



Office of the President

February 8, 2016

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

The Honorable Nancy Floreen
President, Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett and Ms. Floreen:

At the outset of this semester, we asked our faculty and staff to be more, to do more to drive student success, and to see that the future of our county, our beloved community, depends on their good work, both inside and outside the classroom. We ask the same of our county: to be more, to do more, so that our students can thrive and become active participants and contributors to all that Montgomery County is and will be.

To that end, Montgomery College seeks a total appropriation of \$263.7 million. This is an increase of \$12.2 million or 4.85 percent over fiscal year 2016. We request a contribution of \$10 million from the county, the majority of which will help meet our collective bargaining agreements with our faculty, part-time faculty, and our staff.

Specifically, the College seeks resources to help fund compensation enhancements and benefit cost increases; to expand, modestly, both our Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success program (ACES) and our efforts to close the achievement gap—the Achieving the Promise initiative, an effort to unleash the potential of every student; and to enhance funds for institutional financial aid for students.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Exercising Fiscal Prudence

This year, we renewed our effort to manage our resources carefully and spend cautiously. In preparing for fiscal year 2017, the College made permanent reductions in operations, accrued savings as directed beyond the county's target set for our institution, and assumed a greater

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tuition rate increase than last year. Additionally, in an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations and to limit operating budget impacts, we will outsource the retail operations of our bookstores, and eliminate two early learning (child care) centers on our campuses. We also chose to forego additional staff positions commensurate with the opening of a new facility on the Rockville Campus. Also, we have not budgeted for additional part-time faculty despite the expected growth in the number of classes students will take next year. With the leadership of the Board of Trustees, the College has made fiscal prudence a priority; we have made these difficult choices to respond to the current fiscal environment and to maximize the use of the public resources. These combined efforts lowered the budget gap for fiscal year 2017 by almost 50 percent.

Advancing Excellence

Our highest priority is to continue to advance excellence at this institution as evidenced in our *Montgomery College 2020* strategic plan. We will ask our faculty and staff to embrace and practice radical inclusion. In higher education, that means working to ensure the success of every student. To set about this purpose, we must upend our institution to profoundly change how we think and act. We must step away from the traditional notions in higher education that the success of some is acceptable—that collegiate success is the province of the few. Yes, even the democratic and open access institutions of community colleges operate on this idea. Our colleges will give every student a seat in a classroom. Yet, ultimately we are content with the some that succeed. But no more will we meet students at the starting line and wait to see who crosses the finish line. Instead, we will open our eyes to see that for some the race is an obstacle course, a marathon, not a clear linear path to the finish line. No longer will we let these obstacles beset our students and allow them to languish on the sidelines. Instead, guided by the core values that cause our college to open our doors to all, we will see the potential in every student and bend the institution to help them unleash their potential.

So, with clear eyes and deep intention, we will focus on the success of *every* student and make students the center of every decision—to make deeper our commitment to success for all. As an institution that stands at the epicenter of our community's future, we cannot stand across from our students on their educational journey. Instead, we must encircle all of our students to better understand their needs, their challenges, and their barriers to success. Together faculty, staff, and the institution will foster greater academic achievement—we will teach, usher, guide, mentor, and cheer our students across the finish line.

To achieve full inclusion and equity in success, we must also be able to quantify our findings and measure our efforts. Last year, the College crafted a Student Success Score Card—a key goal outlined in our strategic plan—with success indicators as a tool to track our progress. This tool helps leadership plan, provide strategic guidance, and prioritize resources. The Score Card also provides faculty and staff a gauge to measure their work, to help them understand the impact of their work, and to understand the importance of centering their efforts on the students they serve.

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This year, as the result of an initiative of our committed faculty and staff, the College has been invited to join Achieving the Dream (ATD). This national organization and network of colleges dedicated to student success is underwritten by the Lumina Foundation, which is focused on “low income students and students of color completing their education.” In other words, equity is their agenda. ATD encourages and supports evidence-based institutional improvement. It partners with colleges, like ours, and provides coaches, advisors, and networks to support student success goals. ATD offers a strong tool box to strengthen the efforts that we are already making and provides us with new strategies to advance excellence at Montgomery College.

