors:

- **BlackBeltHelp** – US-based help desk call center for augmenting after-hours, weekend and holiday college help desks. Licenses include a reduced cost close to 45% off standard rates.
- **FitFaculty** - Faculty qualifications management software. MCO has negotiated a collaborative discount of 10% off the annual subscription rate for the first year.
- **NetTutor** – US based online tutoring service for all students. MCO has negotiated a collaborative discount for colleges wishing to join – with about 15% off standard price
- **ReadSpeaker** – A text- to-speech technology that gives a voice to websites, online courses, digital books, etc. Aligns with ADA accessibility guidelines. MCO's collaborative statewide purchase reduces cost by leveraging a combined FTE. Colleges will get a savings of 25% off standard pricing.
- **TechSmith** – Michigan based company offering digital curriculum development tools. Collaborative discounts are providing all faculty and students with licenses at reduced costs close to 50% off standard pricing. Now includes Relay – for video hosting and close captioning.
- **ZOOM** – US-based web conferencing service. MCO has negotiated a savings of nearly 90% off standard pricing.

MCO is currently working with the following vendors to provide additional software services at reduced costs.
- **Packback -** Packback is an "AI supported" online discussion platform that improves student curiosity, communication skills, and critical thinking. Packback delivers an easy-to-use and engaging discussion experience for students and professors, with powerful support from automated moderation, sorting, and scoring algorithms. MCO is currently working to allow several Michigan community college faculty to participate in a study to confirm successful outcomes for community college students.
- **Pisces Online Collaboration Tool -** Pisces is the same online collaboration platform that is currently utilized by the NetTutor tutors to tutor your students. Pisces allows all member institutions to schedule and host online meetings and sessions, such as: one-on-one and group tutoring sessions, online courses, SI sessions, advising appointments, counseling appointments, and instructor office hours.