



COLLEGE OF  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 27, 2022

Dear Students and Colleagues,

During the past week, after the announcement of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*, a student organization made a post on their club's social media account that has created significant concern within, and beyond, our community. Whereas some commented in support of the post, many wrote comments that noted their offense and disagreement. Some responded respectfully, some did not. Several tagged me in their comments, asking me to respond, reprimand, or engage with the students who made the post. I have not, and do not intend on commenting on the post for very important reasons that I want to outline in this message.

First, the College of Mount Saint Vincent upholds students' and employees' right to free speech. Whereas I, personally, encourage people to be mindful of what they say—especially in such a public forum—the College does not censor or restrict what student organizations post on social media. We do, however, have policies with regard to conduct, behavior, and the expectations for behavior of student organizations. I have asked Student Affairs to review the conduct of the students/student organization involved in light of the policies that exist. I encourage you to reach out to [deanofstudents@mountsaintvincent.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@mountsaintvincent.edu) should you have any questions or concerns.

Second, as many of you know, I use Instagram to share the story of the Mount. Although the account I use ([@susanburns](https://www.instagram.com/susanburns)) is my personal account and not the College's, students, alums, colleagues, and many more see my account as a voice of the College. I am very mindful of that fact when I post, when I follow others (or choose not to), and when I like or comment on others' posts. When using social media, I keep in mind the [policies](#) for the College regarding social media use. Specifically, I do not post anything I would not say in public (or would want people to see), I assume that my posts and online behavior is public regardless of privacy settings, and I understand that whatever I post or share online is permanent regardless of whether it has a limit on the time it is posted or if I were to attempt to remove it.

Finally, as stated in my communication to the Mount community after the January 6th insurrection at the Capitol, **words matter**. Sadly, we live in a society and world where exclusion and division have taken hold. Too often, words are being used to create fear and hurt rather than to heal or comfort. Again, I would argue that as a community associated with the College of Mount Saint Vincent, we *can* and *must* be models to others with our words and our actions. By living our [mission and values](#), we can listen to those who disagree with us and still honor our understanding of our common humanity, commitment to human dignity, and obligations to each other.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Burns, Ph.D.  
President