

CLOSING MEETING
May 21, 2013

Closing Meeting

A Speech by
Montgomery College President
Dr. DeRionne Pollard

Good morning. Hard to believe it is the end of another academic year!

When I stood in front of you at our fall opening meeting about nine months ago, I talked about mindfulness...of being present in the moment, while having a sense of urgency for the future.

Now, I realize that being mindful is hard... it takes self-reflection, patience, and diligence. But when I have taken the time to be mindful, I have learned that, instead of always focusing on the goal, on crossing the item off the to-do list, the journey itself is something to be cherished.

You could say that the journey is the soul of our daily lives...it is what makes each experience, each outcome, each event, unique. The soul is what survives long after the actual journey ends. The soul is the takeaway, the lesson, and the purpose.

Today is about our collective journey... our soul.

There is no doubt this has been an eventful year, with lots of successes, lots of changes and, even some angst.

I hear you.

But today... I want to kick off our closing day celebrating you, and letting you know that I am so very proud of who we are.

So while change is the new reality of higher education, it does not mean stripping away what makes us who we are, what we are, or why we are.

I want you to leave today with a little bounce in your step, a little reason to dance.

There is someone much wiser than me who will give us all a little pep talk at the end of my remarks. But to tee up his wisdom... I want to start by sharing some thoughts from our College community about the soul of our College and why being

part of this phenomenal group of people gives us all reasons to dance.

First... People here care about each other.

We celebrate happy moments and empathize with heartbreaking ones... usually over food: with potlucks and casseroles and home-cooked meals delivered with love.

We come together as a community to celebrate the start and close of each academic year, with diverse offerings around the College like a picnic, softball game, and even some of Jacob's famous fried chicken in Germantown.

We gather with one another in created or found spaces to study or socialize. On our Rockville Campus, it's on the Macklin Tower Terrace under the umbrellas, or by the sundial, and the

outdoor classroom pond, the amphitheater and even building lobbies where sometimes students strum a guitar.

We fill our classrooms, and our cafeterias, and our student centers with the sounds of every language spoken – and the two universal languages of music and laughter.

We revel together in the sunny days, and commiserate on the rainy ones...like when everyone at Takoma Park/Silver Spring knows that the bridge between the East and West campuses feels twice as long.

People here care about our students.

We host program completion ceremonies for graduates of our WD&CE programs to bring together families and community members to celebrate success.

We e-mail students who have passed certification exams and we celebrate students who are graduating or transferring.

We walk with a worried student in order to ensure he gets the help or make the connection needed or finds their way to class on their first few days here.

We work together to help a student apply for financial aid or scholarship funding.

We employ our students on campus, some front offices staffed entirely by students, demonstrating our commitment to student leadership and success.

We cheer on our men's baseball team ...and our women's basketball team...and our men's soccer team...and our track

team as each team makes our College proud at nationals...as do the many other Raptor victories too many to name.

We teach in the classroom. We teach in the hallways when we notice a student's struggle and want to show concern. We teach by example. We know that when it snows, there will be plenty of folks out there shoveling the sidewalks side by side with our dedicated facilities workers.

People here care about learning and culture

We organize an art walk where students place art in unexpected places and even bring in performance art at irregular times.

We create environments where students learn their true potential not just from professors, but from one another too.

We innovate and are willing to fail...then get up and try again.

We use technology in new and different ways to reach our students.

We collaborate across campus borders.

We provide cultural programming open to the community, enriching people's minds, as well as nearby businesses.

People here care about the community

We pack smart sacks filled with nutritious food for local elementary school children who need it over the weekend.

We provide the workforce that helps local businesses run, including area hospitals.

We open our Rockville Campus to the community to witness the wonder of fireworks on the Fourth of July.

We create programs and curricula to respond to the specific needs of the community.

We work with incarcerated members of our population to ensure they have access to education now and when they get out of jail.

We are proud of being Montgomery College...and our students are too...and so too is our community.

People here have soul.

The soul of our College is deep.

It is passionate.

It is ever-lasting.

It is something to dance about.

But don't take this president's word for it...ladies and gentleman, may I present the Kid President.

CUE VIDEO- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o>

He is right: We are awesome!

“Its everybody’s duty to give the world a reason to dance. Let’s get to it!”

Let’s celebrate our soul... with the king of soul.

CUE MUSIC- Funky Good Time.

As I wish you a very restful and rejuvenating summer...let’s get up and dance!