

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

March 2012



Montgomery College
endless possibilities



Being an educator is a bit like being a brain surgeon. While the tools are different—one uses scalpels, the other uses books—both occupations involve the same methods: stimulating, probing, energizing, and searching for the surest way to change a life. Every brain, every patient, and student presents a unique set of challenges and possibilities. But, as any doctor will tell you, success can only be attained when there is a strong mind-body connection.

I believe a successful place of learning must provide students with a healthy, well-rounded experience that recognizes the symbiotic relationship between the mental and the physical. From on-campus fitness classes to access to information on nutrition and health, our campuses provide our students, faculty, staff, and administrators with convenient options to flex their brains *and* their brawn.

That is why we provide our students not only with excellent teachers and classes, but also a strong athletics program; we realize the classroom is not the only place where our students learn and find the strength to change the course of their future. I am excited that we are reinvigorating our athletics program so that our students will have the opportunity to be part of an intercollegiate sports team. By having *one* College team available for each sport, our students will be able to cross campuses to play sports on *any* campus and still comply with the National Junior College Athletic Association's new rules. Additionally, we will expand our intramural opportunities to allow even more students to participate in healthy competition on all of our campuses.

With our athletic reinvigoration underway, our campuses are emphasizing the importance of athletics and wellness as a healthy complement to a student's academic curriculum. I have asked each of our campuses to provide specific examples about how the College helps students sharpen their mental and physical skills. I especially encourage you to read the student stories—they are true examples of how our College empowers students to change their lives in every way.

Board Discussion Questions:

1. With so many competing obligations and responsibilities, what words of advice do you have for our students that will encourage them to better prioritize their own wellness to ensure success?
2. What innovative suggestions do you have for the College to better address the mental and physical needs of our community?



In the Classroom

- Students in the redesigned developmental math course have assignments that require them to understand and calculate BMI—body mass index.
- Biology 101 course content features the chemistry of nutrition and the evolution of behavior. This year, Biology Professor Carol Allen will require her students keep a nutrition diary for one week to calculate their caloric intake.
- Germantown’s Health and Physical Education Department has increased its course offerings and opened participation in athletics to anyone interested, regardless of prior experience.
- When discussing globalization in their paired course in the College’s Renaissance Scholars program, Professors Jennifer Haydel and Kelly Rudin talked about the global rise in obesity as fast foods and processed foods have become more prevalent.

Campus Services and Extracurriculars

- At Rockville, student-athletes participate in study halls, monitored by an athletic academic coordinator. First-year student-athletes, transfer students, or student-athletes with grade point averages (GPA) of 2.5 or lower have mandatory attendance requirements.
- At Germantown, all college athletes are required to attend mandatory study hall, and College faculty monitor student grades for compliance.
- The new student orientation program at Rockville includes modules about athletics, student life, and the transition from high school student to college student. All three modules have content that resonate with wellness and encourage students to lead balanced lives.
- The Rockville Campus will offer open gym/fitness center hours. Collaboration between College Athletics, the Health Enhancement, Exercise Science and Physical Education Department, and Workforce Development & Continuing Education made scheduling time possible.
- This year, members of Germantown Student Development— Professors Gillian Reid-Nelson, Bonnie Vanatta, Harry Zarin—teamed up with the baseball and basketball teams to monitor mid-term and final grades. Each semester, Professor Zarin meets with the teams and coaches to talk about the players’ responsibilities as student-athletes and support services available. As a previous student-athlete, Professor Zarin understands the importance of time management, study habits, and a high GPA for students who play a college sport. For students who seek his support throughout the semester, Professor Zarin helps with course selection, registration, graduation application, and transfer planning. Student Services Specialist Gillian Reid-Nelson runs a study hall with both teams, based on the coach’s wishes and the needs of the team.
- This spring, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Women's Studies Program will have a Run for Congo Women to benefit women survivors of war and Women for Women International. Assistant Professor of English Lynn Roessner-Ankney is coordinating the effort to train and coachrunners.

Access to Information

- Sally Zimmerman, part-time mathematics professor, shares healthy eating information with students through her College [web page](#). The site includes links to information about organic farms, pick-your-own orchards, and farmers markets as well as plant and seed sources, stores, and organizations. Professor Zimmerman also provides healthy snacks for her classes.
- The First Year Experience Program [recently connected](#) with Student Health 101, an online health and wellness magazine with information and tips for student health. The discussion topics include: “What to Do if Your Grades Are Slipping,” “Apps to Keep You Fit and Healthy,” “Resumes: How to Get Yours into Shape,” and “How Better Sleep Can Improve Your Life.” Students who register and participate in online forums are eligible for up to \$1,000 from monthly drawings.



