

# FAST Fund

*Believe in Students!*

FAST Fund is an economic emergency fund for MATC students

## Media Release

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## Local 212 MATC FAST Fund Helps MATC students Continue their Education

The MATC FAST Fund is pleased to announce that in the 2022-2023 academic year its grants not only kept Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) students from dropping out of college but also improved the college's capacity to serve students overall.

According to Liz Franczyk, the FAST Fund's Executive Director, FAST Fund grants enabled 251 MATC students to continue their education who otherwise would not have been able to take classes because they owed MATC money from a previous semester.

In addition to helping these students, the FAST Fund's efforts generated well over half a million dollars in state aid to MATC since the college receives approximately \$575,000 for every 100 full time equivalent students.

Franczyk noted, "The FAST Fund understands that indebtedness to MATC is as real an obstacle to student success as housing and food insecurity because it prevents students, even those with good academic records, from continuing their education. Last year alone," she added, "the FAST Fund spent \$140,797 dollars helping students establish a payment plan so they could register for the following semester."

The FAST Fund has even been asked to help scholarship winners with previous debt so they could enroll and use their awards.

Reginald Leslie, an electrical engineering technology student, explained, "I was fortunate enough to receive the Pepsi Uplift Scholarship to pay for my tuition. However, I couldn't register for classes if my MATC balance wasn't paid. I was truly financially strapped for any cash outside of my regular bills. But the FAST Fund paid my MATC balance, so I could register for classes. I am now attending classes and on track to hopefully transfer to MSOE to finish my electrical engineering degree by 2024-2025."

The FAST Fund did not begin keeping data on the number of Checota and Uplift scholars it helped register until January 2023. However, since that time it has enabled 125 Checota scholars and 48 Pepsi Uplift recipients to pay on their debts so they could utilize the scholarship.

Ellen and Joe Checota Scholarship winner Termiane Roberson recalled, "A few years back I signed up for classes, but couldn't attend due to personal reasons. I never knew I had a balance that was due and



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that I couldn't pay off in full. But the debt meant I couldn't use the scholarship. The FAST Fund covered a little over 30% of my debt, and now I'm an up-and-coming bricklayer."

FAST Fund Board Chair Barbara Toles explained, "Student loan debt has become such a major issue that the Biden Administration has attempted to address it through executive action. But the debt MATC's low-and-moderate income students owe to the college is another obstacle to MATC student access." She added, "Scholarships are useless if students can't register for classes and use them. The FAST Fund is pleased that our support has enabled 251 students to enroll who otherwise would not have been able to attend classes. "

The Local 212 MATC FAST Fund is a non-profit organization initiated by MATC's faculty union, the American Federation of Teachers Local 212, that provides quick financial assistance to MATC students. Last year it provided assistance to 765 students. This year it provided assistance to 1,668 students, a 118% increase.

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