

# Student Financial Aid: Access Demands Outreach

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# Montgomery College

- The largest community college in Maryland with three campuses serving more than 60,000 credit and non credit students annually
- In academic year 2009-10, MC enrolled 37,584 credit students
- Average full-time tuition and fees is \$4,272
- Approximately 39% of MC students receive some form of financial aid



# Student Financial Aid at MC

## 2009-10



- Total aid to students \$51.3 million
- Aid increased 100% in past five years
- 14,921 recipients
  - 35% African American; 32% White; 17% Hispanic/Latino; 11% Asian; 5% Other
- Number of recipients increased 75% in past five years

# Student Financial Aid at MC

2009-10

- Sources of all financial aid:
  - 75% federal
  - 13% institutional (MC)
  - 8% state
  - 4% private sources
- Federal aid is an increasingly greater share of all aid (up from 70% in the prior year)
- Pell Grants provide 46% of all financial aid dollars at MC



# Financial Aid Applications

Academic Year	Total Applications
2007-08	14,259
2008-09	16,122
2009-10	19,707
2010-11 as of 3/11	24,100

Applications increased 22% from 08-09 to 09-10; increase is 22% from 09-10 to 10-11 (to date) – but the year's not over yet!  
No new staff were added during these increases.

# Outreach Target Populations

## Four-Pronged Approach

Pre-high school:

Parents (throughout process)

Elementary/Middle School PTAs

Community/Church Groups

High Schools

Public and Private

High School Counselors

Current Montgomery College Students

(Never stop trying)

MC Students Preparing to Transfer

(May never have applied for aid at MC –  
but they need it now)

# Outreach Programs

- Early Awareness workshops at Elementary and Middle Schools
  - Stress basic “go-to-college” processes, deadlines, forms
- National Association of College Admission Counselors spring college fair
  - Financial Aid 101 Workshop for parents of high school freshmen – juniors
- Financial aid outreach counselor visits high schools with college recruiters
  - Meet with students to discuss financial aid programs and procedures
- Fall high school financial aid workshops for parents of seniors
  - Offered in Spanish and English
  - Review programs, deadlines, cost of college, basics of the FAFSA, FAFSA4caster, how to apply for scholarships

[Paying Your Way](#)

[Paying Your Way Spanish](#)



# Outreach Programs

- “You Can Afford College” TV call-in show staffed by financial aid volunteers
  - Hosted by Maryland Public TV and sponsored by state financial aid association
  - Free, anonymous financial aid advice
- January/February hands-on FAFSA workshops at high schools
  - Extension of fall workshops with emphasis on FAFSA completion
- January/February College Goal Sunday
  - Nationwide program (National Association of Student Financial Aid Admin.)
  - Multilingual financial aid volunteers (Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, French, Russian)
- “Time to Apply” postcards and emails to all enrolled MC students
  - Reminder of Maryland, DC, and MC fall deadlines

[Time to Apply](#)

- Financial Aid Awareness week to promote March 1 MD state deadline
  - FAFSA workshops on all three campuses
  - Day, evening, weekend
  - “Campus Conversations” MC TV show on financial aid and scholarships



# Keys to Outreach Success

- Reach families where they are
  - Pick workshop locations convenient to public transportation
- Bilingual help for parents who do not speak English
  - MC has a bilingual financial aid outreach counselor; adding one more
- Choose times and days that work best for families
  - Evenings and weekends; Sunday afternoons may be the only free time for parents working two jobs
- Keep it simple
  - Try to demystify the FAFSA; use real words and not acronyms
- Demonstrate on-line wherever possible
  - Teach families about web resources; they may apply on their own next time
- Follow-up
  - Who can they call/email with questions?



# The TOP 5 Outreach Challenges

1. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
  - Forget the scary stories – convince families they can do this!
2. Too many of them and not enough of us
  - Everyone wants one-on-one counseling and most schools handle outreach in group workshops
  - College Goal Sunday is the exception – includes one-on-one counseling
3. Balancing work and work
  - Financial aid offices are also busy processing aid applications for current students
  - Make outreach a priority too
4. Staff presentation skills
  - Not everyone is a good presenter; provide training, start with smaller workshop experiences
5. Finding the adult student
  - Where's the best place to find adult students who want to return to school – before they show up on your doorstep August 30<sup>th</sup>?

# Questions?



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