

PACEI News
**President's Advisory Committee
on Equity and Inclusion**



December

2019

Office of Equity and Inclusion



Message from the CEIO

Sharon Bland, J.D., CPM, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

Welcome! I am grateful for all for your efforts, actions, courage and commitment to the work of building an equitable, civil, inclusive, welcoming, trusted, safe, and accessible community.

The work of equity and inclusion enables us to elevate the value of different ideas, values, beliefs, perspectives, identities, backgrounds, and cultures. A series of seven town hall meetings, three Pizza for Your Thoughts with students, two fall equity dialogues and one student panel as well as the many individual, department, governance council, student club and senate discussions have been underway the entire fall semester with over 600 individuals in attendance.

This has been an important opportunity to integrate issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in to the overall plan for the future of this work at Montgomery

College. Our master planning process is about to conclude and the President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion will present a draft Equity and Inclusion Roadmap for Success in January 2020. Through the work and leadership of PACEI, PEC, SALT and the SVP liaisons to the Office of Equity and Inclusion, we will continue to work on advancing equity, inclusion, and social justice strategic plans and objectives.

I know we recognize that diversity of all types supports our mission of learning, teaching and discovery. We must continue to build a community of diverse cultures where diverse perspectives are valued and uplifted to engage in the complex, fascinating, and transformative work that occurs on and off our campuses.

We know our goals; we understand our purpose; and we acknowledge there is hard work to do. I am pleased with our progress, but there is still much work ahead of us. By working together, we will continue in our pursuit to appreciate and celebrate every aspect of our differences.



Senior Vice President Liaisons' to the Office of Equity and Inclusion Role and Charge

by James N. Gillis, LEED GA
Director of Facilities and Operations

Dr. DeRionne Pollard, president, appointed liaisons to the Office of Equity and Inclusion from each area overseen by a senior vice president. Their responsibility is to work directly with each division senior vice president on matters relating to equity and inclusion. SVP liaisons endeavor to ensure barriers to equal access are identified and addressed, and inclusiveness is represented in all aspects of life and study throughout Montgomery College, in every academic discipline, administrative unit, and community partnership.

Donna Pina
Director of Foundation Finance
SVP Liaison for Advancement and Community Engagement

Andrea Foster
Professor, Business and Management
SVP Liaison for Academic Affairs

James N. Gillis, LEED GA
Director of Facilities and Operations
SVP Liaison for Administrative and Fiscal Services
Vacant

SVP Liaison for Student Affairs

Each SVP liaison commits a minimum of eight hours per month working under the direction of Sharon Bland, chief equity and inclusion officer in the areas of:
Administration, and Communications

Administration, and Communications

- Coordinate and/or support equity-oriented programs and initiatives, (i.e. dialogue sessions and other programming) as recommended in the Equity and Inclusion Roadmap for Success on behalf of the senior vice president for academic affairs.
- Communicate the work of equity and inclusion to document the successes of such initiatives to the greater college community.
- Attend monthly PACEI and leadership team meetings.

Institutional Access, Equity, Organizational Research, and Assessment

- Monitor and support the success of social justice programs for all underserved student populations including, but not limited to, students of color, disabled students, veterans, LGBTQ +, immigrant, and religious student groups to ensure alignment with the College's mission, strategic plan, and institutional goals.
- Assist senior vice presidents in achieving inclusive excellence metrics and institutional performance goals, and assist in recommending and supporting the development of effective curricular and co-curricular programs to meet these metrics.
- Initiate, coordinate, and gather content for the preparation of an annual report and annual plan regarding current and future diversity and inclusion initiatives for the CEIO's review.

Office of Equity and Inclusion / Office of the President

December 2019



PACEI News

PACEI 2020

If you are interested in joining the President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion apply now. The deadline has been extended to January 27th!!

[Apply for PACEI 2020](#)



Introducing Our New Program Manager

Jeanette joined our office on October 7, 2019 as the Equity and Inclusion Program Manager. Ms. Rojas has over 20 years of experience in education program management and social justice advocacy that started when she was one of the founders of the first Latina Sorority at the University of Maryland, College Park. After receiving her bachelor's degree in psychology from UMCP she worked in advocacy organizations such as the National Council of La Raza (now known as Unidos Us) as a Senior Resource Development Specialist, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute as a Programs Manager, and the Parent Institute for Quality Education as a Director. Working in these organizations helped her realize that her true calling was in the field of education. She received her master's degree in education and human development from George Washington University.

