



## Office of Equity and Inclusion

### Implementing Search Advocates in Our Recruitment and Hiring Process

#### Background

Montgomery College has grown into an institution where radical inclusion—that is, deeply rooted values of welcoming all individuals who seek higher education or continuing education—is an essential element of our identity. By intentionally cultivating our campuses as places where equal education and employment opportunity flourishes, we advance our own educational mission, contribute to the aspirations of Montgomery County, and add to the vision of our nation.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the College’s workforce is more than a goal or aspiration: it is an essential component of academic and career success for the student body at the most diverse community college in the continental United States (Chronicle of Higher Education). MC workforce diversity is also a key element of partnership, community engagement, and economic development for a Montgomery County population that is 56.7% non-white, 32% foreign-born, and 40.6% speakers of languages other than English. (Data USA)

One of the College’s goals is to engage highly qualified talent, create opportunities for all employees to grow professionally and to retain the intellectual capital necessary to achieve our commitment to student success. Cultivating a culture of equity and inclusion, continuous learning, civility, and mutual respect is key to institutional success. We value the skills, knowledge, and cultural competency that diverse employees bring to our educational environment. The ability to welcome, teach, and serve our diverse students must be a fundamental requirement for hiring and promotion at Montgomery College and a crucial qualification for all personnel.

Montgomery College defines cultural competency as the state of having and applying knowledge and skill in four areas: awareness of one’s own cultural worldview; recognition of one’s attitudes toward cultural differences; realization of different cultural practices and worldviews; and thoughtfulness in cross-cultural interaction. The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University and the seminal works of Terry Cross and others identify five essential elements contributing to an institution’s ability to become more culturally competent. Those elements are:

- valuing diversity,
- having the capacity for cultural self-assessment,

- being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact,
- having institutionalized culture knowledge, and
- having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity. (National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University)

With a student body that is approximately one-quarter each Black, Latinx, and White, and with substantial numbers of Asian, multi-racial, and international students (see Figure 1), diversification of the MC workforce presents numerous opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators to serve as role models, mentors, and advocates for equity and inclusion.

