



**MONTGOMERY**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# **CREATING** A CULTURE OF **BELONGING**

ANNUAL REPORT

19

20

OUR MONTCO FAMILY

# STRONGER

TOGETHER

**FOR MORE THAN 55 YEARS,** Montgomery County Community College (Montco) has grown with the community to meet the evolving educational needs of Montgomery County at its campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown, The Culinary Arts Institute in Lansdale and online. At Montco, we provide a comprehensive educational experience that enables students to not only succeed academically, but also professionally and personally.

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For our work in removing barriers to access, improving learning outcomes and increasing completion, Montco has earned national recognition this year as an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction. For the fifth consecutive year, Montco has been named one of the Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges in the nation by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, for its commitment to diversity.



For Global Diversity Month, Montco held a special pride flag-raising ceremony at both campuses to promote inclusion.



## OUR MISSION

Serve the educational, workforce and cultural needs of our students and County communities by creating innovative, sustainable, meaningful learning experiences and programs that afford access to and drive success of our students both at the College and beyond their experiences here.



## OUR VISION

Montgomery County Community College will be highly valued as a key community partner that further advances the growth of a vibrant, increasingly diverse Montgomery County. Montgomery County Community College will be viewed as the region's hub for serving students and our communities with meaningful educational experiences, workforce solutions and cultural opportunities.



## OUR EQUITY STATEMENT

Montgomery County Community College is committed to ensuring that all students receive what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.

## THESE CORE GOALS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2017-2022 »:

- ▶ Champion Student Success
- ▶ Foster Meaningful External Relationships
- ▶ Ensure a Sustainable Organization



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

## **Dear Montco Family and Friends:**

The 2019-2020 school year should be remembered as a time when the mettle of our community was tested like never before and the strength inside each and every one of us was revealed.

While the COVID-19 global pandemic may have forced us all to stay at home in order to keep continuity of our work and learning, it did not pull us apart. We continue to brave these unprecedented days together with unity and resolve.

None of us should be surprised by our response to this adversity. The journey of the Montco community is one of resilience, excellence and innovation. It's who we've always been. For 55 years, we have stood shoulder to shoulder in the midst of difficult days and persevered. Now we've been asked to do it again.

Over the past few months, I have been inspired by the incredible work our students, faculty and staff have done to support the community and keep us moving forward. From transitioning our College entirely

online in a matter of weeks, while continuing to support our students along the way, to finding creative ways to stay connected through the use of technology – we should all be enormously proud of the way we've handled this crisis. This is who we are.

It has been a privilege to lead this remarkable College as interim president, and it is my honor now to serve as president. Thank you for the incredible support you've continued to show this College and one another.

Until we see each other in person again, stay safe and remember that better days are just on the horizon.

With Mustang Pride,

**Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez**  
*President, Montgomery County  
Community College*

# KEY LEADERSHIP PLAYERS

## Board of Trustees and President's Cabinet

### Board of Trustees »

Frank X. Custer, Chair  
Lisa B. Binder, Vice Chair  
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### President

Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez

### Emeriti

Charles Kahn, Jr.  
Karen A. Stout

### President's Cabinet »

Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez  
*President*

Jay Browning, CFRE  
*Vice President for Advancement*

Therol Dix, J.D.  
*Vice President of West Campus  
and Educational Partnerships*

Rose Makofske  
*Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*

Philip Needles  
*Vice President for Student Services*

Diane O'Connor  
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Dr. Gloria Oikelome  
*Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Dr. Celeste Schwartz  
*Vice President for Information  
Technology and Chief Digital Officer*

Charles Somers, CPA, CGMA, MBA  
*Vice President for Finance  
and Administration*



Frank X. Custer, Chair, Montgomery County  
Community College Board of Trustees



# LEADING MONTCO'S

# MOMENTUM

## ***Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez Named Sixth President***

Higher education was the catalyst that changed her life and her brothers' lives for the better. As a first-generation college graduate, Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez understands not only the value of quality education, but she knows the sacrifices and challenges that go along with earning the degree.

From this perspective, she relates to students and their experiences as they start their educational journeys at Montgomery County Community College. She also understands the significance for students and employees to have a sense of belonging to the Montco community.

"It's important that everyone feels welcome here, and that they know they have a voice and their voice will be heard," said Dr. Bastecki-Perez, who was appointed as the sixth president of the College on May 18, following a nationwide search. Dr. Bastecki-Perez's inclusive and collaborative leadership style during her tenure as interim president in 2019-2020 enabled Montco to strengthen partnerships with the community and explore new opportunities for students.

"We are confident that Dr. Bastecki-Perez's strong leadership and unwavering dedication to the success of our students will continue to propel Montgomery County Community College as a national leading institution in higher education, a key community partner and an invaluable resource for all Montgomery County residents," said Board Chair Frank X. Custer. "Her performance as interim president, especially during the current COVID-19 crisis, only served to confirm that the Board was choosing the right person to lead the College today and into the future."

