



**Montgomery County Council
FY27 Operating Budget Hearing**

April 7, 2026

**Testimony of Montgomery College Rockville Campus Student Alexander
Hardman**

Good evening, Council President Fani-Gonzalez and Members of the Montgomery County Council. I am honored to speak before you tonight.

My name is Alexander Hardman. I am a performing arts major at Montgomery College on the Rockville Campus.

I am here tonight to ask you to please fully fund Montgomery College's operating budget to keep MC's tuition affordable for all students, like me.

I have lived in Silver Spring here in Montgomery County since 2018. I attended Northwood High School where I checked off some bucket list items by taking part in a musical and a play. My plan was to join the military after high school graduation. But my plans abruptly changed soon after graduation. I was too late to register for a large university. I was left stuck with no direction—until I found Montgomery College.

That summer, my father bought tickets to see a musical at Montgomery College, *In The Heights*. It was MC's Summer Dinner production. I left the show so impressed, the next day I started figuring out how to register to attend MC!

Once at the College, I found myself able to jump in and apply myself immediately that first semester. I auditioned for shows. I worked with the head carpenter on a show sets and got hands on experience with set design. I participated in a national college theater festival competing for scholarships. MC's Performing Arts program is busy, which is perfect for someone like me who wants to be involved and learn.

On top of that, the students and faculty always share educational and professional opportunities to engage with, spurring further growth as I prepare for my career as an actor. The theatre program is very open to all participants no matter the level of interest. If you want to meddle with carpentry, you can try your hands in the scene shop first before deciding to pursue a career as a set designer. If lighting or sound interests you, you can see

what you can learn then pursue that career path. Plus, the MC theatre alumni network is employed across the DMV, stretching to New York and reaching Broadway, which allows MC graduates to easily jump into the professional world.

I've been at MC for almost two years. I can confidently say I made the right choice.

I would not be where I am now without the numerous benefits that make Montgomery College the leading community college in the country. Montgomery College allowed me to jump right in.

Most importantly, MC is affordable. I will be graduating with no debt! Without MC's affordable tuition, I would not be pursuing my degree or a career in the theater industry. And I am not alone—students depend on MC's affordable tuition so they can get the education they need to succeed.

MC is where I have learned so much about theatre and experienced the many different theater career roles that work together to bring shows to the community. None of this would be possible without the needed funding to keep MC affordable for students. **Please support MC's operating budget to keep tuition affordable.** And please support the Theatre Arts building renovation.

We are grateful for your ongoing support—it would be an honor for you to keep supporting us.

On behalf of Montgomery College's Rockville Campus students, thank you!