

# MARIST

## MEMORANDUM TO THE MARIST COLLEGE COMMUNITY

FROM: STAN HARRIS, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

DENNIS J. MURRAY, PRESIDENT

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2021

We hope this memo finds you well and enjoying the fall semester. This past January, we sent out a [memo](#) to update the Marist community on the College's efforts to support diversity and inclusion (D&I), and to ensure that Marist is a place where everyone feels welcome, respected, valued, and heard. We're pleased to be able to provide you with a further update outlining our accomplishments to date and previewing our plans for the current year. There have been exciting initiatives across all operational areas, and we'd like to highlight them for you in this report. At the same time, we acknowledge that much work remains to be done, and for this reason, we are committed to sustaining our momentum.

As previously reported, the College's D&I initiatives are being overseen by Marist's senior administrative team and faculty working in concert with the Board's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, chaired by Dr. Stan Harris. Dr. Harris has outlined three main objectives for the Committee: 1) using data to understand and assess the status quo at Marist; 2) listening to a wide variety of constituencies to understand their lived experiences and hear suggestions for how Marist can do better; and 3) using this feedback to formulate a comprehensive set of short- and long-term actions that will help to improve the educational experience, the way we think about each other, and the way we will function going forward.

To help guide our efforts, we have continued to hold **listening sessions** with a variety of campus stakeholders. Since summer 2020, the Board's Diversity & Inclusion Committee has engaged directly with faculty, staff, students, and alumni, including Marist's Alumni Executive Board, Diversity & Inclusion Alumni Advisory Board, Black Student Union, Diversity Council, Black Student-Athlete Alliance, Student Government Association

(SGA), Marist Ambassador alumni, Fox Pride, Latinx students, Latinx faculty and staff, Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students, and AAPI faculty and staff. Future sessions will target LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, student and employee veterans, students who identify as white, maintenance and housekeeping workers, security officers, and others. The Committee has also continued to receive feedback via Marist's diversity [website](#) and through individual exchanges. These listening sessions will continue this semester so that we continue to hear and take into account the perspectives of as many campus community members as possible.

The following is a summary of the specific D&I initiatives the College has been pursuing in recent months, broken down by category.

### *Curriculum*

One of the most frequent suggestions we heard last year was the creation of a mandatory diversity-focused course. In response, Vice President for Academic Affairs Thom Wermuth and his colleagues in the academic area formed the **Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Curriculum**. This faculty committee, which also includes student representation, has been busy researching and developing ideas for a D&I-focused course (or courses) that would be required of all students attending Marist. The committee has made substantial progress and plans to submit a proposal for the full faculty to review this semester.

The College has also undertaken a comprehensive curriculum review, and we have **updated the inventory of Marist courses that address diversity, equity, and inclusion**. The number is impressive – **about 75 courses** – and they are spread across many, though not all, academic disciplines. One excellent course worth singling out is the “American South” spring attachment program, taught by Professor of History Robyn Rosen and Associate Professor of History Steve Garabedian; this program examines issues of race, history, and civil rights and allows students to visit sites like the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery, Alabama and the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. In addition to the required diversity course being developed for all students, we are encouraging the development of more discipline-specific courses in those academic areas that are underrepresented.

As promised, the Office of Academic Affairs has **developed a campus common read focused on issues of racism and social justice**. This year, the campus-wide read is

*Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man* by Emmanuel Acho. The book is required for all first-year students this fall and is recommended for everyone in the Marist community. We would like to note that the **Board of Trustees expressed interest in reading this book, and all members have been provided copies. A series of follow-up workshops, discussions, and lectures focused on diversity has already begun**, including an interview with former NFL wide receiver Donte Stallworth by Director of the Center for Sports Communication Jane McManus on September 14. Building on this important community dialogue, Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah, a distinguished philosophy professor with appointments at Princeton University and New York University, delivered a talk entitled “What is Racism?” on October 1.

The Office of Academic Affairs will be issuing a new call for faculty-led projects to engage students in research on racism, bias, and diversity, in addition to creating a special diversity designation at Marist’s annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. To encourage these types of research projects, we have created the **Diversity Council Student Research Award**, which recognizes and supports a student engaged in D&I-related research.

#### *Training for staff, faculty, and students*

As we have spoken with various constituency groups, one of the most common recommendations we heard was the need for D&I training for members of the Marist community. In response, the College conducted a national search for research-based learning tools and identified Vector Solutions, a leader in higher education training, as the platform for our inaugural D&I training series. Just this month, Marist announced the **launch of mandatory D&I training for all Marist staff, faculty, and students**. This training is in addition to the already-required Title IX training, which educates community members about harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct prevention.