For more than 30 years, Dr. Bastecki-Perez has dedicated her professional pursuits to helping students achieve their dreams of higher education, including access to college, retention, completion and family-sustainable wage employment. She spent 24 of those years at Montco, starting as the director and professor of Dental Hygiene in 1996 and moving up through various leadership roles. In 2010, she was named vice president of Academic Affairs and provost — the position she held when she was selected to serve as interim president.

“

It's important that everyone feels welcome here, and that they know they have a voice and their voice will be heard...”

While Dr. Bastecki-Perez served as interim president, Montco earned the prestigious Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction award, a national recognition for its work in narrowing equity gaps and improving student outcomes. Montco was one of only 11 community colleges in the country to receive this prominent designation.

“This award recognizes that Montgomery County Community College is a leader in its work to champion success for all students through the intentional design of the college experience,” said Dr. Bastecki-Perez. “I’m proud of the dedication of our faculty, administrators and staff who diligently work to develop innovative solutions to help all students achieve their academic and career goals.

Recently, Montco instituted three impactful interventions — 24/7 online tutoring, a new streamlined student onboarding process called Ready, Set MontGO!, and a new course withdrawal process — all of which have resulted in improved retention and transfer attainment rates.

Additionally, Montco was named one of the Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges in 2020 for the fifth consecutive year by “Diverse: Issues in Higher Education” and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development. This national recognition salutes community and technical colleges that cultivate diverse, inclusive and supportive workplaces and learning environments.

Montco promotes and advances professional development offerings through opportunities such as the Faculty Diversity Fellowship program, which focuses on the careers of exceptional scholars from historically underrepresented groups. Throughout the year, Montco holds numerous programs and initiatives, including the annual Presidential Symposium on Diversity, Social Justice Series, the Lively Arts Series performances and art exhibitions, and activities throughout Global Diversity Awareness Month, which embraces diversity and inclusiveness.

Under her leadership, Montco also was recognized as an inaugural Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (PNGAS) Guard-Friendly School for its support of students in the National Guard, an All-In Gold Campus for outstanding student voter engagement, a national Bellwether Award finalist in the categorical strand for Planning, Governance, and Finance, and a Forbes’ ranking as a top employer, among other prestigious awards and designations.

## OUR ACCOLADES





# ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITIES

As the community's college, Montco partners with many organizations, businesses, school districts, and other private and public entities to serve the residents of the County and region.



Montco partners with the **Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board** to offer events like the Harlem Globetrotters for the community.



More than 7,000 visitors attended the annual Whitpain Community Festival in 2019 co-hosted by Montco and **Whitpain Township**.



More than 1,400 people attended the **2019 Presidential Symposium on Diversity** featuring author of *Educated*, Dr. Tara Westover.



**The Pennsylvania State Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs** awarded a \$46,090 grant to Montco to work with the community to help address the opioid crisis with MCCC S.T.O.P. (Students Tackling Opioid Prevention).



**Pennsylvania Department of Education** Deputy Secretary Dr. Noe Ortega and PDE Higher Education Specialist Mike Dotts visited Montgomery County Community College on Nov. 15 to learn about our programs and student-centric approach and to tour the campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown.



In honor of the life and legacy of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Montgomery County Community College students, employees and their families spent their day volunteering at the **Elmwood Park Zoo** in Norristown, and at the **TriCounty Active Adult Center** and **In Ian's Boots** in Pottstown.

# #MontcoFamily



Monty delivered cheer to our Montco Family with his special Monty-grams during Valentine's week.

## The Importance of Belonging

In 2019-2020, the overarching College goal was to create a sense of belonging. The Montco community collectively focused on generating a warm, welcoming atmosphere throughout our campuses in which everyone felt accepted, appreciated and valued.

**To foster this environment, the Board of Trustees approved Montco's equity statement for student success:**

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Montgomery County Community College is committed to ensuring that all students receive what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.

## Weeks of Welcome With Monty

Every year, to help with our student's transition to College, Montco rolls out the red welcome carpet at the beginning of each semester with our Weeks of Welcome.

Among the welcome tables, Academic Affairs Meet and Greet, club and career fairs, therapy dogs and free massages, Monty, our Mustang mascot, is there cheering everyone and handing out free food and Montco gear. Through these fun activities, students learn about helpful resources, where to get involved and begin to develop relationships with other students, staff and faculty.

## Celebrating Our Diversity – OneMontco Unity Series

Throughout the year, Montco celebrates the richness of its diversity through a series of events that are open to both the campus and local communities. In 2019-2020, Montco started the series with a powerful mobile exhibition, "Long Road to LGBTQ+ Equality in PA," a walk-through timeline of the past 30 years of the HIV/AIDs epidemic. For Global Diversity Month, Montco held a special pride flag-raising ceremony at both campuses to promote inclusion.

