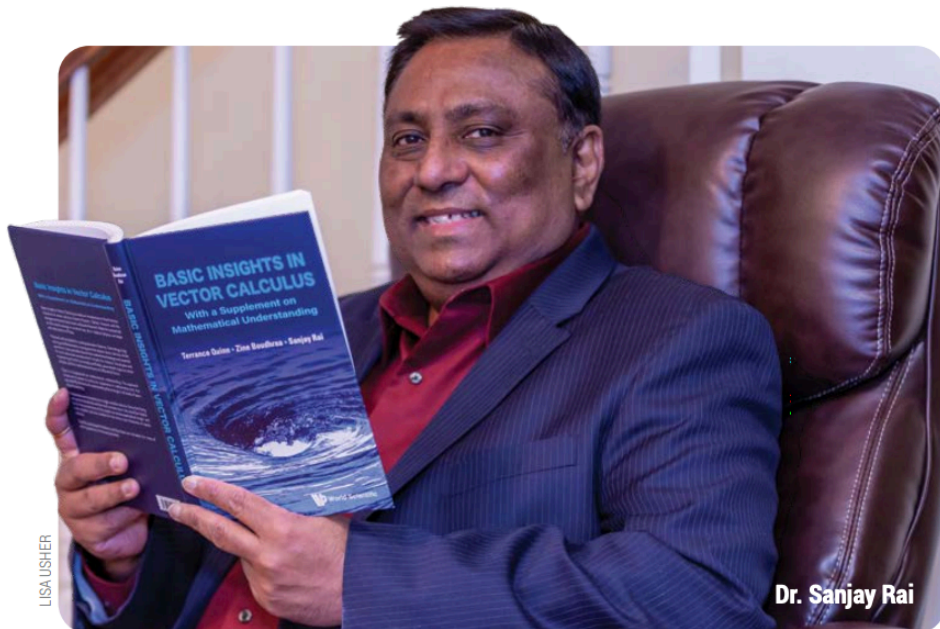


A Textbook Formula for Giving

Administrator Uses Book Royalties, Payroll Deduction to Benefit Students | By Jill Fitzgerald



Dr. Sanjay Rai

Growing up in India, life was difficult for Sanjay Rai. Scarcity defined life in the small efficiency apartment with no air conditioning he lived in with his parents and sister. “My parents did not finish high school—and they had a hard life because of it,” he says.

“Had I not gotten into college, it would have been the end of the road for me,” says Rai, senior vice president of academic affairs at Montgomery College. When he left India to earn his master’s degree at Dalhousie University in Canada, he had \$50 in his pocket.

“I benefitted from the kindness of others,” he says, noting his college, graduate, and doctoral work, completed in three countries, was fully funded, through fellowships and stipends, by strangers.

“I want to do whatever I can to make an impact on our students,” says Rai, who is donating the royalties of his book, *Basic Insights in Vector Calculus: With a Supplement on Mathematical Understanding* to support MC student scholarships. Rai’s co-authors are Dr.

Terrence Quinn, professor emeritus at Middle Tennessee State University, who he met in graduate school, and Dr. Zine Boudhraa, a Rockville Campus math professor.

Rai started at MC in 2004 as the Rockville Campus dean of science, engineering, and mathematics. Dr. Jim O’Brien, a Rockville Campus physics professor, helped acclimate Rai to the College. When O’Brien died of a brain tumor in 2010, Rai began contributing to College scholarships through the Jim O’Brien Scholarship Fund.

When he was promoted to senior vice president in 2014, Rai continued his benevolence to students by donating his pay increase to fund the Rai Family Endowed Scholarship.

“Dr. Rai has been giving at a very high level for a long time,” says Noah Saposnik, major gifts and annual giving director. “Through his payroll deduction, he’s creating a lasting legacy for our students.”

In addition to his generosity, Rai has spearheaded a number of innovative initiatives that promote student success. And having faced adversity, removing barriers to academic achievement is his personal mission. Some of his accomplishments include, creating online degrees and using open educational resources; increasing partnerships with MCPS, leading to a dramatic increase in dual enrollment; launching the Achieving the Promise Academy, which provides academic coaching for underprepared students; and garnering \$25 million in U.S. Department of Labor grants.

In his previous role as Germantown Campus vice president and provost, he advanced important ventures including the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology, Holy Cross Germantown Hospital, the Frank Islam Athenaeum Symposia, the Southern Management Leadership Program, and the Biological Sciences Education Building.

Rai believes Montgomery College is among the best community colleges in the nation—and is doing his part, both through his philanthropy and his leadership, to ensure it continues. “Education is the key to economic and social mobility throughout the world. Community colleges, in particular, are in the best position to meet the educational needs of the members of our communities,” he says.