

INTERSECTIONS

THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS CHRONICLES

A message from Dr. Rai

The Thanksgiving holiday passed barely two weeks ago, and final exams are next week. It seems impossible that the fall semester is drawing to a close. This season also marks the end of my second year as your Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. It is more than a coincidence that this anniversary coincides with Thanksgiving because I am deeply thankful for the support you have given me, the confidence you have shown in me, and the guidance you have provided in navigating our way through remarkable changes that are having a significant impact on student success.

This is also the season when we measure the progress that students have made on their academic journeys. Projects, presentations, final papers, and final exams benchmark the intellectual growth students have made as they move closer to completion. Excellence in teaching is a source of pride at Montgomery College: Professor Nevert Tahmazian, our most recent CASE Maryland Professor of the Year, joins eight other Montgomery College winners in the last 12 years. I know that many more faculty will join those nine in the coming years. Montgomery College's remarkable record is a tribute to our faculty and their commitment

to students and scholarship.

Several initiatives highlighted this fall semester. Many of you are working on the Academic Master Plan, grappling with the dynamic landscape of higher education and the question often posed today: what is the value of a college degree? Achieving the Promise is implementing research-based strategies to bridge the gaps that leave many promising students at risk. The Part-time Faculty Institute's new director is hard at work ensuring that our part-time faculty, so vital to student success, have access to the resources that they need and are fully integrated into the College ecosystem. It is exciting to anticipate new spaces as the Facilities Master

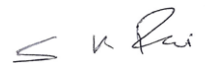
Plan and the plan for a new Math-Science Center building at TP/SS are underway.

The end of this calendar year will mark the end of an era as Dr. Judy Ackerman, Vice President and Provost of the Rockville campus, retires. Dr. Ackerman has served the College with distinction for 44 years as a faculty member, the chair of mathematics at the Rockville campus, a dean, and since 2003, as Vice President / Provost. I hope to see many of you on December 15 as we celebrate Judy's contributions and achievements.

A national search will be conducted with a goal of bringing the new Vice President / Provost of the Rockville

campus on board July 1, 2016. During the intervening six months, Professor Joan Naake will serve as interim Vice President / Provost. I am grateful to Joan, and I know that she will do an outstanding job, providing a seamless transition of leadership as she steps into her temporary role in January.

As our semester and year comes to a close, I hope that each of you enjoys winter break with your family and loved ones. We will come together again in 2016, renewed and refreshed.



INSIDE

- **Maryland Association of Community Colleges Summit**
- **U.S. State Department Awards \$60,000 Grant to Montgomery College**
- **Distance Education Ambassadors Program**
- **Nevart Tahmazian: 7th Consecutive MC Professor of the Year**
- **Libraries Acting on Recent Studies' Results**
- **Fall 2015 Honors Snapshot**
- **Maryland Distance Learning Association**
- **Assessment Corner**

U.S. State Department Awards \$60,000 Grant to Montgomery College

The US State Department awarded a grant to Montgomery College to organize a symposium in India on "Community Colleges in the 21st Century." The main objective of this project is to promote US community college curriculum and syllabus development models and principles in India. In a symposium to be held in Chennai, Indian and US experts will study the existing curriculum of various courses offered in Indian community colleges, and develop a standardized syllabus using the US approach.

Montgomery College will work with the Indian

Center for Research and Development of Community Education to conduct this project in four areas: allied health, applied technology, information technology and electronics. The project period will be up to eight months, include pre-symposium consultations, a four-day symposium, and post-symposium work. This grant is recognition of Montgomery College's leadership at the national and international level in providing expertise on the best practices for the changing nature of higher education landscapes in the era of a technology-driven globalized economy.



DISTANCE EDUCATION AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

The Office of E-Learning, Innovation and Teaching Excellence is implementing a Distance Education Faculty Ambassadors program to help full-time and part-time faculty learn more about distance education and improve their courses.

Each campus will have a Distance Education Faculty Ambassador beginning in the spring semester. Each ambassador will serve for a year.

Ambassadors will possess the ability to design and deliver workshops that focus on pedagogical strategies aimed at improving student success in distance education. Emphasis will be on assisting faculty through Quality Matters certification, as the Faculty Ambassadors will assist ELITE with internal QM course reviews. In addition, Faculty Ambassadors will work with ELITE to understand the professional development needs of the faculty at their campus as it relates to distance education. Faculty Ambassadors may be regular presenters in ELITE's Academy for Teaching Transformation.

