

Academic Master Plan Summary

The *Montgomery College 2020* strategic plan is a seven-year effort that began in Fiscal Year 2013. In it, we charged ourselves “to develop a new academic master plan that responds to the economic and workforce development needs of the community.” In order to ensure student success and to thrive in a time of uncertainty, a plan that allows us to be nimble and responsive is vital.

Why does Montgomery College need an Academic Master Plan? Our Academic Master Plan will be our roadmap for the future and help us to align our energy and resources with programs and practices that foster success. A constellation of challenges brings Montgomery College to a critical inflection point. Our core assumptions are challenged by many factors: our rapidly changing, dynamic world; technological innovation; our knowledge-based economy with its need for highly skilled workers; calls for greater accountability; eroding tax payer support (and the associated need for creative and flexible strategies to reduce dependency on tax dollars); and the changing landscape of higher education. Having a master plan is both a “best practice” and a requirement of external stakeholders such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Middle States and MHEC want evidence that MC is thinking strategically about the future of our academic programs and practices and that we are prepared to begin, adapt, or phase out programs in light of new realities.

What will the Academic Master Plan include? The Academic Master Plan will chart the course for the next ten years of academic programming at MC—five years in some detail, and the next five more broadly. The Plan is an opportunity for the Montgomery College community to engage in serious assessment of what we do. It will include data, benchmarks, an environmental scan, and recommendations in three thematic areas: Student Access, Student Success, and Academic Excellence. These themes will address topics such as stackable credentials, achieving the promise, academic program review, and globalization. Two sets of recommendations will emerge: one for implementation in the next five years and another for the following five years based on available resources.

What process will we use to create the Academic Master Plan? Creating the Academic Master Plan will be an inclusive process involving participation of dozens of faculty, staff, administrators, and students from the Academic Affairs unit and all other units of the College. This fall, a steering committee will guide the work of three thematic workgroups which will hold open meetings and campus forums to encourage maximum participation beyond committee membership. In addition, focus groups will be conducted for community stakeholders, including businesses, nonprofits, and academia. A website and online resources will also be available. In spring semester, we will draft the plan, solicit feedback, revise it, and present it for approval by the end of the academic year.

Will there be any costs associated with the Academic Master Plan? Some initiatives recommended in the Academic Master Plan will require resources, but the Plan may also phase out programs or recommend reallocation of funds and personnel. In addition to their efficiency and benefit to the academic program, all recommendations will be evaluated on cost, scalability, and sustainability before they are adopted into the final plan. Having an Academic Master Plan will help us to streamline programs and initiatives, avoid inefficiencies and duplication of effort, and use data to evaluate our success.