

# MONTHLY OUTLOOK

*A Meeting Preview with Data Insights and Strategic Topics*

November 2021

## November Meeting Highlights—What to Expect and Why

Your next meeting takes place on Monday, November 15. It will be your first in-person meeting since February 24, 2020. Following are major items and topics planned at this time.

**Proposed FY23 Biennial Capital Budget.** The proposed biennial capital budget request for FY23 and the six-year FY21–26 capital improvements program were presented and discussed at the October 18 Board of Trustees meeting. The capital improvements program supports and implements the College's Facilities Master Plan. The FY23 request is the first half of the FY23–24 biennial capital budget and totals \$35,785,000.

**Supplemental Appropriation Request.** This is a request to the county government for a supplemental appropriation of \$22,320,815 to the FY22 Federal, State, Private Grants, and Contract Fund. This supplemental appropriation is needed in order to expend HEERF III funds in this fiscal year. This action will increase the FY22 Federal, State, Private Grants, and Contract Fund to \$56,758,701.

**Awards of Contract.** Two competitively bid awards of contract will be presented for your consideration: one is for collegewide digital signage software and the other is awards of contract to multiple providers of youth programming.

**Change Order.** This proposed action is for a change order to an existing contract for multi-facility grounds maintenance and pond weed control services.

**Academic Matters.** These academic requests are for five actions: the creation of a new associate's degree in art; new titles for two existing academic programs; and the deletion of two programs.

**Policy Matter.** A proposed modification of College Policy for the Allocation, Recruitment, Employment, and Salary Placement of Part-Time Faculty will be presented to you for discussion and possible action.

### **The following items are on your consent agenda.**

**Personnel Actions Confirmation Report.** This report reviews the personnel actions taken during the month of September.

**Designated Awareness Days and Months for 2022.** This is a standard annual action that acknowledges special awareness days and months to honor and recognize groups in our community.

## Data Focus

### **Enrollment during COVID**

The College has been carefully watching changes to the student body since the start of the pandemic to ensure that we are supporting our students, upholding our mission and continuing our practice of radical inclusion. Locally as well as nationally, college attendance rates, especially those at community colleges have seen steady declines.

**Fall headcount has decreased.** The official third-week fall headcount has fallen each year during the pandemic (see *Figure 1*). This standard metric counts each credit student enrolled in the fall semester regardless of how many courses they are taking or the programs in which they are enrolled. The fall 2020 enrollment fell six percent compared to the larger national average of a nine percent at community colleges nationwide, according to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). In our current semester, fall 2021, there has been a 14 percent drop in headcount. Preliminary data from the NSC shows that nationally community colleges have lost about 6 percent of their students over the same time period.

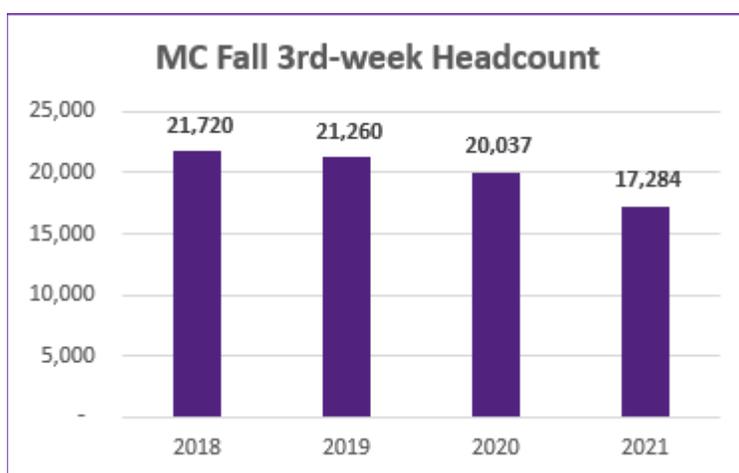


Figure 1: Montgomery College Official Third-week Fall Headcount

**Decreases occurred in all race/ethnicity groups.** The data show that enrollment decline has occurred across races. The data reveal that Black/African American, Hispanic, and Asian students each had a 13 percent drop in headcount from fall 2020, whereas the number of White students declined by 18 percent. The NSC data on race/ethnicity is not yet available at the community college level for the current semester.