ELITE is seeking nominations for Faculty Ambassadors at each campus who will be appointed for the Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 semesters. The appointment carries 3 ESH per semester.

Access the Nomination form for more information - <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/elite/forms/2016-elite-faculty-ambassadors-form>

Maryland Association of Community Colleges Summit

On Friday, December 4, a delegation of Montgomery College faculty, staff, and administrators joined colleagues from across Maryland at the 6th annual Maryland Association of Community Colleges Summit on College Completion, held at the Catonsville campus of the Community College of Baltimore County. The group was led by President DeRionne Pollard and Senior Vice-Presidents Sanjay Rai and Monica Brown.

Participants heard remarks from Dr. Bernard Sadusky, MACC Executive Director, and gained insight into the community college's impact on Maryland's economic development from Dr. Robert L. Caret, Chancellor, University System of Maryland, and Mr. Bret Schreiber, Director, Education & Innovation, Maryland Department of Commerce.

Montgomery College was well-represented among the conference presenters. Darrin Campen and Ernest Cartledge shared their experiences with on-time registration; Deborah Preston, Carolyn Terry, Sara Ducey, and Kevin Long discussed ac-



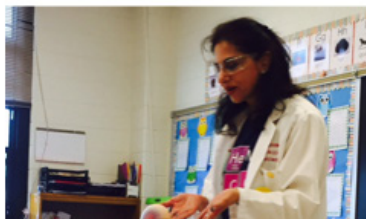
ademic restructuring, academic master planning, and integrated learning. Clarice Somersall, Sanjay Rai, and Antonio Thomas presented the development of the Center for Part-time Faculty Engagement and Support;

and Amina Rahman and Angela Rhoe described the work that MC academic learning centers do to support students in many different contexts.

Efforts to accelerate student access to credit-bearing courses were highlighted by Michael Berman and Monica Trent, who focused on high-level AELP students in credit courses, and by Rodney Redmond and Elena Saenz, who explained the pilot for alternate placement measures in English and math.

In response to the conference theme of workforce partnerships, Margaret Latimer, Martha Schoonmaker, and Frank Skinner were joined by Holly Sullivan of Montgomery Business Development Corporation and Eileen Cahill from Holy Cross Health to present efforts to build a highly-skilled workforce in Montgomery County.

Nevart Tahmazian Becomes Seventh Consecutive Montgomery College Professor Selected as Maryland Professor of the Year



with other faculty members, she secured a \$600,000 grant which help to provide 150 scholarships to engineering students.

Tahmazian says she is grateful for the support of her fellow faculty members who have helped her to grow professionally and “live her dream of teaching.”

Dr. Mary Furgol, a history professor, received the honor in 2003. In 2006, Joan Naake, an English professor, won the award.

Nevart Tahmazian, a professor of chemistry at Montgomery College, has been named the 2015 Maryland Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

“I believe the opportunities are endless to reach out to students, one by one, and make a difference in their lives,” Tahmazian said.

This is the ninth time in 12 years--and the seventh year in a row--that a Montgomery College professor has been named Maryland Professor of the Year.

“On the first day of class, I ask students to introduce themselves, to talk about their backgrounds and share some of their hobbies,” the professor says. “I tell them the class is like a train. We are going to leave the station with everyone on board and we won’t stop for 15 weeks; we need an en-

“There is no part of my job that gives me greater pleasure than to celebrate Montgomery College’s outstanding faculty. Today, I am very pleased and proud to congratulate another Montgomery College faculty member as a Maryland Professor of the Year, named by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).”

- Dr. Sanjay Rai
SVP for Academic Affairs

vironment of respect so we don’t allow anyone to fall off the train.”

In addition to her classroom work, Tahmazian also acts as an adviser to the STEM ED Community Club and the Learning Assistant Program, both of which encourage students to become educators in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math(STEM).

In addition, Professor Tahmazian is a long time community outreach ambassador, promoting chemistry in local schools. In 2015,

she was recognized as the local Outreach Volunteer of the Year by the American Chemical Society.

Dr. Judy Ackerman, vice president and provost of the Rockville Campus, says the professor’s commitment is “exemplary and praiseworthy.”

Tahmazian served a three-year term as the coordinator for the prestigious National Institute of Standards and Technology summer internship program, enhancing professional opportunities for students. And, working

In 2009, the award went to Susan Bontems, professor of chemistry, followed by Dr. Deborah Stearns, professor of psychology; Dawn Avery, professor of music; John Hamman, professor of math; Dr. Greg Wahl, professor of English; and KenYatta Rogers, professor of theater, respectively.

