

To: Montgomery College Community

From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

Subject: Opportunities for Engagement

Date: June 3, 2020

Good morning. Not everyone gets to live through such historic times as these. We are watching our nation confront some of its deepest ills: racism, exclusion, and violence authorized by the state. These are simultaneously lessons in humanity and history.

As individuals, we have opportunities here to take stands that are infused with compassion and respect for human dignity. These are powerful albeit simple choices that speak loudly to the values that MC has long championed: inclusion, equality, and opportunity.

As an institution, we have an increased responsibility to promote these components of civility. Yesterday's "Let's Talk" on race relations through the Office of Equity and Inclusion drew 240 people for a passionate conversation informed by faculty expertise in criminal justice and psychology. Participants addressed some compelling questions around how we create spaces for action, engagement, and healing at the College. Fortunately for us, these are not new questions. Students, faculty, and staff have responded to the events of the past weeks with outreach, dialogue, and inquiry in multiple spaces. These responses speak loudly to the essence of our mission and the moral imperative of our work. Even in tumultuous times, we continue to empower our students with knowledge and create safe spaces for our community to address painful issues.

Disruption can be unsettling, but it is not always wholly negative. When the status quo is injustice, it is often essential. History shows us, however, that when the smoke of the protests has cleared there will be questions of policy, policing, and resources that require complex answers. The work that MC does every day in its classrooms and learning spaces positions us better than many to be part of those solutions. I am grateful, as always, for your continued engagement.