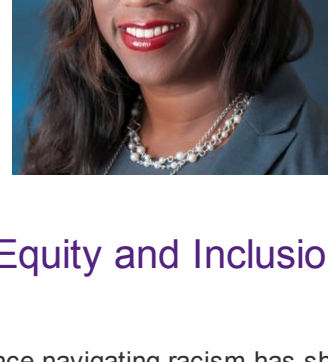




News



Message from the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

Sharon Bland, J.D., CPM

As a person of color, my lived experience navigating racism has sharpened my understanding of the dynamics of power and access. As a servant leader, I advocate for an equitable community that takes the responsibility of facilitating, promoting, and supporting student success and it is that support that promotes the development of an inclusive community free of discrimination. Higher education, specifically community colleges, are a critical space for the preservation of a democratic society in the United States. Developing an inclusive community calls for each of us to be both learners and teachers, to critically examine power, privilege and its hold on the College. I am committed to engaging in difficult dialogues, truth telling to hear others' experiences and to dismantling levels of racism within our society. From organizing town halls and developing policy, to hosting campus wide forums, creating an equity summit, and equity and inclusion dialogues addressing both employee and student concerns and needs, I am clear that as an educational leader and senior administrator I must provide the leadership necessary to create equity-minded and racially just spaces. At every turn, the work that we do as College employees contributes to creating and sustaining a healthy and safe teaching, learning, and working environment that is inclusive and equity-minded. During this crazy time in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, the College has truly embraced radical inclusion. I urge you to take advantages of the information that can be found on the College's [coronavirus website](#). Finally, I look forward to unveiling the Equity and Inclusion Roadmap for Success next month which details our efforts and commitment to equity and inclusion. We can do this together.

Implementing Search Advocates in Our Recruitment and Hiring Process

Process

Montgomery College has grown into an institution where radical inclusion—that is, deeply rooted values of welcoming all individuals who seek higher education or continuing education—is an essential element of our identity. By intentionally cultivating our campuses as places where equal education and employment opportunity flourishes, we advance our own educational mission, contribute to the aspirations of Montgomery County, and add to the vision of our nation.

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Student Assistance during the Pandemic

Advancement and Community Engagement
By Donna Pina and Joyce Matthews

Montgomery College has several heroes during this pandemic. Our faculty have been tremendously caring advocates for their students, particularly the most vulnerable ones. As they advocate for student needs, more than 1,600 requests came in for laptops, software, smart devices, and food and rent assistance. A team of people – Paty Lopez, Donna Pina, Dawn Drew, Joyce Matthews, John Libby, and Francine Butler – are processing these requests night and day. More than 1,200 awards have been processed to date totaling more than \$500,000. They have helped homeless students, former addicts, and more. This team has gone out of its way to provide outreach. For example, Donna Pina made a special effort to personally meet with a student prior to the stay-at-home order to provide the individual with rent expenses so the individual could leave the current residence and a domestic violence situation. Our faculty and staff are there for our students and the pandemic has shown the lengths to which they will go to help those in crisis.

Community Engagement

By Karla Silvestre

Our community engagement staff continues to serve the needs of the communities they serve. The staff, which represents a multitude of ethnicities and races and speak multiple languages, continue to work with partners to help students in need. For example, during the pandemic, the courses held at the community engagement centers were cancelled, leaving many of our most vulnerable students and community members without our services. Based on the advocacy of the community engagement staff, the student assistance fund has been able help a WDCE student whose class was cancelled with a laptop so the individual can take a different remote class offered through WDCE that fits with her career trajectory. This is just one example of how this diverse staff is working to keep students from dropping out.

Montgomery College Minority Faculty Internship

By Dr. Rodney Redmond and Dr. Elizabeth Benton

In 2018, Dr. Rodney Redmond, dean of English and Reading, established the Montgomery College Minority Faculty Internship (MC MFI) for English and Reading. At the same time, The Chronicle of Higher Education named Montgomery College among the top most racially and ethnically diverse community colleges in the United States. Seeking guidance from Montgomery College Policies and Procedures (Minority Faculty Internship Program-32201), College administrators, and the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management, Dr. Redmond and Dr. Elizabeth Benton, the program director, outlined the one-year internship. MC MFI would seek underrepresented minority applicants from area graduate schools: students had to be in their final year of a master of arts program or any stage of a doctoral program in English, reading, education, or closely related field. As is the practice for all faculty hiring, applicants could apply through Montgomery College's Workday system.

