

Testimony of Lori Ulrich, AFSCME, Montgomery College
Montgomery County Council
FY23 Operating Budget Public Hearing
April 20, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Good Evening, County Council Members. My name is Lori Ulrich, and I am the president of AFSCME Local 2380 at Montgomery College.

It's been a rough couple of years! NO wage increases last year; an increase that leaves us all in the inflationary hole this year, positions not filled, remaining employees filling gaps, everyone is stretched thin. We have implemented "fiscal discipline" and incorporated "savings strategies" when asked by the County. We are straining to provide services to one of the most diverse community college student populations in the country...in multiple modalities...simultaneously.

Some people might think Montgomery College is just a two-year institution, a place to fulfill general ed requirements before transferring to a four-year institution. We are so much more than that! As an open-enrollment community college, we accept *everyone* who applies, regardless of what neighborhood they are from, what school they attended, or how they performed in it, and we meet them where they are. We serve those in need of developmental coursework as well as academic rock stars. We provide mentoring, coaching, and career acquisition. We assist non-traditional students with career changes, job skill development, or re-entry to the world of academics, when their paths may have bypassed it the first time around. The members of AFSCME strongly hope that the County Council remembers Montgomery College's cost-saving efforts if and when it comes time to ask again. The non-instructional bargaining members are like the workers at one of Disney's Parks. You can't see them but without them, the rides stop, and the attractions close. Without this bargaining unit, the College heat and cooling shut down, lecture rooms and offices become dirty and rundown, technical services cease to exist, academic and administrative support functions come to a halt, and we cease to employ a significant number of Montgomery County residents.

These hard-working employees are equal partners in student success with faculty, in ways that many don't consider, and they deserve the pay increase that will come with the full funding of this Montgomery College budget.