Other events included the Presidential Symposium on Diversity, Performing Arts Showcases, Annual Pan African Festival and International Festival, which students hosted in a virtual format this year.

# STUDENT WELLNESS

## The Situation

During the academic year Opening Day event, Dr. David Kowalski, Montco's Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Innovation, shared some eye-opening results received from student surveys concerning their overall well-being and sense of belonging on campus.



ARE DEALING WITH DEPRESSION (BASED ON A SCREENING TOOL)



HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY SUPPORT FOR THEIR EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PAST YEAR



BELIEVE PEOPLE WOULD THINK LESS OF THEM IF THEY RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT



WERE FOOD INSECURE IN THE PAST 30 DAYS



WERE HOUSING INSECURE IN THE PAST YEAR

Surveys showed that the majority of the students felt welcomed on campus and thought the campus faculty and staff were caring and helpful. Furthermore, they thought diversity was valued and the library staff, in particular, was approachable and helpful.

However, students reported that when they lacked essential needs — food, housing, child care, health care and finances — they often faced barriers to feeling that sense of belonging.

## The Plan

The Board of Trustees agreed the College should explore solutions to help students. Over the next several months, a team of trained administrators were tasked with developing a plan: Kowalski along with Dr. Keima Sheriff, Assistant Dean of Student Programs, and Holly Ann Clayton, Executive Director of Marketing and Communication, created a comprehensive Wellness Center Initiative that included a tiered system of holistic care.

## The Resources

This year, we offered a number of essential resources to support the health and wellness of our students, including our recently launched Talkspace Online Therapy Program – free to all students.



### ONLINE THERAPY

Talkspace is an online therapy service that connects students to a dedicated licensed therapist from a secure, HIPAA-compliant mobile app and web platform.



### STUDENT SUPPORT AND REFERRAL TEAM (SSRT)

The SSRT is a free confidential service referring students and faculty to health care professionals and other community resources.



### WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Montco provides ongoing wellness programming that includes mindfulness seminars, therapy dogs and other stress-relieving activities for our students, faculty and staff.



### MINDWISE MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING

MindWise Mental Health Screening is an interactive, quick and anonymous online health screening tool.



### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Montco also provides emergency contact information for local and national support groups.

**>> READ MORE** about our resources.

# POTTSTOWN CAMPUS



Montco leaders are contemplating ways to make the Pottstown Campus space more engaging for students and the community.



## New Leader Appointed

Following a nationwide search, Therol Dix, J.D., was named vice president of Montco's West Campus in Pottstown in September 2019. She is a familiar face to the College community, serving as the Dean of Arts and Humanities since 2018 and teaching prior to that appointment.

In August 2020, Vice President Therol Dix expanded her role to Vice President of the Pottstown Campus and Educational Partnerships.

» [READ MORE](#) about Therol Dix.

## Revitalizing South Hall

Montco will revitalize its South Hall building at its **Pottstown Campus** as part of its Master Facilities Plan. The total project will cost approximately \$4,235,000, of which the Pennsylvania Department of Education will fund 50% of the cost.

Several open forum discussions with faculty, staff and students were held early in 2020 to gather ideas and input about different concepts for the first floor. MGA Partners Architects was hired for the project, which is still in the early design phase.



Plans for North Hall include its transformation into a welcome center for the Pottstown Campus with a green space where students and the community can gather.



## Pottstown Possibilities

While considering plans for South Hall, Montco officials looked at the entire campus and its other buildings (North Hall, 16 W. High Street; Workforce Development Building, 95 S. Hanover Street; and the Sustainability and Innovation Hub, 140 College Drive) to contemplate ways to make the spaces more engaging for students and the community. Our leadership team met with several Pottstown stakeholders to discuss possibilities for the long-range plans, including a gateway entrance to athletic fields and paved walkways, among other ideas.

As discussions and planning continue, we will proceed with improvements around North Hall to create an entranceway to the campus from High Street, Pottstown's main street. The College will repair the retaining wall along the Manatawny Creek and convert the small parking area into a grass-covered outside gathering place for students, academic experiences and community events. Tiered gardens with native plantings will be installed to help alleviate drainage issues and provide environmental learning opportunities.

POSSIBILITIES

# IN POTTSTOWN

## Pottstown Fitness Center Pilot

The Pottstown Campus piloted a fitness center in February 2020 in response to strong interest from students and employees with more than 100 people registering to use the facility. The center includes an array of fitness equipment for all levels of exercise and was open by appointment. Montco will consider continuing this option in the future when students and employees return to campus.



## Challenger Learning Center

Another unique opportunity under consideration for the Pottstown Campus is a Challenger Learning Center — a hands-on learning program with simulated space missions designed to inspire and excite middle school students about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Only 42 centers currently exist worldwide, and the Challenger Learning Center in Pottstown would be the first center in Pennsylvania. Beyond school visits, the Center could be used for summer camps, team retreats, tourism visits and community events.

