

MC Forward Podcast  
Season 4, Episode 1  
Hyde Revilla  
Transcript

[Music]

**Mike**

Welcome to the first episode of Season 4 of MC Forward, a podcast that focuses on Montgomery College individuals who are leading from where they are. I'm your host Dr. Michael Mills. Joining me today is Hyde Revilla, Digital Learning Center Specialist on the Tacoma Park/Silver Spring campus. Hyde, I appreciate you joining me.

**Hyde**

Thank you. Thank you for inviting me. I'm so honored to be here.

**Mike**

So, when I look at your history of working in academia, it's vast. Can you elaborate a little bit on what you've done, and how that has shaped your view of leadership, both from being a leader and someone who want... what they want in a leader?

**Hyde**

Okay. So, my first school, so Montgomery College is my fourth College to work at, and my first goal, I started working at about 2000, and I needed a job, and I was working in telecom prior to that and I didn't know where I was going to go, so I decided I needed to find a J-O-B. I looked on Craigslist, and I found that they were hiring for what we now have is CMAP 120, the Computer Applications class, at a for-profit college. It was an artist, Art Institute of California, San Francisco. And so, while I was there, I found that I really enjoyed teaching. Didn't know that I would love it so much, and I started teaching other classes, so I taught algebra and I taught another remedial math class and student success class. At the same time, I really enjoyed working there, so I took on the position of Transfer Credit Evaluator and then I was then promoted to managing the tutoring program. And so, it's a small school, so if anything happened, I was one of the 15 people to solve the problem on the spot, and so that was an excellent learning ground for me. I was there for about 10 years, and then, when the tide turned against the for-profits, I asked to be laid off so I could move in with my partner in Southern California, and that was in 2012. I found myself with a job at a small Catholic School in Southern California called Marymount California University, which is defunct as of August, but I was hired on as an Academic Advisor, so I had these other jobs and then now I'm doing a job I hadn't done before as an academic advisor. And I was there for a year, but then I moved to the east coast to be in the DC area with my spouse, and I found myself working at Trinity Washington University as an Academic Advisor, and that was three years, and I learned so much. Fast forward to December 9, 2019, and I found myself hired just before the covid lockdown, just three months prior, with Montgomery College. Now,

having had this experience from prior schools, I have the experience to work in my present job but I also feel like I have the ability to see how we can make some positive changes in support of students. So, I'm really excited to be here. And so, that's... I like having this vast experience. It does help me with students, and it helps me with the position I have now.

**Mike**

How have those experiences formed your views on leadership?

**Hyde**

I had excellent leaders along the way as a mentor, so I, at every job, I found myself with excellent mentors. In my first job, I saw the first dean that I worked with who was not only personable but she was effective and helps build the community, and that's what I do now at the Digital Learning Center. I do what I can to build the community, and then throughout the times, I met other leaders who helped me decide that I wanted to work with students from diverse backgrounds and I learned so much from different leaders.

**Mike**

You had mentioned that you had great mentors along the way. What made them such good mentors to you?

**Hyde**

To me, they came with a different perspective. I had my own. I came from a corporate environment to work at the first college, so I didn't understand working with college students. I didn't understand the needs of a diverse population and how to meet them and to adjust. And so that was the learning there. At each location, I learned the different needs from different populations. Here, I find that, because it's Montgomery College and it's such a commuter school, I'm learning that we definitely need to reach out to students who are not on campus or not as close in the vicinity. and I really feel like I've learned that from the last goal.

**Mike**

Have you tried to pay that idea or that concept of mentoring forward? Are you mentoring students?

**Hyde**

Yes, we have a few a handful of student aides here in in the Digital Learning Center and I do spend time with them and we do talk about their life issues and what they're running into whenever we get a chance.

**Mike**

What would you say is your most prominent leadership trait?

**Hyde**

I think it might actually, this is the worst one, but I think it's experience. It's worse because I had to learn from doing things and not being successful. And maybe it's learning from what I've done in the past, I think that might be more effective because having had the experience of working at different colleges, I got to see what other people did. What was successful and what didn't quite work out and what could have been tweaked. And I think that kind of experience has been really helpful to help me succeed here.

**Mike**

You mentioned this idea and it's resonated in a number of conversations I've had with people as part of this series in failure or things not going great or things not working as successfully as you might hope. Talk to me about this idea of failure helping form people and really when it comes down to it, not necessarily being a negative, but you can turn that failure into positive?

**Hyde**

Right. So, what I've noticed is that, in the context of Montgomery College, I think the term failure is inaccurate. Sometimes it's not as successful as we had hoped. I think there might be an expectation attached to that, and so what I've noticed is that when things are not as successful, it's very helpful for us to take a step back and reevaluate what did work. And I feel like that's what we're doing with success, like to find the success. For example, doing the promotions for the Digital Learning Center. I found it helpful to attend the Raptor Resource Fair at Montgomery College's Tacoma Park Campus, but then, I didn't feel like we were really reaching enough students. So, that's when I decided this semester to go to Rockville and to go to Germantown, and so that was helpful, and we're hearing little trickles of students understanding who we are and where we're coming from. And so, I think we didn't fail when I went to the first Raptor Resource Fairs, I just feel like we didn't meet the expectations we were looking for from it.