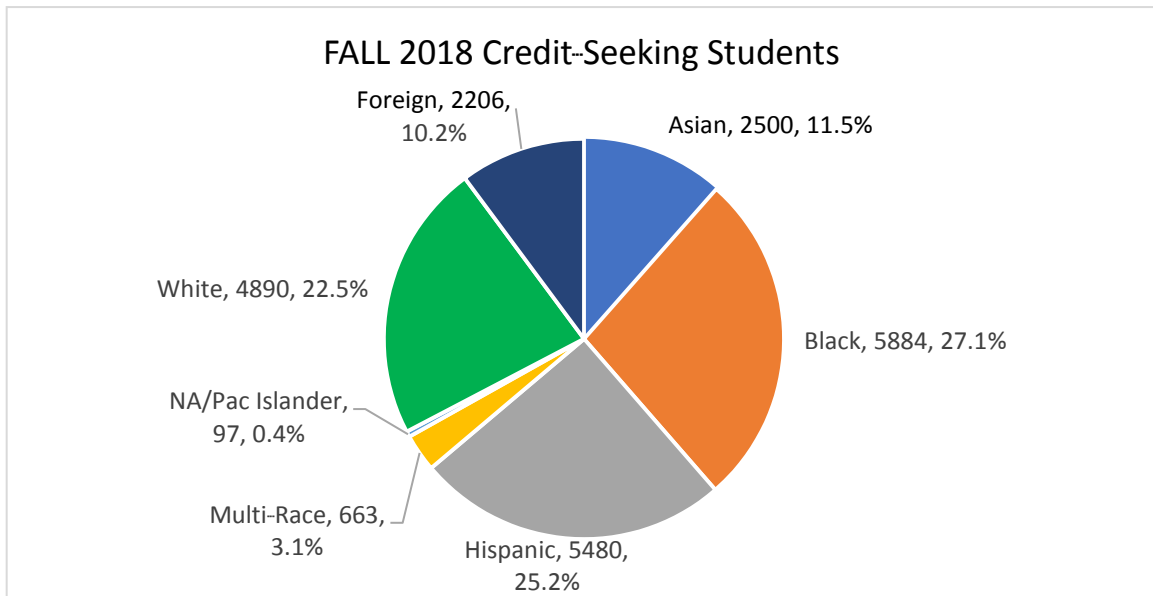


Figure 1

Employee groups that would benefit from greater representation, such as Latinx/Hispanics, should more closely reflect the diversity of our students. Latinx individuals are 25.2% of students (Montgomery College OIRE), but only 6.6% of faculty, 3.9% of administrators and 12.6% of staff identify as Latinx (Montgomery College Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management) (See Figures 2, 3, and 4). Additionally, with 7.8% of MC students provided accommodations and support through Disability Support Services (DSS) in Fall 2018 (MC Disability Support Services), increased inclusion and visibility of employees with disabilities would be of value.