## College Connection Experience

To help first-time college students succeed with their educational experience at the Pottstown Campus, Montco applied for and received a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant for \$1.9 million in 2019. The grant will fund the creation and implementation of the College Connection Experience — an immersive academic pathway program with wraparound support services that will encompass all years of a student's career at the College.

Students in the College Connection Experience started in September 2020 taking two courses – English Composition and a fall seminar. The seminar will introduce them to academic success strategies, including time management, goal setting, critical thinking, learning styles, test-taking skills, familiarization with college resources, diversity appreciation, college transfer options and career development.

## Pottstown Dual Enrollment Opportunities

In 2020, 15 Pottstown High School seniors successfully completed the Dual Enrollment Pottstown Early College Program. Funded by the Pottstown Education Foundation, high school students can earn up to 30 credits during their junior and senior years in high school by taking classes at Montco's Pottstown Campus. Sixty-eight students have completed the program since it started in 2014.

# LEARNING SPACES



## Science Center Completes First Two Phases of Renovations »

Crews completed the first two phases of renovations to the Science Center on Montgomery County Community College's Blue Bell Campus, beginning a complete modernization of the nearly 50-year-old building.

The project's first phase included the installation of new HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems, and improvements to the science laboratories in the south wing. The second phase included renovations made to the west wing, and improvements will soon continue into the Science Center Theater.

James Bretz, Ph.D., Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), said the improvements allow the College to meet the needs of the future.

"We are able to create a more versatile learning environment that can be updated to meet changes in pedagogy over time," he said. In March 2019,

construction began on the building, which first opened its doors in 1972.

"We moved everything out of the south wing to the west wing," said Bretz. "Then we moved the west wing to elsewhere on campus. Everyone moved."

The goal was to change the overall aesthetic of the building.

"The renovation allowed us to look at the building in a way not thought of in 1972," he said. "It was essentially a building block structure - very institutional, with not a lot of windows and concrete walls."

Crews installed LED lights and glass to brighten the building and create more open space. Laboratories featuring state-of-the-art technology including robotic arms, 3D printers and other pieces of equipment also can be seen.

"It created an environment that feels much larger, and is more energy efficient," said Bretz. "It really gave us an opportunity to reinvent the building. They did a fantastic job making an old building look new and modern. It's unbelievable what it used to look like compared to what it looks like now."

Another improvement to the building includes the retrofitting of office suites into student hubs, where students can engage and learn from one another. White boards and comfortable chairs allow them to study and interact.

**"We really created a building that's more student friendly—and more faculty friendly," said Bretz. "We've brought life to the building that wasn't there prior to the renovation."**



Students competing on the Mustangs eSports team face video game players from across the country in online tournaments.

## Mustangs eSports Is for Everyone »

Starting in the spring 2020 semester, Montco launched its new coed athletic program, Mustangs eSports. Esports, or electronic sports, is a form of competitive multiplayer video gaming in which teams compete against each other in single games or tournament events. Mustangs eSports involves much more than playing video games, according to Mustangs eSports Coordinator and Coach Ryan Plummer, who describes the many benefits of the program.

“A major benefit of Mustangs eSports is that it will bring together students who have a shared passion, and it will encourage them to communicate with each other as they work together developing their strategy and resolving conflicts,” Plummer said. “Through practice and competition, they will learn to work well as a team. All of these skills will help them succeed in the classroom and in their careers.”



Similar to Montco’s other varsity sports, Mustangs eSports has eligibility requirements. Student-athletes must be enrolled in one of Montco’s academic programs, take a minimum of 12 credits per semester, maintain a grade point average of 2.0 or higher and pass a physical.

When COVID-19 caused Montco’s physical campuses to close, players were forced to practice and play together from home. Even playing from home though, Mustangs team member **Tasia Jones** said the team makes her feel like she’s part of a community.

After a successful inaugural season playing online against nationwide opponents, the Montgomery County Community College Mustangs eSports team is ready to level up with new teams and games. **The fall season will feature** “Overwatch,” “League of Legends” and “Super Smash Bros. Ultimate.”



At Montco, the e in Mustangs eSports stands for everyone,” said Kelly Dunbar, Montco’s Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation. “On our campuses, we foster an all-inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong. ESports provides an opportunity for all students to participate on a varsity team.”



RELOCATING THE

# CULINARY ARTS INSTITUTE

The Culinary Arts Institute is scheduled to relocate to the former bookstore building on the Blue Bell Campus.

## The Culinary Arts Institute to Move to Blue Bell

Montco opened The Culinary Arts Institute (CAI) in Lansdale in 2013, adding a live-learning café in October 2014, followed by a similar bistro in March 2015. Since it opened, CAI has seen a steady growth in enrollment for both credit and non-credit offerings. Additionally, CAI now includes the expanded Tourism and Hospitality Management Program. The demand for both culinary and hospitality professionals continues to be high for the Montgomery County region, even as the region recovers from COVID-19.

