



Office of E-Learning, Innovation, and Teaching Excellence (ELITE) SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE LAUNCHES VIRTUAL CAMPUS



Montgomery College (MC) continues to be recognized as a leader in online education, most recently receiving recognition from Intelligent.com as being one of the best online community colleges in the state of Maryland. Over the years, MC had seen tremendous growth in fully asynchronous online courses, and in recent years, growth was also seen in synchronous structured remote courses. Open Educational Resources, zero cost textbooks, and extended winter enrollments have contributed to the College's overall online enrollments. Currently, there are nine online degrees and four online certificates, and

more are being explored for online delivery.

The launch of a virtual campus at MC is rooted in the need to provide equitable access to all Montgomery County residents, regardless of background. In addition to increasing access to education and reducing cost and time to completion, there is also an obligation to deliver high quality, inclusive services in the virtual environment to improve the overall student experience. As stated in Goal #2 of the MC 2025 Strategic Plan, a virtual campus would offer the opportunity to transform the teaching and learning environments in the online as well as in-person spaces. Specifically, a virtual campus can be the source through which enhanced and expanded wraparound academic support is offered.

In February 2021, a three-year virtual campus strategic plan was developed to guide the launching of the virtual campus. In January 2022, Dr. Shinta Hernandez was appointed as the founding dean of the virtual campus, who will lead all implementation efforts. As part of the implementation process, two teams have been created to help launch, advance, and sustain the virtual campus. During this Spring 2022 semester, the Implementation Team and the Horizon Team will meet monthly to discuss strategies and provide recommendations to help reach the institutional goals. These two teams are

cross-functional representations of the various units, offices, and departments at MC that may contribute to the virtual campus.

During the implementation time period, Dr. Hernandez will work with the Implementation Team and Horizon Team to achieve greater holistic educational excellence for all students. In collaboration with the various units, offices, and departments, they will solidify a framework for the virtual campus, increase academic offerings to online students, expand College marketing of the virtual campus, and expand College services to further embrace online students. They will also utilize the strength of the business community in Montgomery County to increase relevance in discipline and online pedagogy, develop a plan to increase the market base more nationally and globally, and recommend a plan to utilize new technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence in student engagement, course delivery, and support services for online students.

DR. SHINTA HERNANDEZ NAMED DEAN OF VIRTUAL CAMPUS

Dr. Shinta Hernandez has been named as the founding dean of MC's virtual campus. She began her new assignment on January 10 and will focus on launching the virtual campus this spring.

Dr. Hernandez previously served as department chair of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice for the Rockville and Takoma Park Silver Spring campuses. Previously, Dr. Hernandez was a sociology instructor, teaching both on-campus and online, and a SOCY 100 Common Course coordinator. Dr. Hernandez has a doctor of philosophy in Sociology from the University of Maryland, College Park, a master of Public Policy in Social Policy from Georgetown University, and a bachelor of arts in Psychology from Brandeis University.



Dr. Hernandez led her department through the creation of various online courses that employed Quality Matters standards to enhance online pedagogy, increase student engagement and improve overall student success in the online environment. She led the implementation of Z-courses using culturally relevant Open Educational Resources that resulted in students in her disciplines saving approximately \$1 million in textbook costs. She provided leadership and helped develop the comprehensive seven-week Structured Remote Teaching (SRT) training as part of the 2020 Summer Professional Development Institute for more than 700 full-time and part-time faculty, ensuring best online practices, embedded student services, and relevant discipline connections.

Dr. Hernandez has facilitated workshops on Decolonizing the Curriculum, Social Justice and Inclusive Curriculum, tough empathy pedagogy and open education. She also facilitated Constituent Conversations with the Board of Trustees and Governance councils on matters relating to student success, retention, and graduation. Currently, Dr. Hernandez serves as Chair of the Faculty Advisory Council for the Maryland Higher Education Commission and as Vice President of Professional Development for the Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources. She has also served as a co-designer and facilitator for the MarylandOnline Leadership Institute and as the MC representative for the Maryland Sociology Affinity Group. She was awarded the

Montgomery College Outstanding Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching and Advising in 2017 and the Teaching Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organization Development in 2018.

MC SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH UNIVERSITY IN COSTA RICA

MC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a university in Costa Rica that focuses initially on faculty collaborations but could expand to student exchanges and research programs.