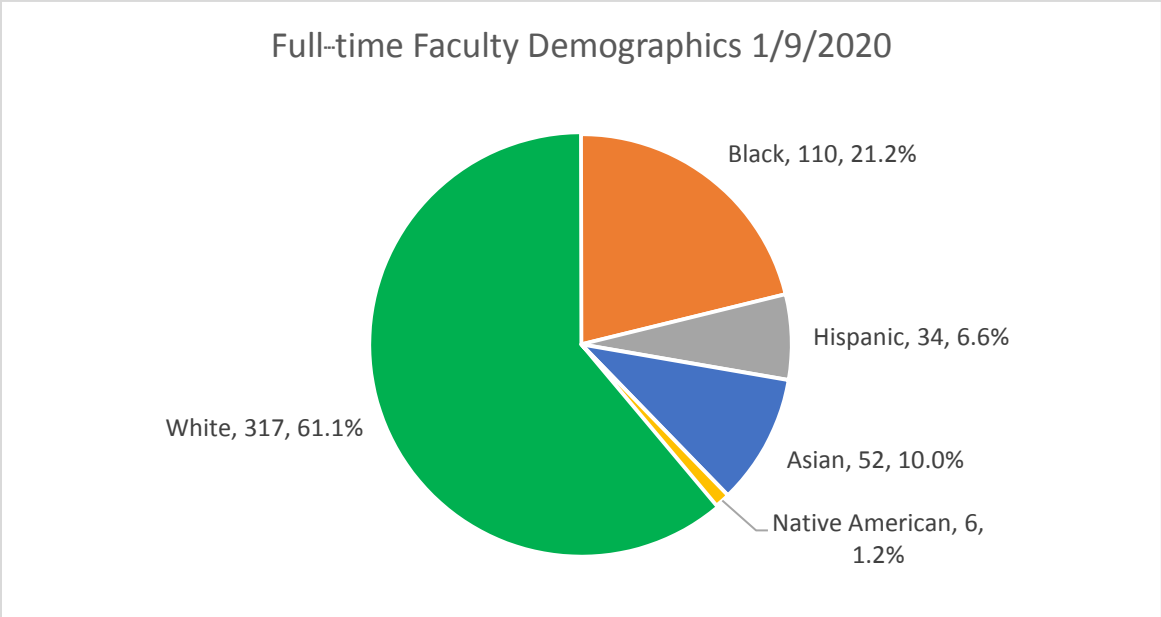


Figure 2

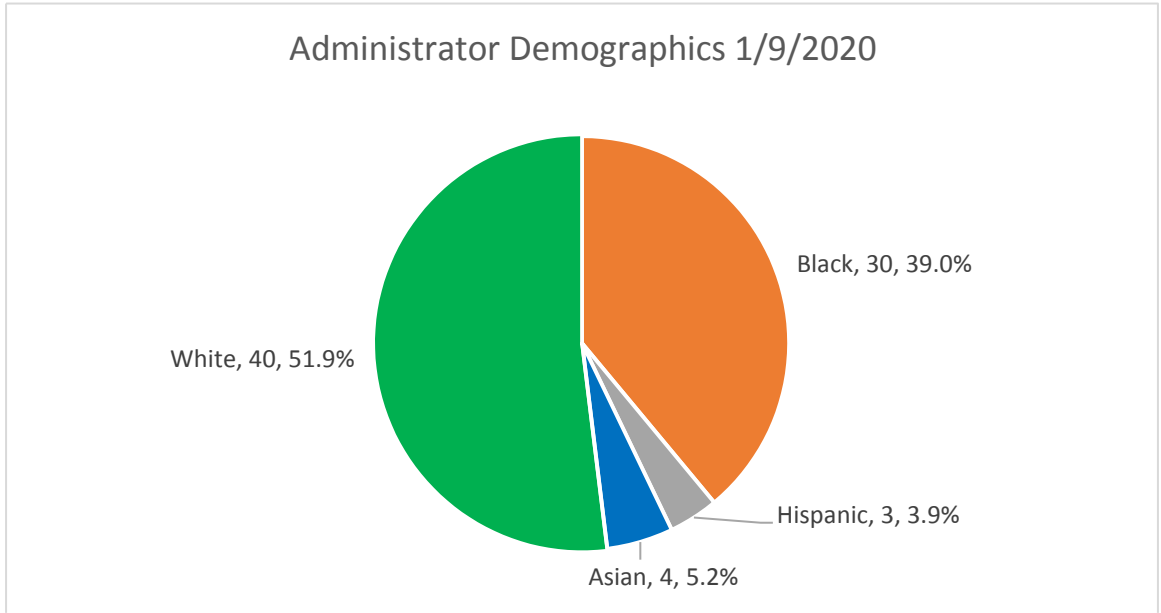


Figure 3

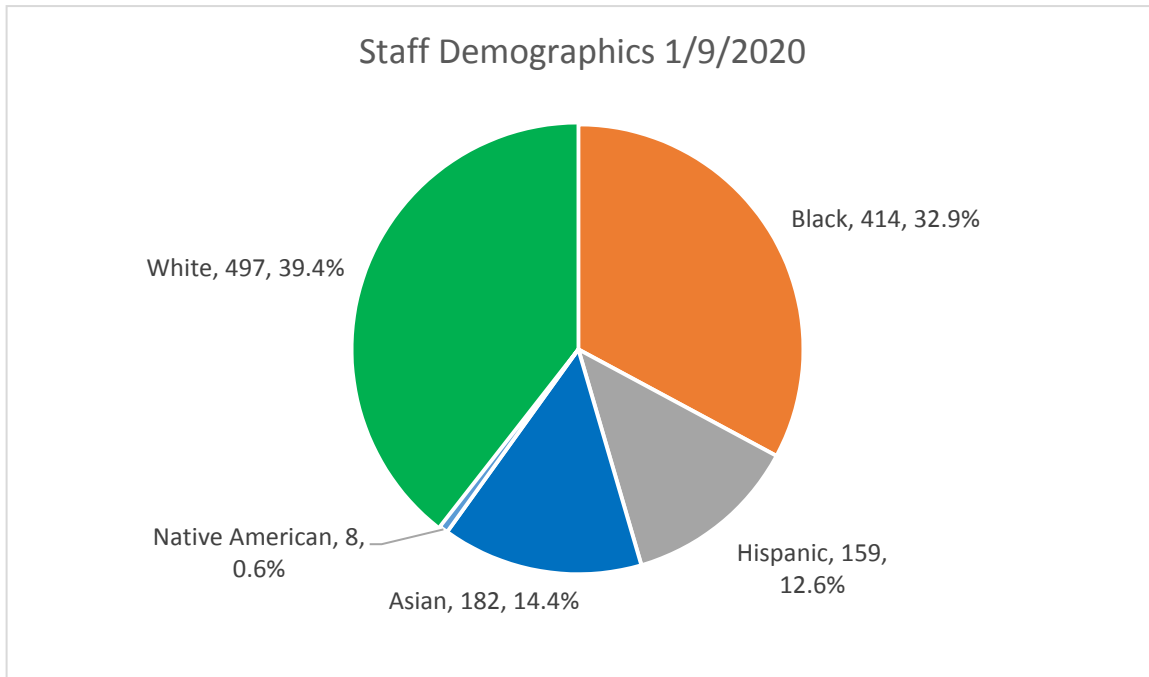


Figure 4

Recruiting efforts, professional development, and career advancement paths should position Montgomery College as a destination employer for diverse County residents, current MC students and alumni, traditionally underrepresented graduate interns, and equity-focused professionals. Thus, the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM), in partnership with the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI), have identified some key strategies for enhancing recruiting and hiring practices and processes.

