September Meeting Highlights—What to Expect and Why

Trustees, welcome to a new academic year! Your first regular meeting of fiscal year 2016 occurs on Monday, September 21, 2015. The following are major items and topics planned at this time.

Constituent Conversation. The focus of constituent conversations this year will be Achieving the Promise. I have asked Dr. Tacy Holliday, director of governance, presidential projects, and institutional initiatives, to facilitate our discussions this year. The first constituent conversation is with the Staff Council.

Performance Accountability Report. The annual Performance Accountability Report, with 35 indicators of student performance, is coming to you for your review. Upon your acceptance of the report, it will be submitted to MHEC.

Ratification of Summer Graduates. Before student graduations become official, the Board must ratify their completion status. For fall and spring graduates, you ratify the list in the meeting prior to the end of term. The resolution for summer graduates is just a little different since it is an "after the fact" ratification.

Payment Software Contract. This sole source contract is for the continuation of the existing proprietary commerce management system and cashiering equipment. The software is an integral part of the College's operations and ensures Payment Card Industry (PCI) Level I compliance with regard to the protection of confidential data.

Operating Fund Functional Transfer. Each year at your first meeting, this transfer is required to align the previous year's actual expenditures with their correct budget functions. The transfer needed for FY15 is a very small percentage of the budget. Once approved, this action is submitted to the county executive and council for approval.

Capital Budget Transfer. This proposed transfer of funds from the Rockville Science East Renovation Project to the Site Improvement Project will be used for improving campus signage on the Rockville Campus. Such a transfer between projects is in accordance with College policy and county fiscal procedures.

Progress Report on Programs of Cultural Diversity. Recall that a Board poll was taken in late June for acceptance of this report for submission to MHEC. This action is required during a public meeting to affirm the poll.

Letter to City. Though College construction projects on the Rockville Campus are not subject to the mandatory referral process, the College and the city of Rockville have agreed that projects within city limits will be reviewed by the city. Board approval is sought for the president to respond to the city regarding the College's intentions related to conditions imposed on the Student Services Building Project beyond standards specified in mandatory referral.

Policy Modifications. Two policy modifications will be presented for your consideration. First is a brief addition to the Sexual Misconduct Policy to describe a confidential resource, a recently developed role in reporting misconduct. The second is a revision of the Use of Facilities Policy. A related policy, Restrictions on the Use of Facilities, has been incorporated into the Use policy and, therefore, is proposed for retirement.

Data Focus of the Month

The Number of Montgomery College Completers is Growing

In the second month of his presidency, President Barack Obama challenged higher education to pursue a "completion agenda" and dramatically increase the number of graduates by 2020. His vision is for the US to lead the world in college completion. The US currently stands 12th in the world. South Korea, Japan, and Canada top the list. While the community college mission encompasses a wide range of purposes, the traditional role of helping students obtain an associate's degree or a certificate in transfer-oriented or career-preparation programs is often primary, and Montgomery College is doing its part to increase the number of awards.
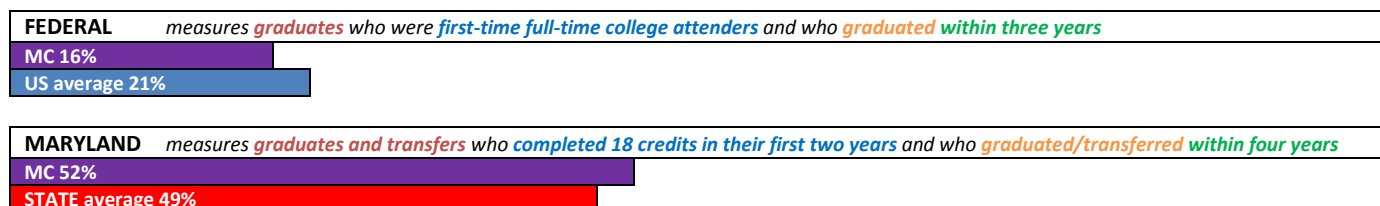
Nearly 3,000 awards were granted in FY15. Over the course of the FY15 summer, fall, and spring terms, 2,834 individuals graduated with a degree or certificate. A small number of students—about five percent—completed more than one credential, so the total number of degrees and certificates granted was 2,972. The vast majority of awards—2,665—were the associate's degree. Specifically, there were 1,724 AA degrees (associate of arts), 446 AAS degrees (associate of applied science), 387 AS degrees (associate of science), 78 AAT degrees (associate of arts in teaching), and 30 AFA degrees (associate of fine arts).

