



COLLEGE OF
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 4, 2020

Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, Friends:

The College has received from many sources copies of a student's deeply offensive Instagram post. **The College is pursuing and addressing this offense.**

This memo, the second of the day, cannot comment on matters of individual discipline—whether student, faculty, administrative, or staff. That does not mean College inaction. There is no known instance of College inaction in the past. There will be no instance of College inaction in the future. The policy whereby we do not comment on cases of individual discipline is essential if we are to fulfill our responsibilities as an educational institution.

The College's values and policies on equality, bigotry, violence, liberty, and justice are clear and always have been.

We are shocked by videos of a policeman's knee on George Floyd's lifeless neck. How could that policeman and others be blithely indifferent to another human being, to his suffering, his cries, and his death? We are shocked when people are indifferent to injustices that we recognize, to children treated like animals in cages, to peaceful demonstrators gassed and bludgeoned. We talk about injustice in precisely these terms: someone objectified, someone treated as an animal, someone treated as a label, not as a person.

The initial Instagram post that has been forwarded to me offended the values and standards of Mount Saint Vincent, and we are dealing with it. Some of the social media posts and emails that we received about that Instagram post articulately explain the offense and the values it violates. Some messages, however, create anew similar or additional offenses about which they allegedly object. Some are intolerably violent, threatening, and hateful.

In this light, condemnation alone is not enough. The Instagram post and subsequent social media posts and emails require us all to reflect additionally on how the College will give life to its values. I want to particularly thank the SGA and many members of the community for their initiatives in serving students as they grapple with the complexities of this turmoil and the values that we share.

I will be writing to you all again next week.

Charles L. Flynn, Jr.
President