The College will expand outreach activities and will incorporate guidance and assistance from current employees serving as “diversity ambassadors” to their own communities, external organizations, events, conferences, and local graduate programs.

In accordance with best practices from leading institutions of higher education, Montgomery College is implementing training on the value of diverse workforces and on procedures that encourage diverse candidates to apply, as well as on avoiding unconscious bias in searches. Montgomery College search committees will begin to incorporate these “search advocacy” practices and incorporate questions regarding applicants’ abilities to successfully work with and serve our diverse community. The College is prioritizing these search advocate efforts.

## Search Advocate Program & Justification

HRSTM, Academic Affairs, and OEI explored the feasibility of implementing a search advocate program at Montgomery College, as a result of reviewing personnel action data. This program would be modeled and based on the work of Anne Gillies, director of the Search Advocate Program at Oregon State University (OSU) a highly-respected pioneer and leader in this work.

The purpose of OSU's Search Advocate program is to enhance the equity, validity, and diversity in the institution's hiring process. Through the program, employees participate in training that addresses current research about implicit bias, diversity, the changing landscape in hiring, inclusive principles, practical strategies for each stage of the search process, and effective ways to be an advocate on a search committee. The role of the search advocate is to assist hiring managers, search committee chairs, and search committee members, promoting a focus on equity, inclusion, and integrity throughout the recruitment and hiring process. Search advocates provide guidance and support to the hiring manager and HR recruiter in writing job advertisements and other recruiting materials and media that are inclusive and designed to encourage diverse candidates to apply. The advocates are charged to work with the search committee throughout the candidate search, interview, and recommendation process to utilize equitable practices and raise awareness of unconscious bias.

In November 2019, the College sent a team of individuals from the Office of Equity & Inclusion, Human Resources, and a professor working with PACEI to OSU to observe and participate in their Search Advocate Training workshops. In addition to the training, the group had the opportunity to meet with members of OSU's administration and faculty, including Nana Osei-Kofi, Director of the Difference, Power, & Discrimination Program in the Office of Academic Affairs; Tuba Ozkän-Haller, Associate Dean of Institutional Research; Todd Palmer, Associate Dean of Engineering for Faculty Development; and Rebecca Warner, Sociology professor and former Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. These and other members of the OSU community shared their perspective on the impact and value of the Search Advocate program. They pointed out that, in addition to boosting the employment of qualified minority and female candidates, the widespread participation of faculty, staff, and administrators in the training had brought about positive changes in cultural competency and awareness of implicit bias throughout the community.

Recent hiring data from MC's HRSTM office (see following Tables) suggest that search advocacy procedures may be helpful in addressing disparities between the demographics of MC's applicants and the demographics of candidates hired, particularly in faculty searches. The data indicate that White applicants are hired at a rate that exceeds their proportion in the applicant pools. In hiring for faculty positions, White applicants were hired considerably more often than their ratio of the applicant

pool.

