

MONTHLY OUTLOOK

A Meeting Preview with Data Insights and Strategic Topics

February 12, 2021

February Meeting Highlights—What to Expect and Why

Your next meeting takes place on Monday, February 22. Following are major items and topics planned at this time.

Conversations with Constituents. The Guest speaker for your Conversations with Constituents this month is County Councilmember Craig Rice, who will engage the Board on the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic rebound and recovery plans, and the College's role in these matters.

My Monthly Written Report. My written report this month focuses on our Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management's (HRSTM) adaptations to COVID conditions. HRSTM's work has had to address new complexities around supervision, payroll, supplies, onboarding, recruitment, and hiring. They have done so while maintaining a sharp focus on employee mental health and equity.

Total Compensation Program Update. A status report will be provided on the College's compensation program, presenting historical and background information regarding the College's past compensation practices and a series of compensation studies. Analyses will provide context for the College's 2018 transition to a market-based compensation system.

Collective Bargaining. Two memoranda of agreement will be presented for your approval—one with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) representing full-time faculty, and the other with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) representing part-time faculty.

A Policy Matter. A policy modification to the College's mission, vision, and values statements will be presented for information or possible action.

Board's Schedule of Meetings for FY22. A draft calendar of your FY22 meetings will be presented for your consideration. Adoption of the calendar will be on your March meeting agenda.

The following items are on your consent calendar:

Personnel Actions Confirmation Report. This report reviews the personnel actions taken during December 2020.

Recognition of Retirees. Each February, the Board receives resolutions to honor and appreciate the service of employees who retired in the fall semester. In addition, three awards of medallion are on the consent agenda for your consideration.

Data Focus

Student Success during COVID

The College is monitoring student progress during structured remote teaching/learning to ensure that our students are successful in this new format. Comparative data has been useful in this assessment.

Course grades have remained almost the same. One important measure of student success is first semester grade point average (GPA). Students who began college as first-time-ever-in-college (FTEIC) students in fall 2020—during the pandemic—had the same average GPA as those who started in fall 2019—before the pandemic: 2.16. In fact, as shown in *Figure 1*, the distribution of GPAs in fall 2020 almost exactly mirrored the distribution of GPAs in fall 2019. To ensure that classes consistently met the high standards held in previous semesters, several disciplines adopted common exams for all their sections. Despite that change, the pass rate for fall 2020 classes for all students was almost identical to the pass rate for fall 2019 classes. These data suggest that, largely, students have been able to continue to be successful—even during the pandemic.

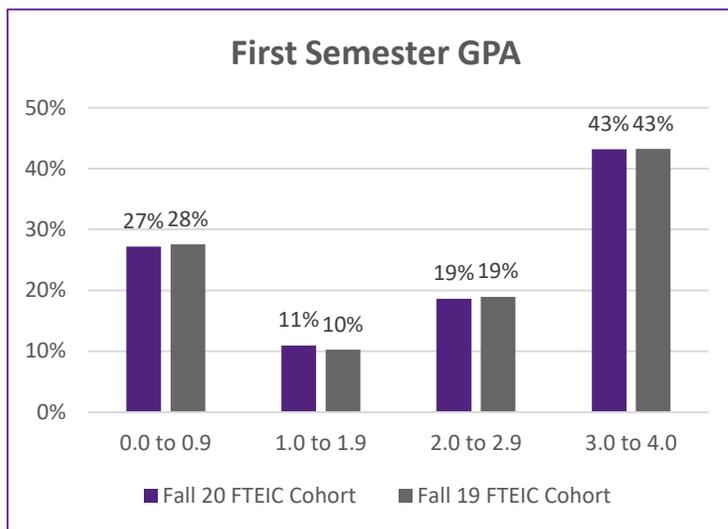


Figure 1. First semester GPAs of FTEIC students in the fall 2019 and fall 2020 cohorts.

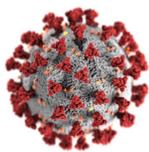
Retention from fall to spring is strong. A strong indicator of student success is the number of students who return in the spring semester after their first fall semester. In the past several years, the College has had a high fall-to-spring retention rate of 80 percent for FTEIC cohorts. Currently, more than 75 percent of the fall 2020 FTEIC cohort has registered for spring courses. With a quarter of our course offerings starting later in the semester this spring, we anticipate that this rate of return may continue to rise over the next month. Given that many FTEIC students did not know what to expect from remote teaching and learning, this high retention rate is a strong indicator that students feel confident in this format.

