From: The President
To: MC Communications List
Subject: State and County Advocacy Update
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2011 12:54:31 PM

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

April 19, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery College Colleagues

FROM: Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President

SUBJECT: State and County Advocacy Update

During this budget advocacy season, I repeatedly tell our elected officials that Montgomery College is needed now more than ever before, and that everyone at the College—faculty, staff, and administrators—has made sacrifices to ensure we continue to serve students in these challenging times.

As the budget has developed at the state and county, I want you to know what is happening, what our next steps are, and what it means for you.

State of Maryland

The Maryland General Assembly concluded a busy legislative session last Monday, and I am pleased to report that our state legislators listened to our advocacy efforts. The legislators approved the governor's plan to provide funding at the same amount in fiscal year 2012 as compared to this fiscal year. This is terrific news, given the state's funding constraints.

I am very proud of a major victory for our College and for the state of Maryland. Legislators worked up until the final hours to pass SB 167, which will provide all Maryland high school graduates with in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities. During the session, I joined members of the education community, students, elected officials, and advocates in testifying in support of the bill, stressing that it could make the difference between enrolling in college and missing out on higher education. As I see it, this bill has codified the College's long-standing tuition policy. A team at the College will meet in the next few weeks to

determine the bill's impact on the College, our students, and our policies. The team will also develop an appropriate plan for implementation.

Among the other state budget actions is the passage of a one-time $5 million grant—spread across the 16 community colleges—to help us keep tuition increases at three percent or less. Legislators also approved the governor's capital budget, which included construction funding for the renovation of the Science East Building on the Rockville Campus.

Montgomery County

The Montgomery County Council is currently reviewing the County Executive's budget proposal, which includes a $7.4 million cut in the College's county funding for fiscal year 2012. I remain disheartened by this proposed cut to our budget, given your sacrifices, our efforts to rein in spending, and our reductions across units. As a result, we have requested that the Montgomery County Council restore $4.6 million in county funding to the College's operating budget.

I am grateful to the members of the Montgomery College community—faculty members Rose Sachs, Robin Flanary, and Dan Moskowitz; staff member Liz Brandenburg; students David Myers and Corey Golladay; and Board of Trustees Chair Michael Lin—who testified or provided written testimony to the Montgomery County Council on behalf of the College, faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, Susan Bateson from Human Genome Sciences—one of the country's leading biotechnology firms—testified about the benefit the College provides to Montgomery County residents and businesses. In all of the testimony, the resounding theme was that an investment in the College is an investment in the county.

Next Steps

In the next few weeks, members of the Board of Trustees will join us in one-on-one meetings with each of the councilmembers. On April 25, the trustees and I will appear before the Education Committee to defend our budget request and seek the restoration of the $4.6 million in county funds. The council's vote on the county operating budget will occur in mid-May, around the time of our commencement ceremony.

If you would like greater detail about our budget, I encourage you to attend one of the presentations by Donna Dimon, chief budget and management studies officer, this week and next week. Please check Inside MC Online for the schedule.

Impact on College Community

Let me assure you, I take every opportunity to remind elected officials of your sacrifices in

support of the mission of the College. I want to be clear that our Montgomery College Board of Trustees does not want to close the budget gap by furloughing employees next fiscal year. The trustees and I understand that furloughs provide only short, one-time budget savings and place a burden on our dedicated employees. We are grateful for the sacrifices you have made both personally and professionally during this challenging year.
For the foreseeable future, revenues at the state and the county governments will remain limited. This will affect the College well beyond FY2012, forcing us to continue our operations in a constrained fiscal environment. As we move forward in this "new normal," we must keep students like Corey and David—who testified for the College at the Montgomery County Council—in the forefront of our minds.

For Corey, the College has been the place for the 37-year-old father to finally pursue his dream of becoming a mechanical engineer. For David, the College has been the place to reinvent himself from a student "who barely managed to graduate" high school into a successful honors student and soon-to-be Montgomery College graduate.

I appreciate the work each and every one of you have done to help students like David and Corey succeed at Montgomery College. You prove that we are relevant to our community now more than ever before. You ensure that Montgomery College remains an accessible, affordable, and high-quality institution of higher education.

Thank you for continuing to support Montgomery College and our students.