From:	The President
To:	MC Communications!
Subject:	Restructuring Academic Affairs with a One College Focus
Date:	Monday, August 19, 2013 10:04:12 AM

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

August 19, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: Restructuring Academic Affairs with a One College Focus

With the first day of classes just around the corner, we are reminded that empowering students to change their lives is not just what we do; it is who we are. For that very reason, we spent the past year engaged in a deliberative process to review the current structure of academic affairs and to identify an organizational structure that supports a common student experience, curriculum uniformity, and cross-campus leadership. Dr. Don Pearl, senior vice president for academic affairs, presented me with the recommendations proposed by the Academic Restructuring Task Force in May. As I outlined during the Fall Opening Meeting, I have made the decision to accept the task force recommendations. My deepest appreciation goes out to the task force—consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators and representatives from key resource areas—who served with dedication and commitment throughout this process over the past year.

The College's Evolution

Before looking to the future as reflected in the recommendations, it is helpful to consider our history and how the College has grown and transformed, and why the recommendations are right for the College at this time. First, know that I honor the past and the history of Montgomery College. This phenomenal institution began as a single campus and grew to three campuses within the span of 30 years. The academic and administrative structures that existed then worked well for the students we served and the institution we were at that time.

In the early 1980s, shortly after Montgomery College became a three-campus institution, a new president began an effort to unify the three campuses and their largely independent operations into One College. Much formal progress was made in administrative units such as Admissions and Records, Bookstores, Facilities, Financial Aid, and Information Technology. Today we take for granted that these services are unified across the College. Progress in academic units was significant, but a less formal system developed among campuses rather than a structured collegewide organization. In good ways, collaboration grew and included regular collegewide discipline meetings; a single collegewide curriculum development process; stronger alignment of the Catalog, course syllabi and outcomes across campuses; distance education offerings; and lead dean roles.

Higher education today puts new demands on the institution. The more informal academic system that developed in the 1980s and 1990s was sufficient then, but it must be reviewed and refreshed for the 21st century. Unlike then, in our Montgomery College of today:

- we are now accredited as One College—no longer as three campuses;
- our accreditation expectations have become significantly more prescriptive;
- we have two faculty unions and a staff union;
- legal compliance expectations require an administrative structure that assures accountable implementation; and
- our intercampus differences can be confusing and frustrating for our students and community to navigate.

Interestingly, the College considered moving to a One College academic structure as early as the 1980s to ensure that "all students receive an equivalent education regardless of location." This goal could have been written for today's Montgomery College, which is why I look forward to our institution finally actualizing the goal for the benefit of our students, our employees, and our community. We owe it to our students and to ourselves to truly act as One College, in all aspects. Formalizing the academic affairs structure follows the path set by administrative units and student services, transforming Montgomery College from three campuses into One College.

One College Structure

The new academic structure will be an organizational change. Vice president/provosts will have responsibility for multiple disciplines across campuses to ensure better collaboration. Instructional deans will have responsibility for specific curricula and programs, again across campuses. While vice president/provosts and deans will each have a base office on a particular campus, they will take a One College approach in their academic leadership.

The academic affairs and student services department chairs will continue to focus on campus-level leadership, and will assume supervisory and leadership responsibility of faculty. In addition, chair roles will become 12-month positions.

While I understand that these organizational changes may cause concern, I want to assure you that this was not a decision I took lightly. I considered our institutional history, documents prepared by the task force, as well as the challenges currently faced by higher education.

To be clear, we are not creating another set of silos. In fact, any existing silos should be eliminated. We will continue to have very clear reporting lines—faculty to department chair to dean, and then to vice president/provost to senior vice president. What we are creating is a program emphasis, not a campus emphasis, for the academic offerings for the institution. At the same time, we will rely upon continued collaboration and support across the institution.

Benefits for Our Students

Our restructuring of academic affairs will have a powerful and positive impact on our students. Moving forward, from the moment our students step foot on our campuses, they will benefit from aligned academic options across all campuses on their paths to success. It will mean greater consistency in academics and academic support, as well as an integrated collegewide course schedule that will allow students to build the academic schedules they

need to fit the reality of their busy lives.

Since I arrived at Montgomery College, students have been asking for a common student experience in academics across our three campuses. By fully adopting a One College model in academic affairs, we will retain the unique characteristics of each campus that attract students, but students will experience greater clarity and consistency with our academic disciplines, which will result in stronger departments, stronger units and divisions, and a stronger College.

Benefits for Our Employees

Among the biggest challenges facing higher education is increased attention from accreditation agencies. Our accrediting agency, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, expects colleges to follow its standard of educational effectiveness, which speaks to academic content, rigor, and coherence. For this reason, it is incumbent on us to address inequitable distribution of support and resources to ensure, for instance, that innovative ideas are scaled up, rather than limited to one program or campus.