Empowering students through education and advocacy work have helped her understand the importance of equity and inclusion not only in educational institutions but in all facets of the community. She has worked as an ESOL teacher, mentor and as an Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) Academic Coach with Montgomery College. She has served in various committees within ACES including being the chair for the programmatic evaluations committee, the Universities at Shady Grove and ACES curriculum committee, and the student participation protocol committee. She is a proud Leadership Development Institute Graduate (2018) where she presented a leadership curriculum for first generation students as her final project. During her free time, she enjoys volunteering with the PTA and for Girl Scouts as a Brownie troop leader.



Search Advocate Training

In November, Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer Sharon Bland, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager Jeanette Rojas, Human Resources Specialist Elaine Doong, and Professor Karen Penn de Martinez visited Oregon State University to attend their Search Advocate Training workshop. This program trains employees to assist search committees in promoting a focus on equity and inclusion in the hiring process. Advocates aid the hiring manager/search committee members in writing position descriptions that are inclusive and designed to encourage diverse candidates to apply. They then work with the committee throughout the search, interview, and recommendation process to utilize equitable practices and raise awareness of unconscious bias. Attendees were charged with describing the role of being a search advocate and what that meant to them personally and with the groups they worked with. The training helped everyone become more analytical of how to use language that is equitable, inclusive, and created opportunities rather than barriers. They also worked on how to use other search strategies with regards to increasing diversity and avoiding bias. These methodologies have positively impacted the hiring process at OSU and have recently been adopted by the community college system in Virginia. The attendees learned about multiple search strategies to increase diversity and avoid bias. The Office of Equity and Diversity plans to bring the trainer to the College during professional week in August 2020 and apply these principles in MC's efforts to recruit, hire, retain, and promote highly qualified employees who reflect the diversity of our community.

PACEI Disability Inclusion Subcommittee

by Christopher Moy
Director of ADA Compliance

In 2019, PACEI recommended the creation of a new subcommittee, Disability Inclusion, to address the specific suggestions made in the 2018 Montgomery College Middle States SelfStudy Report.

The Middle States Self Study Report recognized and identified opportunities to model national best practices by the [Association on Higher Education and Disability](#) in reframing disability from a medical model to a social justice model.¹ This can be accomplished by expanding discussions of disability as a distinct aspect of diversity at the College and providing increased educational programming on disability history and culture. There are opportunities to include disability in training related to culture and identity, education on bias and microaggressions, and focused programming during Disability Awareness month. The fundamental vision is to create a culture that inspires inclusion and considers access for persons with disabilities in all decision-making throughout the College.

The Disability Inclusion subcommittee was charged to recommend prioritized goals and strategies from five target areas including Academic Access (A), Program and Electronic Information Technology Access (P), Architectural Access (R), Employment Access (E), and Campus Climate for Persons with Disabilities (C). In acknowledgement of the opportunities identified in the 2018 Montgomery College Middle States Self-Study Report and Montgomery College's commitment to the full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Disability Inclusion subcommittee will work toward the full inclusion of people with disabilities, including creating a pathway toward inclusion and equity from a social justice perspective for persons with disabilities at Montgomery College.

Leadership, Assessment, Education and Awareness, and Universal Design². and Accessible Information Communication Technology are the four prioritized goals developed from the five target areas in the Disability Inclusion committees.

^[4] The concept of ableism is central to social justice. Implicit in the ableist perspective is the belief that disability is a negative status. However, rather than attempting to “fix” people with disabilities so that they will “fit” into an ableist society, advocates address the oppressive culture. Employs concepts such as social justice, liberation, and oppression to analyze, evaluate, and transform systems of social behavior, discriminatory institutional structures, and cultural practices (M. Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). The focus is on ableism—the oppression of people with disabilities. Postulates: (a) Focus on privilege and oppression. (b) Emphasis on diversity and intersectionality of experiences, roles, and identities. (c) Goal of educating both individuals with disabilities and those who are not disabled about the existence of disability oppression. Practitioners can use the concept of ableism to analyze and assess their campus environment and departmental policies. Rather than locating the problem within the individual with a disability, practitioners can use ^[1]the social justice model to change oppressive components of the broader culture, including ideas (e.g., beauty, independence, normality), policies (e.g., laws), and attitudes (e.g., paternalism, pity, sympathy). Evans, Nancy J., *Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach* (p.90), 2017.

