Forum: Community College Scholarship Dinner  
Speech: Remarks  
Title: Community College Scholarship Dinner  
Date: November 18, 2011 

Good evening and welcome to the University of Maryland University College. I cannot tell you how great it is to see so many of you here for such an auspicious occasion.

Tonight is certainly one of my favorite nights of the year...because there is nothing that makes me happier than giving out scholarships. And these scholarships are particularly near and dear to my heart because they underscore the solid commitment this university has made to building a longer and stronger academic pipeline...here in Maryland, across the nation, and around the world.

When it comes to higher education, community colleges are truly the backbone of the American dream...as institutions of opportunity...dedicated to meeting both the needs and the expectations of our society and its people.

In fact, this year, more than twelve million men and women...at all ages and stages in life...will attend community colleges...because of their career-focused programs and accommodating course schedules...lower tuition rates and open admissions policies.

A significant number of them will also continue on to earn advanced degrees...thus joining the ranks of public servants and military leaders...research scientists and industry executives, who got a running start in community colleges across the country.

Highly successful individuals such as Lt. Colonel Eileen Collins, the first woman to pilot the space shuttle...Congressman Sylvester Reyes from Texas...James Carrigg, Chairman of New York State Electric and Gas Corporation...and actor Charles Dutton, who graduated from Maryland’s very own Hagerstown Community College.
Not surprisingly then…these two-year institutions play a critical role in America’s workforce development…serving almost half of all college undergraduates in the United States…many of whom hope to eventually earn a four-year degree.

But far too many community college students face significant barriers moving on. For starters, they often find it difficult to transfer all of their hard-earned credits. And because so many of these students are adults… who attend college part-time…they are frequently ineligible for scholarships.

That’s where universities like ours come in…adult-focused, open access institutions that are dedicated to serving all qualified students. Or as one of our esteemed community college transfer students so eloquently put it…universities that embrace the No Citizen Left Behind Rule.

In supporting this mission, UMUC is always looking for innovative ways to remove any and all barriers that might otherwise keep outstanding students from continuing on to the next leg of their academic journeys. And our Community College Alliance Program is one such effective strategy.

This program took root more than a decade ago, and has since grown to serve thousands of students, faculty, and staff…from coast to coast. As such, we have created more than four hundred articulation agreements…which pave the way for students in our partnering colleges to move seamlessly from an associate's to a bachelor's degree, without losing credits or ever leaving home.

Moreover, the Alliance offers flexible online access to a wealth of both undergraduate and graduate level coursework and degree programs for community college faculty and staff members…who wish to expand their knowledge and enhance their credentials.

We have also recruited an exceptional alliance team…including our scholarship coordinator…Ashley Arvin…and her supervisor, Morgan Martin. Under the very able direction of Lisa Romano-Arnold…our Assistant Vice President of Community Relations…this dedicated team works tirelessly around the clock…traveling from campus to campus….where they field questions, evaluate transcripts, and provide personalized guidance.

And finally…to help close the tuition price gap between UMUC and its community college partners…the Alliance Program has furnished millions of dollars in Community College Transfer Scholarships over the years. These awards
are funded entirely by the university…thanks to the generosity of its many enthusiastic investors….who have made it Maryland’s largest renewable scholarship program of its kind.

As beneficial as I believe this alliance is for the community college students we serve, it is even more so for UMUC.

Why? Because the amazing men and women like you…who come to this university from the community college environment are among our most talented and tenacious students…our most successful and self-directed graduates.

And it is your personal tales of sacrifice and triumph that inspire all of us at UMUC to do whatever it takes to make the academic journey easier….including the scholarship awards we are here to celebrate tonight.

So as you prepare for this remarkable expedition…I would challenge you to move beyond simply getting a four-year degree…to become genuine knowledge leaders in the UMUC tradition.

And by that I mean competent and creative individuals…who by turning knowledge into action…and action into innovation…are always on the front lines of discovery…in a world that demands big ideas and bold perspectives.

Of course, I have no doubt that each and every one of you is up to that challenge…because in persevering against all odds to achieve your academic goals…you are already making an enormous difference…for your families…your communities…and your country. Likewise, I know that even greater accomplishments lie ahead as you continue your studies here at UMUC.

So on behalf of everyone at this university, I am delighted to welcome you into the UMUC family…and wish you the very best of luck as you set out to become knowledge leaders in your own right. I look forward with great anticipation to shaking your hands in a few years at commencement.

And now I would like to introduce tonight's very special guest...Dr. Walter Bumphus…President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of Community Colleges.

Dr. Bumphus began his long and illustrious career in higher education administration nearly four decades ago, as director of minority affairs at Murray
State University in Kentucky….moving on from there to become the dean of students at East Arkansas Community College.

And in 1978, he found his way to Maryland, where he spent fourteen years as vice president and dean of students at our Alliance partner, Howard Community College.

In 1991, Dr. Bumphus became the fourth president of Brookhaven College…one of seven colleges within the Dallas County Community College District…which is the largest higher education institution in Texas. Nine years later, he took his considerable expertise to Baton Rouge Community College…and under his leadership it soon became one of the fastest growing colleges in the country.

Subsequently, he left his extraordinary mark on the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), where as president he led a phenomenal system expansion…which resulted in two new technical community colleges and a Leadership Development Institute…while also ramping up statewide efforts to establish transfer articulation agreements.

As a prominent champion for community college students and faculty, he has served on numerous boards and committees, including the American Association of Community Colleges Board of Directors…the American Council on Education Board of Directors…the National Advisory Board for the Education Commission of the States…and the Advisory Committee for the League for Innovation in the Community College Kellogg Minority Leadership Project.

Dr. Bumphus has also used his enormous expertise to work with more than 100 institutions in 26 states, Canada and Puerto Rico…on a variety of projects…and has chaired or participated in accreditation reviews for 19 institutions.

Over the years, he has received numerous national accolades for his work…including the Marie Y. Martin CEO of the Year award from the Association of Community College Trustees…the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness Lifetime Achievement Award…and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development International Leadership Award.

Needless to say, we are exceedingly privileged to have someone of his vast knowledge, extensive experience, and accomplished leadership as our speaker tonight.
So it gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. Walter Bumphus.

Thank you,

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