PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

April 2012

Montgomery College
endless possibilities

This month, I gave my first State of the College address, reassuring our community that though we are in the midst of many changes, the state of our College is strong. However, I stressed that we will only become stronger if we continuously adapt and find innovative ways to empower our students. An example of this innovation is our plan to create a common student experience (CSE): a set of truths that each and every student can come to expect from Montgomery College, regardless of campus. A group of College students, faculty, staff, and administrators crafted these truths, while another group, the Student Services Task Force, created a plan for restructuring student services in order to meet our CSE goals.

I commend the members of both task forces for their work to develop guiding principles around which we can unite and that, once implemented, will help our College meet our completion goals. These seven broad categories of truths, as articulated by the CSE Task Force, are:

- **Start Smart**
- **Maintain a Foundation of Support Opportunities**
- **Get Connected**
- **Build Community**
- **Enhance the Classroom Experience**
- **Encourage Student Success Every Step of the Way**
- **Plan to Cross the Finish Line**

I look forward to sharing more about these truths in the weeks and months ahead. Specific ideas include creating collegewide advising services and requiring First Year Experience programs and New Student Orientations. Additionally, the CSE Task Force suggests establishing momentum points— moments in a student's experience at the College when we automatically check in on his or her progress.

As we move to a One College model, I have reassured our campuses that this does not include changing their individual campus identities. Becoming one does not mean becoming identical. I like to compare this idea to the dynamic in my family. My sister, Dawne, and I are two distinctly different women; Dawne is a banker, singer, single, and tall. Despite our differences, the core of who we are is the same. At the end of the day, I am DeRionne Pollard and she is Dawne Pollard, but we are both Pollard girls. At the end of the day, whether Rockville, Germantown, Takoma Park/Silver Spring, online, or a satellite Workforce Development & Continuing Education location, we are all Montgomery College.

As the College began implementing the suggestions from the CSE and Student Services Task Forces, I asked our campus leaders to reflect on how their campuses are working toward creating a common student experience. This is but a sampling of the hard work occurring in every corner of the College. I look forward to seeing how these efforts strengthen the state of our College in the years to come.

Board Discussion Questions:

1. Have you experienced or learned about initiatives that have helped multicampus institutions overcome similar challenges to the ones our College faces?

2. Why is the One College model so important?

Common Curriculum

Last semester, the College implemented Mathematics Prep (MA 094) collegewide, thanks to a collaborative faculty initiative. A collegewide Developmental Math Task Force, chaired by Professor Emeritus Ken Weiner, created a course that is offered in the same format on all three campuses, as well as online as a distance education course. A collegewide curriculum ensures that all students are taught the same content and held to the same standard. Online homework and proctored online tests ensure that uniform standards are met across the College.
The College is adjusting class sizes across campuses, departments, disciplines, and courses in an effort to achieve greater consistency. Instructional deans equalized the sizes of similar online courses across campuses, and they are making similar adjustments within disciplines.

The health sciences programs have developed and implemented information sharing and brainstorming events. During the sessions, the participants shared information about their curricula and generated ideas about how to help students succeed in the pre-health sciences stage of their education. Additionally, a panel of faculty and staff from health sciences presented information critical to understanding the nature of these programs and the completion challenges that their students face. A period of open discussion, question and answer, and sharing of ideas for student support followed this presentation. These information sharing events will be replicated collegewide so that all faculty and staff can help to support students who wish to succeed in the College's health sciences.

Computer Applications Professors Melissa Lizmi and Gail Youth created of a set of collaborative instructional materials for core web courses. Web faculty can easily access, modify, and share the material online, which has led to greater consistency in course content across all three campuses. The department aims to have a common and collaborative set of course materials for all web classes by spring 2013.

Common College Process

Workforce Development & Continuing Education faculty, staff, and administrators are focused on enabling students to move seamlessly from a noncredit course to a credit program on any campus and vice versa. Examples of the ways that they are streamlining this process include:
- Students in an apprenticeship program benefit from an articulation agreement that awards equivalent college credits should the student continue toward a credit certificate or degree program.
- Instructors encourage students enrolled as a noncredit student in a co-listed credit class to explore the credit program option.