^[1] The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Copyright (C) 1997 NC State University, The Center for Universal Design.

Communication, Best Practices, and Assessment Subcommittee

by Maria Adams
Associate Compliance Specialist

In fall 2019, the Nationwide Peer Institution Best Practices, Assessment and Evaluation, and Resources subcommittee merged with the Reports and Communications subcommittee to become the new Communication, Best Practices, and Assessment Subcommittee. This new subcommittee will continue the work started by both groups, maintaining a strong focus on the development of PACEI communication efforts and consideration of how best practices can inform our equity and inclusion initiatives.



Fall 2019 Equity Dialogue Summary

by Jim Sniezek, Instructional Dean - Chemical and Biological Sciences and Ramon De La Cruz, Building Coordinator - Facilities-Central Services

On Friday, October 4th at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus and Tuesday, October 8th at the Rockville campus, a combined total of nearly 200 college employees met to learn about and collegially discuss their views on what equity means at Montgomery College. Dr. Pollard, president, attended both dialogues and affirmed the importance of actively engaging in equity and inclusion conversations and transforming it from awareness to action. The MC community was able to actively

and formally discuss, apply and advocate for topics and ideas around equity and inclusion. To significantly move the needle of student success, discussions such as those that took place needed to occur. Uncomfortable at times, these critical discussions allowed for all involved to stretch and grow, to gain a deeper understanding of the issues, and provide the framework for continued discussions. The October 4th dialogue started with a synopsis of the MC Equity and Inclusion surveys, as provided by Mr. Timothy Kane, associate director of Inclusion Initiatives, George Washington University. A critical review of conveyed inequities, areas where MC needs to take action, and a concentrated look at microaggressions was the focus of Mr. Kane's presentation. The October 8th dialogue started with a synopsis of the MC Equity and Inclusion surveys from Sharon Bland, chief equity and inclusion officer.

Participants later critically examined the survey results and developed plans for action. The afternoon session for the October 4th session was led by Ms. C. Marie Taylor, president, Leadership Montgomery, and focused on racial equity and social justice. Students joined this conversation, often providing perspectives not generally considered by employees. The October 8th session was led by President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion committee members which emphasized the importance of speaking up and the importance of having your voices count. This was an opportunity for personal growth and reflection for the entire MC community. The mentioned action plans, when implemented, will drive culture change. Culture changes through subtle and bold action, often in 20-second increments. The fall equity dialogue resulted in robust and honest discussion, as well as a reinvigorated call for action.

A spring equity dialogue is planned. You are the catalyst for change in your community!



