Hello again and welcome back after Spring Break.

While you might have taken a relaxing vacation, 20 of our students were hard at work in Americus, Georgia, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. Our students repaired two Habitat homes in a new program that assists current Habitat homeowners with home repairs.

I want to personally thank the Germantown Director of Student Life, Debi Higbie-Holmes, other College staff, and all of those amazing students who donated their time to such a worthwhile cause.

Since spring break, I have been very busy, like so many of you. Let me share a few updates.

This past Monday, I testified before the Maryland House Appropriations Committee to ask for support of the Governor’s 2011 Community Colleges’ Capitol Budget. I advocated for funding for construction of the Germantown Bioscience Education Center and furniture and equipment for our Rockville Science Center.

On Wednesday, I traveled to the College’s Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus to welcome a delegation from the World Bank, who were visiting the U.S. to learn about our higher education system and how it prepares our country for global innovation and competitiveness. Following my welcome and College overview remarks, I entertained questions from the representatives from over a dozen countries in the audience.

I want to thank Dr. Brad Stewart, Dr. Sanjay Rai, a seven-member student panel, and other College speakers for their presentations and work with this visiting delegation.

I also had the pleasure later that same day to introduce Dr. Danette Gerald Howard. She’s Director of Planning, Research Analysis, and Workforce Development at the Maryland Higher Education Commission. She was the keynote speaker at the College’s second Annual Career Congress. The Congress brought together educators from the College and the Public Schools, as well as business leaders, to discuss how our coursework aligns with industry expectations.

Congratulations to Dr. Clarice Somersall for organizing such a productive conference.

Let me extend another note of congratulations to the faculty in our Interior Design program. On Thursday evening, I was honored to sign a special agreement to mark the accreditation of our Interior Design program by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. The process to achieve this accreditation took many years and significant effort from a number of different faculty members. Our students will be grateful for this new educational designation.

I look forward to sharing all of these wonderful success stories with our elected officials as part of our advocacy efforts. It is because of the work of our faculty, staff, and students that I can brag so often about our importance, particularly to our community.

So until next time, keep up the good work…and I’ll keep sharing it with others.