The MOU between MC and the Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia y Tecnología (ULACIT) in San Jose, Costa Rica, outlines ULACIT's participation in three projects: the Global Classrooms Project spearheaded by Professors Shelley Jones and Carla Naranjo, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship led by Drs. Michael Mills and Shinta Hernandez, and the International Dialogue towards Excellence in Academic led by Dr. Paul Miller.

ULACIT is a bilingual university established in Costa Rica in 1987. With an enrollment of 4,500 students, ULACIT offers undergraduates, graduate, and post-graduate degrees.

Professors Jones and Naranjo initiated the agreement between the two institutions following efforts by Professor David Lott, who made about a dozen guest presentations for ULACIT classes, student groups, and campus events during 2021.





MC'S UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) OPEN PEDAGOGY FACULTY FELLOWSHIP

MC's United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship continues to expand its footprint, connecting MC faculty with faculty in the United States and internationally.

The fellowship, founded by Drs. Michael Mills and Shinta Hernandez, now has partnerships in Maryland, Arizona, Canada, and most recently, Costa Rica. The Universidad Latinoamericana de Ciencia Y Tecnologia (ULACIT) in San Jose, Costa Rica, has joined the Community College of Baltimore County in Maryland, Maricopa Community College and Pima Community College in Arizona, and Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Thompson Rivers University, and Langara College in Canada.

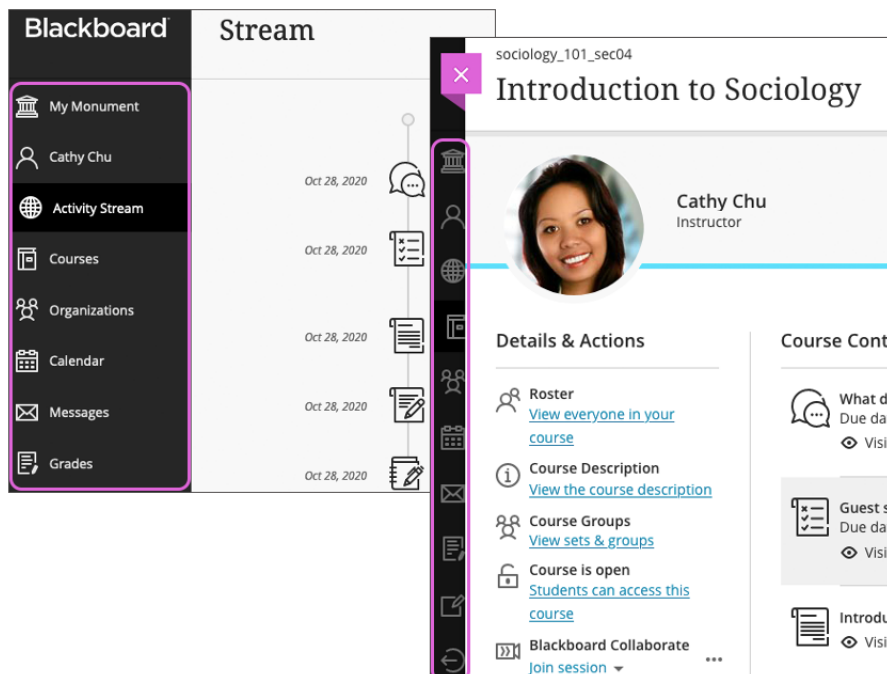
The focus of the fellowship is to have faculty create renewable assignments—those assignments that students complete that add value to their world—centered around one or more of the 17 SDGs that address a wide range of social issues. Faculty work in interdisciplinary teams across institutions and engage students as partners in the learning process.

Since the fellowship began in the summer of 2018, almost 4,000 students and 112 faculty have participated. In 2020, MC won the Open Education Consortium's Open Education Award for Excellence in the Open Pedagogy category.

Both part-time and full-time faculty are eligible to participate. Applications for the Summer 2022 fellowship will be available in March.

For more information about the fellowship, go to <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/offices/elite/unesco>.

BLACKBOARD ULTRA BASE NAVIGATION



What is the Ultra Base Navigation?

It is a modern, intuitive navigation menu that lives outside of courses. It includes links to new pages such as the Activity Stream, Calendar, Messages, providing quick access to the most critical information consolidated from all your courses.

What does it mean for me?

- Courses will not change. They look and operate exactly as now.
- Starting Summer 2022, you will see the new navigation as soon as you log into Learn.

How will this enhance your efficiency and experience?