In the end, excellence happens because of the daily effort put forth by our faculty and staff who put students at the epicenter of their work and continue to embrace efforts to drive student success. Our employees will aim to practice radical inclusion so that every student, no matter the challenges faced, will succeed and achieve the promise of higher education. Please support the funds necessary to provide salary enhancements for our dedicated faculty and staff, whom we challenge to strive every day to raise the bar, to spur innovation inside and outside the classroom—to be more, to do more, to strive for more for the sake of equity in achievement. Help us help our dedicated employees, like 2015 Maryland Professor of the Year Nevart Tahmazian, to close the achievement gap so that every student can achieve the promise and more.

Protecting Affordability and Enhancing Access

We are grateful for your continued commitment to an affordable yet high quality, locally provided postsecondary education. Poverty is the biggest barrier to obtaining a postsecondary credential, yet an education is the surest path out of poverty. Furthermore, many more jobs of the future require a postsecondary education. This conundrum makes your community college central to ensuring Montgomery County will be a thriving community in the years to come.

Nationally, we know that less than eight percent of students from the lowest income quartile achieve a baccalaureate degree within six years of high school graduation. Locally, we know that the debt load of our students has grown by 154 percent since 2011, making it difficult to transfer and afford a baccalaureate degree or support the local economy. Applications for financial aid have skyrocketed over the last several years. Today, 30 percent of our students qualify for a Pell grant, a form of federal financial aid for low income students—up from 25 percent since 2012. The families at Montgomery College who have qualified for Pell have an average household income of \$27,000. Yet, many Pell recipients do not get enough aid to cover the entire cost of their education leaving them to scramble to find resources to pay the last bit of tuition or buy books. Attending college part time makes achieving a degree harder. Nationally, less than eight percent of part-time students complete an associate’s degree within four years of high school graduation. Clearly, part-time attendance gets in the way of completion and is a very slow path to economic security or success. The majority of our students attend part-time. Students who qualify for grants but do not receive them generally do not enroll. Last year, 7,000 students who qualified for a grant and did not receive one, did **not**

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enroll. That is the equivalent to the total student population at Clarksburg, Montgomery Blair, and Walter Johnson high schools.

The need for an affordable postsecondary education will continue to grow in our community. Seemingly every day, we hear new statistics about the number of Montgomery County Public Schools students qualifying for free and reduced meals. Today, 40 percent of students in kindergarten through 5th grade are now eligible.

We believe it is imperative to increase the institutional aid available to our students. We hope you will support our efforts by keeping the growth of tuition revenue modest and supporting additional resources to lower the biggest barrier to success. It is a good investment in our collective futures because 77 percent of Montgomery College graduates stay local and enter the workforce. Our alumni—like Martin Mayorga, founder of Mayorga Coffee—help make Montgomery County all that it is today and can be tomorrow.

On a related note, we wish to thank you again for the county's support of our MI-BEST program last year. Given that there is little financial aid available for students who seek job training and skill enhancements, we are most grateful for the funds you provided to support students in this program. One cohort of 15 students has finished and one cohort of 14 is near completion. With two more cohorts beginning soon and, possibly, one more before the end of the semester, we hope to stretch our funds to serve a total of 75 students. Thank you for supporting this important program.

Driving Student Success

Open access to a postsecondary education is the cornerstone of our mission as a community college—providing open doors to all who wish to improve the trajectory of their lives through education. But our community can no longer afford a mission of access alone. Instead, we must look back briefly to review our accomplishments to date as we have done in our “Milestone Moments” project—a copy of the report is enclosed—and, then, swiftly look forward to build a stronger foundation of success for all, and endeavor to embrace radical inclusion, if we are to achieve equitable student outcomes. We must spur excellence in the classrooms and continue to build support outside the classroom—to find innovative ways to nurture each student. Your help is necessary and we ask to embrace and help underwrite key initiatives.