Early in 2020 after reviewing different options, the Board of Trustees approved moving CAI to the Blue Bell Campus with the renovation and expansion of the former bookstore.

The move to the new building at Blue Bell would create several advantages for students and the community. Students and residents could use existing public transportation and have plenty of parking. Students would be able to enjoy all



campus experiences, including advising, tutoring, career services, the library and access to student events and activities. The community would have convenient access to a café or restaurant, and those dining experiences would bring more visitors to Montco.

According to a preliminary timeline, construction is slated to start in 2021 with classes possibly starting as early as 2022.

THE BEST VERSIONS

# OF OURSELVES



## Mustangs Are Champs!

Montgomery County Community College Mustangs Men's Basketball team won its first-ever **National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region XIX title** after defeating Middlesex Community College on Feb. 29 (81-61) and the Community College of Philadelphia on March 1 (66-52). The Mustangs advanced to the seventh seed in the **NJCAA National Tournament**, March 11-14, at the Rochester Regional Sports Center in Rochester, Minnesota.

**Cameron Reid** earned Tournament Most Outstanding Player Honors, while Head Coach Nyere Miller was named Eastern Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (EPAC) Coach of the Year and NJCAA Coach of the Year for the North Atlantic District in Division III basketball.





Dennis Duett



Matthew Falcone



Blessing Osazuwa



Ashley Tokarski

## Making the Grade

Four Montgomery County Community College students — **Dennis Duett**, of Souderton, **Matthew Falcone**, of Green Lane, **Blessing Osazuwa**, of Drexel Hill and **Ashley Tokarski**, of Pottstown — were selected for the 2019-2020 All-Pennsylvania Academic Team, which is sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges, and the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Falcone was also one of only 50 students nationwide to be named a 2020 Coca-Cola Team Silver Scholar. The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation selects students based on their high academic achievement, leadership and engagement in college and community service.



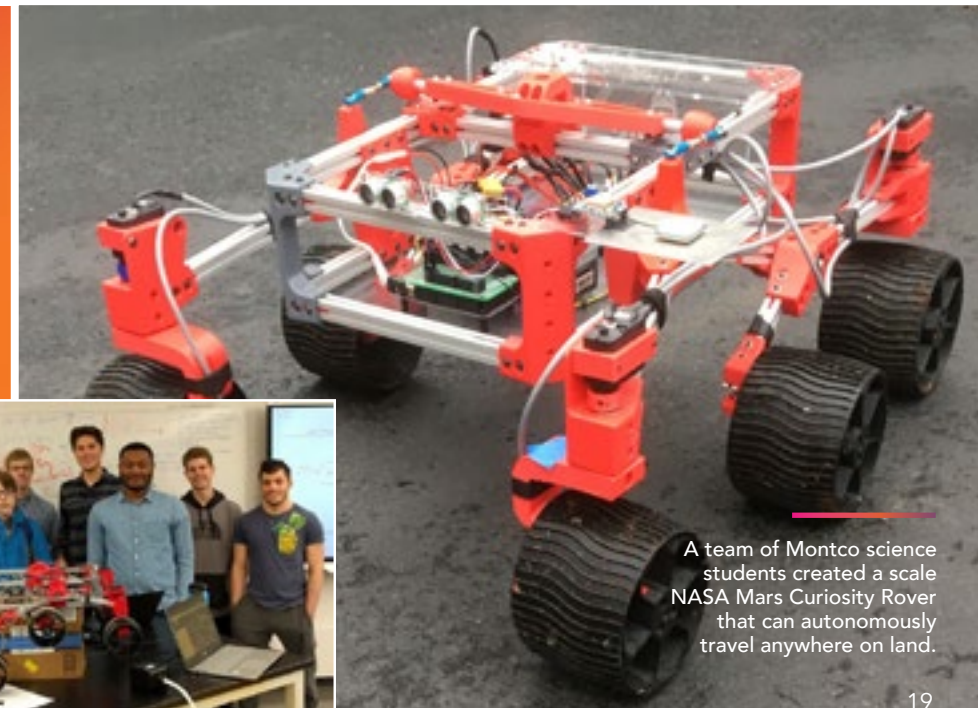
**Brigette Barrow** is one of only 290 students nationwide to be named a 2020 Newman Civic Fellow. The students selected for the fellowship are leaders on their campuses who demonstrate a commitment to finding solutions for challenges facing communities locally, nationally and internationally. Barrow was nominated for this esteemed program for her passion to help others, particularly fellow students who face food insecurity.

## Students Build NASA Mars Curiosity Rovers »

In the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic, a team of students managed to nearly complete a yearlong, out-of-this-world independent study that would surely make the folks at NASA proud.

