

**Harry N. Zarin, President  
American Association of University Professors  
Montgomery College Chapter  
Operating Budget Testimony  
Wednesday April 10, 2019**

Good evening. My name is Harry Zarin, and I have been a counselor/professor at the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College for almost 26 years. I am here today in my role as the President of the full-time faculty union, the AAUP.

If I were asked to pick one word to describe the importance of my work and the work of the faculty at Montgomery College, the word I would pick is **impact**. As a faculty, we have a very positive impact and help to change the lives of thousands of students on a daily basis. The impact occurs both inside and outside of the classroom. The outside impact occurs in our learning centers, our offices, in training sessions, and at meetings with groups of current and prospective students. We provide our students with endless hours of counseling and advising in order to assist them in dealing with issues in life that impact their ability learn. We help them chose a major, help them plan their classes, help them learn how to study and to manage their time. We guide them towards becoming independent, confident, and ambitious people. Inside the classroom we must be creative, keep up-to-date with technology, be aware of the latest pedagogy, and create courses that don't require text books in order to keep the costs down for our students.

As a community, we made a positive impact and changed the lives of Patrice, Heather, Rhiley, and Joanna.

Patrice came to MC as a high school dropout as part of our Gateway Program, and she had few defined hopes and dreams. As a single mother, she needed additional counseling and advising to help her learn how to manage her student life and her life as a mother. Through the combined efforts of a caring faculty, Patrice received the support she needed to achieve her eventual goal of becoming a nurse. She graduated from our nursing program in December 2018, passed her nursing boards in February, and will begin the RN to BSN program at the University of Maryland at the USG campus. We surrounded her with support both inside and outside the classroom.

Heather arrived at MC with some obvious physical challenges, and we needed a team of people to help ensure that MC was accessible both inside and outside the classroom. All of our learning centers, the library, bookstore, cafeteria, our private offices, etc. had to be accessible. We taught Heather how to be a confident student who learned how to advocate for herself. Thanks to our dedicated faculty, and the Disability Support Services staff, Heather had a very positive experience at MC, graduated with her BSW from UMBC at the USG campus, and subsequently

graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore at the USG campus with her MSW. Heather has been employed at MC as a part-time faculty counselor for eight years. She is now part of the community at MC, and she is making a positive impact on the lives of our students on a daily basis.

Riley came to Montgomery College as a student in transition with the usual doubts and confidence issues that many of our new students have. Through his hard work and dedication and a group of faculty who have been supportive and encouraging, we challenged him to be his intellectual best. Rhiley will soon achieve his goal of becoming a college graduate, and in the fall will begin working towards receiving his Bachelor's Degree at the USG campus of UMBC.

It took a community of faculty and staff to help Joanna, who was home schooled, achieve her goal of becoming a teacher. Joanna is legally blind, and we spent many hours together trying to figure out what assistive technology she needed in order to help her become a successful college student. We had to find tools to make the relatively invisible, visible. Our Disability Support Services faculty and staff constantly communicated with her faculty, the learning center staff, and most importantly with Joanna so that we could provide her with whatever was needed to help her be successful. Joanna not only graduated from Montgomery College but also subsequently graduated from Towson at USG with an education degree, and she has been employed at Weller Road Elementary School for the last 4 years.

These students are where they are today partially because of the proper guidance, creative instruction, counseling, encouragement, and training they received from our faculty. All of these students have learned how to be a better student. They should be very proud of themselves.

Now we need your assistance to help Montgomery College continue to be in a position to recruit, retain, train, and re-train quality full-time faculty. We need the financial support of the County so that the College can meet its contractual obligation to fund our bare bones negotiated increase in salary. Recognizing that the county and state budgets are tight, we have agreed to a general wage increase that is below the federal standard, no increase in our overload pay, and no increment. We ask for your support of the budget request so that we can continue to hire and keep the faculty who are making such a positive impact on the lives of thousands of students on a daily basis.

I would like to add that each of the students I mentioned this evening have written an impact statement, and their statements are attached to my testimony.