Last year, we reframed conversations about the achievement gap from a deficit perspective and renamed our efforts—Achieving the Promise—to acknowledge and capitalize on the assets that our students possess. With the resources you provided last year, we began this effort and hired a small cadre of part-time faculty coaches to aid in our efforts outside the classroom to foster student success. Building on the lessons learned from ACES and the recommendations of the closing the achievement task forces, this cadre of “coaches,” or mentors, will guide 1,500 students to achieve their highest potential. These coaches will form the core of the focused and intentional efforts of our Achieving the Promise initiative to unleash the potential of all of our students. Given that we serve 35,000 credit students annually, we have asked our faculty and

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staff to renew their individual efforts to craft new ways or tools to engage students—to listen carefully to our students, to hear their needs, and to respond with everything from changing advising practices to implementing innovative instructional methodologies in the classroom. We have asked them to think critically about this notion of radical inclusion—what it means for each student they engage and how this interaction can drive student achievement. Our employees will rise to the task if only evidenced by their efforts to solicit and gain participation in the Achieving the Dream program.

This year we seek your help to grow the Achieving the Promise effort with resources to create and implement the Achieving the Promise Academy.

Additionally, we seek a modest expansion of ACES. This program, which now serves 1,700 students, continues to demonstrate positive results with participating students outpacing their peer students on an array of progress and completion metrics.

If we are to truly deliver the future we collectively want—a dynamic workforce, a vibrant local economy, and a community filled with opportunity for all—we ask you to continue your profound commitment to education. More specifically, we ask you to engage in radical inclusion, too. Please give the residents who require an affordable, high quality, locally provided postsecondary education to drive their success—to be ready workers and vital members of our community—your utmost attention as you deliberate the county’s revenue needs and budget allocations. Help us break the down the barriers to completion. Help us help our students unleash their unlimited potential and drive equity in student success. Help us help you build the Montgomery County of tomorrow.

FISCAL BACKGROUND

Demonstrating Fiscal Stewardship

We complied readily with the county’s request issued last summer to save \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2016 to fund the fiscal year 2017 budget. Additionally, the College solved almost half of our budget gap ourselves—\$11.2 million of our \$23.2 million projected fiscal year 2017—by initiating a planned tuition increase that will raise \$3.2 million in revenue, and implementing permanent budget reductions of \$2.9 million and with the use of \$1.4 million in fund balance. The Board of Trustees plans to ask for more from our students with a 3.7 percent tuition increase. This increase will balance the support needed from taxpayers. We will forgo the expense of additional part-time faculty, despite the expected increase of 5,234 credit hours. Furthermore, we abandoned plans for new information technology and academic cost increases for the opening of a new building. Together, these actions helped narrow the budget gap significantly.

To minimize any potential burden on the operating budget and maximize service to our students, we made decisions to change how we operate our early learning centers and our bookstores.

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Projecting Enrollment

Overall, enrollment remains stable, and Montgomery College continues to have the largest enrollment of all community colleges in Maryland. Our fall 2015 credit enrollment was 25,320 credit students, down slightly from the fall 2014 enrollment of 25,517 students. We are the third largest undergraduate institution in the state, behind the University of Maryland College Park and University of Maryland University College, an online school serving students all over the world.

Credit hour enrollment determines our tuition revenue. In fiscal year 2017, we project credit hour enrollment increase 5,234 credit hours—meaning students are taking more classes. This is a one percent increase over last fiscal year’s projection. For fiscal year 2016, the College is experiencing higher than projected increases in both the fall and spring credit hour enrollment. This is good news for revenue projections and student outcome metrics—students who take more courses complete a degree sooner.

Additionally, the College continues to experience growth in certain high demand areas. For example, the combined enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs has increased nearly 60 percent over the last five years and teacher education program enrollment grew 75 percent over the same time period. We also experienced a 15 percent growth in our business program and a steady increase of student majors for a recently added communication studies program.

