

Subject: Monday Update - April 20, 2020

Date: Monday, April 20, 2020 at 9:08:18 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Rai, Sanjay K

To: Rockville Faculty{FT&PT}, Germantown Faculty{FT&PT}, Takoma Park Faculty{FT&PT}, Academic Affairs Staff and Administrators

Colleagues –

When we transitioned to remote teaching and learning one month ago, one great concern was “will students engage?” We know the answer. With over 385,859,805 course access minutes on [Blackboard](#) and 128,675 total logins for last week we know they are engaged. In addition, when faculty provided their deans with names of students who had *not* engaged, just over 1,000 students were identified. 454 students had phone numbers on file with the College. Achieving the Promise Academy (ATPA) coaches took on the task of calling those 454 students. On average, these students were called three times, resulting in 201 students getting back into class - engaging. A lack of technology and internet access were primary reasons for students failing to engage. Secondary issues - challenges related to the pandemic itself - included family and job stressors. At Montgomery College, 20% is not usually a good grade, but I am so impressed. Thanks to the ATPA coaches' efforts, 201 students who would have lost this semester, are back on track. To them and to the faculty who are working with these students, thank you. The simple act of a phone call sent a very powerful message that we care. Counselors are working to reach the remaining students, as well.

I think that some of you may know that I appreciate good data, and our [Dashboard](#) provides that. When I see that we have [19,191](#) students enrolled in 2,868 sections - 19,191 student learning across a spectrum of classes while we are sheltering at home - it is amazing and exciting to me. The numbers tell the magnitude of what you are doing. Students are taking advantage of [virtual tutoring](#) at the learning centers (675 sessions last week); students accessed an additional 178 sessions of [Smarthinking](#) online tutoring; part-time faculty have engaged in training fellow part-time faculty on Blackboard and Zoom; [withdrawal figures](#) are just a little more than half of what they were for the same time period last year. The data is thought-provoking, unexpected, and wonderful. It will inform future planning. But these numbers only confirm the wonderful work being done and what you have achieved. Our students are still engaged, learning the curriculum and learning first hand from you what it means to respond to a crisis with grace, skill, agility, flexibility, and grit. I am also very proud of the ways that the College community is responding outside of the classroom. You know that we have donated PPE for use by first responders and health care workers. This past Thursday, Greg Downs, the instructional lab coordinator for physics and engineering at Germantown, delivered to Holy Cross Germantown Hospital 20 face shields he created using the 3D printer in the SA building. Others will be provided to our own facilities staff. We have loaned equipment to a biotech company that is manufacturing much need coronavirus tests. I am so proud to be part of this community.

Let me conclude by saying that I know that this is a very difficult time for many people, including some of you who are reading this message. I can say only that things will get better. I hope that by sharing the victories that we are having, and some of the things for which we can be grateful, you are encouraged.

Please continue to take care of yourselves, your families, your colleagues and your students. I appreciate all that you do.

Sanjay