The number of MC graduates hit a new record. The number of graduates as well as the numbers of awards in FY15 represented all-time highs for Montgomery College! For comparison, this FY15 milestone represents an increase of 270 graduates (10.5 percent) and 274 awards (10.2 percent) over the previous year.

Transfer program graduates outpaced career program graduates. Three-fourths of our graduates are typically in transfer-preparation programs and one-fourth in career/technical degree programs. The graduates of FY15 were no exception as 74.4 percent earned a degree in a program intended for transfer. By the way, the average proportion earning a transfer credential among the other 15 Maryland community colleges is 61 percent. The top five MC programs among our FY15 graduates—which accounted for 62 percent of all graduates—are shown here:

Program	Graduates
General Studies	1,062 graduates
Business Administration	446
Nursing	129
Sciences	118
Engineering	88

How do our completion rates stack up? Nationally, both community college and four-year college students take longer than the "expected" two or four years to finish their degrees. The federal government uses a standard—often debated—that looks at first-time full-time student completion in three years for community college students. The Maryland state definition looks at *all students* who entered and then completed 18 credits within two years—a sign they are serious about college—and then graduated or transferred within four years. Often the federal definition is used in the public discourse on college completion. These graphs show how our students are doing on these two measures.

FEDERAL *measures graduates who were first-time full-time college attenders and who graduated within three years*

MC	16%
US average	21%

MARYLAND *measures graduates and transfers who completed 18 credits in their first two years and who graduated/transferred within four years*

MC	52%
STATE average	49%

Montgomery College 2020 Update of the Month

The *Montgomery College 2020* strategic plan is a seven-year effort that began in Fiscal Year 2013. In it, we charged ourselves "to develop a new Academic Master Plan that responds to the economic and workforce development needs of the community." In order to ensure student success and to thrive in a time of rapid changes, a plan that allows us to be nimble and responsive is vital.

Why does Montgomery College need an Academic Master Plan? Our Academic Master Plan (AMP) will be the roadmap for the future and help us to align our energy and resources with programs and practices that foster success. A constellation of challenges brings Montgomery College to a critical inflection point. Our core assumptions are challenged by many factors, such as our rapidly changing, dynamic world; technological innovation; our knowledge-based economy with its need for highly skilled workers; calls for greater accountability; declining revenue forecasts for our public sector funders—and the associated need for creative and flexible strategies to reduce dependency on tax dollars; and the changing landscape of higher education. Having a master plan is both a best practice and a requirement of our accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, as well as the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Middle States and MHEC want evidence that colleges are thinking strategically about the future of our academic programs and practices and that we are prepared to begin, adapt, or phase out programs in light of new realities.

What will the Academic Master Plan include? The Academic Master Plan will chart the course for the next 10 years of academic programming at MC—five years in some detail, and the next five more broadly. Development of the AMP gives the Montgomery College community an opportunity to engage in serious assessment of what we do. It will include data, benchmarks, an environmental scan, and recommendations in three thematic areas: (1) student access, (2) student success, and (3) academic excellence. These themes will address topics such as stackable credentials, Achieving the Promise, academic program review, and globalization. Two sets of recommendations will emerge: one for implementation in the next five years, and another for the future contingent on resources.

What process will we use to create the Academic Master Plan? Creating the AMP will be an inclusive process involving participation of dozens of faculty, staff, administrators, and students from the Academic Affairs division and all other divisions of the College. This fall, a steering committee will guide the work of three thematic workgroups that will hold open meetings and campus forums to encourage maximum participation beyond committee membership. In addition, focus groups will be conducted for community stakeholders, including businesses, nonprofits, and academia. In the spring semester, we will draft the plan, solicit feedback, revise it, and conclude the work by the end of the academic year. A website and online resources will also be available.

Will there be any costs associated with the Academic Master Plan? Some initiatives recommended in the AMP will require resources, but the plan may also phase out programs or recommend reallocation of funds and personnel. In addition to their efficiency and benefit to the academic program, all recommendations will be evaluated on cost, scalability, and sustainability before they are included in the final plan. Having an AMP will help us to streamline programs and initiatives, avoid inefficiencies and duplication of effort, and use data to evaluate our success.

Be well,

DeRionne P. Pollard, PhD

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