



Office of the President

**Testimony to the Montgomery County Delegation
Joint Priorities Hearing
by Dr. DeRionne Pollard,
President of Montgomery College
Wednesday, November 14, 2012**

I'd also like to thank Priyanka for her testimony. For while her story is very much her own, she speaks for thousands of students who identify with her educational journey. More and more MCPS graduates face financial challenges in paying for college; others are first generation college goers who may also balance work and family responsibilities. Montgomery students of today need locally provided and affordable higher education options, and they are likely to begin their education at Montgomery College. These same students need a convenient and affordable route to further their education-- to complete a baccalaureate degree and work in the innovation economy.

It is on behalf of those students that I thank all of you, Dr. Kirwan, Dr. Edelstein, and the University System of Maryland (USM) for creating the Universities at Shady Grove. USG provides access to an array of the USM's fine institutions and some of their best programs. That access has never been more important—for workforce development and for the opportunities it provides to the residents of this county, *in this county*. It's becoming common knowledge: good middle and high skill jobs require a college degree.

That's why MC was a leading proponent of the system's visionary effort to create the Universities at Shady Grove. I would offer that we remain one of USG's greatest champions. We should be—after all, 75 percent of USG's undergraduate students transferred from Montgomery College.

If we are to expand opportunities for more students and respond to workforce needs, it only makes sense to grow options in our own backyard. And, that means USG—an investment that has already paid dividends for the state's workforce needs. The new Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Academic Complex at USG is key to achieving our workforce goals and providing more students with affordable transfer options close to home. This project complements MC's efforts over the last 10 years to expand and enhance science, math and engineering facilities at our campuses—efforts which continue with Science West at the Rockville Campus and the Bioscience Education Center (BEC) at Germantown.



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Together, we have made meeting STEM workforce needs a priority.

- Montgomery College has one of the largest engineering transfers programs in the country, with 1,300 students in the transfer program this year.
- And these future engineers need more local transfer options if they are to work locally.
- A new Science and Engineering complex at USG will provide additional transfer opportunities for our next generation of engineers, preparing more STEM graduates in key science, technology, engineering and math fields.
- And it will support students and workforce needs in Maryland's largest jurisdiction—one that is also the heart of the life sciences and technology corridor.

But we are not content to stop here. Our institutions are inextricably linked not only with each other, but also with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Dr. Edelstein and I have worked with the superintendent on a new collaboration---one aimed at getting the Montgomery student of today on a path to success.

- MCPS, USG and Montgomery College recently partnered to launch the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program, which creates a directed and seamless educational pathway—from high school to MC, USG and a baccalaureate degree—for underrepresented minority and first-generation college students from Montgomery County Public Schools.
- ACES participants may well prove to be our future engineers and scientists. The new Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Academic Complex at USG will ensure ACES participants and other STEM students can complete their degree locally and grow Maryland's economy.

You're used to me advocating for Montgomery College – which I'll continue to do. But tonight I advocate on behalf of the full continuum of high quality, affordable public higher education opportunities here in Montgomery County. Please share your support of the College's capital projects and USG's Biomedical Sciences and Engineering Academic Complex with the governor and your colleagues. These projects will be an engine that drives professional and job growth in critical areas for the region and state.

With your help, MC and USG can change lives and grow the workforce Maryland needs.

Thank you for your support.