Marist’s mandatory diversity training includes three learning modules: Diversity and Inclusion; Engagement in Diversity; and Communication for Inclusion. These set a foundation for campus-wide learning and dialogue. One of the advantages to the platform we chose is that it is highly customizable. As specific issues arise, we will be able to implement additional modules and support resources. D&I training must be completed by all employees and students no later than December 31, 2021. New hires must also complete training as part of their onboarding and orientation. Beyond the

mandatory training modules, members of the Marist community will also have access to a library of resources covering topics such as cultural appropriation, becoming an ally, diversity-competent mentoring, and supporting students of color at predominantly white institutions. By the end of the current fiscal year, our goal is to identify a minimum of two additional modules to add to this resource library.

In order to ensure that our workforce is representative of the larger society, it is important to utilize best practices and avoid implicit bias. With this in mind, Marist is adding **training specific to the search process to better educate and support search committees**. Beginning October 1, all employees chosen to serve on a search committee must complete two training modules: Search Committee Best Practices and The Influence of Unconscious Bias in Decision-Making. The Office of Human Resources will confirm that all committee members have completed this training before a search can commence.

**Student Affairs has strengthened anti-bias and Title IX training** as part of fall orientation activities. This year's "In the Fox Den" session, a mix of skits and conversation attended by almost 1,000 students, covered Title IX and issues related to bias, consent, and sexual assault. The Office of First Year Programs also continues to partner with the Center for Multicultural Affairs (CMA) to offer "Voices of Diversity," a project that explores the experiences of students of color and female students on the campuses of predominantly white institutions. Of the courses offered by the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) during the 2020-21 school year, 37 percent were diversity-related or were delivered by diverse speakers modeling leadership success; similarly, 40 percent of this semester's ELP programming is diversity-related or presented by people of color.

Marist has also continued providing **specialized training for security officers** to ensure that their interactions with members of the Marist community reflect the welcoming atmosphere we seek to create. All security personnel are trained upon hire and receive quarterly training focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural awareness. The training touches upon topics such as cultural competence, generational differences, and ethics. The Office of Safety and Security has also partnered with Student Affairs to offer professional development training on unconscious bias and de-escalation. To ensure an open dialogue with students, Director of Safety and Security John Blaisdell attends all meetings of the SGA.

We are also pleased to report that the **Marist College Diversity Leadership Institute (MCDLI)** had an extremely successful first year, graduating 16 participants from both the

faculty and staff. Launched in September 2020, this innovative training program is led by Associate Professor of Psychology Stacy Williams and Director of the Office of Accommodations and Accessibility Maryellen Guardino, and the College is proud to support it. Facilitated by a committee of campus experts, MCDLI supports Marist community members in developing awareness and advocacy skills to inform diversity, equity, and inclusion work on campus. The first cohort completed modules in Race & Culture, Disability & Accessibility, and Sexuality & Gender. The material was delivered asynchronously through a combination of webinars, readings, and online forums.

MCDLI's second cohort began this fall in a hybrid format with 20 participants. Judging from the highly positive feedback of the first cohort, this group can expect a personally meaningful and transformational experience. We would like to salute both Stacy and Maryellen for their outstanding work, along with their colleagues on the Planning Team: John Sellmeyer, Accommodations Coordinator, and Katy Silberger, Librarian, Digital Content Services. Special thanks also go out to the MCDLI Facilitators: Tammy Allison, Learning Specialist; Judy Creedon, Learning Specialist; Christina Wright Fields, Assistant Professor of Education; Emma Fredrick, Assistant Professor of Psychology; Daria Hanssen, Associate Professor of Social Work; Marisa Moore, Director of the Counseling Center; and Deborah Reeves-Duncan, Director, TRiO Student Support Services.

*Reporting, investigation, adjudication, and follow-up communication regarding discrimination complaints*

Marist is committed to improving our procedures dealing with reports of discrimination, including (but not limited to) race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religion. Making changes related to Title IX issues can be challenging because of the different laws that govern us. The College is still operating under Trump administration rules, but we anticipate revisions will be made by the Biden administration.

