The Economic Value of Greenfield Community College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
GREENFIELD Community College (GCC) creates value in many ways. The college plays a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. The college draws students to the region, generating new dollars and opportunities for the GCC Service Area, an area comprised of Franklin and Hampshire Counties. GCC provides students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers. Furthermore, GCC is a place for students to meet new people, increase their self-confidence, and promote their overall health and well-being.

GCC influences both the lives of its students and the regional economy. The college supports a variety of industries in the GCC Service Area, serves regional businesses, and benefits society as a whole in Massachusetts from an expanded economy and improved quality of life. The benefits created by GCC even extend to the state government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings.

This study measures the economic impacts created by GCC on the business community and the benefits the college generates in return for the investments made by its key stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. The following two analyses are presented:

**Economic impact analysis**

**Investment analysis**

All results reflect employee, student, and financial data, provided by the college, for fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 (July 1st 2018 through June 30th 2019). Impacts on the GCC Service Area economy are reported under the economic impact analysis and are measured in terms of added income. The returns on investment to students, taxpayers, and society in Massachusetts are reported under the investment analysis.
Economic impact analysis

GCC promotes economic growth in the GCC Service Area through its direct expenditures and the resulting expenditures of students and regional businesses. The college serves as an employer and buyer of goods and services for its day-to-day operations. The college’s activities attract students from outside the GCC Service Area, whose expenditures benefit regional vendors. In addition, GCC is a primary source of higher education to the GCC Service Area residents and a supplier of trained workers to regional industries, enhancing overall productivity in the regional workforce.

Operations spending impact

GCC adds economic value to the GCC Service Area as an employer of regional residents and a large-scale buyer of goods and services. In FY 2018-19, the college employed 363 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 82% of whom lived in the GCC Service Area. Total payroll at GCC was $19.6 million, much of which was spent in the region for groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. In addition, the college spent $5.5 million on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.

GCC’s day-to-day operations spending added $24.4 million in income to the region during the analysis year. This figure represents the college’s payroll, the multiplier effects generated by the in-region spending of the college and its employees, and a downward adjustment to account for funding that the college received from regional sources. The $24.4 million in added income is equivalent to supporting 415 jobs in the region.

Student spending impact

Around 18% of credit students attending GCC originated from outside the region in FY 2018-19, and some of these students relocated to the GCC Service Area to attend GCC. These students may not have come to the region if the college did not exist. In addition, some in-region students, referred to as retained students, would have left the GCC Service Area if not for the existence of GCC. While attending the college, these relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, accommodation, transportation, and other household expenses. This spending generated $3.8 million in added income for the regional economy in FY 2018-19, which supported 78 jobs in the GCC Service Area.

IMPACTS CREATED BY GCC IN FY 2018-19

- $24.4 million Operations Spending Impact
- $3.8 million Student Spending Impact
- $50.8 million Alumni Impact
- $78.9 million TOTAL IMPACT
  - OR -
- 1,254 JOBS SUPPORTED
Alumni impact

The education and training GCC provides for regional residents has the greatest impact. Since its establishment, students have studied at GCC and entered the regional workforce with greater knowledge and new skills. Today, thousands of former GCC students are employed in the GCC Service Area. As a result of their GCC educations, the students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2018-19, GCC alumni generated $50.8 million in added income for the regional economy, which is equivalent to supporting 760 jobs.

Total impact

GCC added $78.9 million in income to the GCC Service Area economy during the analysis year, equal to the sum of the operations spending impact, the student spending impact, and the alumni impact. For context, the $78.9 million impact was equal to approximately 0.7% of the total gross regional product (GRP) of the GCC Service Area. This contribution that the college provided on its own is almost as large as the entire Utilities industry in the region.

GCC’s total impact can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The $78.9 million impact supported 1,254 regional jobs, using the jobs-to-sales ratios specific to each industry in the region. In addition, the $78.9 million, or 1,254 supported jobs, stemmed from different industry sectors. Among non-education industry sectors, GCC’s spending and alumni in the Health Care & Social Assistance industry sector supported 252 jobs in FY 2018-19. These are impacts that would not have been generated without the college’s presence in the GCC Service Area.
An investment analysis evaluates the costs associated with a proposed venture against its expected benefits. If the benefits outweigh the costs, then the investment is financially worthwhile. The analysis presented here considers GCC as an investment from the perspectives of students, taxpayers, and society in Massachusetts.

**Student perspective**

In FY 2018-19, GCC served 2,517 credit and 2,079 non-credit students. In order to attend the college, the students paid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies. They also took out loans and will incur interest on those loans. Additionally, students gave up money they would have otherwise earned had they been working instead of attending college. The total investment made by GCC’s students in FY 2018-19 amounted to a present value of $14.4 million, equal to $6.9 million in out-of-pocket expenses (including future principal and interest on student loans) and $7.6 million in forgone time and money.