Thank you

04/08/19

Dear Council members,

My name is Patrice Torries and I am a nursing graduate from Montgomery College. I recently passed the state board NCLEX and I am officially a Registered Nurse. I plan to start working in a nurse residency program with George Washington University Hospital. I am also continuing my education with University of Maryland, Baltimore to obtain a Bachelor of Science in nursing starting in the fall of 2019. Eventually, I will further my education and obtain a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

To give a little background, I am a first-generation college graduate. I grew up with a single mother and four siblings. We were homeless and had to be separated while I was in high school. I dropped out of high school because I never believed that I could ever graduate and go to college. I had never seen anyone in my family graduate so, how could I? Statistically speaking, my chances of succeeding academically or professionally were very low. Because of this, I know that Montgomery College's instructional and counseling faculty played a major role in my success.

I chose Montgomery College because I was accepted into the Gateway to College Program, which allowed me to take college courses and receive high school credits, as well as college credits simultaneously. I was also amazed at how there were so many career options I could choose from to pursue. Again, as a first-generation student, I had no guidance at home on how to be a successful student or how to do simple tasks such as applying for financial aid or choosing a career path. All guidance and support I received were from the Montgomery College faculty. The faculty at the career services helped me to choose a major. We explored different options and program outcomes until I decided on a major. I met with a counselor who helped me come up with a plan to graduate. We mapped out all the classes I needed to take each semester which made the transition between semesters smooth. As a single mother, I was given outside resources available to me for childcare. Not only was I helped academically, the professors and counselors motivated me throughout my semesters. Anytime I had any issues or just needed general guidance, I knew I could just sit in their office and I would be uplifted to continue working hard. This was important to me because this was the only form of support I had.

Without the support and guidance, I received from Montgomery College faculty, I would not be where I am today. I felt as though I always had someone holding my hand toward independence throughout my journey. I often found myself working harder because I wanted them to be proud of me, which was a major motivating factor to my success. I have grown as a person. I am confident, I am ambitious, and I know I can achieve whatever I set my mind to. These are the values that were ingrained in me by the faculty at Montgomery College. I will forever be grateful for all the support I received at Montgomery College and I am thankful for this life-changing experience.

Thank you,

Patrice Torries

April 10, 2019

County Council Members:

In 2002, I received an AA in General Studies with a focus on Psychology from Montgomery College. I took most of my classes on the Germantown campus. I received my BA in Social Work at UMBC at USG and received an MSW at UMB at USG with a focus on individuals in educational settings.

I began my education at Montgomery College in the fall of 2000, after graduating from Poolesville High School the previous June. I initially choose Montgomery College, particularly the Germantown campus, because it was close to home. It was a way for me to experience college with as much support as possible. Being a student with disabilities presented its challenges. I was learning to advocate for myself, explore what I needed to be successful, and adjust to the demands of higher education. Mr. Zarin and other counseling faculty, listened to my needs, provided honest, informative feedback and additional ideas whenever needed. The instructional faculty always provided informative, interactive instruction. They all encouraged me to enhance my education by doing research and learning outside of the classroom. With their help, I grew into a self-assured adult. If I had not had this time at MC, my educational experiences may not have had a favorable outcome.

I owe a great deal to Mr. Zarin and the faculty at MC who helped me grow and mature from a high school graduate with sheltered eyes into a self-assured adult. The exceptional support, guidance, and encouragement and help to become self-aware that I received as a student at MC gave me the confidence, patience and desire come full circle to give back to community as an academic and disability counselor at MC.

Heather Hughes

April 10, 2019

County Council members,

MC was a large reason for why I chose to move to Montgomery County. I heard from family friends that the quality and affordability of the school, coupled with its progressive atmosphere, would be a good fit for me and my situation. Having IEP support throughout high school, I knew I needed to get very familiar with DSS before the start of the semester. I was impressed with the level of attentiveness, respect, and humility of the counseling faculty and staff.

The counselling offices are a crucial resource to students. Being critical for student success, they require that students advocate for their needs, understanding that anything less will not lead to growth. The counselling office, specifically the disability counsellors, promotes self-determination in students who may be unfamiliar with the level of independence needed in higher education environments.

