

**From:** [DeRionne Pollard, Montgomery College President](#)  
**Subject:** Achieving the Dream (ATD) Update  
**Date:** Friday, May 11, 2018 12:17:45 PM  
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**To:** Montgomery College Colleagues  
**From:** Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President  
Office of the President  
**Subject:** Achieving the Dream (ATD) Update  
**Date:** May 11, 2018

As we close our second year engaged in the transformative work of our Achieving the Dream (ATD) membership, I want to thank our ATD Core and Data teams for their tireless efforts this year. The expertise and energy of faculty and staff have been inspiring. I have witnessed an extraordinary level of commitment in the College community, and our students will be the beneficiaries of our work. Most importantly, our participation in ATD is already strengthening our capacity to improve student outcomes. While our connection to ATD involves a long-term vision, which will take time to implement fully, our earliest efforts have borne some impressive results.

The College has made significant progress in alternative scheduling and delivery, in reducing the parts of term, and in standardizing the start times for courses. A schedule-building software tool, Ad Astra, has also been purchased in preparation for more intentional designs of class schedules. Comprehensive advising efforts have begun and program advising guides have been created for 32 of the College's highest enrolled programs. Lead program advisors have been identified and more than 100 academic program advisors have been trained and deployed. Academic program advising has been embedded in program curricula, with specific benchmarks of success and required interventions if goals are not met by students. Significant progress has been made to implement mandatory advising and assign advisors. All of these steps are supporting students more thoroughly in their goals, and speeding their time to completion.

Affordability continues to be a focus of the College's attention and the tremendously popular educational resources (OER) initiative is helping in that realm. We continue to scale up Z-course offerings for students through our nationally-recognized OER initiative. The MC Open initiative has already saved students nearly a million dollars in textbook costs, making the College accessible to countless students who could not afford books. It has also provided resources and support for faculty to ease adoption and development of quality OER materials. Our ATD student success work has also been incorporated into the President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion. Among many other accomplishments, the Core Team has worked to gather vital information and data for our student success inventory, which will catalog much of our work across the College.

The ATD Data Team has worked diligently to define our student success goals with benchmarks for our incoming students. These goals are important indicators of our student success—graduation, transfer, and baccalaureate degree attainment—and have been submitted to the Board of Trustees. They will be announced once approved. Having specific targets marks a significant moment for the College community. These will become part of our collegewide conversation and our Student Success Score Card.

As the College transitions into year three of our ATD work, there will also be some transitions in the leadership structure. While I am on sabbatical this fall, Dr. Stephen Cain will serve as the acting president. His role as Data Team co-chair will be assumed by Dr. Bob Lynch, director of the office of institutional research and effectiveness, who will join team co-chair Dean John Hamman. Additionally, I have asked Dean Janee McFadden to replace Dr. Monica Trent in her role as co-chair of the Core Team with Professor Shinta Hernandez and Dr. Denise Simmons Graves. As we move into the next phase of this work, we will want to sharpen our focus to get the most benefit from our connection with the ATD network by aligning the efforts of the Core and Data teams with the implementation of our most promising student success interventions.

The first two years of our work with ATD were designed to gather the best ideas about where this work would have the most impact and to begin the processes of design and implementation. The next stage will focus more directly on actualizing the desired outcomes of our Start Smart, Guided Pathways, Scheduling for Student Success, and Comprehensive Advising priorities. This transition in the focus of our work, will also require some changes to the ATD Core and Data teams' membership, so that we can include the most important stakeholders for these initiatives. Providing some team members the opportunity to serve the College in other ways will infuse the ATD mission and vision into more of the work that we do. The structure of these new teams will be developed over the summer and invitations to participate will follow. We look forward to returning in the fall with a new focus and renewed energy.

Again, thank you to everyone who has contributed to this visionary, student-driven work. Montgomery College will continue to build a culture of evidence and work to build our student success inventory, making sure that data become more readily accessible. I feel confident that integrating this work into our student-focused pathways will strengthen the student experience from first contact to completion. This will undoubtedly impact our outcomes in ways that empower our students and enable them to change their lives.