



President's Report to the Board

October 2012

Oxford Dictionaries will tell you being strategic means “carefully designed or planned to service a particular purpose or advantage,” and “relating to the gaining of overall or long-term military advantage.” While we may not be waging a war, we are mobilizing to empower our students with a long-term educational advantage required to compete in today’s innovation economy. Our community came together to carefully design *Montgomery College 2020* in a way that allows us to actualize our mission. In other words, we have been strategic in crafting a bold, mission-centric plan for the future of our institution.

At all levels, the College has started the hard work required to fulfill our strategic plan. The Fall Opening Meeting in August centered on *MC 2020* and the specific changes our faculty, staff, and students can expect to see in FY13. Our senior vice presidents presented their key action items, about which they will update you as a supplement to this report. I urged all members of our community to internalize our strategic plan as the guiding post that must inform every decision made in the days, months, and years ahead. It was with this goal in mind that we produced and handed out hard copies of *MC 2020* at the opening meeting. I also sent the College community an electronic copy of our FY13 initiatives, and posted them, as well as the entire strategic plan, on my [website](#). We are not stopping with our internal community; after all, we are the community’s college. As such, we have strategically distributed copies of our plan to key business and community leaders on whom we depend to become the most relevant community college in the nation.

But just as our strategic plan is more than just words, our actions speak loudly about our commitments espoused in *MC 2020*. We are working with leaders in our new governance structure to integrate the ideas of the strategic plan with their daily activities—and to develop annual outcomes that advance this work. We have developed budgeting priorities to align with *MC 2020*. Individual units from across the College are developing their tactical plans and already have started to implement some of the tangible steps required. For instance, our Rockville Campus leadership is working with a collegewide team to develop a protocol to provide consistent assessment and placement information for which we can hold ourselves accountable. Our Administrative and Fiscal Services units are initiating the steps required to form a Common Employee Experience, so that



the College becomes a destination employer. In addition to working on FY13, we also have started developing the initiatives to tackle in FY14. I could spend pages detailing the work already underway throughout our College to bring our strategic plan to life.

Our College faces inherent challenges, especially as a multicampus institution. We prize diversity and having distinct campuses, departments, and programs. Yet, we also are cognizant that we must unite as One College in order to position ourselves for sustained relevance. The same holds true for implementing our strategic plan. While each area of our College may have different ideas or approaches for how to best actualize our strategic plan, there must be uniformity on this issue. In other words, a purely top-down approach or a bottom-up approach will not work. Neither is efficient. Failing to embrace a holistic approach is not, dare I say, strategic.

I began this monthly report discussing the classic definitions of being strategic. I end it with the hope that you consider what being strategic means to our College and to you as board members.

Monthly Discussion Questions¹

1. **Institutional needs.** What kind of change, if any, does our institution need?
2. **Context and competition.** Do we understand our institution's competitive position?
3. **Consequences of no change.** What are the consequences if we do not engage in a change process?
4. **Leadership capacity.** As a board and as individual board members, are we able and willing to work with our president to bring about positive change?
5. **Change process and players.** Based on this discussion, what is the right role for the board to play at this time?

¹ Adapted from MacTaggart, Terrence J., *Leading Change: How Boards and Presidents Build Exceptional Academic Institutions*, AGB Press, 2011 (pp. 21-22).