

To: Montgomery College Community

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Office of the President

Subject: **Updates on Remote Teaching, Learning, and Working at MC: Day Three**

Date: March 25, 2020

Welcome to Day Three of Montgomery College's remote teaching, learning, and working. I hope you are doing well under these challenging circumstances and following recommended health precautions. I don't know about you, but I am washing my hands at least ten times a day—even as I have rarely left my home over the last ten days. My family and I are enjoying the time together, but we know that all of this togetherness can also feel a tad bit overwhelming at times.

What is not overwhelming is you—each and every one of you. I continue to be grateful for the tireless work of MC's faculty and staff and the extraordinary spirit shown by our students. You are glorious! Here are some **good news stories** from our first two days:

- Food distribution: 131 food packages to MC students on Monday across all campuses. MC staff and some of their family members bagged items on Sunday until four in the morning! Arrangements for drop-off of 100 more packages to food-insecure students are underway.
- 300 laptops have been deployed to MC faculty and staff over the last week. Another 40 are scheduled for distribution so far.
- More than 250 requests for emergency assistance have been submitted to the Montgomery College Foundation, which will be distributing grocery gift cards via mail to approved students. Other requests for assistance with rent, utilities, and tuition are being processed.
- E-tutoring is running with just under 50 students meeting virtually with tutors on Day One.
- ELITE has posted six [terrific links](#) on working and supervising remotely!
- Students are showing extraordinary fortitude, helping each other, sharing resources, and actively engaging on line!

- Employees are demonstrating ingenuity and commitment that goes beyond traditional duties!

As we grapple with this new reality, we are learning and growing together, and collectively enhancing our protocols. The **two cases of positive testing** in the MC community provoked some questions about why the campuses of infected persons were not identified. You would be amazed by the considerable, careful discussions that went into this decision. Some of these factors were top of mind:

- Many of our students take classes on multiple campuses and faculty/administrators move regularly among campuses, making it difficult to definitively state that the cases were limited to a single campus. Hence, identifying specific campuses might create a false sense of security to those who believed they could not have had contact with these people.
- The College follows established protocols when communicating about an individual with an infectious disease to protect their privacy and dignity—and to ensure HIPAA and FERPA compliance.
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services is authorized to conduct contact tracing with any information the College provides to them—including MC's two positive cases.

As we move forward, the College will not make announcements about individuals who test positive unless directed otherwise by public health officials, since the closing of our physical facilities—and the enhanced cleaning protocols implemented—make transmission through contacts at the College less likely. We will continue to share medical guidance, such as that provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is directing everyone to take specific precautions about personal hygiene and social distancing. Please visit MC's [coronavirus page](#) for more information.

Thank you for considering the College's multiple levels of responsibility as we communicate with our community and try to protect the health of the largest number of people possible. We are working hard to get it right; sometimes we will not, but I believe that more often, we will. During my time at the College we have never faced a disruption equal in scope to the current one. We are fine tuning our communications and operations processes as we go, and will continue to consider students, faculty and staff's input on what information is shared. Thank you for your feedback and understanding—I am listening and I hear you.