

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

October 2011



Montgomery College
endless possibilities



The heart of the community college lies in our ability to connect to the myriad communities we serve.

Community members collaborated to establish Montgomery College in response to a need for locally based higher education over six decades ago. After being in the Montgomery County community for such a long time, our roots run deep. I would argue that, as a community college, community building is what we do; workforce development and transfer education are essential to strengthening our community. Yet, we cannot become complacent; we must continue to develop our roots.

So, how do we make greater connections with our community? Many of our students find their own communities within the larger Montgomery College community, through one of the many clubs or activities aimed at their area of interest—from the Veteran and Active Duty Military Student’s Club to Women in Engineering, Science, and Technology (WEST). In the College’s Workforce Development & Continuing Education, the Community Education and Extended Learning Services unit sponsors Adults Seeking Knowledge, a weekly gathering of seniors who meet for intellectual stimulation.

Connections also occur outside the College’s classrooms, fostering better relationships with the community on our campuses. For instance, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus launched a new King Street Cultural Arts Night in September that showcased innovative artists. Utilizing the Cultural Arts Center and The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center, the College provides important venues in south Silver Spring for community arts organizations and residents.

We also build community with our business and industry partners through efforts like the [Germantown Innovation Center](#), an on-campus, county-operated business incubator that houses 30 start-up companies.

Clearly, community exists both inside and outside the physical boundaries of Montgomery College. While the word “community” is broadly interpreted, the key thread is that we must remain relevant to many different kinds of communities. We must remain consistently and continuously engaged with our student and employer communities. And we must do so with a sense of urgency. Because more than any other segment of higher education, community colleges have a responsibility to our communities—all of them. Our connections run deep, from our names to our histories. And when we write our future, our community connections will continue to play a central role.

Board Discussion Questions:

1. How do you define community?
2. How do we, as a college, remain relevant and essential to the multiple communities that exist at our college and in our county?

Community Outreach by Faculty

For the past five years, English Professor Bryant Davis has educated his local faith community by teaching ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at his church. He teaches the literacy level, which is the very beginning level of the ESOL classes. Students have united from many nations including El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, China, Korea, Brazil, Russia, and Germany, and they have been delighted and challenged by Professor Davis's generous gift of time and talent.

At "Frontiers in Science and Medicine," which will be held on October 28 at the Montgomery County campus of Johns Hopkins University, Chemistry Professors Nevert Tahmazian and Virginia Miller will lead hands-on activities to increase younger students' appreciation and love of science.

Art Professor Emerita Komelia Okim produced an extensive exhibit of artists for the American Pavilion at the Taipei World Design Expo located in Taiwan. The College cosponsored a special press conference announcing the exhibit on September 16 with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

Native American guitarist Larry Mitchell kicked off the College's annual World Arts Festival of multicultural events with a September concert on the Rockville Campus. Music Professor Dawn Avery, who produces the annual series, joined Mitchell in concert.

Planting Seeds for Future Engagement

During the spring 2011 semester, students from the Germantown Campus Women's Studies Club, Girl Effect Club, Student Service Club, and Student Senate sponsored an event called "Once Upon a Prom," where Montgomery College students provided 130 dresses, 50 pairs of shoes, and outfit accessories for girls in need who wanted to attend local proms. The event was attended by 48 high school girls (as well as some counselors and parents). MC students volunteered a total of 97 hours organizing and running the event, and local community organizations and schools have already begun asking about plans to repeat the event in the future.

While a student at the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College in 2004, Foday Sackor ran a tutoring group and served as the CEO of a local mentoring and tutoring company called Role Model Tutors (RMT). Sackor is now a graduate student at Columbia University, where he is president of the SIPA Pan-African Network (SPAN), a student group based in the university's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Sackor was also a speaker at Columbia University's African American Economic Forum in March 2011, at the United Nation's Psychology Day in April 2011, and most recently at the United Nations for the Universities of Shady Grove.

