

MEMORANDUM

April 25, 2022

TO: Education & Culture Committee
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Nicole Rodríguez-Hernández, Legislative Analyst
Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: READY Institute @ Universities at Shady Grove

PURPOSE: Receive update and have discussion, no action required

Expected Participants:

Universities at Shady Grove

- Anne Khademian, Executive Director
- Robyn Dinicola-Wagle, Chief Student Affairs Officer
- Mary Lang, Chief Strategy Officer

Chair Riemer requested that the joint Committee receive a presentation about the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) READY (Resilient Education for All, Designed for You) Institute proposal. This proposal is separate from the Council's review of the County Executive's recommended FY23 operating budget but part of the larger cross-sector proposal further described below. The USG proposal can be found [here](#).

The joint Committee convened two meetings in 2021 about developing talent pipelines. The October 2021 worksession concluded with a charge from the committees that the County's education institutions and WorkSource Montgomery develop a holistic and cross sector proposal to drive impactful change on the County's talent pipeline efforts and educational ecosystem. The Council received this proposal from all County partners in mid-April. Today's topic of discussion is on a separate but related proposal led by USG that is one piece of the larger cross-sector proposal.

Background

At the request of Chairs Riemer and Rice, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) and Education & Culture (E&C) joint Committee convened two meetings on [March 15, 2021](#) and [October 21, 2021](#) to discuss meeting in-demand workforce needs and short-term

skill/education attainment programs, specifically in light of the workforce impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery College (College), USG, and WorkSource Montgomery participated in both joint Committee meetings.

During the March 15 discussion, the County partners provided information on the following:

1. Review the roles of each agency in supporting career pathway students;
2. Receive an update of the impacts of the COVID-19 health pandemic on agency efforts to educate and secure employment for these students/graduates;
3. Discuss the collaboration (ecosystem/pipeline) between agencies including successful efforts and identified gaps in the system; and
4. Discuss future considerations and support to strengthen the career pathways pipeline, especially post COVID-19.

From the March 15 discussion, the joint Committee identified three follow-up items for discussion:

- Update on the infrastructure needs in the current career pathways.
- Update on the efforts and needs to scale the current programs.
- Update on meeting the workforce system needs for the mental health, P-tech, biotech, and early education/care industries.

These items were discussed at the October 21, 2021 meeting in addition to a case study on the College' Biotech Bootcamp. At the conclusion of this meeting, the joint Committee charged the County partners to develop a holistic, cross-sector proposal with the goal of driving impactful change on our talent pipeline/educational ecosystem that involves direct employer engagement and a holistic response from the County and its partners.

The READY Institute @ USG proposal is only one component of the larger cross-sector proposal from all County partners and was added to the joint Committees' agenda earlier this year at the request of Chair Riemer. The larger proposal was recently shared in mid-April; however, it has not yet been scheduled for review as the Council and Committee agendas are significantly time-constrained as the Council undergoes the FY23 operating budget review process.

This report includes:
READY Institute @ USG Proposal

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READY (Resilient Education for All, Designed for You) Institute @ USG

Proposal to
Councilmember Hans Riemer, Chair of the Planning, Housing and Economic
Development Committee
Councilmember Craig Rice, Chair of the Education and Culture Committee
Montgomery County Council

February 2022

The Challenge

In March 2021, the Chairs of the Montgomery County Council Committees on Public Housing and Economic Development (PHED) and Education and Culture (E & D) challenged the educational, economic and workforce development institutions (the partner institutions) of the County to envision a new educational paradigm. Specifically, they asked Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, the Universities at Shady Grove, WorkSource Montgomery and the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation to develop a plan on how will Montgomery County:

- Serve the students of the future?
- Meet and lead on the educational equity challenges that have expanded exponentially during the pandemic?
- Deliver a more seamless, student-centered, accessible, affordable, high quality education (K - Jobs) that leads to high demand careers, and beyond?

Similarly, how will Montgomery County meet the dramatically changing workforce demands of new industries fueled by the pandemic, like biotechnology and healthcare; changing industries like construction and hospitality; rapidly growing high demand skills in cybersecurity and data analytics and the experience and know how of entrepreneurship; urgent priority areas such as teaching and behavioral health; and the transformative workforce impact of quantum computing?

The partner institutions are working together to develop a vision of the next **Montgomery County Educational Ecosystem** that would take programs and collaborations underway to the next level. The ecosystem would provide necessary coordination and insight to current partnership work with an enhanced focus on the areas of need to turn successful partnering initiatives into a working ecosystem. Borrowing from existing educational partnership initiatives, we propose naming the educational ecosystem as the Montgomery County “Resilient Education for All, Designed for You” or READY educational system. This name borrows from an existing grant pathway program designed specifically for development of STEM programs in IT (Talent Ready and STEM Ready). One of the fundamental pillars of this work is that the educational ecosystem needs to address the needs of the diverse community in Montgomery County and the needs to increase the success of those underserved populations in the educational system, thus the importance of “FOR ALL” in the title of this work.