In return for their investment, GCC’s students will receive a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives. For example, the average GCC associate degree graduate from FY 2018-19 will see annual earnings that are $9,200 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Massachusetts. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of the associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to an undiscounted value of $331.2 thousand in higher earnings per graduate. The present value of the cumulative higher future earnings that GCC’s FY 2018-19 students will receive over their working careers is $62 million.

**Study: Ericsson, M.**

The average associate degree graduate from GCC will see an increase in earnings of $9,200 each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Massachusetts.
Investment analysis

The students’ benefit-cost ratio is 4.3. In other words, for every dollar students invest in GCC, in the form of out-of-pocket expenses and forgone time and money, they will receive a cumulative value of $4.30 in higher future earnings. Annually, the students’ investment in GCC has an average annual internal rate of return of 21.1%, which is impressive compared to the U.S. stock market’s 30-year average rate of return of 9.9%.

Taxpayer perspective

GCC generates more in tax revenue than it takes. These benefits to taxpayers consist primarily of taxes that the state government will collect from the added revenue created in the state. As GCC students will earn more, they will make higher tax payments throughout their working lives. Students’ employers will also make higher tax payments as they increase their output and purchases of goods and services. By the end of the FY 2018-19 students’ working lives, the state government will have collected a present value of $16.1 million in added taxes.

Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of GCC students and the corresponding reduced government services. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. Students’ GCC educations will generate savings in three main categories: 1) healthcare, 2) crime, and 3) income assistance. Improved health will lower students’ demand for national health care services. In addition, students will be less likely to interact with the criminal justice system, resulting in a reduced demand for law enforcement and victim costs. GCC students will be more employable, so their reduced demand for income assistance such as welfare and unemployment benefits will benefit taxpayers.

For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report. Altogether, the present value of the benefits associated with a GCC education will generate $1.6 million in savings to state taxpayers.

Total taxpayer benefits amount to $17.7 million, the present value sum of the added taxes and public sector savings. Taxpayer costs are $16.6 million, equal to the amount of state government funding GCC received in FY 2018-19. These benefits and costs yield a benefit-cost ratio of 1.1. This means that for every dollar of public money invested in GCC in FY 2018-19, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of $1.10 over the course of the students’ working lives. The

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* The rate of return is not reported for the social perspective because the beneficiaries of the investment are not necessarily the same as the original investors.
average annual internal rate of return for taxpayers is 1.9%, which compares favorably to other long-term investments in the public and private sectors.

Social perspective

Society as a whole in Massachusetts benefits from the presence of GCC in two major ways. Primarily, society benefits from an increased economic base in the state. This is attributed to higher student earnings and increased business output, which raise economic prosperity in Massachusetts.

Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of GCC students. As discussed in the previous section, education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings. Note that these costs are avoided by the consumers but are distinct from the costs avoided by the taxpayers outlined above. Healthcare savings include avoided medical costs associated with smoking, alcohol dependence, obesity, drug abuse, and depression. Savings related to crime include reduced security expenditures and insurance administration, lower victim costs, and reduced expenditures by the criminal justice system. Income assistance savings include reduced welfare and unemployment claims. For a list of study references, contact the college for a copy of the main report.

Altogether, the social benefits of GCC equal a present value of $202.4 million. These benefits include $199 million in added income through students’ increased lifetime earnings and increased business output, as well as $3.5 million in social savings related to health, crime, and income assistance in Massachusetts. People in Massachusetts invested a present value total of $33.9 million in GCC in FY 2018-19. The cost includes all the college and student costs.

The benefit-cost ratio for society is 6.0, equal to the $202.4 million in benefits divided by the $33.9 million in costs. In other words, for every dollar invested in GCC, people in Massachusetts will receive a cumulative value of $6.00 in benefits. The benefits of this investment will occur for as long as GCC’s FY 2018-19 students remain employed in the state workforce.

Summary of investment analysis results

The results of the analysis demonstrate that GCC is a strong investment for all three major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. As shown, students receive a great return for their investments in a GCC education. At the same time, taxpayers’ investment in GCC returns more to government budgets than it costs and creates a wide range of social benefits throughout Massachusetts.
Introduction

The results of this study demonstrate that GCC creates value from multiple perspectives. The college benefits regional businesses by increasing consumer spending in the region and supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers to the workforce. GCC enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. The college benefits state taxpayers through increased tax receipts and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, GCC benefits society as a whole in Massachusetts by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.

About the study

Data and assumptions used in the study are based on several sources, including the FY 2018-19 academic and financial reports from GCC, industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, outputs of Emsi’s Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix model, and a variety of studies and surveys relating education to social behavior. The study applies a conservative methodology and follows standard practice using only the most recognized indicators of economic impact and investment effectiveness. For a full description of the data and approach used in the study, please contact the college for a copy of the main report.

Emsi

Emsi is a labor market analytics firm that integrates data from a wide variety of sources to serve professionals in higher education, economic development, workforce development, talent acquisition, and site selection. Emsi is a leading provider of economic impact studies and labor market data to educational institutions in the U.S. and internationally. Since 2000, Emsi has completed over 2,000 economic impact studies for institutions across three countries. For more information about Emsi’s products and services, visit www.economicmodeling.com.