Under the direction of Executive Vice President Geoff Brackett, the senior administrative team is conducting a **thorough review of existing procedures for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating discrimination complaints by students, faculty, and staff**. Final recommendations for improvements will be made during the current academic year. As a next step, Executive Vice President Geoff Brackett is working with College Counsel Sima Saran Ahuja to determine additional opportunities for reporting.

Marist aims to enhance our current supportive community by creating a “reporting culture” in which all victims of harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, and other mistreatment feel comfortable coming forward, making a report, and receiving support. To this end, we are developing a communication plan that will better educate students, faculty, and staff about reporting mechanisms; this plan will be ready by December of this year. As part of this effort, we reconfigured the Marist website to create one location in which students can file either a generic or formalized complaint under Title IX. Students also have the option to make a report anonymously, although this complicates the College’s efforts to investigate incidents and hold people accountable. There are also links to these reporting forms from the Security and Housing and Residential Life websites, as well as a QR code on the Student Conduct website. All Residence Life staff, including resident assistants, are provided with reporting links. Prompted by a suggestion, we are also examining the possibility of creating an independent advisory committee to review incidents of racial bias.

There are several notable initiatives happening in the area of Student Conduct. Director of Student Conduct Kelli Campa is conducting an annual **review of our Student Code of Conduct** and attending a five-part series of workshops on bias. She will present her recommendations for improvements this academic year to Vice President for Student Affairs Deb DiCaprio and Associate Dean for Student Affairs Matt McMahon. We are also endeavoring to increase the pool of student conduct hearing board panelists to include more diverse representation from the Marist community. Following up on an idea from a listening session, Kelli and Matt have established a committee to create a restorative justice program within the area of Student Conduct and, in preparation, Kelli is attending a two-part workshop on restorative justice sponsored by the Student Conduct Institute.

We’re pleased to report that **Marist’s Title IX Office** now has a team dedicated to handling all reported cases of misconduct with professionalism, sensitivity, and respect. Kelly Yough, the Director of Equity and Title IX Coordinator, and Bill Meyer, Title IX Investigator, are eager to provide their assistance and recently held an open house for members of the Marist community. Kelly also met with members of the freshman class during orientation. This proactive outreach will continue in order to build awareness of the resources available here at the College. To improve immediate support for student victims, the Title IX Office has been co-located with the Office of Counseling Services in the Student Center.

*Hiring, retention, and promotion of diverse members of the faculty and academic administration*

In spite of significant limitations in hiring during the pandemic, the Office of Academic Affairs has **added four faculty members of color to Marist's full-time ranks**. In addition, two of the three faculty members granted tenure last year were people of color. According to the most recent comparative data from 2018, the College has the highest percentage of diverse faculty in our *US News* comparator group (20 percent), and we are slightly above average in Black faculty (5.2 percent, as compared to the national average of five percent). While we are pleased with this progress, we recognize that there is still much work to be done, and we are committed to doing this work. As you will read in the next section, a comprehensive review of the diversity of the faculty and staff populations is underway.

To help ensure that faculty of color feel comfortable and remain at Marist, we introduced a support group called **Marist Academics of Color**, which is in its second year. Overseen by Director of Academic Diversity and Inclusion Addrain Conyers, the goal of this group is to create a supportive environment for faculty of color and raise awareness of issues related to race and ethnicity at Marist and beyond.

We are also focused on increasing the representation of people of color on the College's academic advisory boards, whose members provide advice on curriculum, career planning, and resource development. The College Advancement team is prioritizing the diversification of these boards and other key volunteer leadership groups. One key appointment has already been made, and these efforts will be pursued vigorously throughout the current academic year.

*Hiring, retention, and promotion of diverse members of the administration and staff*

This year, under the direction of Vice President for Human Resources Christina Daniele, we are pursuing a number of data-driven initiatives. Manager of Compensation and Total Benefits Crystal Wilkinson has begun a **comprehensive equity review** to develop baseline data for both faculty and staff, engaging the senior leadership in our various operational areas. This review is being conducted in collaboration with Vice President for Human Resources Christina Daniele and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs John Ritschdorff as it relates to faculty. The baseline data will be completed for institutional review this academic year. Once the data sets are established, we will

implement additional procedures, including hiring, support, and retention practices for underrepresented groups. These procedures will build upon the capabilities of Marist's applicant tracking system, which allows Human Resources to monitor pipeline activity in accordance with the College's affirmative action plan. Vice President for Human Resources Christina Daniele is also reviewing Marist's processes to ensure that the contributions of our community members are recognized in an equitable and appropriate way. This plan will be ready for review by May 2022.