READY (Resilient Education for All, Designed for You) Institute @ USG

Dual enrollment and early college, STEM Ready, and Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) provide the framework for **career focused educational pathways**; joint efforts to engage employers provide the infrastructure for more systematic and inclusive **business participation in educational pathways**; a recent agreement to jointly build **career competencies** programming across educational partners will provide the career ready edge for all students in Montgomery County; educational opportunities for adult populations for post-secondary credentials such as the recent boot camps to pivot employees into high demand life science careers provide a model for a broad array of **point-of-need/ fit-for-purpose** educational opportunities throughout any given pathway; and efforts to better serve every Montgomery County student in their educational journey will be the foundation **for a robust system of educational data** to plan for, build and assess the student-centered pathway experience.



*Components of the Montgomery County Educational Ecosystem

A first step toward this more comprehensive vision is **investing in the people and the information that will center the student experience and bridge** the partner institutions in the County. Investment in this capacity to collaborate--the connective tissue across partner institutions--will create a system that is more than the sum of its parts and deliver on seamless educational pathways for the lifelong learners of Montgomery County. It is important to note that there are multiple successful pathways programs currently in place from ACES to Early College/Middle College, WSM bootcamps, IgnITeHub, etc. The READY Institute will not duplicate these programs, rather build on these successes to gain insight of best practices, identify gaps in service and build a seamless educational pathway for all.

The READY Institute @ USG

This proposal to establish the READY Institutes @ USG is a first step for investment in key components of the READY vision. The Institute would provide:

1. Data and analysis to plan for and build educational pathways that lead to great careers (K - J and beyond);

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2. Provide a point of coordination for partner institutions to implement and continuously improve planning and creating pathways.
3. Coordination and facilitation of partner institution engagement with employers across the planning, implementation and assessment of pathway work;
4. A hub where County thought leadership on educational equity can thrive;
5. Coordination and facilitation of cross-County career readiness work.

WHY READY Institute?

County investment in the Institute will establish a cross-institutional (joint) team that can help to build components of the next educational ecosystem. Individually, the education, economic and workforce development partners in the County do not have the resources to collaborate at the intersections between institutions (sharing information, joint resource efforts, and student/employee support between institutions) where students may encounter gaps in their educational and career journeys--between early education and K-12, between high school and Montgomery College, between Montgomery College and career paths and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), between USG and a career path, between credentials and career pivots or career advancement and throughout their career journey. At scale, the largest gap is between academic planning and programming and the workforce needs of the County combined with the ability of students to complete their education journeys. Investment in the Institute would be an investment in the data, analysis, and coordination to facilitate work among the education and workforce development partners that is essential to a seamless student-centered educational and workforce experience.

First, the institute can be a means to institutionalize systemic, cross-sector ***analytic capacity in the County***. The first steps are investing in the people and the technology to collaboratively gather, integrate and analyze workforce demand studies, reports and data at the micro (employer), mezo (industry), and macro (State and regional) levels with an eye toward understanding workforce demand and talent development (micro credentialing, associate degrees, baccalaureate and graduate degrees, certificates) programming needs. Mapping the current range of educational programming in any given area and highlighting the gaps and opportunities will foster planning for and building responsive career pathways. The capacity to assess and evaluate the quality of the student experience across pathways will also be key to continuous improvement and connection to career opportunities. Right now, today, we don't know what happens to our Montgomery County students on their journey from K-12 through their meaningful employment. We must and will find out. This Institute will be a catalyst for the institutional partners to take on this challenge.

Second, in planning for pathways, the institute can more ***seamlessly connect employer needs and workforce priorities in the County with educational programming*** in the University System of Maryland, Montgomery College, and MCPS on the academic side and WorkSource Montgomery and MCEDC on the employer side. We must overcome the "prisoner's dilemma" of educational outcomes--a result in game theory when every player in a game is motivated to take actions in their immediate best interest but the result is a suboptimal outcome. In the case of the educational ecosystem, a better outcome would be more students who are prepared for

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education beyond high school (who might not otherwise have the chance), with support to retain them and help them graduate, and many more career ready employees across the board and employers who are poised and ready to hire. Overcoming the dilemma (an educational system of strong institutions but big gaps for students between institutions but also along the way) requires information, coordination, and a shared vision. Across the country, efforts to build a more seamless, intentional connection between education providers and employers are often fraught with clashing institutional priorities and metrics for success. While a few examples stand out, such as the Tech Talent Pipeline in NYC, Montgomery County has the opportunity to invest at the intersection of education providers, employers, economic and workforce development partners to elevate planning for career pathways and open broader, more inclusive opportunities for students to succeed. The Institute would provide the time, space, and data to foster and advance this collaborative work.