The Office of Equity and Inclusion Hosts its First Student Panel

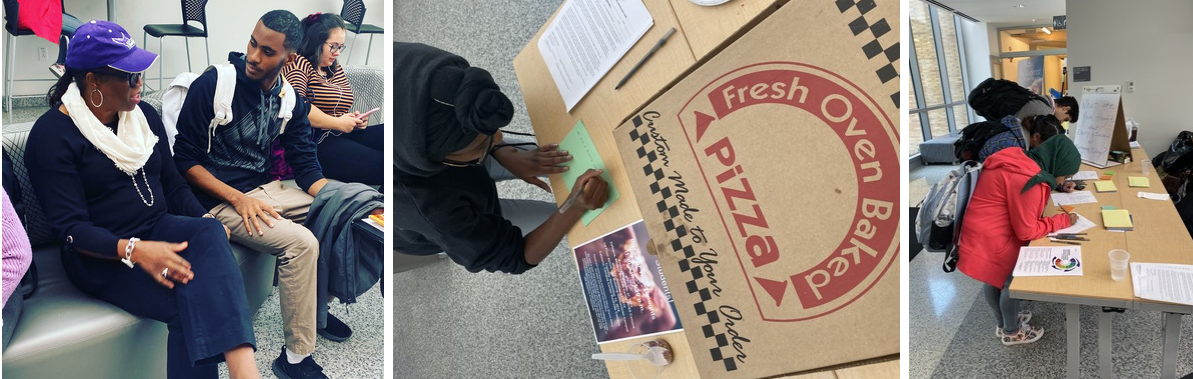
by Jeanette Rojas

Equity and Inclusion Program Manager

Montgomery College (MC) students come from various economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. Historically, community colleges have appealed to students because they are able to stay close to home in order to assist their families financially. Additionally, students do not have to worry about an overpriced tuition bill or large intimidating classes. A significant number of MC students begin their community college careers with the disadvantage of not having educated and professional mentors that can help facilitate their path to a career and higher education. Professional panels that include first generation and/or people of color talking about their experiences motivate students to achieve because they can see themselves in the panelists. Being able to listen to someone that has had similar experiences as your own can be a game changer. Our students need more role models, and this becomes more critical when students are first generation college students, are from low-income backgrounds, and/or have any other barrier that may impede their success.

On November 22, 2019 the Office of Equity and Inclusion had its first panel for students at MC's Rockville campus. Despite it being a cold and rainy Friday afternoon, students filled the Theater Arts Arena to listen to the motivating words of our three panelists. Our first panelist, Dr. Zuleima Hidalgo - a physical therapist for Kaiser Permanente, inspired students to not feel ashamed about asking for extra help and really going out there and the importance of applying to scholarships. She told the amazing story of how she won the Dr. Pepper scholarship after practicing throwing a football with the University of Maryland's football team because that was part of the application requirement. Our second panelist, Dr. Erwin Hesse – executive director of enrollment management at Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies, talked about his difficult journey through school where he was not making the best decisions but decided to go to MC and continue pursuing education until he got his doctorate in education from Johns Hopkins University. Our third panelist, Dr. Cara Grant, Supervisor for Pre-K-12 Health and Physical Education teachers at Montgomery County Public Schools talked about her journey through undergraduate classes and graduate school struggling to juggle school and work because she did not qualify for financial aid. She talked to students about the importance of networking and not giving up on your dreams. Students asked deep and compelling questions about self-worth, finding a career, and perseverance. Students said things like, 'I had never

met a Latina doctor!’ and ‘I could really see myself in him’. Students stayed after the panel and continued to talk to the panelists one-on-one because they felt excited about meeting young and highly-educated professionals that were also down-to-earth and friendly.



Pizza for Your Thoughts

by Jeanette Rojas

Equity and Inclusion Program Manager

Over 400 students attended Pizza for Your Thoughts at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring, Rockville, and Germantown campuses. Students stopped by to grab a slice of pizza and a cold beverage while they talked about equity and inclusion on their campus with other peers, the Office of Equity and Inclusion staff, and PACEI members. They were excited to learn about what the Office of Equity and Inclusion was doing at Montgomery College and how their voices mattered. Sharon Bland sat down and had one-on-one conversations with several students about their experiences with faculty, student services, and the College’s culture. Comments from students were mostly positive, with comments such as:

- “I feel like MC is a diverse and understanding place.”
- “I feel as if MC has done a great job about being inclusive to all the students. Professors set time for students to meet with them for more help.”
- “I like MC because they care about mental health, the classes are small, and there are many clubs I can join.”

There were concerns about the lack of options and inconvenient hours in the cafeteria; and the need for longer hours at the library. International students expressed that they did not have the necessary support in terms of finding housing and financial aid. There were comments about wanting more collegewide events for students that celebrated different cultures. These concerns, as well as the positive comments, will be discussed with PACEI and Dr. Pollard. Overall, Pizza for Your Thoughts was a fun and relaxing opportunity for students to express their thoughts and have their voices heard.



Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Professional Panel for Students: Careers in Criminal Justice

February 6, 2020 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, CM211

Spring Dialogue: Speak Up, Speak Out

February 7, 2020 - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Rockville Campus, Theater Arts Arena

Spring Evening Dialogue

February 11, 2020 - 9:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m. - Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, CU105

Equity Summit: Changing Ourselves, Changing the Culture

April 1, 2020 - 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Germantown Campus

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