



MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Fall 2022 Newsletter

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

December 21, 2022

Message from the CEIO, Sharon Bland, J.D., CPM

Happy Holidays! Whew –it has been a full and fulfilling fall semester! Over the past 5 years, I have been building the Office of Equity and Inclusion at Montgomery College. Areas of focus for OEI this semester has included:

- Implementing required equity and inclusion training focusing on antiracism.
- Expanding the use of Search Advocates and outlined the framework for developing our own in-house MC training.
- Creating of the plan to build out the Inclusion Centers.
- Continuation of *Let's Talk!* Dialogue Series.
- Launched the Antiracism Micro-credential Badge.
- Developing the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Taskforce.
- Hosting the 2022 Fall Equity Dialogue on Antiracism



While beginning this work initially, my focus was on assessing the climate and building an infrastructure around equity, diversity, and inclusion, establishing a foundation for this work and standing up the President's Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion (PACEI). In my second through fifth year in the CEIO role I focused on

1. Finalizing the Equity and Inclusion Roadmap for Success.
2. Continued best practice research.
3. Diverse talent acquisition and development through building the Search Advocate program.
4. Peer mentoring and coaching.
5. Strengthening college and campus culture.
6. Developing an antiracism strategy for the college.

Moving into the spring semester, I will be focusing on strengthening our internal partnership and the instructional-educational support of our equity efforts, conducting an equity audit, and integrating equity, inclusion, and antiracism goals into individual work plans. My hope is that people perceive a sense of how significant their voice is and that through this change process, college stakeholders see how critical their contributions have been, and that they are encouraged to continue giving of themselves to ongoing equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism efforts.

Please join me and my colleagues in the Office of Equity and Inclusion as we continue to “level up” in this work!



HSI TASK FORCE

In 2022, Montgomery College was officially designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). To begin our work towards improving our servicing of Hispanic/Latinx students, the HSI Task Force has been created. Dr. Williams has charged this task force with the following goals to better serve our students:

1. Identifying, analyzing, and discussing gaps in student access, completion, and post-completion success between Hispanic students and their peers.
2. Attending meetings with senior leaders and community groups to learn how the College can more deeply partner with the community to address gaps.
3. Collaborating with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs and other key individuals to ensure an HSI grant is submitted.
4. Providing recommendations to senior leaders that are focused on eliminating gaps, while simultaneously increasing student success at the College through a lens of inclusive excellence.

The HSI Task Force recommendations will be presented to Dr. Williams and senior leadership by June 30, 2023.

REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION

On November, our OEI hosted our *Let's Talk!* dialogue about the Montgomery County Commission on Remembrance and Reconciliation. This commission was formed in 2019 by councilmembers Hans Reimer, Will Jawando, and Craig Rice to assist in uniting the county. It is made up of leaders from the community who collaborate with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project, and other stakeholders from the community to commemorate the three locations in the County where racial terror lynchings have been documented.

This commission has been working for the for the last three years appealing strongly to these responsibilities:

- Share untold history and create a comprehensive narrative of the lynching occurrences.
- Memorialize these incidents by creating projects in Maryland related to them. One for George Peck killed in Poolesville and a second ceremony for Sidney Randolph and Dorsey, alongside the collection of the soil from where these gentlemen were lynched (Remembrance) and the creation of space for the planting of seeds for (Reconciliation).
- Collect soil samples from these locations and place in a jar with men names respectively for the lynching museum in Alabama and Montgomery County.
- Engaging in conversations like this with our community and make them aware of our history.

They put these practices in place so we can use daily.

If you would like to know about this commission and their future events, you can visit them down below: [Commission on Remembrance and Reconciliation: Events](#)

FALL EQUITY DIALOGUE

On Wednesday, December 7, 2022 we hosted our Fall Equity Dialogue *Facing History: The Roots and Impact of Antisemitism* on the Takoma Park Silver Spring Campus.

Our dialogue featured panelists Alan Ronkin Regional Director of American Jewish Committee, Meredith Weisel, Regional Director Antidefamation League of Washington, DC, and Franz Afraim Katzir, Director of Sephardic Heritage International and State of Maryland's Commissioner for Middle Eastern American Affairs. Craig Simon, Vice Chair of Committee Against Hate/Violence and Board Member, Jewish Federation of Greater Washington served as our moderator. Over 100 people attended this hybrid event. The dialogue provided a rich foundational context as it relates the origins of Jewish people, Jewish culture, and their evolution abroad and here in the continental United States. As the discussion evolved, the panelists delved into the intricacies of Antisemitism's history, language, and beliefs and why they offensive and divisive to Jewish people and culture.

Look for a continuing discussion series on Antisemitism during the Spring 2023.

ANTIRACISM

What does it mean to be Antiracist?

In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi, author, professor, anti-racist activist, writes:

"To be antiracist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right -- inferior or superior -- with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or negatively, not representatives of whole races. To be antiracist is to deracialize behavior, to remove the tattooed stereotype from every racialized body. Behavior is something humans do, not races do."

In this sense, Kendi seems to agree with teachers who prefer to focus on helping the individual students in front of them, no matter who they are. However, he does not let people off the hook so easily. Becoming antiracist requires every individual to choose to think, act, and advocate for equality daily, which will require changing systems and policies that may have gone unexamined for a long time.

A common response to the word "antiracist" is "I'm not a racist." Antiracism requires awareness and engagement, defined as the work of actively opposing racism and racial inequality in systems by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. (Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide," 2015).