In addition, through the restructuring, academic affairs will be greatly enhanced and have a greater presence and voice in resource allocation and in the decision-making leadership of the College. Chairs will be empowered to make decisions for their faculty and staff, thereby encouraging decisions by individuals who are curricula content experts and closer to the classrooms.

Under the new structure, there will be improved opportunities for career progression within academic affairs. Another benefit will be the ability to better incorporate succession planning into the work of departments.

As this structure evolves, I am mindful of the fact that this organizational change may generate feelings of uncertainty and even discomfort as there may be changes to your title or the person to whom you report. You may have a new dean—now a collegewide dean—who is not based on your campus. However, I assure you that you will have support on your campus; there will be a person on each campus to whom you can go for any issues that arise and who will have the very clear responsibility for supporting you in the new academic structure.

Benefits for Our Community

I believe that our broader community will find greater clarity in our new One College academic structure. With curriculum alignment across campuses, prospective students and families will know they are guaranteed the same quality, educational experience at all of our campuses. Our corporate and community partners will know that the partnerships they establish with the College will reach across all campuses.

In addition, a new structure demonstrates to our community that we are living up to our mission of holding ourselves accountable. Montgomery College will have a more cohesive commitment and strategy to improve completion, which will ensure that we engage in the best use of our public resources. A One College structure will position us to meet expectations of the public and elected officials to increase students' college completion, as reflected in the recent College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013.

Next Steps

As the next step, I have given Dr. Don Pearl two charges: (1) develop a series of work groups —consisting of vice president/provosts, deans, associate deans, academic affairs and student services department chairs, faculty, and staff—that will work collaboratively to develop a plan that outlines how curricular leadership will be aligned at the dean level and how the chair position will evolve, and (2) outline a plan to improve the structure of his own office to support the organization change. Specifically, Dr. Pearl must account for several collegewide initiatives that are important to the institution, such as honors and study abroad, that were not considered in the recommended academic affairs division. By September 9, Dr. Pearl will issue a collegewide communication that outlines how the work groups will be developed and provides greater detail about the process.

I have set a date for the submission of all plans by December 20, 2013. But this does not mean that our structure will change immediately. Rather, the implementation will take place on July 1, 2014, with the understanding that it will be an incremental process, with opportunities for ongoing assessment throughout the first year and in subsequent years. As we move through this process, the work groups should consider the use of the College Council's change map to assist in their efforts.

As I conclude, I would again like to thank the task force members, listed below, for their commitment to a deliberative process. It is always challenging to envision the future, and I applaud the hard work that went into developing a new academic affairs model that will allow our institution to grow and evolve in the years to come. The core of what we do and who we are is academics, and I recognize that transitioning to a new structure will take time and effort. But I am confident that Montgomery College will be stronger, and our students will be the true beneficiaries of becoming One College.

Academic Restructuring Task Force Members

- *Dr. Judy Ackerman, Vice President/Provost, Rockville*
- *Cindy Brueggenjohann, Part-time Faculty Member (alternate resource member)*
- *Cathy Galasso-Schwartz, Assistant to the Deans, Rockville (resource member, non-bargaining representative)*
- *Robert Giron, (former) Chair, English and AELP, Takoma Park/Silver Spring*
- *John Hamman, Chair, Mathematics, Germantown*
- *Dr. Tony Hawkins, Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Takoma Park/Silver Spring*
- *Dr. Tacy Holliday, Director, Academic Support Center, Germantown (resource member)*
- *Dr. Muhammad Kehnemouyi, Chair, Physics, Engineering, and Geoscience, Rockville*
- *Dr. Donna Kinerney, Dean, Adult ESOL, Literacy, and GED, Workforce Development & Continuing Education*
- *Margaret LaRocca, Office Assistant, Takoma Park/Silver Spring (resource member, AFSCME representative)*
- *Kathy Michaelian, Dean, Business, Science, Math, and Technology, Germantown*

- *Dr. David Neumann, Part-time Faculty Member (resource member)*
- *George Payne, Vice President/Provost, Workforce Development & Continuing Education*
- *Dr. Deborah Preston, Instructional and College Dean, Fine, Performing, and Visual Arts, Rockville*
- *Dr. Sanjay Rai, Vice President/Provost, Germantown*
- *Ruby Sherman, Vice President of Finance/Chief Financial Officer (resource member)*
- *Jacia Smith, Director, Employee and Labor Relations and Recruitment (resource member)*
- *Dr. Brad Stewart, Vice President/Provost, Takoma Park/Silver Spring*
- *Carolyn Terry, Dean, Humanities, Rockville*
- *Samantha Veneruso, Full-time Faculty Member, (alternate resource member), Rockville*
- *Kathy Wessman, Vice President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (resource member)*
- *Daniel Wilson, Chair, Sociology, Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Rockville (resource member)*