The mission for the team was to design and build from scratch a scale NASA Mars Curiosity Rover that was like the ones blasted off into space to study the Red Planet. The twist on the project was the machine had to be able to autonomously travel anywhere on land, provided it didn't cross a road or go through a building.

**Students Paul John Balderston, Noah Williams, Ezra Galapo, Salvatore Sparacio, William Pastor, Nicholas Gahman, Corey Shive and Jaden Weed** collaborated to build three rovers, each with a different object detection system, to see which would work best for the mission. They were able to complete two of the three rovers before the pandemic closed the science lab.



A team of Montco science students created a scale NASA Mars Curiosity Rover that can autonomously travel anywhere on land.

## Montco Earns National Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction Award »

Achieving the Dream (AtD), a national nonprofit organization that promotes student success through institutional improvement, named Montco as a 2019 Leader College of Distinction for its work in achieving new higher student outcomes and narrowing equity gaps. Montco is one of only 11 community colleges in the country to receive this prominent recognition.

“This award recognizes that Montgomery County Community College is a leader in its work to champion success for all students through the intentional design of the college experience,” said Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez, Montco Interim President at the time the award was received. “I’m proud of the dedication of our faculty, administrators and staff who diligently work to develop innovative solutions to help all students achieve their academic and career goals.”

AtD honored Montco for its innovative work to improve student success outcomes. Three interventions – 24/7 online tutoring, a new student onboarding process and a new course withdrawal process – have produced significant results, helping students reach greater academic accomplishments.

Montco was named an AtD Leader College in 2011, and the Leader College designation was reaffirmed in 2017. In 2014, Montco received AtD’s prestigious Leah Meyer Austin Award for building whole-college solutions and equity resulting in notable increases in student success.



**DREAM 2020**  
National Harbor, MD  
February 18-21



Montco was one of only 11 community colleges in the country to earn Achieving the Dream’s 2019 Leader College of Distinction award.



**The Children's Center** received reaccreditation from the National Association or the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 2020.

Did you know? Less than 10% of all child care centers, preschools and kindergartens nationally achieve this recognition, which must be renewed every five years.



**Montco's Nursing Program** announced it once again received reaccreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The decision allows the Nursing Program to graduate students who are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN), which students must pass in order to become licensed registered nurses.

## 2019

# BY THE NUMBERS:

### First Attempt Pass Rate Percentages for Montco Health Care Programs

#### DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

National Board Dental Hygiene Exam

**96%**

NATIONAL AVG. 89-92%

#### MEDICAL ASSISTING PROGRAM

American Medical Technologists Registered Medical Assisting National Certification Exam

**96%**

NATIONAL AVG. 77%

#### MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN PROGRAM

American Society for Clinical Pathology National Certification Exam

**100%**

NATIONAL AVG. 81.4%

#### NURSING PROGRAM

National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses

**96%**

NATIONAL AVG. 88%

#### PHLEBOTOMY

National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences

**100%**

NATIONAL AVG. 75%

#### RADIOGRAPHY

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists Radiography Exam

**86%**

NATIONAL AVG. 89%

#### SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Certified Surgical Technologist Exam

**86%**

NATIONAL AVG. 60.4%

## STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES

### Employee Workforce Planning in Progress

One of the goals in Montco's Strategic Plan is to deliver a comprehensive employee workforce plan to ensure best in class recruitment and retention of our faculty and staff. Gaining a greater understanding of our current workforce and devising a thoughtful strategy for attracting, retaining and engaging our future workforce is critically important to Montco's success.


In support of these objectives, Montco launched an initiative in 2019-2020 to identify and assess the critical workforce needs, demands and issues currently and over the next five-plus years. We will use these findings to assist in the design of a comprehensive strategic employee workforce plan to support future workforce needs and recruiting and retention strategies.



## FORBES RANKS MONTCO TOP EMPLOYER »

In 2019, Montco earned a spot on Forbes' esteemed list of the 60 best employers in Pennsylvania and was the only community college included in this ranking of top employers. The ranking was based on an independent survey conducted by Forbes and Statista, a market research company.

# ON THE RISE



The Montgomery County Commissioners, alumni, special guests, community members and Montco students and employees celebrated Founders' Day on Dec. 10, 2019.

## 55 Years Strong »

Since opening its doors in Conshohocken more than five decades ago, Montco has touched and transformed the lives of thousands of students and residents in Montgomery County and beyond. Montco celebrated its 55th anniversary on Founders' Day on Dec. 10, recalling the vision of its founders, giving a nod to its accomplishments and looking ahead to new plans on the horizon.

"Today, we're celebrating the 55th anniversary of Montgomery County Community College by remembering the early founders who had the vision, determination and grit to create an institution that would make quality higher education accessible to all learners," said Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez, who served as Montco's interim president at the time. "We also welcome President Emerita Dr. Karen Stout and acknowledge and thank all past and current faculty, administrators, staff, supporters, and County, business and community partners who have collectively made Montco what it is today — the region's resource hub for providing quality education, workforce solutions and cultural opportunities."