In the meantime, we have made some **key hires and promotions** that increase the visibility of underrepresented groups at Marist, including administrators who serve on the President's Cabinet. Haseeb Arroon, a triple Marist graduate with a bachelor's and two master's degrees, joined the Cabinet as Director of Institutional Data, Research, and Planning. His promotion brings to three the number of people of color serving on the President's Cabinet, and in this year's budget, we have also provided funding for a senior-level chief diversity officer position. When incoming President Kevin Weinman takes office, recruitment for this position will begin. Athletics has also made several notable appointments, including Harrison Baker, Associate Athletics Director, Director of External Affairs & Chief Diversity Officer for Athletics, and Anthony Randall, who joins us as Head Coach for Swimming and Diving.

Marist also wants to further expand opportunities for students to obtain valuable professional experience while on campus. With the resumption of in-person internships, there are currently fall and spring opportunities available to BIPOC students in the Physical Plant Office. In addition, Information Technology has developed a cybersecurity internship that will be launched this fall for placement in January. Finally, the Office of Human Resources has hired a student worker, continuing its long practice of having an internship program.

### *Student admissions and recruitment*

Despite the challenging environment for college admissions, Marist was delighted to be able to assemble an **ethnically and geographically diverse freshman class**. We are especially pleased to note that 24 percent of the Class of 2025 self-identify as students of color (Black/African American, Asian, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian, or Multiracial). There are also 17 foreign countries represented in the class, including Brazil, Canada, China (Hong Kong), Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan,



Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Thailand, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing, and Communication Sean Kaylor is overseeing the College's efforts to improve the way in which we recruit students. We are expanding our data collection and reporting efforts, with a **special focus on multiracial, LGBTQ+, first-generation, and religious minority students**, as well as analyzing competitor institutions. Reports and dashboards are currently being created to help track our progress, and they will be in place during the spring 2022 semester. We are also developing specific recruitment strategies for underrepresented groups to increase applications and maximize yield on diverse student populations. Another goal is to improve the diversity of our Division I sports teams, especially in women's sports. Athletics Director Tim Murray has set specific recruitment goals to increase representation within five years.

Marist is one of the few private colleges in New York that supports both Liberty Partnerships Program (LPP) and Upward Bound, and we are committed to **strengthening student pipelines**. We are thus developing a new marketing and recruitment plan to increase new student enrollment from both programs. That plan will be in place in January in order to impact the fall 2022 freshman class. Currently, there are 13 LPP students enrolled at Marist, and LPP Director Crystal Purfield is initiating a program in which Marist LPP graduates will mentor seniors at Poughkeepsie High School, encouraging them to apply to and attend Marist. The College has hired alumnus Mario Johnson to become the new Director of Upward Bound, a program that helps local students excel academically. Mario is a longtime Poughkeepsie resident with deep experience mentoring students, and we look forward to partnering with both Mario and Crystal to enhance this important pipeline.

Marist's longtime support for LPP and Upward Bound is in addition to our half-century of support for Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP). I'm pleased to report that the College, and CMA in particular, played an extremely effective role in lobbying for state funding for HEOP in this year's budget. Kudos to CMA/HEOP Director Iris Ruiz-Grech and Assistant Director Mary Rice for their continued great work with this program.

We understand that visibility and representation are important ways to signal inclusivity, particularly to prospective students. As such, we are doing a better job of tracking and

**ensuring diverse representation at recruitment events and in our tour guides and student Ambassadors programs.** On the website, we are publishing a minimum of two new stories each month celebrating the diversity that exists at Marist. On social media, too, we have committed to a monthly minimum of two student profiles or stories on diversity.

### *Student retention and graduation rates*

Marist is committed to not only recruiting students from diverse backgrounds, but to retaining them and ensuring they succeed here. We have completed a five-year analysis of six-year graduation rates for Marist as compared to our peer schools in the *US News* Top 30, the *US News* Top 10, and national four-year institutions. The data is currently under review to determine the College's positioning compared to these groups and to development goals related to these benchmarks. We expect an overview of Marist's current position and pertinent goals to be complete by May 2022, and that information will inform operational goals for the 2022-23 academic year and beyond. In addition, we have developed a standard report to review first-year retention trends by ethnicity and gender on a rolling five-year basis. The College continues to seek relevant comparison data on other institutions, although that information is not always broken down by ethnicity and gender.

