



President's Report to the Board

November 2013

Americans between 25 and 54 years old spend more time working than doing any single other activity, including sleeping, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). On average, we spend 8.8 hours a day on the job, as compared to 7.6 hours sleeping, 2.5 hours doing sports or leisure activities, and 1.1 hours doing housework. As a result, it is imperative that we take deliberate steps to ensure that our College remains an excellent place to work—a place where our employees can cultivate balanced and satisfying careers, and where they work with colleagues who reflect the diversity of our community and who offer intellectual and creative inspiration.

Positioning the College as a workforce leader benefits our employees, as well as our very organization. As you have certainly heard before, organizations are only as great as their talent, and the College is no exception. To continue to thrive and meet the needs of our community, we must attract, hire, and retain the individuals who will propel our institution into an even-more promising future.

It is with these mutually beneficial goals in mind that the College is laying the groundwork for human resources initiatives led by Vice President of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement Nadine Porter: Destination Employer and Common Employee Experience. In this month's *President's Report*, I provide you with some of the conceptual framework supporting these initiatives, which we are in the early stages of defining.

Destination Employer

The phrase “destination employer” is commonly used by employers who strive to attract the best candidates to their organizations. It reflects a deliberate effort by employers to define a recruitment strategy that competes for the best talent in the market.

Montgomery College has a great record well in finding talented individuals



for all levels of the organization. In the new competitive marketplace, it is time to step up our game.

The College's Destination Employer strategies are being developed in the Office of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement (HRDE), but we already have goals and purposes in mind as we undertake this effort.

I like to compare the concept of a Destination Employer to a wellness wheel: a healthy institution is one that ensures its employees are occupationally well with access to cross training and career growth; physically well with access to wellness programs; educationally well with access to educational benefits and cultural events; emotionally well with access to support services; and socially well with access to supportive colleagues. There are many components of the institution that we must examine in our process, but we have identified eight areas that are our primary target areas:

- **Foundation, Structure, and Alignment** - We must make sure that every employee has a tangible connection to our organizational mission, vision, and core values, as well as to our strategic plan. This requires every employee to understand how his or her position and responsibilities are directly connected to the overarching goals of the organization.
- **Culture and Leadership** - We must focus on creating a culture of collaboration, innovation, and personal and professional growth. Such an attitude starts with the leadership, who must set an example through increased transparency and greater access at every level of the organization.
- **Leveraging of Existing Strengths** - As an employer, the College already does a lot well! We provide our employees with work-life flexibility, wellness programs, affordable child care, training opportunities, and more. We must continue to leverage that which makes the College the type of work environment that employees want to stay for their entire careers.
- **Attraction and Retention of High-caliber Talent** - On the recruitment side, we must better market the strengths of our institution to create an employer brand that is dynamic enough to capture the attention of exceptional talent. We must be creative, not only in *how* we reach individuals, but also *whom* we reach. We need to prioritize cultivating a diverse employee population rich with different personal and professional background



experiences. We know firsthand from our students that they respond and learn in drastically different ways—likewise, current and prospective College employees respond to different types of recruitment, incentives, and work structures.

- **Learning, Development, and Growth** - We must constantly ask how we can encourage employees to keep their intellectual capital and institutional knowledge here at the College. By encouraging and empowering employees to expand their skill sets through lifelong learning and training, the College will benefit from engaged employees, and our employees will feel intellectually challenged and rewarded.
- **Rewards and Recognition** - While we may face restraints in the amount of money we can offer employees when compared to the private sector, we know that our College offers intangibles that enhance employees' experiences. While exploring financial compensation rewards, we also will consider innovative non-monetary recognition programs that will set our College apart.
- **Workforce Planning and Talent Management** - The College needs to take a holistic view of the institution, where the sum of all of our parts equals our desired outcome. We must continue to make sure that current positions and the talent who will fill those positions align with our overarching goals.
- **Career Architecture** - Our employees should be able to navigate a diverse career path without ever leaving the institution; they should be able to explore any available position at the College for which they are qualified. Not only does this improve career quality for our employees, it also ensures that the College has the right people in the right places, with qualified employees motivated and prepared to serve. We must provide an easy and efficient process—and the encouragement necessary—for our employees to feel empowered to shift between College departments, campuses, or positions that better match College needs with employee talents.

Common Employee Experience

Becoming a Destination Employer is impossible if we do not have a system in place that ensures each and every one of our employees has a common experience. Last spring, a committee of employees from across the College examined what it means to belong to our



employee community and what employees should be able to expect from the organization. The committee laid out five expectations that will serve as the hallmarks of the MC employment experience; they echo the expectations that comprise the Common Student Experience, as previously defined by a separate College task group. The Common Employee Experience expectations are:

- **Start Smart** - Montgomery College will assist employees new to their positions in building a firm foundation for an engaged and fulfilling employment experience.
- **Provide a Positive, Healthy Workspace, and Environment** - Montgomery College values a safe, secure, and productive employment experience.
- **Provide and Maintain a Foundation of Support** - Effective leadership and sufficient resources are essential to employee success. In this way, Montgomery College will ensure its management is effective, knowledgeable, and accountable.
- **Get Connected and Build Community** - Montgomery College will encourage employee engagement.
- **Encourage Growth, Success, Recognition, and Lifelong Learning** - Montgomery College is committed to providing meaningful professional development, career path development opportunities, and succession planning.

Both of these efforts speak to creating institutional vision and value for how employees and students—our largest stakeholder group—experience the institution. It is no coincidence that each of these sets of expectations directly overlaps in some way with the target areas necessary to create and sustain a successful Destination Employer posture in the market. In fact, the Destination Employer initiative encapsulates the Common Employee Experience—in other words, creating a common experience for our employees is a *necessary* component of becoming a place where exceptional talent wants to come and stay.

I am proud of the conceptual framework that we have established for both the Destination Employer and Common Employee Experience initiatives, and have tasked Senior Vice President for Administrative and Fiscal Services Janet Wormack, Nadine Porter, and the Office of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement with developing and implementing a multi-year work plan to move forward on the initiatives. To start the process, the HRDE team will host planning sessions with individuals from across the College. This interdisciplinary group will be tasked



with fleshing out the concepts of what will make us a Destination Employer and also create the Common Employee Experience for Montgomery College, by brainstorming and developing a specific work plan that can help us to realize these goals. My expectation is that the resulting work plan will feature multifaceted strategic approaches and actions that can be fulfilled in the coming years.

While these initiatives will take time, I continue to find inspiration every day in the employees who make Montgomery College a wonderful place to work, and I look forward to enhancing this organization, both for those here today and those yet to come. Working thoughtfully, collaboratively, and diligently, Montgomery College will become known as a destination where talented employees want to work and grow throughout their careers.

Monthly Discussion Questions¹

1. **Institutional needs.** What kind of change, if any, does our institution need?
2. **Context and competition.** Do we understand our institution's competitive position?
3. **Consequences of no change.** What are the consequences if we do not engage in a change process?
4. **Leadership capacity.** As a board and as individual board members, are we able and willing to work with our president to bring about positive change?
5. **Change process and players.** Based on this discussion, what is the right role for the board to play at this time?

¹ Adopted from MacTaggart, Terrence J., *Leading Change: How Boards and Presidents Build Exceptional Academic Institutions*, AGB Press, 2011 (pp. 21–22).

