

Montgomery College Academic Master Plan Executive Summary

Introduction

With this Academic Master Plan, Montgomery College embraces the opportunity to examine our academic enterprise and to agree upon the focus and direction of our programs and practices for the next five to ten years. We have, as of 2016, seventy years of history that we must honor and evaluate as we move forward to fulfill our mission to empower our students, enrich our community, and hold ourselves accountable for our results.

A clear, intentional, and innovative Academic Master Plan is more important than ever in today's higher education climate, as government, industry, accreditors, and students expect measureable results from colleges and universities. Internally, these institutions struggle to adapt and adopt disruptive technologies as we acknowledge that the very meaning of "education" has evolved in this information age and that our methods of instruction must also evolve to meet the needs of students whose cognitive processes are very different from those of yesterday's students. Externally, even as funding streams are reduced, redirected, or cut off entirely, colleges are called upon to improve completion rates and align programs with workforce needs—all while adapting our strategies to serve an ever-changing student body.

Academic Master Plan Goals and Priorities

In light of current realities in the world of higher education, a thoughtful, focused, and forward-thinking Academic Master Plan is crucial to meeting the needs of students and our community. This Master Plan will pursue the following broad goals:

- Setting academic priorities that impact other College units;
- Benchmarking data to gauge progress on the Academic Affairs student success matrix;
- Establishing criteria for effective academic program review, curriculum development, and assessment of the Academic Affairs Division's initiatives;
- Identifying major academic initiatives that will drive academic unit planning and budgeting;
- Coordinating the Academic Master Plan with Montgomery College 2020, the College's strategic plan, and the Middle States Self-Study process.

In addition, the Academic Master plan will align with the six Academic Affairs Division Priorities:

- Increase the graduation rate of first-time, full-time students;
- Increase the transfer rate of first-time, full-time students;
- Reduce time to completion;
- Reduce cost of completion;
- Align programs with workforce needs; and
- Align programs with transfer requirement.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Montgomery College students demonstrate excellence in learning and achieve personal, career, and academic goals because they are able to:

Think: Solve problems by inquiring, interpreting, evaluating, and applying knowledge and skills.

Communicate: Pursue common understanding through effective exchange and expression of ideas.

Create: Apply curiosity, creativity, and flexible thinking to develop new ideas.

Engage: Collaborate effectively to discover and achieve common objectives.

Connect: Integrate learning across courses, over time, and between campus and community to recognize interdependence and interconnectedness.

Grow: Develop knowledge and skills to be resilient, self-confident, and independent life-long learners.

Achieve: Apply the experience, knowledge and skills attained at Montgomery College to complete personal, educational, and professional goals.

Academic Affairs Division Goals

The faculty, staff, and administrators of the Academic Affairs unit hold ourselves to the same standards of excellence by committing to the following actions:

Think: Use qualitative and quantitative information to make informed decisions that promote student success while maintaining academic excellence. [Data and Analytics Software and Student Success Software].

Communicate: Initiate, deepen, or expand conversations with internal and external partners to help students succeed. [Improved Advisory Groups, DS Roundtable]

Create: Foster and celebrate innovation at all levels of the institution. [Innovation Works]

Engage: Interact with students beyond the classroom, individually and in small groups, to support academic success. [Mentoring, Micro-Interventions]

Connect: Embrace interdisciplinarity, and promote collaboration among disciplines, programs, and faculty. [Programs Across the Disciplines, Assignment Clearinghouse]

Grow: Offer meaningful professional development for all employees. [PD Pathways]

Achieve: Foster a culture of empowerment and accountability whereby all employees in the Academic Affairs unit have both agency and responsibility to make positive changes for students. [Revised Faculty Evaluation Process, Revised Curriculum Process]

Academic Program Review

Academic Program Review will build upon our current CAR process, transforming it from an inwardly-focused self-study to a comprehensive, comparative review that examines a program within the context of the college's current goals, priorities, and resources.

Sample Criteria for Evaluating Programs (Dickeson):

- History, development, and expectations of the program
- Alignment with college mission, goals, or institutional values
- Impact, justification and overall relevance of the program
- Size, scope and productivity of the program
- External and internal demand for the program
- Costs and other expenses associated with the program

Once criteria are established and described or quantified, a process will be created that builds upon the existing Academic Program Review process, including the following:

- An Academic Program Review committee with representational membership to make recommendations to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- Management of the program review through the Office of Assessment;
- A timeline for periodic review that is based on the current 5-year review cycle and that includes a mechanism for early review;
- A rubric that identifies whether a program is viable, needs revision or improvement, or should be considered for elimination; and
- Training in the process for all involved.

First Five Year Initiatives

Between 2016 and 2021, the Academic Affairs unit will pursue increased rates of graduation and transfer, reduced time and cost to completion, and better alignment with industry and transfer institutions by implementing the following initiatives:

Embed Classroom Support: In-classroom support from tutors, librarians, student learning assistants, community volunteers, and others.

Offer Alternative Scheduling and Delivery: Evening and Weekend College, specialized scheduling, flex-terms.

Implement Alternative and Customized Assessment and Placement: Assessment of Prior Learning, expanded proficiency credit, multiple measures for developmental placement.

Design Alternative and Customized Credentialing and Guided Pathways: Competency Based Education, stackable credentials, badges, Technical Professional Skills (TPS) degrees, and multiple exit points from developmental studies.

Enhance Student Pathways from MCPS and to USG: Dual enrollment, Middle College, CTE transfers, enhanced articulation agreements with USG.

Expand Global Partnerships and International Opportunities: Entrepreneurial and educational partnerships, student and faculty exchanges, study travel, and international experiences.

Second Five Year Initiatives

- A. Integrate High School, Associate's, and Bachelor's Degrees
- B. Offer Expanded Academic Orientation
- C. Enhance Scheduling (Block, Cohort, Accelerated, and Long-Term)
- D. Offer MC Curriculum and Credentials Globally
- E. Institutionalize On-line Training for Academic and Career Success