### 2019 Data On MC Applications & Hires

The data in the tables below indicates the demographic breakdown of applicants (both internal and external) who applied for positions at Montgomery College in FY 2019, as well as the breakdown of the candidates who were hired, transferred, or promoted to those positions. (Montgomery College Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management) Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

#### **All Budgeted Positions**

	<b>All Applicants*</b> Internal and External	
<b>Race Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian	598	14%
Black or African American	1,812	42%
Hispanic or Latino	553	13%
Two or More Races	184	4%
White	1,176	27%
Total	4,323	

<b>Candidates Hired/ Transferred or Promoted</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
20	13%
49	33%
19	13%
6	4%
55	37%
149	

### Full-time Faculty Positions

	<b>All Applicants*</b> Internal and External	
<b>Race Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian	80	14%
Black or African American	190	34%
Hispanic or Latino	51	9%
Two or More Races	12	2%
White	233	41%
Total	566	

<b>Candidates Hired/ Transferred or Promoted</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1	4%
7	29%
2	8%
0	0%
14	58%
24	

### Staff and Administrator Positions

	<b>All Applicants*</b> Internal and External	
<b>Race Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian	518	14%
Black or African American	1,622	43%
Hispanic or Latino	502	13%
Two or More Races	172	5%
White	943	25%
Total	3,757	

<b>Candidates Hired/ Transferred or Promoted</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
19	15%
42	34%
17	14%
6	5%
41	33%
125	

\* May contain duplicated headcounts

As the overall applicant data above demonstrates, the College's increased efforts to recruit applicants that are more diverse is resulting in diverse applicant pools. However, there continues to be concern regarding the number of diverse or underrepresented candidates that are hired, especially into faculty and administrator positions. Employee and management reports expressing complaints and concerns received through various avenues regarding the hiring process primarily center on issues with the screening, search committee, and selection processes. For fiscal year 2021 we are working to further develop metrics to track applicant demographics at different stages of recruitment. This will allow us to see demographics related to the number of the qualified candidates, those submitted to the search committee, and those interviewed.

### Recommendation

As one intervention to address this area of concern, it is the recommendation of the Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management that the College implement a Search Advocate Program as a part of the College's recruitment and hiring process.

A Search advocate program will help Montgomery College hiring managers, search committees, and employees learn to utilize language that is equitable and inclusive, and creates opportunities rather than barriers. A significant element of the program is large-scale organizational education and training for potential search committee advocates. Attendees work on using various search strategies to increase equity and inclusion and to avoid bias. These methodologies have positively impacted the hiring process at OSU and have recently been adopted by the community college system in Virginia. We believe that that they can do the same for Montgomery College.

The plan and timeline for implementing a Search Advocate Program at Montgomery College, including communication, outreach, and training activities is as follows:

### December – January 2020

- Sent out a formal invitation to OSU trainer, Anne Gillies, to invite her to Professional Training at MC in August 2020. Sessions are either 2 full days or shorter periods over several days. Goal is to train 60 people who will commit to serving on 1-2 search committees per fiscal/academic year
- Provide overview of search advocacy training at the retreat for the chairs in January
- MC trained search advocates began pilot search advocacy work to generate ideas and feedback of how to roll-out training for larger group
- Created a communication plan-memo from HRSTM/OEI to Administrators



## February – May 2020

- CEIO/CHRO presented at 2/12 All Administrators meeting
- OEI/HRSTM representatives' informational presentations at Governance councils, SVP, PEC, and Deans' meetings
- CEIO/CHRO presentation at PEC meeting
- Employee search pilots (feedback feeds into large-scale training for August)
- Meet with NOVA colleges that are rolling it out. Talk to Howard Community College about their search advocate program (Krista Walker will reach out to them)

## June 2020

- Begin to customize MC training
- Possible all administrators and MC trainers training –Tentatively scheduled via Zoom on July 11-12, 2020

## June – August 2020

- Possible summer faculty training

## August 2020

- Possible August 25 & 26, 2020 staff training. August 27 & 28, 2020 faculty, chairs and deans training. Two-day pilot session for 80 employees including all deans, all chairs, and 15 staff.

## September – December 2020

- Pilot continues with feedback sessions

## January – May 2021

- Assign OEI staff person to administer program
- Maintain list of trained staff/faculty that can serve as search advocates on HRSTM/OEI websites
- Train the trainer program launched through ELITE

## Conclusion

In support of the Office of Equity and Inclusion's recommendations, the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management plans to pilot the use of search advocacy

at Montgomery College during the 2020-2021 academic year. We invite faculty and staff to become a part of this initiative and welcome feedback and insights from the College community on the training, implementation, and impact of the process.

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