However, we project our “headcount” enrollment to decline slightly next year, because of the projected decrease in the Montgomery County Public Schools 12th grade population in the 2015–2016 school year. While we anticipate our “draw rate” of county high school graduates to remain at 25 percent, the decrease in the total number of possible MCPS graduates leads us to lower our expected enrollment in the fall semester of 2016 to 24,911 credit students.

We are concerned, as noted, about the growing rate of poverty in our community, its impact on our residents’ quality of life, as well as its impact on College enrollment.

REVENUE SOURCES

State Aid

The College’s anticipated state aid is \$42.2 million in fiscal year 2017. Of that, the current fund would receive \$36 million, a 6.1 percent increase from the prior year. This year’s increase is a result of the governor’s use of the John A. Cade Funding Formula in his proposed budget. For fiscal year 2016, the College received a net reduction of \$852,150 in state aid over the previous fiscal year.

The governor has asked the legislature to introduce legislation to eliminate funding formulas. However, members of the general assembly have introduced legislation to enhance the Cade

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Funding Formula for community colleges, which determines state aid for the College.

Tuition Increase

The College anticipates a \$4/\$8/\$12 per-credit-hour increase in tuition for in-county/in-state/out-of-state students. The Board of Trustees acts on tuition rates in April. The consolidated fee charged to students will also increase because it is calculated as a percentage of tuition. Also, this budget reflects a \$1 increase in the transportation fee to support the bonds for the new Rockville Campus parking garage. With these proposed increases, the average full-time student will pay \$4,902 next year, a 3.7 percent increase from last year. Overall, tuition and related fees are expected to generate \$84.1 million, an increase of \$2.9 million above last year.

Savings

The College saved \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2016, as requested by the county, for use in fiscal year 2017. Additionally, the College added another \$1.4 million to fund balance for a total commitment of \$3.9 million of resources to fund the fiscal year 2017 budget. Leaving \$4.5 million in reserve for fiscal year 2017

County Support

To help fund next year's operations, we respectfully request \$10 million in county support and an increase in our personnel complement by 12. Approximately \$2.5 million of the request will fund important student centered initiatives and the remaining \$7.5 million will fund two-thirds of our compensation and benefit cost increases. Five positions will expand our ACES program, three positions will support our Achieving the Promise initiative, and four positions will staff the early learning center at Germantown as we transition it to the operating budget.

EXPENDITURE REQUESTS

The Current Fund expenditure appropriation request totals \$263.7 million, representing an increase of \$12.2 million or 4.85 percent over last year.

Advancing Excellence with Compensation and Benefits for our Employees— \$11,200,000

This budget request includes an increase of \$9.8 million for compensation-related increases, driven primarily by our three collective bargaining agreements as well as a change in the county minimum wage rate. We have a nine-year comprehensive agreement with our full-time faculty union wherein compensation is reviewed every three years. Fiscal year 2017 is the last year of a three-year agreement in place with our part-time faculty union. We expect to conclude negotiations with our staff union by March. Staff compensation is included in this request.

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In fiscal year 2017, our employee benefit costs will increase by \$1.4 million, a 4.25 percent increase over last fiscal year. The increase of \$1.2 million for our group insurance is from a higher number of claims and higher prescription drug costs. To minimize these increases, the College instituted several plan changes resulting in estimated savings of \$470,000.

Driving Completion with Scholarships—\$1,115,000

As noted earlier, poverty is the biggest barrier to obtaining a postsecondary education. This budget assumes an increase of \$1,115,000 to the Board of Trustee (BOT) Scholarship Fund to provide grants to students in need. Scholarships and grants awarded from this fund are managed by the College's financial aid office. This additional funding will help low income students pay for the cost of attendance including tuition, fees, and books. Many students have demonstrated need but do not qualify for state or federal financial aid.

