

To: Montgomery College Community

From: Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President

Subject: Grading at Montgomery College

Date: April 3, 2020

Good afternoon. Montgomery College has a distinctive mission with respect to students: “We empower our students to change their lives.” This element of our mission is grounded in academic excellence and integrity.

We understand that the rapid transition to remote learning and advising, which nearly all colleges and universities have made with the onset of the pandemic, can foster uncertainty and anxiety among our students. How will this different learning environment affect grades and progress toward graduation or transfer? We understand and share in your concerns. Even under the extreme circumstances of this pandemic, the College is committed to ensuring that our decisions do not negatively affect the outcomes of our exceptional students.

To help ensure that our students succeed in this new learning environment, Montgomery College will provide expanded grading options during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to the expressed needs of students. These options will allow more time for students to work with faculty members if the circumstances of their lives prevent them from completing a class this semester, but will not imperil their chances at transfer.

Because Montgomery College faculty maintain a set of academic regulations that clearly define the grading policy for credit courses, Pass/Fail (P/F) grades are not an option as potential outcomes for students. While some schools have adopted this, at Montgomery College the disadvantages of such an approach far outweigh the benefits, even in this unique moment. P/F grades do not serve MC students well as they have the potential to negatively impact transfer to upper-division colleges and universities, acceptance into competitive admissions programs of study, qualification for competitive scholarships, and evaluation of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for financial aid eligibility. Moreover, while some transfer institutions have expressed willingness to accept P/F grades, there is no consensus on this. The consequences for our students are too significant for Montgomery College to ignore.

The College has made these decisions after careful consideration and in accordance with the values that are most fundamental to student success. In these difficult circumstances, Montgomery College faculty and staff are reaffirming their commitment to support students in whatever ways they can to achieve the best possible outcomes: successful completion of their courses in preparation for graduation, transfer, or the subsequent semester of study. An

additional communication from Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Sanjay Rai and Senior Vice President for Student Affairs Monica Brown, will provide further details on Monday. Thank you for your patience as we navigate these challenging times and work to ensure student safety and success.