- Modern, intuitive user experience. You and your students are going to enjoy this simple, intuitive, and engaging user experience.
- Works well on mobile devices. This navigation is designed to work well regardless of which device you're using.
- Aggregates important information. All your course and organization information—like Calendar, Messages, and Grades—is now consolidated into one global view, minimizing the time spent navigating into each individual course.

Where can I find more information?

- [Base Navigation, Instructor Overview](#) (video)
- [Base Navigation for Educators](#) (pdf)

COMMUNITY AND COVID-INSPIRED FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Community and Covid-inspired Faculty Scholarship: Issues and Opportunities Fellowship officially kicks off this Spring to support faculty scholarship and research opportunities designed to explore the themes of social justice and MC's role in community engagement, growth, and recovery. Led by Dr. Paul Miller, Professional Development Director for ELITE, and Dr. Cassandra Jones, Director of Assessment for the Academic Affairs Office, the Fellowship continues MC's commitment to access, equity, and excellence.

Through a competitive application process, the Fellowship committee selected six faculty from

various disciplines to participate in this inaugural cohort. These faculty are Serena Gould, Brandon Wallace, Rashi Jain, Glenda Hernandez Tittle, Geetha Kada, and Niyati Pandya. Together, the fellows will explore the relationship between COVID-19 and its impact to highlight their work as they bring innovation to the classroom to enhance teaching at MC as we restore, evolve, and transform into a socially just post-pandemic institution.

Sponsored by Dr. Sanjay Rai, the Fellowship serves as a vehicle to promote research, support the integration and transformation of knowledge through teaching and learning continuum, and promote the application of knowledge to solve problems identified in the MC community.

ELITE AFTER DARK



In the Fall, ELITE began ELITE After Dark—an after-hours professional development opportunity built with busy schedules in mind.

ELITE After Dark offers some of ELITE’s most popular workshops on the first Monday and Tuesday of each month between 5:00-9:00 pm. Topics included Engaging Students through Digital Storytelling, Culturally Responsive Teaching Using Choice Boards, Getting Things Done: Capture, Clarify, Organize, and Humanities Meets Data: Text Analysis Using the Voyant Tool.

With fewer workshop participants, ELITE After Dark provides MC employees an opportunity to engage in more individualized learning led by the ELITE PD Team. With an intentional focus on reflective dialogue and coaching, participants left each session with actional targets and goals to support their individualized needs.

ELITE After Dark has become a permanent professional development offering based on participant feedback and popular demand. Visit the [ELITE After Dark webpage](#) to view the Spring schedule.

ADOPT LIBRARY E-BOOKS FOR Z-COURSES

The Library is excited to support [MC Open](#) and the College’s efforts at expanding Z-course offerings through its new service tool **Faculty Select**. Faculty Select assists faculty in their efforts to offer free access to textbooks in their Blackboard courses and to support equity of access and college affordability for students. Faculty Select is an online self-service platform that MC faculty can use to locate and adopt high quality, no cost e-books for their courses. Students in classes where faculty have used Faculty Select and worked with MC librarians to adopt a library owned e-textbook will have access to their course textbook through their online class site in Blackboard, completely free of charge and with no barriers to access.



Faculty Select combines three types of resources: e-books the MC Library already owns that may be suitable for use as e-textbooks, e-books the MC Library can license upon request by faculty members, and Open Educational Resources (OERs) from a variety of high-quality repositories. OERs are freely

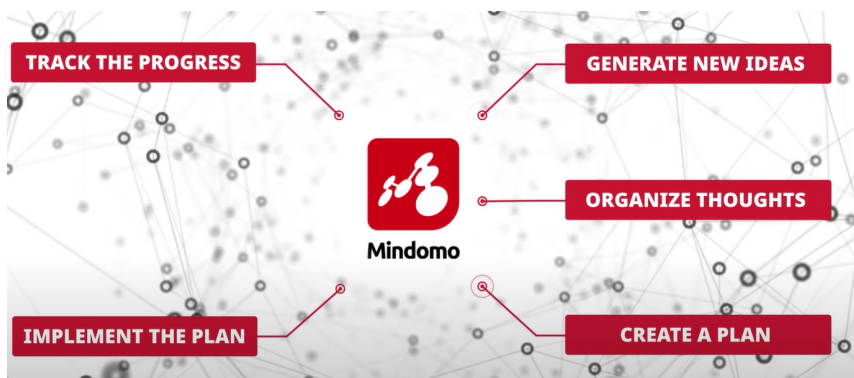
available, openly licensed materials that may be adopted as alternatives to traditional textbooks that students are required to purchase for the course. Faculty can search the Faculty Select platform to identify an appropriate title(s) and adopt that title(s) for use in their classes with just a few clicks.