Note: This article was originally published in InsideMC on November 25, 2015. To view a video about Professor Tahmazian: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuwUh_jz4TE&feature=youtu.be

Libraries Acting on Recent Studies' Results

By: Dr. Tanner Wray

Director of College Libraries and Information Services

The February 2015 issue of *Intersections* included "Synergy at MC: Libraries, Anthropology, Architecture." It focused on the MC Libraries' partnerships with those outstanding programs, as well as others, in undertaking important ethnographic studies to help us learn directly from library users and potential users what they need and want in 21st-century library services and spaces across our campuses. We used reply cards, library observations, interviews and design workshops to engage hundreds of students and dozens of faculty.

We have two completed sets of reports from Ithaca S+R (authored by anthropologist Nancy Fried Foster and the Libraries' project teams) and MC Anthropology, for the Rockville Library and the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Libraries. The Germantown Library's studies are underway.

In 2014 the Libraries also deployed a quantitative survey tool, LibQUAL+, providing complementary information and validation to what we have learned from our qualitative ethnographic studies. We received well over 1,200 responses to that survey.

The Libraries are busy implementing changes based on what was learned in both sets of studies and reports.



Figure 1

Changes across the Libraries:

1. **Extended Monday - Wednesday evening hours** to 10 p.m. in 2014 for the three larger libraries. Since then we have studied library usage during the longer hours and will soon determine whether this will be a permanent schedule change.

2. **Upgrading technology** with OIT, based on users' highest priorities. We added collaborative work areas and flat-screen panels in the group study rooms and, more recently, the One Button Studio and laptop loaning.

3. Continuing to improve "academic affordances," with

- Facilities, such as **installing or upgrading furnishings, art work, painting, and carpeting**. The three larger libraries have been re-carpeted and repainted. We have invested in new furniture across the Libraries.

4. Purchasing textbooks to expand and refine the **textbook on reserve program**.

Additional Rockville Library improvements in planning stages:

1. Studying the Rockville Library's electrical outlets and lighting. We will significantly increase **electrical outlet access** this winter and with Central Facilities are looking for ways to improve **lighting**.

2. Planning to **re-configure the first floor**, with spaces

informed by the ethnographic studies – a single service desk, variety of furniture types, re-configured book stacks for more visibility and flexibility.

Takoma Park/Silver Spring Libraries improvements:

1. Evaluating the results of that campus' studies and by January will develop an action plan for implementation and inclusion in the Libraries' Master Plan.

We in the Libraries appreciate the value of each campus being studied. We have seen local interest, support, initiatives and increased awareness of the roles and services libraries provide to their communities as partners in student success. The studies we are doing to learn what student needs are, and responding to them in the near term are critical to maintaining the relevance of the College Libraries in supporting student success.

Figure 1 - Clockwise from bottom l-r: electrical outlet, One Button Studio, Laptop cart, Outlets in seating, Collaborative work areas.

Figure 2 - Raptor charging station, laptop for loan, flatscreen panel in group study room.



Figure 2

Fall 2015 Honors Enrollment Snapshot

Impact of Honors Courses on Completion Time

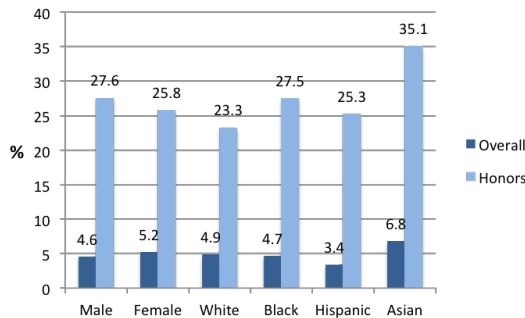
Students who are enrolled in honors courses often reach completion benchmarks more quickly than the general Montgomery College student population. By examining student completion data – defined as attaining 60 credit hours – and sorting these results by race and

gender, the honors program coordinators can see the impact of honors enrollment. Over the past 6 years, students who successfully complete even one honors course demonstrate greater rates of completion when compared to members of their own cohort at Montgomery College.