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Tips for Supporting MC Students During this Pandemic

By Dr. Debra Bright and Professor Sue Haddad

This COVID-19 pandemic is stressful for all of us, and many of our students are struggling in severe ways. It is imperative that we continue to provide critical, holistic supports so they can excel academically and achieve their desired goals, in spite of our current health crisis. Our counseling faculty are available to meet with students for academic advising and short-term personal counseling via Live Chat, email, or by remote appointment (for more comprehensive advising needs). Students may make an appointment through StarFish or may visit the following website for additional options: <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/counseling-and-advising/make-an-advising-appointment.html>.

[Read More](#)

Uncovering Inequity During Coronavirus Pandemic

By Jeanette Rojas

The last month has been a whirlwind for our MC community. No one has ever been through a pandemic in our lifetime. We are living through uncharted territory with no end in sight. Staff, faculty, and students are having to juggle responsibilities such as homeschooling children, caring for our families, teaching online, facing financial uncertainty, while dealing with emotional and devastating news of friends and family being afflicted with the coronavirus.

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Events



Spring Equity Dialogues

By Matt Colburn

This semester the Office of Equity and Inclusion held its inaugural Spring Equity Dialogues with a daytime event on February 7, 2020 and an evening event for second and third shift employees on February 11, 2020. The theme chosen by co-chairs Matt Colburn and Diana Benson, inspired by Dr. Pollard's call for a "speak up" culture at Montgomery College, was "Speak Out." The Feb. 7th event focused on combating racism while the Feb. 11th event centered around career Adv. The Feb.

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The Office of Equity and Inclusion Hosts its Second Student Panel

On February 6, 2020, the Office of Equity and Inclusion hosted its 2nd panel discussion for our students on the topic of Career Tips from Young Experts. Special Agent/Program Manager Julie Hilario, Acting Unit Chief Lamar Jackson, and Special Agent/National Program Manager Abe Jardines from the Department of Homeland Security, assigned to National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination, came to Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus. They talked to students about their career paths in law enforcement and how they reached their goals despite adversity. Students enjoyed hearing the panelists' personal stories and had questions regarding how to get involved in the criminal justice field. Several students commented on how they had never visualized themselves in the criminal justice field and after listening to the panelists had changed their minds.



'Women Who Empower' Zoom Panel

The 'Women Who Empower' panel that had originally been planned for March (Women's History Month) was rescheduled for April 30, 2020 through Zoom. Sharon Bland, chief equity and inclusion officer and Karla Silvestre, director of Community Engagement from the College and Lupi Quinteros-Grady, president & CEO of Latin American Youth Center were our guest speakers. These strong and empowering women spoke to almost 80 participants regarding their journeys, hardships, and perseverance. The zoom chat was buzzing with comments such as:

"This is so inspiring! I'm literally tearing up. I did not know you guys were out there!"

"This is the best diversity event I have attended, hearing so many beautiful stories and (the) best advice."

"Sharon, Lupi, and Karla awesome panel! Thanks for sharing your stories and inspiring and empowering students."

We will have a follow-up to this panel on June 9 via zoom on how to find a coach/mentor. Stay tuned for details!

Self-Care, Mindfulness & Social Justice Zoom Meeting

On Wednesday, February 6, 2020 the Office of Equity and Inclusion sponsored a discussion on Self-care, Mindfulness, & Social Justice with MC Counselor Brenda Crist, Wellness Coordinator India Hunter and Equity and Inclusion Program Manager Jeanette Rojas. Sixty participants learned about the importance of self-care during these most inequitable times through mindfulness, stretching, and breathing techniques. Participants received resources both at the College and in the community which will help them regroup and recharge. After the presentation, one participant said she felt "absolutely lighter, more relaxed, and more calm" and another said, "I feel I'm not alone in this!!"

The Office of Equity and Inclusion Equity Award deadline has been extended to June 1st. Nominate an MC student or employee [HERE!](#)

[Look out for the E&I Roadmap coming soon!](#)

Connect with the Office of Equity and Inclusion!



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