

Subject: Thank You For Your Efforts During the Transition to Remote Learning

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From: Rai, Sanjay K

To: Rockville Faculty{FT&PT}, Germantown Faculty{FT&PT}, Takoma Park Faculty{FT&PT}, Academic Affairs Staff and Administrators

Dear Colleagues,

On this eve of Spring Break, due to the impact of COVID-19, we are taking unprecedented steps to balance our mission with our responsibility to the College community and to the greater community that we serve.

I want to express my deep appreciation to you – the faculty and staff - who have been working tirelessly to prepare for the transition to remote working. Many difficult decisions have been made in the last week and I cannot tell you how heartened I have been by your responses and your resolve to develop – in just a couple of days - creative and collaborative ways to ensure that students will be able to complete this semester.

Ideas have come from so many individuals and groups. You have contributed to operational plans that ensure students will be well served. You have supported each other, sharing expertise and experience. I have lost count of the number of sessions on Blackboard Collaborate that have been taught and attended by so many. My leadership team meets regularly and has been tireless in their efforts to inform the many difficult decisions. Deans and chairs have done tremendous work to provide support at all levels. The ATPA team has developed several ways to support students remotely. Thanks to ELITE, 72 BB Collaborate sessions have been created for ATPA coaches to support help sessions, reviews, and remote tutoring. The Learning Center staff have creating wonderful options for e-tutoring. Simply amazing efforts have been going on.

This kind of commitment, from all corners of the College, is such a clear demonstration of our strength as an institution. The next days and weeks will present new challenges, pose new questions, and pitch novel uncertainties. I have such confidence that we will handle them with the same focus and ingenuity that I have been witnessing for the last 10 days.

One of the challenges will be to help our students be successful in the *remote learning* environment. In adopting this language, we are not only expanding our lexicon, but I want us to be very clear that this pedagogical format differs from our online education/teaching. There simply was not time to move all classes online in the way that we usually add online courses. The transition to *remote learning* is to allow us to minimize health risks to the entire community without sacrificing the semester. Your remote learning courses will differ and students' experiences will differ from simple email interactions to a range of use of Blackboard. We are all doing the best we can under the current circumstances and I know that you will provide the best possible experience for your students.

Please communicate to your students that this is a team effort. Just as some of you are learning to teach in this new environment, you will be a partner in their learning – new course content and how to learn remotely. Some of you have offered great suggestions: stay in contact, stay transparent, and explain why; prioritize and focus on what students really need to know – don't worry about perfection; be kind to graduating students who are very anxious about how this will impact their next move. With our access to technology and support for technology, and your incredible resilience, this will be one more MC success story.

College leadership is continuing to work with County and State officials to develop the optimal response to the current situation. Please watch for alerts and emails as we are in a fluid situation. Just as we support our students, please, let us continue to be patient and kind to each other. Usually, in a crisis, people come together - physically. We are being asked to keep a distance – social distancing. We don't want our students to feel isolated, and I don't want you to feel isolated. We will support each other in all the ways that we can.

Take care of yourselves and your families.

I am so sincerely grateful for all that you have done. Thank you.

Sanjay

Sanjay Rai, PhD

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Office: 240-567-5006

Cell: 240.753.2541

Fax: 240-567-8013

www.montgomerycollege.edu/academicaffairs

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