

Thursday, June 29, 2023

Dear MassArt Students, Faculty, and Staff,

This morning the U.S. Supreme Court published its decision on the legality of race-based higher education admissions criteria. By reversing 40 years of precedent, the court's majority decision states that colleges and universities can no longer take race into consideration as a specific basis for granting admission. In her dissenting opinion Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, *"The result of today's decision is that a person's skin color may play a role in assessing individualized suspicion, but it cannot play a role in assessing that person's individualized contributions to a diverse learning environment. That indefensible reading of the Constitution is not grounded in law and subverts the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection."*

While this decision has been widely anticipated since oral arguments were heard in October 2022, it is profoundly disappointing and arguably creates a more difficult path for many universities seeking to ensure their student populations are diverse. **The Supreme Court decision will not change our practices.** Admissions decisions at MassArt are made based on each student's academic record, portfolio, essay, and letters of recommendation. Additionally, we have continued the practice of remaining test optional. As a public college, we are committed to doing all we can to make MassArt accessible to all students – from Massachusetts, throughout the U.S., and the world.

Our mission is strong and steadfast and builds upon 150 years of history as a public, independent institution that prepares artists, designers, educators, makers, and creative leaders from diverse backgrounds to shape communities, economies, and cultures for the common good. We remain dedicated to our values and to pursuing a just, compassionate, and equitable learning environment. I am proud of this commitment, which is reflected not only in our admissions practices but in our ongoing work to support our students once they enroll at MassArt.

Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, and Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler recently announced that their administration has formed an Advisory Council for the Advancement of Representation in Education and are expanding access to college and career readiness tools for current Massachusetts students. The Advisory Council will work with the administration to ensure that Massachusetts will always be open, welcoming, and inclusive of students of color and other students

typically underrepresented in higher education. I am happy to share that Dr. Lyssa Palu-ay, Dean of Justice, Equity and Transformation (JET), has been appointed to the Governor's Advisory Council.

[Today, the Healey-Driscoll Administration released a joint statement signed by over 130 Massachusetts institutions in response to the Supreme Court's decision.](#)

We know that we must be intentional in our commitment and our work to continue building an inclusive, welcoming, equitable, and diverse community. I am deeply grateful for your support of our mission and our values, your support of one another, and most importantly I am grateful to all of you as we work together for the success of our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary".

Mary K. Grant, PhD
President