

BOARD PERSPECTIVES

Pivoting to the Future

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Introduction

Montgomery College is in a period of transformation.

Many significant changes took root at the College during the past year. These changes have been fueled by not only by dramatic changes in our national economy, but more importantly, they have been driven by a national dialogue about higher education and student completion.

Montgomery College is approaching the 70th anniversary of its 1946 founding, and is a mature organization with a deeply rooted successful past. As any college matures, so must its policies and decisions keep pace in order assure that the institution is meeting the needs of its students and its community.

The foundation for transformation was laid several years ago through the Governor's appointments of new trustees, who then had an opportunity to appoint a new President. The Board has examined national, state, and local conditions and issues, and has charged the new President with recognizing the very good aspects of the College's past, as well as propelling it toward a future that takes new conditions and new needs into account. In the spirit of Jim Collins' bestselling book about successful organizations, *Good to Great*, the Board encourages the College to aspire to greatness in this new environment. Just as Collins found that companies that transformed from good to great believed in their ability to succeed, the Board holds a strong belief in the ability of the institution to rise to the challenges and succeed.

National Call to Action

The work of the American Association of Community Colleges' 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges makes the need for transformation abundantly clear in its *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future*. This document should inspire Montgomery College to action in order to reimagine the community college required for the 21st century and:

- *redesign* students' educational experiences;
- *reinvent* institutional roles; and
- *reset* the system to create incentives for student and institutional success.

Growth at Montgomery College

In 2011, the Board approved the College's new mission statement along with a vision statement, and an articulation of values. These statements represent the collective wisdom of the College community and resulted from a collaborative and inclusive development effort. The mission provides the reason the College exists. The vision calls the College to work urgently toward a new future. The values reflect what the College holds at the heart of its actions: excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability.

During the past year, the President has led efforts that have created the foundations for transformation. These include:

- positioning the College for the future through the development of the new *Montgomery College 2020* Strategic Plan, which not only charts the College's course through the decade, but intentionally provides the appropriate markers, measures, and controls for ensuring that the College operates in the most effective and efficient manner;
- appointing a full complement of new senior leaders;
- establishing an Office of Student Services, thus creating a new entity focused entirely on the critical support services that students need in order to fully realize their personal academic goals;
- strengthening the focus on creating a common student experience whereby all students at every campus have the same opportunities for access, support, and success;
- creating a new Office of Compliance to ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations;
- reorganizing administrative units including the Office of Administrative and Fiscal Services; the Office of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement; and the former Office of Academic and Student Services in meaningful ways that bring welcome improvements to processes, best practices, and an enhanced mission-centric focus on student success at all levels throughout the College;
- establishing a new system of participatory and inclusive governance, thereby creating a dynamic new means of shared responsibility and data-informed decision-making, all with the goal of ensuring that all voices from all quarters of the College are heard, and have a seat at the table;
- renewing the internal efforts to review and complete the staff job classifications project;
- establishing an educational foundation—the Montgomery College Life Sciences Park Foundation—to inspire the development of the new Hercules Pinkney Park at Germantown, and create new partnerships with the College that will benefit students, faculty, and staff; and
- renewing the sensibility that we are One College through the creation of a unified athletic program, a new mascot, and new Colleges colors that bind the organization into one cohesive entity, all with a unified sense of belonging and being.

Pivoting to the Future

In the coming year of 2012–2013, the College pivots to the future. The foundations for transformative changes are in place, but the real work is yet to begin. In particular, the Board charges the President to pursue priorities that stress accountability, innovation, and

community. Following are key steps that the Board asks the President to address during the coming year.

Accountability

- Implement the *Montgomery College 2020* strategic plan and link it to the College's planning and budget decision-making.
- Examine methods to add performance metrics into the operation of the organization.
- Establish a Teaching and Learning Committee of the Board.
- Take actions to strengthen the institution based on any recommendations resulting from the College's Periodic Review Report.

Innovation

- Implement the major initiatives listed above such as the Common Student Experience, the new governance system, the One College model, and the Montgomery College Life Sciences Park Foundation.
- Explore methods to diversify revenue sources.
- Use technology to improve teaching and learning and to lower costs.
- Complete bargaining unit agreements, explore methods for developing Montgomery College as a "destination employer," and support professional development opportunities for employees.

Community

- Expand partnerships and explore possible consortiums with other educational institutions, including local and regional institutions and businesses.
- Continue to inform Trustees about opportunities to participate in College events and activities.

The Board is confident that the President and her senior leadership team along with the entire College community will rise to the Board's expectations to build a nationally recognized great and relevant institution that serves Montgomery County with distinction.