Testimony of Michael J. Knapp,
Chair of the Montgomery College Board of Trustees
Montgomery County Council
FY22 Operating Budget Public Hearing
April 6, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

Hello! My name is Mike Knapp. I am speaking today in my role as the chair of the Montgomery College Board of Trustees.

I will be brief.

Please fund the College's FY22 operating budget request. Montgomery College's budget is fiscally prudent and keeps tuition flat for the second year in a row—our faculty and staff made sacrifices to achieve these two key priorities.

We are thankful to our employees for their selfless devotion to our students in forgoing pay raises next year – they are clearly setting the standard for others to follow. During this time of crisis, our faculty and staff have stepped up to the plate in big ways. Seemingly, overnight they learned how to instruct online, began teaching seven-week courses instead of the traditional 15 weeks, created boot camps to help put residents back to work, raised funds for emergency aid for students, and kept our campuses safe while we work from home. Others made face shields, managed blood drives and food distributions on campus, volunteered in clinical trials, and guided nursing students as they dispensed vaccines. And, now, staff are pitching in to make the Germantown Campus work as a mass vaccination site.

We only seek new funds for two shared priorities: to expand access to the coding camp for middle school students, Montgomery Can Code, and to operate the new Innovation Hub at the Rockville Campus. Both the coding camp and the hub will advance equity in STEM careers as well as spur innovation, entrepreneurship, and community building. These initiatives will enable budding coding geniuses, no matter their zip code, to become the skilled talent our county needs and activate innovators to take our economy to new heights.

Together we can help our county rebound because, as you can see, MC works for Montgomery.