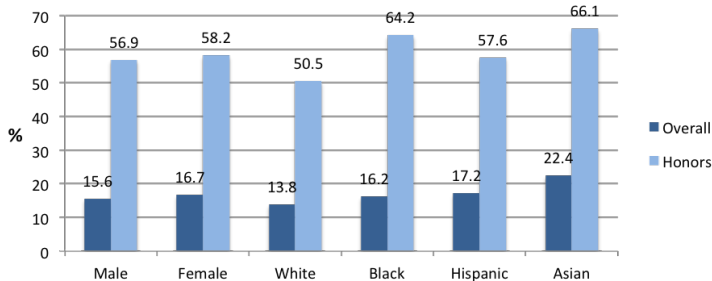
Honors courses provide several best practices for student engagement, including faculty mentoring, student-initiated research, interdisciplinary topics, and co-curricular experiences like internships and place-based learning. Honors programs also provide students with opportunities to make meaningful connections with other students and alumni.

These numbers suggest that all students can benefit from the deep learning experiences found in honors courses. While not every student will be an honors student, guidance from faculty mentors who incorporate high-impact learning strategies in their courses will positively influence student retention, completion, and transfer.

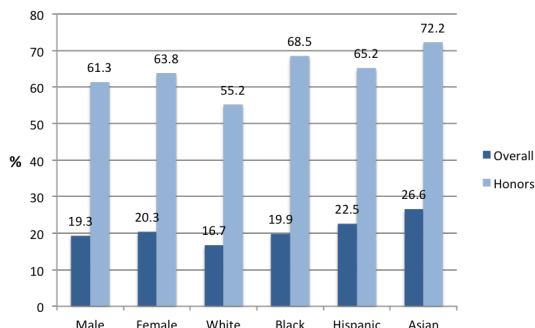
2-Year Completion of 60 Credits



4-Year Completion of 60 Credits



6-Year Completion of 60 Credits



For additional honors enrollment data, contact Rick Penn, professor of Mathematics, Rockville Campus

QUICK FACTS

- This Fall 2015 semester 2671 students meet the honors eligibility requirements of a 3.2+ cumulative GPA with at least 12 credits completed included an A or B in ENGL101/101A.

- Approximately 10% of honors-eligible Montgomery College students are enrolled in honors courses, including 290 unique students, with a total of 521 enrollments.

- 102 different sections (CRNs) of Honors classes currently have students enrolled. 177 students are enrolled in 1 honors section, 53 are enrolled in 2 sections, and 60 are enrolled in 3 or more.

- The honors courses include 66 honors modules (HMs) being taught in 18 different disciplines; 12 honors sections being taught in 6 disciplines; 10 honors labs taught in 3 disciplines; and 14 different HONR course offerings.

Maryland Distance Learning Association

Montgomery College was well represented at the recent Maryland Distance Learning Association fall event. Six individuals presented at the event:

- Michele Knight, ELITE instructional designer, served on a panel discussion titled “Walking off the Beaten Path: Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning”
- Nghi Nguyen, ELITE web specialist, presented “Using the YouTube Automatic Captions Feature”
- Dr. Buddy Muse, ELITE program manager, presented “Open Educational Resources – Big Changes are Here Now and Growing”
- Dr. Timothy McWhiter, philosophy professor, and Dr. Jeanann Boyce, computer information sciences professor, presented “Maryland Flipped Classroom Study for Higher Education”
- Gloria Barron, ELITE instructional designer, presented “Creating Video Resources for Your Students: Even Easier Than You Thought”

Assessment Corner: Getting to the Loop

In the world of outcomes assessment, there is always this phrase: “We need to close the loop.” The phrase means that we need to use the results from assessment to implement the improvements in our programs. Unfortunately, determining how to use assessment results is one of the most difficult parts of the assessment process. Here are some general guidelines to use when viewing assessment results and making plans for improvement:

Findings	Possible Actions
Students performed as expected – met benchmark.	Examine the instrument used for assessment. Was it too easy? If yes, change the instrument. Examine the benchmark for success. Should the benchmark be higher?
Students did not perform well as desired or expected.	Examine how outcome was taught in the course or program. Are there activities or approaches that could be modified or added to improve student learning? Examine the instrument used to examine the competency. Does the instrument align with how the outcome was taught?

Here are a few examples of planned actions that faculty are currently implementing to improve student learning in the following General Education competencies:

Critical Reasoning and Analysis	Information Literacy	Written Communication
Provide examples showing advanced competency in these areas as well as shorter practice assignments in preparation for the cultural presentation.	Require students to consider their data, search for relevant references and cite according to ACS (American Chemical Society) guidelines.	[Offer] More demonstrations of how to analyze literature and more hands-on practice.
[Add] More sample problems in class and as homework related to reactions and mechanisms to give students a more fundamental understanding of those reactions.	Require students to complete the APA-style tutorial through MC Library.	Give students a short preliminary assignment to identify those with problems with writing and have sample papers for them to review.