Third, ***the Institute would more deeply connect the universities in the University System of Maryland to the County as well as the federal agencies NIH, NIST, FDA, and more.***

Efforts to pilot components of pathways, fit-for-purpose programming, experiential learning and cutting edge translational research (in partnership with IBBR) will deepen and enhance the work that these partners do together with a focus on the County.

Finally, ***USG is the ideal location to convene, coordinate, and activate this County work in partnership with MC and MCPS.***

A non-accrediting institution, USG is an asset to the USM and to our Montgomery County partners, where success is measured by the overall increase in students pursuing careers through County-wide pathways and the number of students turned employees securing high paying jobs and choosing to live and work in the County. Robust pathways will be built around baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate degrees for graduates coming out of programs at USG, and around the attainment of workforce-ready micro-credentialing and associate degrees by MC graduates ready to enter the workforce and connect to lifelong learning opportunities throughout their careers. The USG location will be the place to coordinate and communicate with MC, MCPS and more broadly, community based organizations (CBOs) the focus and opportunities of the educational ecosystem.

The READY Institute is designed to serve the future joint initiatives that will be prepared by the partner institutions for a Joint Request to the Montgomery County Council. We are hopeful that the Institute spearheads that effort.

How it works

Core Team: The Institute would be based at USG and operated by a core team consisting of an Institute director, a Data Center director and two analysts, administrative support, and a team of high flex project managers. The core team will also include new positions in data analytics and project management from MCPS and MC. This core group will maintain the institute and drive the cross sector collaborative work of planning for pathways, building pilots to drive innovation, incorporating student experiential learning in the work of the Institute, managing the

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Centers, and coordinating the convenings, research and practices across the ecosystem partners.

Pivot Team/Fellows: The institute will also be supported by a Pivot Team consisting of representatives from all of the Ecosystem partners--MC, MCPS, USG, MCEDC, Worksouce Montgomery, members of the 9 university partners at USG. Pivot team members may be assigned by their respective institutions, or will serve as fellows from across the educational ecosystem with different areas of expertise.

The initiatives and first steps:

1. Focus on the near term workforce needs in the County including behavioral health, teaching, healthcare and life sciences workforce and talent development programming needs.
 - a. Gather and map the data for talent demand, talent development supply and the gaps in a key pathway area.
 - b. Convene all partners for specific pathway planning
 - c. Build a joint database between MC, MCPS and USG to research ACES student experience as a model for wrap-around support in all pathways, and to research the implementation and impact of career readiness work.

It is anticipated that in delivering on these first three steps over the course of one year, county leadership would fully fund the Institute as delineated below, including funding for new positions for all institutional partners, operational funds, and pathway program development and implementation by institutional partners. In following years, the Institute would:

2. Support institutional partner efforts to launch a component of a high demand pathway in partnership with two to three employers ready to make the commitment.
3. Establish a Joint Center for Employer Engagement and Educational Equity to coordinate across all institutional partners and Montgomery County partners. Begin by convening of the employers by industry cluster to understand both short and long term needs and work through initial educational pathways
4. Gradually scale the data enterprise of the Institute (build County methodology and metrics) through research initiatives that involve all institutional partners and employers.

USG would serve as the administrative home of the Institute and house it on the Campus. USG would be responsible for the use of the funding and reporting out to the County Council. MC, MCPS, MCEDC, WSM and USG would develop a Memorandum of Understanding to accomplish this work.

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Budget Request

FY 2023 (\$475,000)

USG Employees

- Institute Data Director (\$175,000)
- Program Manager (\$100,000)
- Operations and Technology Support (\$200,000)

FY 2024

Build in the FY 2023 funding (***\$475,000***) and add:

USG employees

- Data analyst (\$125,000)
- Administrator (\$75,000)
- 1 Program managers (\$100,000)

MC and MCPS employees (\$500,000)

- 2 analysts
- 2 program managers

Computer infrastructure, software and facilities: (\$400,000) and USG would supply office space and convening space free of charge.

Support for convenings, collaboration with employers, CBOs and other interested organizations: (\$100,000).

Launch support for strategic county programs each year: (\$500,000 - \$1 million). Could be increased to support the joint institution proposals for ACES, Talent Ready, STEM Ready, Early College/Middle College Expansion, IgnITeHub, Bootcamps, and Give Back Montgomery to name a few.

FY 2025

Build on the FY 2023 (\$475,000) and FY 2024 funding (\$1,800,000 - \$2,300,000) and add:

Fellowship program

- Support for joint institutional stipends (\$500,000)

Support for strategic county programs each year: (\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000). Could be increased to support the joint institution proposals for ACES, Talent Ready, STEM Ready, Early College/Middle College Expansion, IgnITeHub, Bootcamps, and Give Back Montgomery to name a few.