



President's **FOCUS**

Monthly Report to the Board

May 2018

Integrated Strategic Planning: The Year Ahead

This year I have looked closely at how the College is preparing itself for the next strategic planning process—a process that we will conduct in the coming fiscal year. As you know there are new, detailed master plans for academic affairs and student affairs in place and moving ahead. As additional plans are finalized—professional development, advancement and community engagement, and equity and inclusion among them—the College will continue its work of synchronizing their priorities and processes.

Already this year, significant progress has been made to establish a framework for a thoroughly integrated planning processes. Six months ago, I charged the institutional integrated planning group to map out a calendar of all the planning processes at the College. This roadmap includes details about budgeting cycles, data production cycles, and activity around assessment such as program reviews and learning outcome reviews. The group has successfully laid out an integrated calendar, month by month, with indications where information needs to come together for specific planning activities. Also in this schema are external deadlines for which the College is responsible—to the county government, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, for example. This calendar will continue to evolve as we include the substance of plans that are still under construction, but this draft provides a basic architecture for future planning.



Another task I presented to the institutional integrated planning group was to create a guide for integrated planning across the College. The guide, which will be finalized in June, includes information on best practices for successful integrated planning: plan with the end in mind, articulate outcomes, build in assessment processes, and consider the impact—on people, budget, timing, information technology, and facilities. With the map and the guide in place, the first cycle of strategic planning can begin in earnest.

The planning committee has also been asked to submit a proposed framework for the 2021–2026 plan. It will identify areas of focus that have emerged as common to the existing plans, and areas in which College priorities may not be adequately supported by plans. In consultation with a number of visioning documents—including Middle States standards, the Achieving the Dream student success vision, the Seven Truths of a Common Student Experience, and the five expectations of the Common Employee Experience—the planning group is distilling the elements that are fundamental to the new strategic plan. Once combined with the priorities of the Academic Master Plan and the Student Affairs Master Plan, this framework will help the College to envision the next five years in terms of values and goals. The integrated planning group will then make recommendations to the senior academic leadership team about the structure of the strategic planning leadership group and its anticipated timeline of deliverables. A schedule of campus forums will also be created so that the entire MC community can participate in the planning process.

Increasing access to higher education, promoting academic excellence, and serving the community are parts of Montgomery College's vision. How we accomplish this within distinct circumstances may differ considerably, so assessing the immediate challenges we face is an important part of strategizing for success. As we approach the College's 2021–2026 plan, county fiscal limitations, competition from other providers of higher education, and cost of living increases may impact our approach to funding. Related to these, potential changes in immigration trends based on policy positions, and migration within the US may impact the pedagogical needs of our students. Changes in technology may affect how instruction is delivered, the cost of instruction, and the ability of students to afford necessary tools. Workforce evolution may shape the skills that are required or the fields that are in demand. All of these factors, plus some we have yet to imagine, must be woven into the paths of strategic planning.



Such factors may have increasingly significant impacts on the work of the College. The roles of technology and immigration patterns on higher education, for example, are substantial in comparison to 50 years ago. The roles internal US migration and even matters we often take for granted, for example, water supplies, may be the next major variables to shape higher education. The relative unpredictability of such influences makes the need for careful planning even more vital. While institutions will always have to respond to unknowns, the better control they have over their “knowns,” the more successful they will be in adapting to change while maintaining focus.

Montgomery College’s next chapter of strategic planning is gearing up to be a productive one. With clarity and order to our internal planning and priorities, we can advance a more ambitious vision for the College. I hope this careful, collaborative enterprise will also strengthen MC’s collective sense of institutional purpose, and lead us successfully into productive years ahead.