The adoption of free course materials in higher education can represent a significant savings to students who use library-provided or open access course materials instead of having to take on the significant cost of purchasing the texts themselves. During AY21, the library purchased both electronic versions of print textbooks used in courses during remote learning and worked with faculty across the College to identify alternative library licensed e-books for adoption in their courses. All told, over 200 library licensed e-books were available for use by students for free in 169 courses. These e-books were used over 19,000 times by students enrolled in these courses.

Working with the library to identify alternative library licensed e-books suitable for adoption in your course makes it easier for students from all economic backgrounds and financial situations to afford and access a quality education for a reasonable price. MC Library is proud to support these efforts at the College.

For more information on Faculty Select and to learn how the library may assist you, please see the [Adopt E-Textbooks for Z Courses webpage](#).

FACULTY INNOVATION: USING MIND MAPS TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING



Instructors at MC are continually looking for methods that engage their students with fresh options to support learning at a deeper level. During Fall 2021, Gloria Barron, Instructional Designer for ELITE, and Ishrat Rahman, Science faculty at Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus, conducted a pilot to examine the effectiveness and usability of Mindomo, a mind mapping tool, to

create graded assignments through Blackboard.

Mindomo is a cloud-based application useful for organizing and structuring ideas and complex concepts with a visual representation that supports creativity and profound analysis of a problem.

Fifteen faculty from all three campuses took part in the pilot. Each implemented a Mindomo assignment in one of their lessons. Throughout the pilot, instructors received professional development on how to guide students not only to master a great variety of concepts but also to develop essential learning and thinking skills: generating new ideas, synthesizing and structuring information, problem-solving, decision-making, using evidence to support claims, and accurate planning. Results from the pilot indicated that students found the tool very useful for brainstorming, organizing their notes, and creating mind maps to organize and structure their understanding of course concepts.

To learn more about Mindomo or the pilot conducted in the Fall, contact Gloria Barron.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF LEARNING: HYFLEX INSTRUCTION

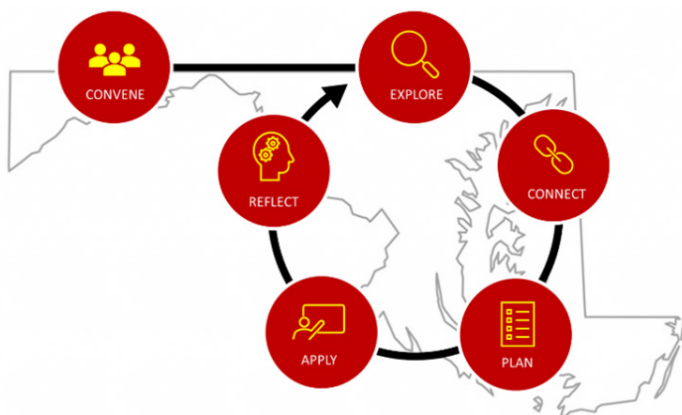
As we begin to evolve and transform into a post-pandemic institution, MC is committed to providing unique opportunities that can meet the individualized learning needs of our students. With an emphasis on accountability and growth, the use of technology has emerged as a way to adapt instruction to advance the competencies of all students, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to learn.

As we have witnessed, technology is a driving factor for educational innovation and change. Our own data clearly shows that course projects and lessons involving the effective use of technology can increase student engagement. Out of necessity, technology has become a mainstay of our community, and as we begin to recover from the pandemic, we have a responsibility to find ways to continue to incorporate technology into our courses to ensure that lessons are meaningful, relevant, and engaging for our students.

Now more than ever, we know that technology is an essential element of learning. With this in mind, ELITE and the School of Education are working together to re-imagine HyFlex learning--a fresh approach to instruction that increases the motivation to learn, engages students, and results in academic success. Building off of the work initially funded by Montgomery College Foundation's Innovation Fund in 2012, the re-designed HyFlex learning model is designed to maximize flexibility for students who have spent the last two years learning remotely. HyFlex learning allows students to attend and participate in classes remotely or in person, and although some in-person classes throughout the semester may be mandatory to achieve desired learning outcomes (as outlined in the syllabus), HyFlex learning is designed with learner agency in mind.

As we know, instructors have a great deal of influence over their students. ELITE is in the process of developing the training and support systems needed to support HyFlex learning, and we look forward to providing professional development opportunities about HyFlex learning in the Spring semester as new HyFlex labs are built across all three MC campuses.

