



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Montgomery County Council Receives Office of Legislative Oversight Report on Trends in Developmental Education

*Report Focuses on Montgomery College's Remedial
Assistance to Prepare Students for College-level Courses*

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ROCKVILLE, MD, October 28, 2014—The Montgomery County Council received a report today from the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) describing local trends in developmental education (also known as remediation) that prepare students for college-level coursework. The report, titled *Developmental Education at Montgomery College*, describes the College's developmental programs and costs, developmental education enrollment and outcomes and the alignment between the college's practices and promising practices in developmental education.

OLO identified four major findings from the information it reviewed:

- Most students at Montgomery College are required to complete one or more developmental courses before they can enroll in college-level courses required for a degree. In 2011, 73 percent of all students new to the college required remediation in math and 29 to 35 percent required remediation in English or reading. Across subject areas, remediation rates were higher for recent high school graduates than for older ones and among Black and Latino students compared to White and Asian students.
- Because the college relies on standardized tests to determine whether new students are ready for college-level coursework, current remediation rates at the college may overstate the actual need for developmental education. Research suggests that course placements based on test scores alone

overstate the need for remediation compared to the use of multiple measures, such as high school grade point averages and transcripts. Research also suggests that giving students the opportunity to use the best of their placement test or high school grade point averages to determine remediation needs increases their college-course completion rates and progress toward a degree.

- Although the college employs the vast majority of promising practices in developmental education recognized in the research literature, most developmental students at the college never progress out of developmental education. Within two years of enrollment, most students requiring math remediation neither complete their developmental sequence of required coursework or first gateway math course for college credit. And although an increasing majority of students requiring English or reading remediation complete their developmental sequences within two years, less than half complete their first gateway course in English within two years.
- The college expended \$14.9 million on developmental education in 2013. County taxpayers funded about half of this cost at \$6.5 million, followed by \$5.6 million in tuition and fees and \$2.1 million in State aid. However, students likely bear the most significant costs for remediation as they must pay tuition and fees for these non-credit classes and delay their progress in earning a degree. Most developmental students are enrolled in lower-level rather than intermediate-level developmental classes. Thus, they typically have two or more remedial courses to complete before they can enroll in college-level courses within the remediated subject(s) that offer academic credit.

OLO offers two recommendations for Montgomery College based on the report:

- Pilot and expand the use of multiple measures like high school transcripts and grade point averages to determine the need for remediation among new students.
- Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to align the college's and MCPS' expectations for college readiness in math by developing common end-of-course exams that are recognized as markers of math proficiency and college-readiness by both institutions.

The Council's Education Committee will hold a worksession on this report at a date to be determined in early 2015.

Copies of the report are available online at the OLO web site: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo/reports> .

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