

To: Montgomery College Community
From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Subject: **Condemning the Violence at the U.S. Capitol**
Date: January 7, 2020

Last night's violence at the U.S. Capitol was appalling on so many levels—the loss of life, the trampling of our Constitution, the occupation of historic chambers, and the open display of symbols of hatred. In an earlier era, I would have thought it unnecessary to articulate my opposition to these offenses. Yesterday's mayhem, however, was a reminder that democracy can be destroyed when good people stand by and say nothing. A profound rebuke of these actions is necessary as we defend one of the pillars of democratic health—the peaceful transition of presidential power.

The disruption of fundamental, democratic norms must be condemned. We should also call for an end to the divisive rhetoric that has been permitted to circulate in our midst, pitting citizens against one another based on unfounded claims. This moment stands as a lesson in the vulnerability of democracy when it is not reinforced with high standards of truth and shared measures of accountability. People of all political persuasions should recognize these dangers and take responsibility for their roles.

As I reflect on yesterday's violence and the disruption to our common safety—both physical and existential—I am encouraged by the strength of the Montgomery College community. We are much more than just educators and students. We have been, and will continue to be, conveyors of civil discourse, constructors of inclusive classrooms, and leaders in protecting the vulnerable in our society. Teaching and learning can move mountains of ignorance and incivility. The values we promote every day—inclusivity, civility, and intellectual rigor—are antidotes to incidents such as those we witnessed last night. Education, information, and dialogue build democratic norms and infuse our communities with the necessary tools for robust democratic processes. Let us all contribute to repairing the damage done to our shared democratic fabric by standing for civil discourse, decrying undemocratic norms, and building transparent, accountable structures that protect our nation.