

That is Why it is Called Community College

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The entire world is changing, and more rapidly than ever. Communities are growing, roads are expanding, communications are enhancing... These are things that are only going to continue to grow. These changes cannot be classified as universally “good” or “bad”, and they definitely cannot be ignored. In a constantly changing world, the people *have* to change with it. It is simple science.

With a growing world, also comes growing industries. When communities grow and traffic patterns change, the construction industry booms. Likewise when technology begins to develop even further, technicians, electricians, and repairmen (just to name a few) find an immense amount of work. These are just a few examples of how the world is changing, but the potential is endless. In fact, the Frederick Community itself is evolving at its own rapid pace, leading to the need of one particular industry: the trades.

The good news for Frederick is that Frederick Community College (FCC) offers a wide variety of programs that specialize within specific areas of vocational training. However, the basic costs of continuing education, even if it is vocational schooling, is daunting to many families and individuals. Far too often than not, the costs of education are what turn many people away from receiving the education they deserve.



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Dawson Nash and Felix Maqueda found themselves in this very dilemma when considering vocational school. Both are serving in the Army as Fiber Optic Technicians. Therefore, FCC’s Electrical Certification Program is essential to their success in their current roles. Even though this is a necessary class for someone in that position within the Army, the cost for tuition and fees was initially a large barrier to their confidence and financial stability to enroll in the program.

Both were quite fortunate, however, to receive a Building Trades Scholarship, offered by the Frederick Community College Foundation. The Building Trades Scholarship Program is available to FCC students who are enrolled in credit courses in Building Trades, or non-credit courses in Trades and Vocational Training (Electrical, HVAC, or Welding). Eligible students are able to receive a scholarship of up to \$500.

Deborah Powell, Executive Director of the Frederick Community College Foundation, explains that “we want to see talent come through, we want to see people taking these classes and actually getting certificates and graduating and getting out in the workforce.”

This specific scholarship also provides an option of non-traditional education that will provide a sustainable career for families and individuals. Powell says “we know that we're training these people to earn a better living and to be able to provide for their families and have a future.”

Then again, the only way to have this type of impact on the community is through the immense support the Frederick Community College Foundation receives from non-profit organizations such as United Way. Powell says “that money specifically funded tuition and fees for students who are taking courses related to the trades,” adding that “the numbers might drop if we don't have the same kind of support that we do now.”

Because of a Laughlin Family Foundation Grant received from United Way of Frederick County in 2018, the Foundation was able to offer 57 scholarships and approximately \$40,000 to students in Building Trades alone. Powell makes very clear that “if we [the Frederick Community College Foundation] don't receive those grants, then we won't have the building trades money.”

Powell even further explains that “the construction industry in Frederick is booming and there's a great need for people who are really skilled in HVAC, carpentry, electrical, and all of those different things.” This has a great impact on the Frederick Community as it encourages involvement in a growing industry, as well as in a growing community such as Frederick.

Nash says that “career-wise, this has been a kick-start because I'd be more hesitant to start school if the financial stability wasn't there,” adding that “it's definitely made an impact and helped cover tuition and fees.”

This all comes full circle with the latest ALICE data as well. As the ALICE data released in 2019 reports, the cost of living in Frederick County is only increasing and therefore, ALICE numbers are on the same exact path. Hence, it is of no surprise that education costs keep people from pursuing a degree or certificate if it means that their financial stability was not at risk.

United Way works each day to combat the ALICE crisis in Frederick County as they see that financial stability, health, and education is simply a right for all individuals and families. Therefore, when United Way of Frederick County provides non-profit organizations, such as the Frederick Community College Foundation, certain grants (like the Laughlin Family Foundation Grant), they are truly placing their efforts straight into the Frederick Community. They know exactly where the need is, and they follow it.

“It all comes together about doing what's best for the community,” says Powell, “*that* is why it is called Community College.”