Although no student services employee will hold their hand through their MC career, it is important that they be available when students seek them out. I was fortunate to have my first counselor be my only counselor but, from what I hear from peers, having a stable counselor/advisor through the two plus years is not the norm. To develop trust, maintain consistency, and ensure degree planning is on track, it is vital to have a large number of counseling staff that can work with the large number of students that require their guidance.

When I first got to MC, I discovered that co-curricular involvement was not only enjoyable, but very educational. I was new to MD and immediately I got involved in clubs to gain friends with similar interests. I was surprised by the push from current Student Senators and Student Life staff to run for a senate position, while also doubtful of my ability to hold a position. Importantly, I had quick support from faculty and staff to realize my potential. Their support and authority motivated me in ways my peers could not. Against all introverted instincts, I threw myself in and took a risk that I will never regret. Having served two years in various leadership positions, I have developed great interpersonal skills, great understanding of group dynamics, and great confidence in my ability to lead and succeed academically. Since being at MC, I no longer see myself as learning disabled but as learning determined.

I believe in the power of leading by example, and I hope to be a source of hope for other students in similar or otherwise challenging situations. Since starting at MC, I have challenged myself year after year to face my fears and push my limits. Every semester, I take on more and continue to keep my head above water. I look forward to continuing this growth at UMBC so I can push through to the other side with pride in my accomplishments and humility in how I achieved them. After graduating from UMBC, I will pursue a PhD in Industrial/Organization Psychology. MC has solidified my belief that diversity makes us better and I intend to convince others of this truth.

I want to offer the tools needed to successfully navigate change and strengthen working relationships. By hard-focusing on student empowerment to the neglect of employee needs, MC neglects to fulfil the remainder of its mission. Even in its atmosphere of "radical inclusivity", it is clear to students that discrepancies are prevalent amongst the faculty, administrative, and executive offices. Faculty overload shows to students and impacts the degree in which faculty can serve students. Admirably but not sustainably, they earn less than what they deserve considering their enduring commitment to the college and its students.

Thank you for your continued support,

Rhiley Farenthold

April 3, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Joanna Linn Contreras. I am currently a fourth grade teacher at Weller Road Elementary School. I serve on the leadership team and represent the 4th grade team as their team leader. I have taught four five years and have taught in grades 3, 4, and 5. I also serve as the 4/5 compacted math (advanced math) teacher. In addition to teaching general education, I have thought inclusion classrooms with many students that have special needs. I will be continuing my role as 4th grade team leader for the next school year.

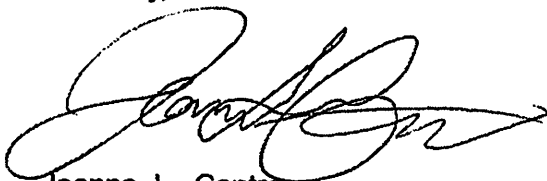
I graduated from Towson University With a Bachelor's degree duly certified in general education and special education back in 2014. I completed my associate's program at Montgomery College prior to transferring to Towson at USG. I spent several years at MC because I started out in high school as a homeschooled student.

As a homeschooled student with a visual disability I was very worried and hesitant that I would not be able to accomplish higher education and my goal of becoming a teacher. In highschool I had scheduled an appointment with the disability counselor at Montgomery College, Germantown Campus. Upon meeting with Harry Zarin, my fears were quickly put to rest. He spent countless hours over the following months and years supporting me with all the accommodations I needed, going out of his way to advocate for me, and providing the guidance I needed as a young student. I attribute my ability to succeed largely to him as he gave me hope for the goals that I had.

When people ask me how I became a teacher with a disability, I often refer to my experience at MC. I describe that I had little expectations for myself to be able to overcome my obstacles yet the people who believed in me and encouraged me changed my life. I will forever be grateful to MC for this experience.

I am now not only able to use my skills as a teacher but as a mom. With a 2nd grade stepson and another little one on the way, I look forward to applying not only the academic skills I learned but the self advocacy skills as a mom. I hope to inspire my boys to overcome their challenges the same way Harry Zarin challenged and encouraged me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanna L. Contreras', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joanna L. Contreras