## Alumni Celebration »

In partnership with Montco's Alumni Association, the College's Advancement team hosted an inaugural alumni homecoming event on Saturday, Sept. 28, to coincide with the annual Whitpain Community Festival at the Blue Bell Campus. Several members of the class of 1970 attended the gathering held in the Fine Arts Center gallery. Chefs and students from The Culinary Arts Institute prepared and served an array of barbecue-style food. Alumni of all ages had a chance to meet one another and members of the Alumni Board of Directors and then stay for the musical entertainment at the festival.

## Day of Giving »

In conjunction with Founder's Day festivities, Montco's Advancement team held a Day of Giving with the goal of raising \$5,500 for student support programs and scholarships. By the end of the 24 hours, Montco raised \$15,796 with participation from 67 donors — the largest amount ever raised during one day for the College.

## Thank You, Donors!

A special luncheon was held in honor of the members of the Gwynllan Society — friends of the College who make planned gifts to Montco's Foundation. The planned gifts are created now but are paid to the College later after the donor's lifetime. The luncheon was held at the Bluestone Country Club on Oct. 24.

## Explore Our Momentum Tours »

In 2020, the Advancement team began hosting Explore Our Momentum Tours inviting visitors to spend an hour touring Montco's campuses to see firsthand the beautiful facilities, learn about the vital work that the College does and to hear about our students' experiences and successes.

When the COVID-19 pandemic halted the on-campus tours in March, the Advancement team quickly pivoted and created a virtual tour to share online with visitors. Viewers can learn about the opportunities at Montco from the comfort of their homes.

The culmination of the tours will be a special celebration event to be held in October 2020.

## Student Emergency Campaign »

The COVID-19 pandemic created unexpected financial difficulties for people across the country, including many Montco students who suddenly had to adjust to taking classes online while struggling with a loss of income, unexpected child care needs and health concerns.

In response to this extraordinary situation, Montco's Foundation launched a micro-campaign reaching out to alumni, donors, employees and community members to raise money for the College's Student Emergency Fund. Within two months, the Foundation raised more than \$100,000 in gifts and pledges.

"We are grateful for this overwhelming outpouring of support and kindness," said Jay Browning, Montco's Vice President for Advancement.

"This immediate response was well beyond our expectations and will help our students tremendously during this critical time."

One of the most heartfelt gifts came from the graduating class of Radiography students, who donated more than \$400 of the money they raised for their pinning ceremony.

"When we learned about the Student Emergency Fund, we wanted to help others on their journeys, and we decided to give half of the money we raised," said Loriel Outterbridge, who lives near Pottstown and serves as the treasurer for the Radiography Class of 2020. "We all share a similar goal to help people and make a positive difference."



Members of Montco's Gwynllan Society were honored and thanked for their support of Montco at a special luncheon.



Radiography students donated more than \$400 to the Student Emergency Fund to help fellow students in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WE'RE ALL IN THIS

# TOGETHER



The COVID-19 drive-thru testing site in the parking lot of the Blue Bell Campus.

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed how Montgomery County Community College completed work beginning in the second half of the spring semester. Collegewide, with physical facilities shuttered, the College was forced to operate remotely.

Transitioning campus into the virtual domain was not an easy job and required extensive time and effort by several different departments working in tandem to pull it off.

The Information Technology (IT) department had one of the biggest tasks that, among other things,

included purchasing new laptops, distributing equipment and reinforcing help for those facing technological issues.

“The speed in which we worked was faster than we’ve ever probably worked before,” said Mary-Kathleen Najarian, Director of User Success and Learning Technologies, Technical Training. “We’re still going full speed ahead from the day we left to now.”

At the same time, across the College, departments faced their own unique challenges preparing for the oncoming pandemic and then moving forward while working from home. Academic Advising and Student Support Services transitioned entirely online to continue assisting students in need during the unprecedented time. Among the programs available online include academic advising, 24/7 tutoring, disability services, libraries, and digital and technical support.

“We were in the process of planning ‘what ifs,’ the potential and then we were gone by March 12. Everything evolved very quickly,” said Dr. Keima Sheriff, Assistant Dean of Student Programs.

Ultimately, the transition has been successful.

“We were one of two schools among the Pennsylvania community colleges able to offer online instruction almost immediately,” said Sheriff.

“That was amazing to me. That speaks to the infrastructure we’ve been building for years. We have been a leader school in the technological space. For us, it was not as much of an uphill battle. We had the forethought and vision we needed to have that infrastructure already in place.”

» **READ MORE** about the transition to remote work.



## Our Response to COVID-19

The virus forced administrators to transition the planned Spring Open House for prospective students at the Blue Bell Campus into an online event on April 25. The event featured prerecorded information about all three locations — the Blue Bell Campus, the Pottstown Campus and The Culinary Arts Institute in Lansdale — as well as flexible program options, affordable ways to pay for college and our student support services. Visitors also could ask questions of knowledgeable faculty and staff during live Q&A sessions. A full calendar of future online admissions events is available online at [mc3.edu/admissions](https://mc3.edu/admissions).