With a grant from the College, a student in need is more likely to enroll. Although 82 percent of students awarded BOT grants and scholarships enrolled at the College, we are concerned for the 7,000 students who qualified, but did not receive a grant because resources ran out. The average BOT award is \$1,000 per student. Funding these additional grants, will help us assist approximately 1,000 additional students.

Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES)—\$590,000

ACES is a partnership led by Montgomery College in concert with our public schools and the Universities at Shady Grove. This effort guides students who are underrepresented in higher education *to* college and *through* college. Coaching is the key element. Today, we embed Montgomery College coaches in 10 of our county's 25 high schools—one per school to date.

Currently in its third year, over 1,700 students are now enrolled in ACES, with over 1,200 students at the partner high schools. There are 481 ACES students now attending the College. The program is highly successful: ACES high school students exceeded other recent high school graduates on several measures. Their course pass rates at the College have surpassed non-ACES recent high school graduates (77 percent for ACES, 72 percent for others); their GPAs are higher (2.65 for ACES, 2.12 for others); and their fall-to-spring retention has soared over their peers (91 percent for ACES, 71 percent for others).

Our request includes funds to expand to two high schools: Blake and Paint Branch. With this expansion, we will reach an additional 240 students. Also, we will hire two additional coaches to support the 800 ACES students we expect on campus next year. An assistant director will strengthen the program by pursuing grants and donations, creating a stronger parent education component, facilitating community collaboration, and assisting the director with daily administration. Additional funding will also support tutoring and operational items for ACES students.

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Achieving the Promise and Unleashing Student Potential—\$500,000

The College will continue our Achieving the Promise initiative to unleash the potential of our African American and Latino/Latina students. Specifically, we will create an Achieving the Promise Academy (ATPA) along with complementary set of student centered initiatives. Grounded in empirical research on student success, the ATPA will create and oversee small cohorts for 1,500 student participants. Students will benefit from collaboration and closer relationships with coaches, mentors, faculty, learning centers, and peers—all well documented factors that contribute to student success. During the 2016 spring semester—thanks to your support—the College began this effort by employing 35 part-time faculty as ATPA coaches.

Additional financial resources are needed to reach a greater number of students and to assess the ATPA and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. This budget includes three full-time staff associates to (1) examine and leverage data culled from ATPA, (2) expand faculty professional development with a specific emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy and active teaching strategies, and (3) coordinate the day-to-day operations for ATPA, including leveraging the good work of our existing faculty and staff. In addition, the budget anticipates the addition of eight more part-time faculty coaches, thus reaching an additional 400 students. The remainder of the funds will be used to send students, staff, and coaches to a Montgomery College co-sponsored *Black, Brown, and College Bound* summit hosted by Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida, as well as operational costs.

Enhancing Teacher Education/Embedding the Early Learning Center in Academics—\$299,000

In fiscal year 2017, the early learning (child care) center at the Germantown Campus center will become fully integrated into the Education and Social Sciences Department and accessible to all the disciplines providing opportunities for meaningful learning and research. Most importantly, as a dedicated laboratory for the School of Education, it will be an important augmentation to the teacher education program as an applied learning environment for our students.

Although our current early learning centers, one on each campus, provide quality child care for our students, employees, and the community, we made the difficult decision to close the centers at the Rockville and Takoma Park/Silver Spring campuses at the end of the current fiscal year to minimize the impact on the operating budget while providing an enriched program for future teachers. This realignment places the focus of our center on student learning through observation and practicum opportunities at what will be a true learning center for our students and the children.

The decision to close two of our early learning centers was made after careful consideration of several factors, including the aging of the facilities and associated costs, increasing expenditures and decreasing revenues, resulting in a net loss for the past several years, and the impact on those served by the centers. The remaining center will become an integral part the

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education program, and hence the expenditures will move from the enterprises fund to the current fund in the operating budget.

The operations of the remaining center will consist of two classrooms and require eight staff positions. Funds are requested to help defray the cost of four positions and daily operations. The remaining four staff will come from reallocating existing positions.

Please note that the College will do its best to minimize the impact on our valued and longstanding employees and the families served by our early learning centers.

