



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 9, 2024
Media Contacts: [Marcus Rosano](#), 301-525-5283
[Vanessa Zambrano](#), 240-910-5057

ACES Program Announces Changes to Enhance Support and Increase College Enrollment and Completion from MCPS to MC and USG

The Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program, a collaboration among Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery College (MC), and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), is set to implement a strategic program revision that will enhance support for students and increase college enrollment and completion rates, particularly among those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. This evolution of the ACES program is driven by 10 years of rigorous reviews of the program's effectiveness and an in-depth understanding of the current educational climate and the impact on students and families.

The new approach, known as the **ACES Pathway to Success**, enhances the already successful model that guides student access to college through to completion from MCPS to MC and USG, with minimal or no debt. The Pathways to Success model promises to further reduce financial burdens and foster economic and social mobility for our students, families, and the broader Montgomery County community. Key features include increasing cohort sizes from 60 to 75 students per grade level beginning with the recruitment of Grade 10 students in the 2024 - 2025 school year. Students who enter the program, and their families, will be asked to make an earlier commitment to the Pathway to Success at the start of Grade 12. Enhanced support will be provided for students who continue the pathway to Montgomery College and USG.

Marking its tenth anniversary, the ACES program has consistently evaluated its impact and success across the high schools and college campuses it serves. Data on ACES Scholars who committed to the MCPS to MC to USG pathway demonstrates the benefits and impact of this college enrollment and specialized career readiness program:

- 99.3% high school graduation rate vs the overall MCPS graduation rate of 89.6%
- ACES Scholars earn more credits per semester at MC compared to non-ACES students
- 96% of ACES Scholars who attend USG graduate with a bachelor's degree

"After a decade of dedicated service and numerous success stories, it's clear that our program works," said Karen Callender-Price, executive director of ACES. "However, we recognize the need for a strategic realignment to better serve our students amidst the rising costs of higher education and the unique challenges they face."

The program's successes over the years can be attributed to its case management approach that combines academic support, financial literacy and planning, personal academic

coaching, career readiness and the development of those career competencies essential to obtaining a college degree.

According to Callender-Price, "this restructuring allows us to concentrate our resources on students who stand to benefit the most, ensuring more personalized guidance and support."

With changes effective beginning with the 2025 cohort, the ACES program aims to double the number of students attending Montgomery College and USG, thereby increasing the rate of college graduates within the community significantly. "Our commitment to expanding opportunity and unleashing potential remains steadfast," Callender-Price added.

For more information about the ACES program and the upcoming changes, please visit <https://www.acesmontgomery.org/>.

About ACES

The ACES program is a collaborative initiative between Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and the Universities at Shady Grove. Established in 2013, it aims to increase college enrollment and completion among underrepresented student groups through individualized support and interventions.

About Montgomery County Public Schools

[Montgomery County Public Schools](#) (MCPS) is the largest school system in Maryland with 160,450 students. A diverse school system with students coming from 158 countries and speaking more than 150 languages, and operates 211 schools and programs. MCPS is an award-winning system recognized with 43 National Blue Ribbon and 11 National Green Ribbon schools.

About Montgomery College

[Montgomery College](#) is a public, open admissions community college with campuses in Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park/Silver Spring, plus workforce development/continuing education centers and off-site programs throughout Montgomery County, Md. The College serves nearly 40,000 students a year, through both credit and noncredit programs, in more than 140 areas of study.

About The Universities at Shady Grove

Established in 2000, [The Universities at Shady Grove](#) (USG) offers select degree programs from nine public Maryland universities on one convenient campus in Montgomery County. Students apply directly to the university offering their chosen major, and on the application, they simply select USG as their preferred campus location. The professors, curriculum, and degree are provided by the home university, but students at the USG campus benefit from small class sizes, increased scholarship opportunities, and an array of customized on-site services and student life - leading to a more personalized, cost-effective, and time-saving path to degree completion. USG's innovative and pioneering partnership approach to higher education is designed to connect local college students to outstanding career opportunities, while providing regional employers with a highly educated, skilled workforce. Only the upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses are offered on the USG campus, fostering a supportive environment of students focused on completing their degrees and advancing their careers.

###

(If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please email marcus.rosano@montgomerycollege.edu, vanessa.zambrano@montgomerycollege.edu, or brady.patton@montgomerycollege.edu with the subject heading "Unsubscribe" and include the email address you would like to have removed.)