

## **FMCC promotes sense of civic responsibility**

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Recently, the faculty at Fulton-Montgomery Community College considered FM's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). That is, no matter what program of study a student is pursuing, when each student graduates, he/she should be able to demonstrate these skills. The faculty determined that FM should have four overall ILOs. They are, FM graduates will: 1) apply appropriate technology in order to effectively research, communicate, and learn; 2) proficiently select and apply appropriate communication skills in a variety of settings; 3) demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity; and, 4) demonstrate self and cultural awareness, civic responsibility, and an appreciation of the natural world.

I have often referenced that higher education has, as its foundation, three overall objectives: 1) to prepare students for a career; 2) to prepare students to be productive citizens; and, 3) to prepare students for leadership. As you can see, the ILOs identified by our faculty clearly reflect those founding objectives. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on demonstrating a sense of civic responsibility.

If higher education is to prepare students for citizenship; and, therefore civic responsibility, colleges and universities must devote time, discussion, and practice of these skills. There are a number of ways that we can address civic responsibility. Certainly, several of our courses such as sociology, political science, ethics, literature, history, and other areas of study can discuss this topic and how to contribute to our society. Perhaps equally as important as discussion is the opportunity for students to practice civic responsibility through clubs, volunteering in community organizations, and service learning. These activities provides students the opportunity to "give back" to the community in which they live. The culture of FM has been one of developing a sense of civic responsibility for decades. Every club on campus has a community service component. Clubs have raised money for external organizations, read to children, visited with the elderly in nursing homes, traveled to areas of disasters and helped with clean-up efforts, as well as many other activities. I have always been proud of how involved our students, as well as faculty and staff, have been in our community.

A fundamental reason why community involvement is so important and expected of our faculty and staff is that students learn by example, and FM delivers on providing examples. I remember the summer that I arrived at FM; it was just after the 2006 flood. Faculty and staff approached me to ask if we could host an event on campus for those affected by the flood, and we did. We had hundreds of folks on campus participating in games, music, and other events to take their minds off of their recent tragedy.

But civic responsibility is more than just hosting events on campus. It is more than just taking classes in your program of study and graduating. Indeed, nearly everyone at FM is involved in their community by serving on boards, speaking at group meetings, running for office, fundraising, leading efforts with their church, and many other activities. We strive to instill a sense of place, a sense of civic responsibility, and a sense of duty to get involved. For FM, "community" really is our middle name.

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