This year, Marist is re-instituting a **Retention Committee** with representatives from a broad range of operational areas in order to understand student attrition issues. The committee's aims will be to understand factors affecting retention and to set key performance metrics to ensure that these populations are receiving appropriate institutional supports. Finally, we have tasked First Year Program Coordinators to conduct additional outreach to Pell-eligible students in an effort to learn more about what extra supports these students might need to ensure a successful Marist experience.

### *Campus life*

Marist continues to develop campus programming related to D&I, including our third annual Social Justice Conference, which took place at the beginning of September and was organized by Associate Professor of History Kristin Bayer. This year's conference included topics such as intersectionality and queer studies. This is also the sixth year of the College's "**Race in America**" lecture series, which in past years has attracted speakers such as Cornel West, Michelle Alexander, and Michael Eric Dyson. This year,

featured speakers include distinguished academic Kwame Anthony Appiah, Black Voters Matter co-founder LaTosha Brown, and political commentator Tara Setmayer. In the spring 2022 semester, the College is again planning to offer the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Speaker Series. On September 22, the Office of First Year Programs co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Wazir Jefferson, Ulster County's chief diversity officer. His talk was entitled "Four Corners," and it centered on diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

We previously reported on the establishment by Kaylin Moss '22 of the Marist chapter of the **National Society of Black Engineers student club**, which seeks to increase the reach of the national organization, build an inclusive STEM community, and grow the number of students of color in STEM at Marist. The Office of Student Activities will assist anyone interested in starting an academic club or honor society for student affinity groups. Similarly, our efforts to bring historically Black fraternities and sororities to campus are continuing. We plan to invite members from local chapters to meet with Marist student clubs to outline the benefits of membership and the steps necessary to achieve organizational status.

We have also implemented changes in the area of housing to better support students' living preferences. Based on feedback from a listening session, a **gender-neutral housing** option was offered during the 2021-22 academic year. We will assess the success of this offering by conducting a student survey. For the second year, first-year students had the opportunity to choose their roommates, and we will similarly assess the results of this initiative. For the past five years Marist has offered a **multicultural floor** option, which 45-50 students take advantage of each year, and this practice will continue.

Several campus constituencies have requested that Marist establish affinity space on campus for students of color and student veterans to meet and socialize, and we are open to exploring this idea. In fact, prior to the start of each academic year, the College conducts a comprehensive space planning analysis. We currently have a robust system for different groups to reserve space, and we will continue this practice going forward. After the renovation of the Dyson Center, a large and complex project that we expect to begin in spring 2022, we will be in a better position to review specific requests for affinity space locations.

## *Student support*

Preliminary steps are underway to review and improve the **quality of academic advisement** for students of color and first-generation college students. This action is being taken in response to comments heard in a listening session.

We are also in the process of forming a committee to support veterans. We have seen a decline in the number of veterans studying at Marist, and for this reason, we are reviving efforts to recruit and support members of this population. A campus-wide **Committee on Veterans Affairs**, chaired by Executive Vice President Geoff Brackett and Associate Professor of English Tommy Zurhellen, is being assembled now, and it will include members with military service. The Committee will be charged with advising senior administration on programs and policies to engage and support student and employee veterans at Marist. It also will assess existing campus programs and policies, addressing issues where possible and making recommendations for improvement to the President's Cabinet. As part of his role, Tommy will assist Admissions and Human Resources in the recruitment of veterans as students and employees, as well as advising the senior administration on issues related to veterans' experiences at Marist.

A listening session with LGBTQ+ students and recent alumni raised the issue of a **"preferred name system."** Human Resources has drafted a preferred name policy, and it is currently under review by College Counsel Sima Saran Ahuja. Once approved, Information Technology will conduct training for appropriate departments for entering data into the Banner system. We expect to be able to review this policy at the February 2022 Board of Trustees meeting.

Marist has also made a concerted effort to hire **diverse staff in the Student Affairs area**. In response to a suggestion heard in a listening session, we funded a full-time position in the budget for a counselor specializing in issues specific to athletes and students of color. This position is currently being advertised, and we hope to have it filled by the spring semester. Since January 2020, we have significantly improved the diversity of staff members in First Year Programs, Athletics, and Housing and Residential Life, including resident assistants.

In the area of mentoring, an initial meeting has taken place between Alumni Relations, Student Affairs, and Athletics to explore the possibility of establishing a **mentoring initiative** for alumni and students of color. It was agreed that the opportunity would be

brought to the Diversity & Inclusion Alumni Advisory Board for their input and recommendations, with a goal of launching a pilot program this academic year.

