Student Leaders Rally in Support of College Completion Initiative

April 4, 2011, Blue Bell/Pottstown, Pa.—Led by the presidents of the Student Government Association (SGA) and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), student leaders at Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) signed the “College Completion Challenge” pledge during a recent rally at the Central and West campuses.

Initially endorsed by the College’s Board of Trustees on Jan. 18, the rally marked the launch of the student effort in supporting the College’s completion pledge. The pledge is part of a national effort spearheaded by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the American Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to help support community colleges in increasing college completion rates.

“A history-making, unprecedented and unified action took place last April when leaders of six national organizations representing the nation’s 1,200 community colleges, their governing boards, their faculty and their 11.8 million students signed a pledge to commit to increase student completion rates by 50 percent over the next decade,” West Campus PTK President Cristie Underwood said to more than 150 student leaders at the rally, which was simulcast between campuses.

Like the commitment signed by the Board, the student pledge affirms the College’s student success efforts, commits to eliminating attainment gaps that separate student groups on the basis of race, ethnicity and family income, and requests commitment from members of the College and external communities.

“We are here to start a movement. We’re here to make a commitment to graduate,” Central Campus SGA President Antonio Marrero told the group. “An engaged student will persist in college. It’s our responsibility to convey the importance of completion to our fellow students.”

College President Dr. Karen A. Stout and Board of Trustees Chairman Michael J. D’Aniello also addressed the students at the rally.

“The associate’s degree has value,” said Dr. Stout. “Our recent comprehensive transfer study revealed that our students who graduate with an associate’s degree are more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree when they transfer. It’s about setting a goal from the very beginning, and earning the result.”

Dr. Stout encouraged the students to look to Chairman D’Aniello as an example of someone who made commitment and saw it through.

“You can do whatever you want to do, whatever you dream to be,” said D’Aniello, who is an alumnus of the College and an inductee in the Alumni Hall of Fame.
Additional completion rallies will be held at various student events throughout the semester. Students are also encouraged to record and submit videos about why completion is important to them.

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**Photo Captions:**

**Completion Central:** Pictured at the Central Campus college completion rally pledge are (from left) Dr. Karen A. Stout, President; Chris Jensen, Phi Theta Kappa President; Grace Pusey, West Campus Student Government Association President; Antonio Marrero, Central Campus Student Government Association President; and Michael J. D’Aniello, Board of Trustees Chairman and College alumnus.

**Completion West:** Pictured at the West Campus college completion rally are (from left) Dr. Stephen Grieco, Dean of Arts and Humanities and Interim West Campus Chief Administrative Officer; Cristie Underwood, Phi Theta Kappa President; Kathleen Emery, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs; and Treveon Henry, Student Government Association Vice President.