

MONTHLY OUTLOOK

A Meeting Preview with Data Insights and Strategic Topics

June 10, 2022

June Meeting Highlights—What to Expect and Why

Your next meeting takes place on *Wednesday*, June 22. Following are major items and topics planned at this time.

Tribute. The meeting will begin with a tribute resolution to Mr. George M. Payne.

Final Adoption of the FY23 Current, Enterprise and Other Fund Budgets. The budget requests that were adopted in January 2022, must be approved for implementation now that the state and county appropriation decisions are final.

Final Adoption of the FY23 College Capital Budget. This request seeks Board of Trustees adoption of the FY23 capital budget as appropriated by the Montgomery County Council on May 26 and authorizes the president to implement the approved budget.

Petition for FY23 State Funding. There are two petitions for state funding: one is for \$5,035,000 for furniture and equipment for the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Resource Center Library, and the second is for \$2,900,000 for the Leggett Math and Science Building project.

FY22 Capital Budget Fund Transfer. This request seeks board approval to authorize a fund transfer from the planning, design, and construction project to the facility planning project. Transfers are permitted as long as the transfer does not exceed 10 percent of the total appropriation.

Compensation in FY23. This resolution requests approval of the salary schedule, consistent with the approved FY23 operating budget, for administrators, department chairs, and non-bargaining associate and support staff. It also authorizes funds in support of special recognition and outstanding service awards for full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff member of the year. In addition, it provides for non-bargaining associate and support staff shift differential for FY23.

Acceptance of the Annual Progress Report on Programs of Cultural Diversity Plan and Annual Report. Private and public institutions of higher education in the State of Maryland are required to develop and implement a plan for a program of cultural diversity. This required annual report reviews the College's progress in implementing its cultural diversity plan during FY22. Upon the Board of Trustees approval, it will be submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Sole Source Awards of Contract. Two sole source awards of contract are being presented for your consideration to continue the College's Wellness at Work program partnership with Holy Cross Health of Silver Spring and to continue the Banner Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software maintenance and related support services.

Awards of Contract, Amendment, and Change Order. Three competitively bid awards of contract are presented (1) to upgrade the Mannakee Building electrical infrastructure; (2) to purchase additional safety and security camera equipment collegewide; and (3) to replace the sidewalk between the Humanities and Macklin Tower buildings located on the Rockville Campus. There is also one amendment to an award of contract and one change order for consideration.

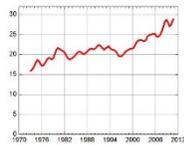
The following items are on the consent calendar:

Personnel Actions Confirmation Report. This report contains a review of personnel actions that occurred in April 2022.

Recognition of Retirees and Awards of Medallion. This action provides recognitions for years of service and medallion awards for employees to honor their service.

Data Focus

Data Informs College Directions in FY22



Throughout FY22 the College tracked several trends that informed important decisions regarding **operations, enrollment, and student support**. Significant changes in coronavirus conditions, employment trends, and student finances meant that adjustments had to be made to class modalities, academic offerings, and scholarship support. The College's careful attention to these metrics allowed it to respond to conditions in real time and maximize positive outcomes for students and the institution. The College quickly shuttled millions in federal and state emergency funds to students who were impacted by coronavirus shutdowns and lost income, helping to keep them afloat financially while staying enrolled when possible.

The College's decision to **require coronavirus vaccines** of employees in the fall of 2021 and of students by spring of 2022 was based on regional data that showed high transmission rates. A robust public information campaign educated our community so that 97 percent of employees were vaccinated and 93 percent of students taking face-to-face classes were vaccinated. The vaccine requirements ultimately enabled a return to face-to-face working and learning that was safe and productive. The emergence of variants of the coronavirus continued to pose risks for in-person working and learning, but the College carefully watched those conditions as well, keeping masking requirements in place in the classrooms through the end of the spring and into the summer of 2022.

With the College **offering multiple class modalities** in FY22—structured remote, face-to-face, distanced learning, and hybrid—academic affairs tracked which classes filled most quickly and pivoted to offer more of them. It observed that some students preferred remote learning—for reasons of convenience, the cost of transportation, or family responsibilities. Many of these students were not remote learners before the pandemic, so it opened a new potential space for alternative teaching and learning. On the other hand, some students enrolled in classes that require a face-to-face component—many science labs fall into this category as do some Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) courses—so the return of face-to-face classes was a boon for them. At the same time, the College kept a close eye on equity in academic achievement, ensuring that no group was being left behind by the varying modalities. Equity in developmental education courses and English as a Second Language (ESOL) were

areas of increased attention in order to maximize student achievement among students with special vulnerabilities in the remote learning sphere.

Class modalities were another area in which the College had to respond with agility in FY22: face-to-face classes, which made up about 20 percent of all classes in fall of 2021, rose to about 55 percent of all classes in spring 2022. The remainder of classes were offered in structured remote or distance learning. Several lessons have emerged over the last three years, during which enrollment in face-to-face classes swung from a high of near 90 percent in spring 2020 to near zero in spring of 2021. First, the College became more capable of offering a wider variety of course modalities once all faculty were trained in structured remote teaching, which occurred in summer 2020. Second, many students who had not taken classes online previously found themselves newly interested in them, even when health conditions allowed for more face-to-face options. Third, despite these improvements, continuing anxiety about coronavirus transmission plus rising gas prices may conspire to keep the number of face-to-face classes lower than recorded before the pandemic.