Former student Franklin Nouketcha recently worked with a student from the University of Puerto Rico to do research on Micro-robot Control and Coordination in the MERIT BIEN REU program at the University of Maryland (UMD). Nouketcha has now transferred to the A. James Clark School of Engineering at UMD.

Radiologic Technology graduate Kayeba Medlin is a health fellow for the RAD-AID International Organization, which seeks to improve access to medical imaging services in developing countries. Medlin has traveled to Haiti and is scheduled to go to Jamaica. Currently, Medlin is involved in developing a mammography online course in Jamaica.

The Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus works with the local Hispanic community in a variety of academic and social service partnerships. Dr. Clemmie Solomon and the Student Development Internship Office are working with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to secure internships for students. Upward Bound, a college-readiness program for high school students who are economically disadvantaged and first-generation college bound, provides an opportunity for students to spend the summer at the campus. This past summer, in addition to providing space, computer, and library support, the College assisted in the placement of several Upward Bound students as interns in the Cultural Arts Center. At the opening of the new community center for Casa de Maryland, health sciences faculty and students conducted blood pressure checks and cardiovascular education in partnership with the Hispanic Nursing Association.



Community Leadership

The Gaithersburg Germantown Chamber of Commerce, on whose board Dr. Sanjay Rai, vice president and provost of the Germantown Campus, serves, recently held its annual golf tournament and raised \$25,000 for scholarships for Montgomery College students, a 100 percent increase over the previous year's amount.

Several members of the College community have joined forces with the Rockville city, county, community, and state government transportation agencies to form the Rockville Bicycle Task Force. The group meets regularly and proposes ways to increase bicycle use for commuting to school and work and for health and recreational purposes.

Carol Burbage, director of the Math/Science Center, represents Montgomery College and the Montgomery County Business Round Table for Education (MCBRE) as she visits high school freshman classes this fall to discuss planning for the future, including such topics as transcripts and financial literacy.

Specialized Academic Programs

The staff from the Citizenship and Adult ESOL & Literacy–GED Programs have given a great deal of thought as to what becoming a member of a community might mean to our new immigrant students who are learning English. Understanding that our students are interested in becoming full community members, staff developed a program for students called Enhanced Integration Tasks (EIT). An EIT is a personal field trip for the students, under the guidance of their classroom teacher. Students are responsible for making the arrangements and determining how to get there; reserving any necessary tickets; learning whether there are any regulations such as no backpacks; traveling to the site either alone, with friends, or with family; and reporting back to the class what they learned. They are also required to journal about their experiences and the insights that they gained. As a result of the experience, student participants are more aware of the community, and they feel more fully integrated and engaged with community members. One student, alongside his school-aged granddaughter, explored local sites important to African American history; another student went to the U.S. Capitol Building after ordering the tickets online and figuring out how to ride the Metro.

Workforce Development & Continuing Education's (WD&CE) Community Education & Extended Learning Services unit sponsors ASK, Adults Seeking Knowledge, which is a weekly meeting of seniors (aged 50+) who meet for intellectual stimulation, access to the College, and an opportunity to meet others outside their traditional communities. The topics are far ranging, including subjects like health and literature. The program can only accept 39 students per section and, in the past, interest has exceeded enrollment capabilities. Due to demand, WD&CE is creating two sections for spring 2012. Enrollees then spill over into other classes, thus creating one community and expanding others as they are introduced to what the College and the College's Lifelong Learning Institute can provide.

Cultural Enrichment for the Community

The Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus launched a new King Street Cultural Arts Night on September 22 that utilized both the Cultural Arts Center and The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center. The program featured separate exhibition receptions for two innovative artists, Mark Behme and Anne Marchand. The evening culminated with a free performance of "Don't Ask, Do Tell: Stories From the LGBTQ Community," performed by SpeakeasyDC, a nonprofit D.C. arts organization whose mission is to give voice to people's life experiences, support artistic expression, and build community by promoting and teaching the art of storytelling. Both buildings anchor the southern end of the Silver Spring Arts and Entertainment District and provide venues for community arts organizations and events for community members who would not easily be able to experience arts and cultural happenings.