- Transitions coordinators help students complete a grant-funded program for the next learning opportunity at the College or in the community based upon students' interests.

A small task force at the Germantown Campus is reviewing the campuswide schedule and coordinating with other campuses to better align low-enrollment, upper-level courses to ensure that students will be able to plan ahead, know when and where to take these courses, and eliminate schedule conflicts. This will help students to complete their course work as quickly as possible.

Common Access to Student Services and Information

The Writing, Reading, and Language Centers on all campuses are exploring how to streamline center reporting through the use of common software like TutorTrak. This will enable all students to have a common experience when visiting centers, regardless of campus. It will also allow for common communication of tutoring sessions and student supports to faculty.

The Virtual Computing Lab (VCL) pilot program created environments that enable students to have 24-hour, remote access to computer programs housed on College computers. The team created, installed, and configured VCL environments that now support the delivery of computer science, information and interactive technologies, distance education, and traditional face-to-face courses.

Plans are underway for the collegewide training of counselors and front-line staff who work with veterans. New initiatives include a welcome packet and orientation targeted to veterans, an open house in the learning centers, and open gym hours specifically for veterans.

Representatives from all three campuses continue to develop a comprehensive and sustainable collegewide support services infrastructure connecting prospective health sciences students to resources that prepare them for the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS). As a result of ongoing collaborations, the following are some of the collegewide resources that the College created or acquired to construct a common experience:
- TEAS study manuals in of all of the College's main libraries
- An online LibGuide TEAS Resources web page
- A four-year license for the SkillsTutor program
- TEAS information sessions
- Ongoing one-on-one and group TEAS advisement sessions
- TEAS prep courses
- A TEAS information webpage with up-to-date information about the TEAS, score requirements for all health sciences programs, and study materials and resources

MC Pride and Allies, a new collegewide organization that supports the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community at the College, has organized around meeting LGBT student needs. They have identified faculty advisors for student groups on each campus. The purpose of these groups is to provide support to their peers, to make College resources more readily available to those who need them, and to educate their peers about LGBT rights issues.

A recently-formed student organization, the DREAM Club, provides enrichment and engagement opportunities for students with developmental disabilities who are enrolled in our noncredit programs.

Common Student Environments

The College's Office of Facilities based the design of both the Science Center at the Rockville Campus and the upcoming Germantown Campus Bioscience Education Center on the needs of students in the STEM fields. Facilities hosted a number of programming sessions with STEM faculty from all three campuses to discuss learning environments for buildings as well as for the future Takoma Park/Silver Spring Math and Science Center. The meetings helped focus plans for renovating Science East and Science West buildings on the Rockville Campus for the mathematics program as well as the renovation and addition to the Sciences and Applied Studies Building on the Germantown Campus for the physics, engineering, and mathematics programs. Early in the planning effort for the Science Center at the Rockville Campus, the College supported a series of meetings among the instructional deans for the STEM academic departments on the three campuses with a focus on promoting a common approach to planning, programming, and designing the STEM labs and classrooms for each campus.

Student Stories

Part of the College goal in the developmental math redesign is to enable motivated students to work at their own pace and move on to college-level math in a more expeditious fashion. An example is Catherine Yeboah, who placed in the beginning of part one of the new MA 094 course. Due to the self-paced nature of this program and her own motivation, in less than three weeks, she passed all of the tests in part one and is currently one test shy of the final exam for part two. Always in the lab, recently finished part two and is planning to complete her MA 099 course, Intermediate Algebra, by May. This means that she completed the equivalent of three semester-long courses in one semester.

Bruno Flaim enrolled in the College's noncredit TechLEAP program to study programming. After completing this track, he stayed on to pursue the web track. Since he did not have any industry experience in information technology, TechLEAP faculty suggested he take the credit networking series to round out his skill set before looking for employment in the IT field. After completing the credit course series, Mr. Flaim participated in a one-year internship with the College's InTech group, working in the Gaithersburg Business and Training Center. Based on his credit and noncredit learning experiences, along with his practical work experience through the internship, Mr. Flaim gained full-time employment with GEICO in a combined networking/programming database position.