**First-time student retention fell.** As you know, the College closely monitors the First-Time-Ever-in-College (FTEIC) cohort. This constitutes all students who began their studies at MC in a fall semester with no previous credits from other colleges and represents students whose retention is critical. From fall 2019 to 2020, the decrease in this cohort was nine percent compared to the NSC national average of 16 percent (see *Figure 2*). This fall, however, the College saw an 18 percent drop in FTEIC students, whereas the preliminary NSC data show a six percent drop nationally.

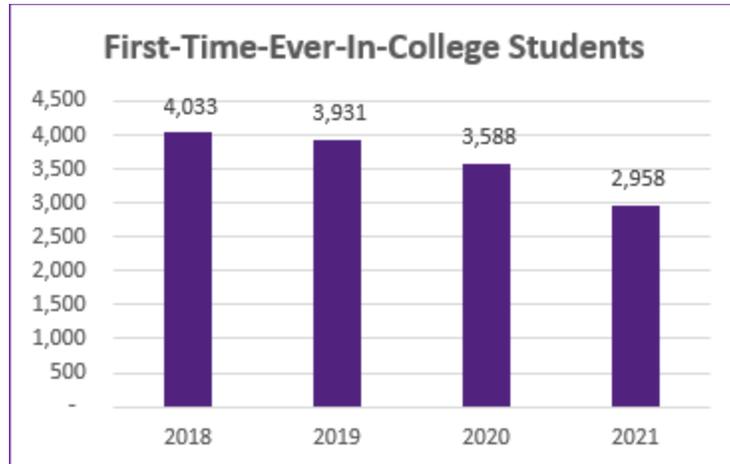


Figure 2. Montgomery College Fall FTEIC Cohort

## Strategic Topic of the Month

### **Community College Survey of Student Engagement**

Montgomery College participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) again at the end of the 2020–2021 academic year. The CCSSE is a national survey of institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. The College administered the survey to all registered students. Due to the pandemic, administration of the survey at MC and many other schools was done online in this cycle instead of the normal practice of administering it with paper and pencil during scheduled class meeting time. This modification reduced the number of participants, but did not take away from instruction time as the pencil-and-paper method does.

CCSSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually-related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement—and that are positively related to student learning and persistence. Benchmarks are used to compare each institution’s performance to that of similar institutions and with the CCSSE cohort. The five CCSSE benchmarks are (1) active and collaborative learning, (2) student effort, (3) academic challenge, (4) student-faculty interaction, and (5) support for learners.

**How do we compare nationally?** Despite the fact that this survey was administered remotely during the pandemic, our students rated us very well in each of the five categories. Our scores put us above the national average in each benchmark and, additionally, we out-performed other extra-large community colleges in each category. When we administered the survey in 2016, we were also above average in all categories. Most significantly, we made improvements in four of the categories since 2016.

**What were the areas of strength?** The benchmarks for *support for learners* and *active and collaborative learning* had our highest marks and showed improvement from our previous administration of the CCSSE. The *support for learners* category included questions about how often the college encourages “contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds” and provides “the support you need to help you succeed at this college.” The *active and collaborative learning* category included questions about how often students “made a class presentation” or “worked with classmates outside of class” or “discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class.” These benchmarks are important because they show that in

addition to our students learning the course content, they are being supportive as they learn to live and thrive in a diverse community.

The College continues to focus on improving the student experience, both remotely and face-to-face. While the results of the CCSSE are positive, some schools were able to attain even higher scores. The results of this survey show that we have been able to have significant impact on our students and are helping them to succeed. We are analyzing the survey more deeply to find areas of improvement and ways to keep bolstering student engagement and success.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlene M. Dukes, Ed.D.  
Interim President

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