### *Fundraising and grants*

Under the leadership of Vice President for College Advancement Chris DelGiorno, we have made significant progress advancing a number of D&I initiatives. Increasing the availability of **scholarships that enhance diversity** was, and continues to be, an important strategic priority for the team. We're pleased to report that three new scholarships with a focus on diversity have been established: The *Gilder Lehrman Institute Scholarship*, which includes funding for eight Pell-eligible students and four merit-based scholars to be awarded over the next four years; The *Joshua and Carolyn Matheus Diversity Scholarship*, which supports first-generation college students and students from underrepresented groups; and The *Edith C. Patrick Endowed Scholarship*, which supports first-generation college students within several academic areas. In addition, further funding was provided for the *Sundown Means Endowed Scholarship*, established in 2012, and other scholarships that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Director of Government and Foundation Grants Jonea Gurwitt has worked closely with the academic deans to identify D&I-related programs that lend themselves to potential funding from private foundations. Hundreds of private foundations and corporate funders were carefully researched, and a select group with significant potential were prioritized for initial outreach. Several promising targets of opportunity have been identified and are being actively pursued.

### *Commitment to communities in the Hudson River Valley*

The College wants to be a good community citizen, and we will continue to prioritize support for the City of Poughkeepsie through nonprofit board service, strategic volunteerism, and donation of resources. An example of this commitment is Marist's active participation in the City of Poughkeepsie's Children's Cabinet, which brings together school districts, government agencies, child-serving community organizations, and other local stakeholders to coordinate youth supports and services.

Another example is Marist's support for Newburgh high school students participating in the **Marist Early College High School program**. This program, funded by the New York State Education Department, allows the students to take a sequence of computing

and mathematics courses offered through Marist, eventually earning 26 college credits toward a degree in computer science. In addition to the academic component of the program, the College hosts a number of enrichment activities for these students, including in-person visits to the Marist campus; classes held on campus; college information sessions with Admissions; campus tours; mentoring and tutoring by Marist students; and guest speaker presentations.

Under the direction of Executive Vice President Geoff Brackett, the Office of Human Resources will benchmark initiatives to incentivize members of the Marist community to reside in the City of Poughkeepsie. Finally, the College is proud to continue its longstanding commitments to Upward Bound and LPP, which assist students in Poughkeepsie and Newburgh. Vice President for Student Affairs Deb DiCaprio recently met with the leaders of both programs to itemize ways in which the College can enhance its support.

Marist's Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership, led by Senior Professional Lecturer of Political Science Melissa Gaeke, continues to provide students with community-based learning opportunities while also benefiting our local region. As part of a recent project, Jessica Hawkins '22 worked to help the College and local nonprofits address food insecurity in the Hudson River Valley, building the capacity of the Marist campus garden, giving students and other campus stakeholders access to fresh produce, and creating linkages with Dutchess Outreach to provide local fresh produce for their feeding programs. This work resulted in 50 percent of community garden produce being donated to the local community.

### *Conclusion*

We are proud of everything that has been accomplished during the past year and grateful to everyone who has worked so hard to advance the D&I initiatives summarized in this report. Ensuring that Marist is a community in which everyone feels valued and heard continues to be a top priority for Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty, and we remain committed to doing more. To do so, we will need the ongoing engagement, passion, input, and goodwill of the Marist community. This is a collective effort, and everyone has a responsibility to do what they can to make our campus feel like home to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

We look forward to providing the Marist community with regular updates on our progress. In the meantime, we hope you will keep your ideas coming. You can submit your ideas directly to the Board's Diversity & Inclusion Committee by emailing [President@marist.edu](mailto:President@marist.edu) or by going to <https://www.marist.edu/diversity/committee>. We also encourage you to review Marist's diversity and inclusion [website](#), which includes a host of resources, institutional data, and other information.

Finally, I would like to note that this will be my last institutional communication on this subject as President of Marist, but I will continue to be personally involved in supporting and advancing D&I initiatives at the College. I also feel extremely positive about Kevin Weinman's commitment to the issue. Throughout the search process it was apparent – and all of my interactions have confirmed – that Kevin is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion. His track record speaks to this dedication, and I have heard him indicate that this will be very high on his agenda when he assumes office.

Thank you all for your continued support and best wishes for the remainder of the fall semester.