

## THE STRENGTH OF THIS COMMUNITY, AFFIRMING MASSART VALUES

November 24, 2021

Dear MassArt Students, Faculty, and Staff,

This time of year, as we take time to reflect upon and be thankful for those we love, for the good in our lives, and the difference we get to make, we do so against the backdrop of the Kyle Rittenhouse verdict, the Charlottesville trial, and the verdict in the McMichaels/Bryan trial in the murder of Ahmaud Arbery. And, frequently, we read about the exoneration of people of color who have served decades in prison for crimes they did not commit; and some of those unjustly imprisoned died waiting for justice. Every one of us feels the impact of these cases, some of us more so than others.

At MassArt our shared purpose and humanity helps keep us grounded and inspires us to continue working passionately to make a difference in our communities and our world. The strength of this community – and our art – will see us through. We must continue to have faith in each other. We must continue to share the hope that justice will prevail, and then work together to ensure that it does. And we must continue to love each other. We share common ground in our purpose, our belief in the essential goodness of humankind, and our determination to pursue a hopeful future.

For many of us, navigating these challenging times is difficult. We acknowledge that different life and lived experiences may cause circumstances to weigh more heavily on some of us than others. Please be mindful of this, and borrow from Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, that *we should cultivate empathy, and develop our civic imagination and a democratic impatience for injustice.*

### COMMUNITY GATHERING

We have learned that being in community, even virtually, may help provide support or simply reassure us that we are not alone. After we return from the Thanksgiving break we will offer an informal gathering for students, faculty, staff, and alumni who would like to come together at this time. Please look for the date and other details for this gathering to be shared next week.

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

For those who would like them, a variety of resources for MassArt community members may be found across campus, including:

[The Office of Justice, Equity and Transformation \(JET\)](#) offers support and resources through the [massart.edu/jetpack](https://massart.edu/jetpack) platform, accessible to everyone with a MassArt NetID and password.

The [MassArt Counseling and Wellness Center](#) offers both in-person and remote services for students (by Zoom or phone); visit the website to make an appointment or tap into a range of self-help resources.

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The [My Student Support Program](#) app offers 24/7 free, confidential mental health and well-being support for students, from counselors who speak many languages.

The [Mass4You Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#), available to benefits-eligible employees, offers an array of free, confidential support available 24/7, including telehealth counseling and work-life convenience resources, among other benefits.

As we work to make sense of all that is going on, we can be confident that the values that define MassArt's mission and community serve us well:

- We pursue a just, compassionate, and equitable learning environment
- We cultivate rigorous creative practices by observing, questioning, making and remaking
- We honor courage, honesty, mutual respect, and self-expression
- We believe in the power of art and design to transform our world

I am grateful to be a part of MassArt and to know that no matter what the challenges, this community of artists, designers and educators will always navigate those challenges and work toward a more just and humane world together, for our remarkable students and ourselves.

Be well,



Mary K. Grant, PhD  
President  
Massachusetts College of Art and Design

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*MassArt is a public, independent institution that prepares artists, designers, and educators from diverse backgrounds to shape communities, economies, and cultures for the common good.*