## #MontcoFamily Reaches Out

As efforts got underway to move campus to the digital realm, the Montco family found ways to help the greater community get through the crisis.

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) under the federal CARES Act provided money to colleges and universities for emergency grants to students in accordance with the guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Education. Montgomery County Community College received \$2.045 million from the Department of Education under the HEERF student portion and used the funds to provide the mandated amount of emergency financial aid grants to students.

The College also helped the greater community by donating a truckload of personal protective equipment to Montgomery County for its use and distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic. The shipment contained face masks, gloves, isolation gowns, thermometers, face shields, goggles, hand sanitizer, professional hand soap, disinfectant wipes, cotton swabs and gauze.

Additionally, the College donated nearly 200 pounds of fresh produce, an assortment of dairy products, eggs and more than 40 pounds of frozen bread and pastries (baked by Culinary Arts students) to Manna on Main Street in Lansdale.

Montco's Blue Bell Campus became a drive-thru, community-based testing site for the COVID-19 virus from Thursday, April 16 to June 30, and more than 11,000 tests were conducted.

The testing site, which was a coordinated effort among officials from Montgomery County, Whitpain Township, Montgomery County Community College, the Pennsylvania National Guard, as well as other state and federal partners, was located in a parking lot of the campus.

During the pandemic, Montco helped its community partner, the Whitpain Township Police Department,

by providing space in College Hall room 146 at its Blue Bell Campus for the officers to write their reports and take needed breaks while practicing social distancing. Officers brought their own computers and connected to Montco's Wi-Fi, with the assistance of Montco's IT department.

Montco hosted blood drives on April 7 in Blue Bell and on April 10 in Pottstown to help the American Red Cross with the extraordinary need for blood and blood products. From the 100 donors, nearly 325 patients were scheduled to receive blood.

On April 16, members of Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU) wanted to show their support for National Guard members and health care workers who were conducting the tests and the visitors being tested. They created signs with messages such as "We are all in this together," "We're proud of you," and "We love our medics." The signs were hung around the perimeter where they could be easily seen and bring some joy to the situation.

During the primary election in June, Montco's Pottstown Campus served as a secure ballot box drop-off site for voters. Montco also is working with the County to ensure a safe polling location for the general election in November 2020.



Montco donated a truckload of personal protective equipment to Montgomery County for distribution during the pandemic.



Campus Crusade for Christ members made signs for National Guard members and health care workers conducting COVID-19 tests.



Montco donated hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, cotton swabs and gauze for first responders to use in the fight against COVID-19.

# ONE STEP AT A TIME



## 01

College President Dr. Victoria L. Bastecki-Perez launched the first of a series of biweekly **Coffee and Conversation** sessions beginning Friday, April 10, through Zoom video conferencing. She and over 200 employees gather to celebrate highlights at the College from the previous two weeks and discuss future events.

## 02

Likewise, Keima Sheriff, Assistant Dean of Student Programs, and Dr. David Kowalski, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Innovation, started **Wellness Wednesdays** on social media. In each post, the two have covered health and wellness topics intended to help users struggling with the stay-at-home order. In the first post, Sheriff encouraged users to share the things in their lives that make them feel grateful.

## 03

With more time to cook at home, the faculty at The Culinary Arts Institute began sharing cooking tips online. In the first post, **Chef Can Uslu shared some ideas** of how to use all the vegetables folks were stocking up in their refrigerator.

## 04

Students in the Exercise Science and Wellness and Personal Training certificate programs also posted 20-minute, at-home workouts — no equipment necessary — **on social media**. Each video included variations of the routine ranging from beginner to advanced, so participants could choose which exercise worked best for their skill level.

# ONE STEP AT A TIME



## 05

Dr. David Kowalski, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Innovation, also began a series of interviews with faculty members to find out how they were dealing with the unprecedented times both in and out of the classroom. The interviews were conducted from his basement, leading to the aptly titled **"Basement Office Interviews."**

## 06

With Zoom video conferencing sessions on the rise, Montco community members were soon able to **download virtual background images** that they could display on a call and feel a part of the Montco family.

## 07

Since schools and day care centers were closed, parents of young children needed to find ways to keep their little ones occupied with stay-at-home activities. Thankfully, Monty the Mustang came to the rescue, with a full coloring page now available to download. **Print our Monty coloring book.**

## 08

As students, faculty and staff began to adjust to working every day from home following the COVID-19 pandemic's initial outbreak, Montco encouraged followers on social media to **post a picture of their workspace and tag #MontcoFamily**. The photos served as reminders that even though we were apart, we were all still in this together.

» **READ MORE** about the College's COVID-19 response.



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