OTHER FUNDS

Emergency Plant Maintenance and Repair Fund—\$350,000

The Emergency Plant Maintenance and Repair Fund is a spending affordability fund. We request an appropriation of \$350,000 and county funding equal to last year's amount (\$250,000), plus the use of fund balance of \$100,000. This funding is crucial for supporting our emergency maintenance needs.

Workforce Development & Continuing Education Fund—\$18.6 Million

We request appropriation authority to spend \$18,560,870 for the Workforce Development & Continuing Education Fund. This is a less than one percent decrease compared to the fiscal year 2016 budget.

More than 24,000 students enrolled in our Workforce Development & Continuing Education programs. The College is a popular choice for students seeking career programs to earn certifications in the health sciences, trades, and management as well as programs for personal enrichment and development. These students rely heavily on our Workforce Development & Continuing Education programs.

Auxiliary Enterprises Fund—\$2.7 Million

We request appropriation authority to spend \$2.7 million for the Auxiliary Enterprises Fund. This request reflects the operational changes of our retail bookstores and early learning centers. The appropriation authority will continue to cover expenditures associated with the Parilla Performing Arts Center, the student operated MBI Café, other facilities rentals, any contingency for the transition operations, and enhanced student centered services.

With the advancement of alternative textbook resources and the various means in which students can purchase textbooks, the current business model for our college-based bookstore lacked sustainability. Careful reviews conducted internally and externally led us to conclude that our bookstore business model is not sustainable and is not the best option for our students. Thus, the College decided to transition to a third-party vendor to operate our bookstores and

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related operations. Third-party vendors are able to employ economies of scale and modern business practices that offer greater selection and convenience to students while managing costs. This transition will take place in spring of 2016. The request includes expected expenditures resulting from the third-party book store operations.

Given the operational changes of the early learning centers described earlier in this letter, no appropriation authority is needed from this account to manage their operations.

50th Anniversary Endowment Fund—\$263,000

We request appropriation authority to spend \$263,000 from the 50th Anniversary Endowment Fund for planning associated with the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology at the Germantown Campus.

Cable TV Fund—\$1.7 Million

We request appropriation authority to spend \$1.7 million. The source of revenue for this fund is primarily the county's cable plan. The Cable TV Fund will increase closed-captioning programming, increase multicultural and foreign language programming, and support community outreach as the College completes the technical transition to high-definition programming.

Grants Fund—\$20.2 Million

We request Grants Fund appropriation authority to spend \$20.2 million. Of this amount, \$400,000 is requested in county funds for the Adult ESOL/Adult Basic Education/GED program. This is the same amount as was appropriated in fiscal year 2016.

Transportation Fund—\$4.4 Million

We request appropriation authority to spend \$4.4 million. The Transportation Fund is comprised entirely of user fees from students and employees, including parking enforcement revenue. All revenue will be used to pay for lease costs related to the Takoma Park/Silver Spring West Parking Garage and the Rockville North Garage as well as fund student transportation alternatives for our students, Ride On bus service and the MC shuttle. The Board of Trustees is expected to approve a \$1 per-credit-hour transportation fee increase to support the Rockville Parking Garage at its April meeting. This will change the transportation fee from \$6 to \$7 per credit hour. This is the same amount as was appropriated in fiscal year 2016.

Major Facilities Reserve Fund—\$3.5 Million

We request appropriation authority to spend \$3.5 million. The amount of the appropriation will cover the lease payments to the Montgomery College Foundation for lease of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center. This fund is entirely comprised of user fees and no

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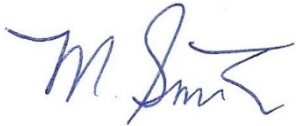
county funds are requested.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the Montgomery College Board of Trustees, we respectfully request total appropriation authority of \$315,317,420.

We appreciate your careful review and consideration of this operating budget request.

Sincerely yours,



Marsha Suggs Smith
Chair, Board of Trustees



DeRionne P. Pollard, PhD
President