To achieve racial equity, we must first engage with antiracism and challenging racism at every step of the way. By gaining a better understanding of antiracism, and through developing our individual approaches and action plans to enact antiracist practices in our spheres of influence, we are better positioned to promote racial equity in all aspects of our work. This is what we, as a college, hope to achieve through our antiracism training.

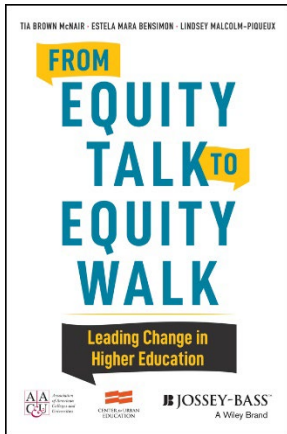
ANTIRACISM BADGE

The antiracism badge is the first micro-credential open to all MC employees and students. Together, the cohort will cover topics related to racism, implicit bias, and antiracism to develop an antiracist action plan to implement in their spheres of influence. We are very excited that one-third of the first cohort is comprised of students!

Over the course of four three-hour sessions, the participants will engage with curated materials and resources to explore their role in racism, understand racism and its impact, and identify antiracist action that suits their circumstances and comfort level as they develop their personalized action plan. As the pilot cohort is halfway to receiving their antiracism badge, we are gearing up to offer additional sessions starting in the spring 2023 semester with the second cohort starting in February.

First Fridays Book: *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*

By Dr. Andraé Brown



The Fall 2022 First Friday Book Discussion focused on, *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk* by Tia Brown McNair, Estela Mara Bensimon and Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux. This very innovative, concise, and transformative book challenges us to move beyond using the rhetoric of inclusion and our “deep desires to be equitable”. The goal is to create an equity-minded campus culture by implementing policies and procedures that result in measurable and sustainable change. Every member of our wonderful educational institution (no matter of the position) is a leader and a statistician. As we gain clarity of purpose and a sustainable action plan, we will create our own functional systems and data-feedback loops to ensure that our equity goals are

actualized. You can generate the data points and research to discern whether our efforts are either working or not. Then we can adjust and continue our journey. If you were unable to join us for the lively, revealing, thoughtful, and entertaining dialogues about the transformational work that we are engaged in, I encourage you to read the book and discuss with friends, colleague, and departments. It is a very digestible must read. Remember, “If you really care about me don’t talk about it... be about it. Show me the numbers!!!”

SAFE ZONE TRAINING

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE SAFEZONE



This semester, three full-day Safe Zones trainings were conducted. Evaluations were positive, with most participants writing, "This should be required for everyone!". Shout out especially to Counselors and to the Librarians who've comprised most of the participants this fall! Some participants also brought to the trainers' attention ways that the

college can continue to be more inclusive, and MC Pride and Allies are following up on some of those comments. Updates were made to the materials on the Safe Zones website.

The Library purchased several materials requested, and the links to those accessible materials are also on the website. An updated listing of all Safe Zones trainees now appears on the website. Everyone who has taken Safe Zones received a mini logo to use with their email signature if they want. Three more trainings are scheduled for January to accommodate faculty and staff who face myriad scheduling conflicts during the semester.

PACEI UPDATES

A new clip from our continued #YouBelongHere campaign, “Kindness.Compassion.Acceptance”, is available [here](#). This activity is an outcome of Goal 3: College Culture. The goal of the #YouBelongHere campaign is to foster empowerment and a sense of belonging among specific diverse populations that make up the rich fabric of MC. The campaign is ongoing and features students and employees representative of diverse identities. Be on the lookout for more. And thank you to MCTV for taking this from concept to a deliverable!



Kindness. Compassion. Acceptance.

VOTING RIGHTS



As Election Day approached, we gathered twenty-five students, staff, and faculty to talk about voting rights of past, present and future. Panelists included Our two panelists were Mr. Alan Bannister, Vice President of Business Development at the Remington Road Group and Shaun Tucker of Worth Thomas Consulting Government Affairs both based in Columbus, Ohio.

Our distinguished students and panelist talked about the gravity of the election season and how our local elections impact the forthcoming 2024 Presidential Election. We also discussed the important notion that “every vote matters because you matter”.

EQUITY WEEK 2023 & EXCELLENCE IN EQUITY AWARDS NOMINATIONS OPEN

As we approached our first full academic year navigating way out of a global pandemic, we felt a deep sense of responsibility to focus on fostering a culture of belonging, not just inclusion. Our team, along with members from PACEI, gathered to refresh and refine our mission as we progress on our journey with our Cycle of Change model as our guide. The 6 cycles in this model include *Awareness*, *Understanding*, *Embracing*, *Commitment*, *Action*, and *Change*, but given the season we survived and the challenges remaining ahead, we believe that **Embracing** is the most important cycle. When we embrace who we are and where we are, our individual super powers are enhanced. When we fully embrace something, we must look at it head-on in order to observe and appreciate its purpose and value.

Our theme for the 2022-2023 Academic Year and Spring 2023 Equity Week is “Face It, there’s no equity and Inclusion without U & I, Embrace it.” **Spring 2023 Equity Week is Monday, April 3rd through Friday, April 7th, 2023.** We encourage and invite students, faculty, and staff to submit your

programs for consideration along with your nominations for our Excellence in Equity Awards. The links for both can be found below. We look forward to EMBRACING the journey with you!

Please submit your proposals by January 31, 2023.

<https://bit.ly/MCEQUITYWEEK23>

<https://bit.ly/MCEQUITYAWARDS23>

Office of Equity and Inclusion
Office of the President
Montgomery College