**Mike**

We have a poster in a classroom on the Germantown campus that that has the word fail. And then it breaks down each of those letters to indicate that fail means First Attempt In Learning. And as you said, it's not the end of something. It's an opportunity to learn and move forward. Has your leadership journey been that way?

**Hyde**

Oh, definitely. I feel like there's a lot of things that I... So, one of the things that I do at the Digital Learning Center is make flyers. I make the flyers for our campus, and so, I have learned that it is an iterative process every time you make a flyer. It is important to show other people and give them the ability to give feedback about that flyer. I know it's a simple flyer; however, if students or other staff members or faculty don't read it, or can't read it, or miss some data... One flyer, I forgot the phone number. Oh, my gosh. And it's

one of those things that I can't make it myself, by myself, if anything, the first attempt means that you're including other people in the process. And I feel like that's part of the process. As a community, as a member of a community, we are successful together. And I think that's what I'm trying to get to.

**Mike**

You had mentioned experience being your leadership trait that jumps out as the most prominent. What leadership trait do you still need to work on?

**Hyde**

Well, it's easy in terms of Montgomery College because I there's cultural things that I'm learning. And my first college had a flat leadership style, so everyone walked over and talked to the dean. Walked over and talked to the vice president, president at any moment. And here, I'm finding that there's a culture of talking to the next person in your... like your supervisor. And that supervisor may talk to the... and so that's a cultural thing that I understand to be here. And I'm learning these things and I don't know who everyone is because we had to stay home for a couple years, so I don't have all the connections that I would normally have had I been here for three years on the campus.

**Mike**

So, in general, and you know, taking Montgomery College out of it for just a minute, but in general, does hierarchy hinder leadership from people at the ground level?

**Hyde**

Not really. I know in my position, the things I can affect, and I think I focus on the things that I affect. There are moments, there are thoughts that I have of like well, how do I get bigger than where I am right now? And how do I reach more students in in a grander or a more official sense? And so, that's often where I get into the hierarchy and like needed to talk to different levels, but what I can affect. I do spend most of my time working on something.

**Mike**

I think we've seen in a number of different organizations, really effective leaders reach out to individuals at all aspects of the organization, right? They don't necessarily stick to that hierarchical structure but that also can create problems within the organization.

**Hyde**

Right. Understood.

**Mike**

Yeah, you know, and I think as good leaders, it's incumbent upon us to figure out how to manage that without creating too much un-organization or disorganization or problems within the unit. How do you work to effect change in an organization that's hierarchical?

**Hyde**

When you try to affect change, no matter what, you need buy-in. And so, when I say you need buy-in, you need buy-in from not only the folks that you work with but the folks that work that are your supervisor and that person supervisor. And so I think, buy-in is effective, and thinking of what to... and to build buy-in, you need to think of their... what is it? Their stakeholders. So, if you have like your supervisor and your supervisor's supervisor, who are their stakeholders? Because I know who mine are, and typically, mine are the student aides that work with me and also the students that I work with, my student customers. That's correct. I have a personal plan and focus to go broader and affect classrooms and meet with faculty, that's not really something that is on my current place. And to do that, I need buy-in. So, I let other folks know supervisor, supervisor, supervisor, etc. Let them know how we can reach more students, increase our numbers, that's the stakeholder they're looking for. They're looking for value in terms of numbers, and they're looking for increasing utilization. More things that they find valuable. So, talking to them at the level that they're looking for.

**Mike**

The pandemic was hard on all of this. How did you manage during the pandemic?

**Hyde**

Ah, it is. Even two months in, I had a hard conversation with my spouse about how do we get outside and talk to people and keep ourselves safe at the same time. And my spouse was like happy to stay inside for literally, it was like a year and a half before my spouse was like I should go out and make friends. I was chomping at the bit. I wanted to go out. I did not do well. I ended up walking and talking. So, I live in Tacoma Park, and I walk three to five miles a day and I talked to neighbors all the time because that was how I kept myself saying well.

**Mike**

And now, what do you do outside of work to help lessen any burdens that worked may throw upon you?

**Hyde**

Oh, I meet friends. I go out to meeting spaces. And right now, I have a tiny baby, so I I'm meeting people at Tot Yoga and activities. So, I'm having fun that way.

**Mike**

How old is your little one now?

**Hyde**

Nine months. Running around. Early walker at seven months and now is running and climbing and just being a little fireball. Um, her nNanny's nickname for her is Earthquake.

**Mike**

Well, on that note, we will end. I so appreciate you taking time out to talk about your experiences, how that has helped form your leadership traits and what you're looking forward to moving forward. So, thank you.

**Hyde**

Oh, thank you, Michael. I really appreciate this and I really am honored to be here.

**Mike**

If you know someone who you think would be a great fit for this podcast, have them reach out to me at [michael.mills@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:michael.mills@montgomerycollege.edu). Meanwhile, keep moving MC Forward.

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