



COLLEGE OF  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 12, 2020

All Academic and Administrative Departments:

Mount Saint Vincent is an uncommonly inclusive and civil place. That's a strength. I hope that, in who we are and what we do every day, we embody the values of our mission statement.

As an academic community, we should draw on that strength as we pursue the questions we face as individuals and as citizens.

The College has convened any number of colloquia, fora, and similar events on values, significant controversies, and political conflict, but I suspect that we sometimes avoid some of the most serious questions for fear of hard disagreement. Might not the fear of offense sometimes preclude true understanding—both of issues and of each other? I think so.

With the leadership of Jaemon Williams, our really excellent SGA is requiring all approved student organizations to offer at least once per semester a program on some issue or issues of race, class, gender, and justice. (E.g., a structured dialog on a serious controversy, a lecture, a forum, an event, an exhibit . . . .)

I think all College academic and administrative departments should offer such programming each semester, too. I hope and expect that this College, better than anywhere I know, can teach others how to pursue questions and controversy with civility and respect.

In this light, my office is sponsoring a revival of Introspect, an on-line journal on race, class, gender, and justice. It was founded by students several years ago but was not sustained. Aaron Cruz and Sarah Peterson, two impressive and engaged alumni, have agreed to serve as advisors.

I am asking all academic and administrative departments (1) to sponsor a fall event (e.g., a structured dialog on a controversial issue, a service opportunity, a topical forum, an exhibit on a theme, a concert, a video competition on a theme . . . whatever) (2) to schedule that event with Campus Events as part of the CMSV Campus Conversation series, (3) to report the scheduled event to [president@mountsaintvincent.edu](mailto:president@mountsaintvincent.edu), (4) and in conjunction with the event or as a result of it, to arrange for an article, commentary, essay, video on some related topic or controversy to be submitted for consideration by Introspect (more information on how to do so will follow from Introspect).

The questions are huge, the possibilities are endless, but each submission or article should include a commentary on a significant issue or issues of race, class, gender, and/or justice. Just three illustrations. (1) If the event were a performance of jazz, the submission should not just be

a review. Perhaps it would be two points of view on the relationship between identity, cultural change, and cultural appropriation. (2) If the event were on proposals for reparations, the commentary (commentaries) would need to reflect differences of opinion. (3) There is an opinion piece in a recent New York Times entitled "Should We Cancel Aristotle?" I don't know anyone who thinks we should, but the article is interesting in its own right and raises significant questions about what we learn when we study positions we do not share and consider abhorrent. Such an article might well appear in Introspect. Responses to it, might as well.

The goal of the CMSV Campus Conversation is insight and understanding through dialog. The goal of Introspect is to expand opportunities for insight and understanding further.

This is important. It should be fun.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Flynn".