An additional area of learning was in **student support**: virtual tutoring, counseling, coaching, and library services proved more effective than might have been imagined. Since these services were delivered remotely, they were able to be offered on weekends and evening hours, which fit some students' schedules better than traditional business hours. Future demand for such flexibility in scheduling may continue even if face-to-face classes become more popular again.

With **increasing use of technology** for teaching, learning, and working, there is also a heightened demand for IT services and increased need for cybersecurity training. As the use of Zoom, Blackboard, and email increased, malicious actors have more targets and users need more training to protect their own data as well as College resources.

With **post-completion success** constantly in the College's vision, careful attention has been paid in FY22 to labor market trends as well. During a period of overall enrollment decreases collegewide, several MC degree programs showed growth, including biosciences, network and IT, information systems, and health care. Activity around vaccine development drew on bioscience majors while coronavirus infections elevated the need for health care workers. Remote working circumstances also enhanced the need for IT, network, and information systems employment. As the College carefully watched these hiring trends, it adjusted its course offerings to respond to market needs, correcting large swings in the unemployment rate with surges in demand in some specific fields. In the end, the College reaffirmed itself as a valuable contributor to the region's workforce development, creating classes and trainings when demand rose in biotechnology, commercial truck driving, and IT, among others.

FY22 offered many lessons, some of which could have been missed, had MC not closely followed the data. While traditional metrics have always been closely recorded—enrollment, achievement, and financial aid—**this year demanded new categories of measurement**: coronavirus infections, vaccination counts, emergency aid, and distributions of class modalities. Local metrics on hiring, unemployment, and skills gaps were also vital, given the College's dedication to filling the evolving pipeline of skilled employment. In the end, the College's dashboard of success indicators proved a reliable tool from which to make important decisions about academics, safety, and student success in FY22.

Strategic Topic of the Month

MC 2025 Guides Progress in FY22



The College's strategic plan, *Montgomery College 2025*, continued to be a beacon for progress in FY22, even as the College navigated conditions never imagined when the strategic plan was developed. Its focus on student **access, success, and affordability**, was critical this year as it developed new tools to help students continue to enroll and pay for college during an unpredictable labor market and changing health conditions. The College also continued the *MC 2025* focus on **fueling the local economy**. In fact, MC's role in providing high skilled workers for the county was heightened this year as the county experienced changes in employment patterns driven by pandemic conditions. The College was able to respond to new needs with agility, empowering new waves of health care workers, commercial truck drivers, IT specialists, and systems analysts, among other job categories. *MC 2025's* commitment to giving students "market-relevant skills [that] are key to individual and county economic success" took on a new urgency in FY22. Fortunately, local, and regional partnerships with employers and education institutions enabled the College to effectively respond to these needs. Numerous grants—Employment Advanced Right Now (EARN), National Science Foundation and Bio-Train among them—helped MC fuel the workforce in specific categories of need.

Several pillars of *MC 2025* helped the College weather the enrollment declines it experienced: investments in dual enrollment, for example, paid off with a record number of students graduating in FY22. The plan's commitment to **protect affordability** for all students was also vital to keeping vulnerable students enrolled even as they lost employment and income, and it guided the distribution of emergency funding in an equitable manner.

MC 2025's continued **attention to the student experience** captured many salient student trends during the second year of the pandemic, revealing increased food insecurity to which the College directed new partnerships and resources. In fact, the College learned much about student need that went beyond tuition expenses, as it reviewed thousands of requests for emergency aid narrating the costs of child care, transportation, utilities, broad band, and more. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement delivered this year revealed high marks for "support for learners" and "active and collaborative learning," an impressive accomplishment when much learning occurred online. MC's scores ranked above the national average in each benchmark, and, additionally, the College out-performed other extra-large community colleges in each category.

Time to degree and completion are two variables that *MC 2025* identifies as central to advancing student success. Both improved in the last measurement, strong indications that the goals of the Academic Master Plan are on target. Alternative placement and embedded coaching—both of which were adapted for remote learning—continued to help improve student outcomes.

The College's **investment in its employees** was also sustained in FY22 with increased attention to mental health, communication, and in employees' satisfaction with professional development. The results of the Your Voice, Your MC survey conveyed several useful perspectives on the employee experience, delivered at an intense professional time. One highlight of the survey was that employees rated "manager effectiveness," "faculty and staff wellbeing," and "mission and pride" highly.

Although *MC 2025* may need some adaptations for changes driven by the pandemic, it continues to be a solid core for the College's values and vision. In fact, it served to keep several long-term

processes and assessments moving forward even as day-to-day operations required almost daily adjustments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jermaine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams
President

We empower our students to change their lives, and we enrich the life of our community. We are accountable for our results.