



**Montgomery County Public Schools**

**Montgomery College**

**Universities at Shady Grove**

## **ACES: Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success**

### **FACT SHEET**

#### **What is ACES?**

Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) is a program designed to create a seamless educational pathway and support structure from high school to college completion.

The program is aimed at those who are underrepresented in higher education, including African American, Hispanic, and low-income students, as well as those who would be the first in their family to attend college.

ACES is a collaborative effort among Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery College, and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG).

The program would identify qualifying students by Grade 9 and provide comprehensive interventions and support to help keep them on track for college enrollment and completion. As students enter Grade 11, they will be assigned to academic coaches from Montgomery College who will work with them and their families in high school to create and support a college-going and academic success trajectory.

ACES students will continue to receive coaching and academic support services while they are enrolled at Montgomery College and work toward their associate's degrees.

In addition, ACES coordinators at the Universities at Shady Grove will provide ACES students with support services and guidance as they transition to a program offered at USG. They will continue to receive academic and leadership/career development services until they receive their bachelor's degree. In addition to the programs offered at USG, students may choose to enroll in a University System of Maryland institution.

The ACES program will begin in the 2013–2014 school year at eight high schools. The first eight are Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein, Gaithersburg, John F. Kennedy, Northwood, Rockville, Watkins Mill, and Wheaton. The program is expected to expand to other schools in coming years.

It is expected that 60 students will participate at each grade level, for a total of 240 students at each school.

While ACES is not a scholarship program, all three organizations are working with their foundations to establish scholarship funds that will benefit participants in the program. Funds will be raised from private and corporate donors.

### **How will ACES Work?**

At Montgomery County Public Schools: Students who would strongly benefit from the additional support and structured guidance of the ACES program will be identified during the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9. These students would receive specific interventions aimed at keeping them on track for college completion, including:

- A personal electronic portfolio that includes an individualized four-year college preparation schedule; goal-setting; an inventory of interests and career options; and academic performance, including SAT, ACT, and Accuplacer data;
- Speakers, workshops, and classes aimed at supporting college preparation, enrollment, and success;
- A summer program between Grades 9 and 10 that includes college tours and visits; auditing of college-level classes; and an introduction to college life;
- A summer program between Grades 10 and 11 that includes preparation for Advanced Placement classes and student-specific academic interventions and supports; and
- Tutoring and mentoring by current college students and honors high school students.

ACES students will be assigned an academic coach from Montgomery College as they enter their junior year. They will participate in a rigorous college readiness program that will include:

- Advising on how to select a college major;
- Assistance completing college applications and financial aid applications;
- Assistance with scholarship searches and applications;
- Tutoring in reading, writing, and math, as needed; and
- Visits to Montgomery College.

At Montgomery College: ACES students will have access to a wide variety of college success services. An academic coach will provide and coordinate services including:

- Academic planning and advising;
- Career exploration assistance;
- Financial aid counseling and scholarship assistance;
- Leadership development;
- Summer bridge program to assist with transition to Montgomery College;
- Transfer advising;
- Tutoring; and
- Visits to the Universities at Shady Grove.

At the Universities at Shady Grove: ACES program participants will have access to a wide variety of services tailored to the needs of students upon transfer to one of the institutions located at USG. Additional services and opportunities will include:

- Academic advising;
- Academic success support;
- Career development, mentoring, and internship and job placement;
- Financial aid and scholarship counseling;
- Interdisciplinary team activities; and
- Leadership development.