- On December 6, the Department of Health Enhancement, Exercise Science, Health and Physical Education's Health 201 class organized a health and wellness fair for students at College Gardens Elementary School in Rockville. Health 201 is the health and fitness class designed for education majors. Students prepared exhibits that ranged from fitness, body composition, and stress management to nutrition, substance abuse, and hygiene. Based on College Garden's count, more than 500 pre-K to fifth-grade students participated in the fair.
- On Monday, April 2, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus Women's Studies and the Writing Arts Committee, in collaboration with the organization Women for Women International, will sponsor a Yoga & Poetry event to benefit women survivors of war. This event will include a yoga class, poetry reading, and other activities to encourage participants to consider the meaning of healing and explore connections between the spiritual and healing aspects of yoga as well as the healing aspects of writing and reading poetry. Participants will be asked to contribute \$20 each, with the goal to earn enough money to sponsor one woman survivor for one year.
- The theme of Rockville's Wellness Fair this year is "Finding a Healthy Balance." Organized by Professor Lesley Wasilko, it will take place at the Rockville Campus on Wednesday, April 11, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Some of the health, physical education, and exercise science classes will present at the fair. For example, students from an Elementary Physical Education course will lead visitors through a variety of games and activities that address the ideas discussed in class. They will utilize the concepts of skill themes and movement concepts to develop and present activities that can enhance fitness.

Student Stories

- Julie Needham, a Montgomery College education student, writes about why health and wellness is so important to a student's overall success:

Children today are less active than previous generations. Childhood obesity is a growing national concern, as is as the physical health of our youth. The College Gardens Elementary School health fair gave students the opportunity to learn about health and physical education from a more contemporary source than their classroom teacher. I found the students to be receptive and excited when I taught them about disability awareness. The fair provided valuable lessons not just for students, but for the aspiring teachers. Physical education should not be an extracurricular activity. It is a vital component in a student's academic success. There are always teachable moments that allow for movement in the classroom. Whether we incorporate movement within the classroom with activities and lessons, or we take the classroom outdoors to participate in physical activities and games, student health is of paramount importance. It is critical that teachers are flexible, creative, and patient as they work to engage all students in lessons and activities. We, as educators, must work and be flexible to include learners of all types.

As an aspiring special education educator, it is important to be cognizant of both the gross and fine motor needs of my future students. Being abreast of physical education allows me to better teach children with autism by providing more productive sensory breaks. Healthy students learn better, get sick less, and have a better quality of life.

- In most discussions about academics and athletics, the assumption is usually that engaging in wellness activities helps one to do better in the classroom. Theatre Professor Ellen Mansueto got a different take when she learned that three of her students were taking her class to improve their focus in basketball. In the past few weeks, student David Hucks has learned to see a connection between a theatre/classroom audience



and an athletic audience. Once he had successfully enacted a frog on stage, he realized that his confidence was increasing: “If you are going to play, you have to have confidence that you are going to make your shot.” Likewise, a teammate, Ivan Flores, agrees that theatre class has improved his ball playing. The relaxation and centering techniques he has learned in class “help you get more in tune with yourself and your body... they help me focus more, and being able to focus all my energy and emotions in one place helps a lot when I’m making a free throw!”

- Many health classes include a behavior modification project as part of the course, encouraging students to evaluate their personal wellness and implement nutritional and behavior changes if necessary. Below are some reflections from Professor Tonya Seed’s students:

Not only was I happy about this class, but also I learned so many things. First, I changed my diet completely; I gained responsibility for what I put in my mouth. I am maintaining a healthy weight and learned to make the best food choices. I now supplement my diet with vegetables and fruits. I am working on cutting out sodium consumption and fats, and I am trying to keep it within the recommended limits. Interesting fact about this class—I learned that you can eat and still lose weight in a healthy way. This idea cleared all the false programs for starvation, in the “name of losing weight.” I know better now. Professor Seed played a great role in teaching me how to work the different muscles in a correct alignment; with her teachings I’ve been able to carry on the exercise routine. I drew up my exercise plan; it is part of my fun and I now enjoy working out. I’ve passed on the same spirit to my family members, and ever since we started, we’re more lively and active. The class PE 174 helped me boost my mood. How? I no longer skip breakfast; that’s important for giving me a fresh start. And also with the workout, I spend my entire day active and full of energy to carry on my other duties. In fact, it is because of this positivity that I was able to make it to the dean’s list, thanks to this class.

This class totally boosted my esteem; I know how to feel good about myself. I don't have to fantasize about the diet programs on TV. I can do it myself within my means. I am a better person because of this class.

– Juliet Namazzi

The curriculum offered in Health 108 was helpful to me because it reinforced and shed new light on my nutritional habits. Because we were required to take a detailed look at what we were eating and how we were being active in our daily lives, I found ways to improve my approach to health and nutrition. The nutrition project that we did really drove home to me the importance of having a well-rounded and variety-packed diet while also making me take into consideration how much exercise I was getting daily. The nutrition project, along with the lectures and reading, showed me the many different components needed to control my weight as well as ways to increase my strength. When I do my shopping at the grocery store, I now pay closer attention to labels on products, which has helped me to stop wasting calories on items that provide little to no nutritional value. I’m really happy that I took this class because I feel more informed about what I am eating and how it affects my body.

– Starre Lanton