MARYLAND H5P COLLABORATIVE NETWORK



Throughout the pandemic, EdTech has evolved and adapted in many ways to support the continuum of teaching and learning. As education has become more digitally supported, the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Reusable Learning Objects (RLO) has become a mainstay at MC and other colleges worldwide. Open-source web-based applications and content creators, such as H5P, have given faculty and staff the potential to redefine how education is delivered, tracked, and experienced by students.

H5P empowers everyone to create rich and interactive web experiences that can be strategically aligned to learning outcomes. With over 41 different learning types (and counting), H5P provides users with rich, interactive content on computers, smartphones, and tablets. With so much potential, ELITE, the Community College of Baltimore County, and the Maryland Open Source Textbook (MOST)

Initiative launched the Maryland H5P Collaborative Network (Network) in the fall of 2021.

To support organizational learning of H5P across institutes of Higher Education in Maryland, the Network offers a virtual community that provides opportunities to:

- share techniques in identifying best practices for creating and using H5P to support learning;
- support one another through problem-solving, mentoring, and coaching;
- foster collaboration in a safe and informal environment; and
- improve performance and productivity through innovative approaches to development, integration, and practice.

As the Network grows, Maryland Online is partnering with the Network to create a statewide repository of professional development resources and supports. When complete, the [Maryland H5P Collaborative Network Hub](#) will offer resources and supports that include recommendations for H5P content types aligned with learning outcomes; just-in-time professional development resources (e.g., instructional videos, how-to-guides, etc.); expert advice from instructional designers and developers of H5P; and coach and mentor opportunities to support the use of H5P.

The [Maryland H5P Collaborative Network](#) meets on the first Monday of each month, 3:00-4:00 pm.

MICROCREDENTIALS AT MC

MC offers programs, units, and discipline areas the opportunity to create microcredentials. A microcredential is a digital form of certification, also known as a badge, that assesses specific competencies. Digital badges prove an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities and are recognized by external institutions and employers. The badge certifies that the earner has demonstrated specific skills/competencies, and it becomes part of the earner's personal digital portfolio. Issuing badges for real, meaningful achievements allows earners to use their badges and new skills in their current and future workplaces. To verify the validity of a specific badge, potential employers and colleagues can click on the badge to see the list of competencies and what is required of the earner to attain the badge.



Currently, MC offers students and employees the opportunity to earn 15 badges. For a full listing of current badges, visit [MC's Credly platform](#). Nearly 250 badges have been issued, and over 90% of badges have been earned by students! Students have been taking note of what classes and programs offer a badge as there is intrinsic value attached to the opportunity.

MC badges use carefully selected earning criteria and demonstrable competencies that are measurable through activities, exercises, and active learning. The skills gap is a real concern for employers, and MC offers this opportunity to create competency-based learning opportunities for students and employees to demonstrate the skills relevant to the current and future workforce. When an earner can use their digital badge to get a promotion or a new job, the value of the certification increases. Including a badge option in your class or program potentially increases student

involvement and engagement. What are the skills that you consider valuable and will help the MC community professionally?

To find out more visit [Microcredentials at MC](#), contact [Christine Crefton](#) for information on how to apply, and/or register in MC Learns to attend an upcoming information session.

PD MASTER PLAN: DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF PD AT MC

As we continue to restore, evolve, and transform into a post-pandemic institution, ELITE is forming a committee in Spring 2022 to help create a professional development master plan that outlines the future of professional development at MC.

The committee, comprised of key stakeholders from across the MC community, will create a dynamic long-term planning document that will articulate ELITE's expectations, responsibilities, and opportunities for employee development. The master plan will build upon ELITE's current Return on Learning focus. It will include a comprehensive analysis of existing policies, procedures, and practices and offer recommendations and proposals for transforming ELITE's professional development offerings to support MC's vision and mission.

This work will support Goal V (Investing in our Employees) of the MC 2025: Strategic Plan and define ELITE's commitment to cultivating an MC workforce that is innovative, competitive, culturally competent, and relevant to institutional success. Grounded in excellence, rigor, and equity, the Professional Development Master Plan will help outline the opportunities for all employees to grow professionally and enhance and apply the intellectual capital, knowledge, and skills necessary to achieve our commitment retention and student success.

If you are interested in learning more about this work or participating on the Professional Development Master Plan Committee, contact Dr. Paul Miller.