Student Feedback. Just prior to the start of the fall semester, the College administered a survey to all registered students, capturing just over 1,300 responses. More than 90 percent of the respondents felt that the College was appropriately considering students' health and safety in deciding to offer most classes in a structured remote format. Over 85 percent of the students who used remote placement or assessment were satisfied with the services, with similar results for students who used Raptor Central remotely. You may recall that Raptor Central was formerly known as the Welcome Center, and is a consolidation of admissions, enrollment, and visitor services' activities. Several weeks into the fall semester, we administered a national survey to our FTEIC students to determine their level of engagement with the College. Almost three-quarters of the 500 respondents stated that COVID did not change their plans about where to attend college. Only eight percent reported child/dependent care to be a barrier to completing assignments. While only one percent of these FTEIC respondents said that they had difficulty accessing the Internet from home to do their coursework—97 percent had access to a computer or tablet to do their coursework—these numbers may be the result of MC's philanthropy, which has provided many students with technology over the past year. What was not measured was the

students who may have decided not to enroll because they worried that they did not have adequate technology, or those who did not respond to the survey because they lacked such technology.

Strategic Topic of the Month

MC Resilient at Eleven Months



As we enter the eleventh month of the pandemic, Montgomery College remains steadfastly committed to prioritizing the health and safety of students and employees, while strategically meeting the challenges presented by COVID-19. While daily life has changed for all of us, the College's commitment to high quality education that is affordable and serves the critical needs of our community has not. It now requires several new elements: creativity, agility, and continued focus on our values. Developed during spring 2020, the *Roadmap for Resilient MC* represents the contributions of dedicated experts from throughout the College to minimizing the impact of the pandemic on MC's mission while protecting employee health. Representing every major part of the institution the roadmap offers a comprehensive and coherent path for meeting the challenges of COVID-19, while aligning with and advancing the institutional priorities found in the *Montgomery College 2025* strategic plan.

Where is the 'resilience' in Roadmap for Resilient MC? The pandemic has required innovative responses to new realities: for class-scheduling, an expansion of the flexible seven-week scheduling option; for exam-monitoring, the deployment of an online proctoring tool. In addition, for academic underperformance due to COVID-19 stressors, the creation of free virtual study sessions to assist students with satisfying incomplete grades. As some students lost jobs or had reductions in their incomes, we responded with emergency funding for food, rent, and technology. And for incoming students, we have developed accelerated assessment and alternative placement processes.

What are some of the major areas of the Roadmap for Resilient MC activity? There are 14 tactical areas to the plan, capturing both operational facets, mission-critical components, and new activity that responds to circumstances created by the pandemic. As the College continues to respond to the challenges of higher education with very few face-to-face, instructional options, *Resilient MC* has helped us keep focus on values and priorities embedded in our mission. Some of them include: continued attention to equity and inclusion through demographic analysis of emergency aid; strategic approaches to enrollment management with adjustments to summer, winter, and spring sessions; robust people stewardship through Talent Share, additional mental health services, and wellness programming; fiscal sustainability through a hiring freeze and use of fund balance; and professional development resources for faculty to successfully upskill to structured remote teaching. Twenty-nine policies and procedures were reviewed or revised in light of COVID-19.

How did the Roadmap for Resilient MC impact relationships to external groups? The College has significantly enhanced its communication and collaboration with employers and industry leaders during the pandemic, partnering with them on a county-based vision for recovery, Rebound Montgomery; on a virtual Student Advocacy Day; and on multiple racial justice events. College leadership meets regularly with county councilmembers, local chambers of commerce, MCPS, USG, and other educational nonprofits. MC remains committed to leading in collaboration with our partners to realize the greatest economic and social impact from strategic responses to the pandemic.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DeRionne". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'D' being particularly large and stylized.

DeRionne P. Pollard, Ph.D.

We empower our students to change their lives, and we enrich the life of our community. We are accountable for our results.