SPRING 2022 PROFESSIONAL WEEK

Spring Professional Week officially kicked off the Spring semester by offering faculty and staff a variety of professional development opportunities. As an integral part of Professional Week, ELITE was proud to sponsor over 30 high-performance workshops and speed sessions, offering tips and advice to encourage and inspire faculty to deliver extraordinary results as we continue our journey of evolving and transforming the MC community.

Over 600 MC employees participated in workshops designed to re-connect faculty and staff, foster collaboration, and offer differentiation based on individual needs. Topics included: Re-Building Face-to-Face Relationships with Students; Making Muscles: Teaching Resilience to College Students at Risk; Work/Life Balance; Using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Tools to Improve Interaction; Designing Effective and Engaging Lessons and Presentations; Using the Blackboard Retention Center; Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment through Intentional Design; and Writing Effective Recommendation Letters.

In addition to workshops, ELITE was proud to welcome two guest speakers to address the MC

Community. With a focus on Refreshing, Reclaiming, Recharging, and Renewing Your Role as a Leader, Ty Howard's dynamic, engaging, and fun presentation gave us a confident way of thinking, processing, and applying four practical success habits that enables us to make the right daily choices. Furthermore, these habits can energize and elevate successes to help us reach our desired outcomes and happiness. Ty's focus on resilience and reclaiming our productive momentum, and recharging our positive intentions was echoed by Dr. Christina Sax, who discussed Resilience in the Face of the Ongoing Pandemic. As described by Dr. Sax, Resilience is the ability to adapt to challenging situations. Her thought-provoking presentation offered practical ways to become strong, healthy, or successful again as we continue to restore, evolve, and transform.

Professional week also provided faculty and staff with an opportunity to learn more about MC's new Virtual Campus. Building off of MC's recognition as a leader in online education, having recently been named the Best Online Community College in the state of Maryland by Premiumschools.org., the Virtual Campus is being launched to enhance the holistic experiences of our students, as outlined in MC 2025.

MC FORWARD PODCAST WITH DR. MICHAEL MILLS



Writer and Speaker Tara Frank said when it comes to leadership, individuals should “lead from where you are with everything you’ve got.” MC is certainly filled with individuals who are leading from where they are.

Dr. Michael Mills, ELITE Vice President, has tried to capture some of these individuals in MC Forward, a weekly podcast that highlights individuals from across the College who are engaged in different types of leadership. Season 1 was delivered during the Fall 2021 semester and featured topics such as Servant Leadership, Overcoming the Fear of Failure and Developing Compassion. Season 2 will begin in early February and feature individuals talking about Leading From Your Heart, Developing an Ethic of Care and Being Transformative, Visionary, and Facilitative.

“I really wanted to capture the essence of the variety of leaders at MC,” said Dr. Mills. “I wanted them to share what leadership means to them and to hear what they look for from their own leaders. This podcast has allowed people to share their stories, and it has been absolutely refreshing for me.”

Each podcast is about 20 minutes long to allow for individuals to listen while driving, exercising, or eating lunch. Episodes of MC Forward are available at <https://mcblogs.montgomerycollege.edu/the-hub/faculty-spotlight/mc-forward-podcast/>.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN CENTER DIALOGUE CIRCLES

Join a book circle!



UNIVERSAL DESIGN CENTER
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE



MC's Universal Design Center (UDC) is designed to support the MC community by removing barriers in our working and learning environments. UDC provides information that include accessibility, communication technology, inclusive physical environments, social justice, and cultural competence.

UDC guiding principle is that all operational aspects of the College can implement Universal Design in decision making and intentionally design instruction, programs, and services that remove barriers in our community. To build awareness of the guiding principle, a series of Book Circles were offered by ELITE and the Office Compliance, Risk, and Ethics (OCRE) in the Fall semester. With a focus on Universal Design for Learning and Universal Design for Everyone, both opportunities give faculty and staff an opportunity to explore the Universal Design approach with principles and themes applied to other areas beyond physical spaces to technology, instruction, education environments, and services.

With a focus on inclusive environments, Universal Design, Universal Design for Learning, and Accessibility, the UDC's networked approach is designed to establish or reinforce policies and processes necessary to minimize risk for the College and create an inclusive environment for all. By coordinating a comprehensive system of support, professional development, job-embedded coaching, and action research, web-based resources and tools will be made available to support MC's vision and mission.

If you are interested in learning more about UDC or participating in one of the Book Circles being offered by this Spring, visit the [UDC website](#).

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