

DeRionne P. Pollard,
Ph.D.

March 2, 2021

Dear Chancellor Rose and Members of the Search Committee,

I serve as the proud president of Montgomery College (MC), a three-campus comprehensive community college serving approximately 55,000 students a year in Montgomery County, MD. For the past ten years I have led a college that is deeply and deliberately connected to our community- amplifying and advocating for the educational needs of those who want to access and work for their piece of the American Dream through a teaching institution. Tightly coupled with and binding the educational spectrum in our region, I believe Montgomery College exists to ensure equitable and robust pathways to economic and workforce mobility. We are a gloriously diverse institution, with 72 percent of our students identifying as BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) from over 160 countries. In fact, Montgomery College was named the most diverse community college in the contiguous United States by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and we actively and deliberately work to meet and exceed the expectations and needs of our students and stakeholders through a creed of "radical inclusion," a term I coined over a decade ago. **Simply put, we bask in and celebrate our role as an anchor institution by removing barriers for all (intentionally), creating pathways to success for all (continuously), ensuring relevance for our students and community (actively), and protecting our access mission for all (ardently) because no student is expendable, and every part of our community belongs to us.** This ethos informs who I am at my core. Inclusive and transformational excellence-in policy, practice, and promise-is the work of my lifetime. To that end, I believe my leadership narrative, as conveyed in this letter and accompanying CV, speaks to the Presidential Pillars and makes me a strong candidate to be the next President of Nevada State College.

I have not been actively seeking new opportunities as I work for a board and serve a college that values me and my leadership competencies while encouraging my continued professional and personal growth. My family-[REDACTED] are well-established and active members of our community, and we have worked tirelessly to build and nurture the community of which we are a part. Serving as a college president has only affirmed my uncompromising belief in the transformational power and efficacy of high-quality, forward-thinking post-secondary education. That said, my connection with, respect for, and admiration of the Nevada State College ethos is compelling and calls to me. I spent time with the leadership profile, perused the college website for hours, scanned news stories about the Nevada education space, studied the state's plan, and read just about everything I could get my hands on about Nevada State College (NSC)- and I recognized that feeling of connection, excitement, and belonging. This mission profoundly inspires and connects with me on a visceral level. Moreover, I am aware of the impact and celebrate the potency of Nevada State College's mission and vision in the higher education landscape. **This is a crucible moment for higher education-and a defining moment for Nevada State College as this college's journey for the students and state is necessary and profound. The institutional values of high-impact culture**

("Embrace the Journey"), courageous innovation ("Blaze Trails"), dignity through equity ("Build Bridges"), and generational impact ("Climb Mountains")-and the outcomes you are producing-are essential for this moment. As an African American woman who is also a first-generation college completer, I know first-hand the transformational impact of education for an individual, a family, a community, and the nation. Nevada State College has a profound and awe-inspiring calling, and I want to be a part of the NSC impact and story.

Commitment to Innovative, Aspirational, and Strategic Leadership

I have been a distinctive leader for an exceptional college, thriving within a committed community that appreciates our role as a boundary-spanning institution of higher education in our region, a knowledge and skill set that aligns well with how I see NSC's unique place within the Nevada higher education landscape. **At Montgomery College, we have honed a deep competency in creating intentional partnerships and alliances to mobilize workforce and economic development, ensuring the upliftment of all members of our community, and advancing the collective well-being of our students, employees, community, and stakeholders.** An example of our innovation and ingenuity under my leadership is the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology (PIC-MC); we are the first community college in the nation to create an integrated academic, business, and research environment providing educational opportunities for our students, ensuring long-term revenue streams to the College, incubating new businesses, and offering unique business collaborations. When I arrived at MC, I had to navigate with my team a complex planning and zoning process at the state level, advocate for land use exceptions, and negotiate a ground-lease with a tenant where we brought the first new hospital to Montgomery County, MD in over 40 years. This ground-breaking outcome advances Montgomery County as the dominant life sciences hub of the country by providing both federal Opportunity Zone and state RISE Zone tax incentives in a region with hundreds of bioscience companies and federal institutions. Nevada State College has begun important work in defining its relevancy in becoming an economic and workforce development engine within the landscape of the state and local community, and my expertise in institutional capacity building through economic and workforce development would be an opportunity for NSC.

Advancing the work in this space took ingenuity and courage, but it is also good business sense as higher education must identify innovative and transformative opportunities that allow us to deliver our mission in a sustainable and evolving manner. Our efforts in this space have been remarkable as we have delivered new buildings and parking garages on our campuses through strategic advocacy with the state of Maryland and Montgomery County and innovative partnering with the Montgomery College Foundation. Navigating complex community relations has become a deep competency as well, as I had to clearly and thoughtfully articulate a set of expectations and ensure the delivery on those expectations in ways that built trust and enhanced communication. Important to this enterprise has been our commitment as an organization to energy conservation and sustainability through a series of intentional actions. In addition to rigorous construction guidelines and fidelity to norms established in co-creation with the community in which

we reside, we publish to the community "A Resource Conservation Plan," and MC's Green Routine lists our conservation and sustainability activities. We know that climate change is real and have worked diligently to address it and reduce our carbon footprint. We benchmark annually and was recognized by the State as an "Early Bird Benchmarker" for reporting campuses energy use and costs a year earlier than legally mandated.

Commitment to Institutional Vitality, Student Success, and Employee Engagement

Leading the successful development of architecture and infrastructure does not mean that as president I can be inattentive to protecting and bolstering institutional culture. I must hold two concepts in my head at the same time: advancing relevant organizational transformation and maintaining deep college connections. To that end, reforming institutional structures that inhibit stakeholder engagement, deny access to decision-making, and mute necessary voices has been a pillar of my presidencies. **Redesigning governance for broader and more robust participation, reimagining organizational structure to emphasize the student experience and subject area expertise, and refocusing attention and energy on organizational policies and practices that ensure consistent and meaningful student and employee experiences has been some of my most impactful work.** Leading a team that deliberately-and often times courageously-took on systemic change has been gratifying. Moreover, our work in "people stewardship" makes us better communicators and problem-solvers for the organization leading to greater stakeholder engagement-be it students, employees, alumni, community members, non-profit partners, business leaders, elected officials, philanthropists, and friends of Montgomery College. I believe my distinctive competencies in this space align with the work in which Nevada State College will engage as it continues to grow, mature, and excel.

All of this work has advanced our mission at Montgomery College profoundly and produced demonstrable outcomes. Our work in expanding access to the college through our ACES (Achieving College Excellence and Success) Program has increased the pipeline to college completion by 2000 students. In partnership with our K12 system-which is the 15th largest in the country-and a regional university partner, we have disrupted a narrative that college is not for everyone who wants to pursue a degree or credential. Significant to our student success work has been our membership in Achieving the Dream (ATD), a comprehensive reform network for student success in higher education; as a result, we've engaged in deep work to redesign our advising structure, improve our scheduling, enhance our student onboarding systems, and implement structured pathways-all with the stated purpose of building deeper connections to the college for the students and accelerating student progression and completion. **Our faculty-led work in developmental education and general education redesign has produced one of the highest persistence and retention rates in the nation for community colleges and has led to significant increases in degree completion and transfer.** Our innovation in delivering relevant workforce education and training that supports both upward mobility immediately AND over time in high demand fields such as nursing, education, cybersecurity, biotechnology, engineering, automotive technologies, and

biomanufacturing has made the college the "go to" partner in our region because we deliver excellence in teaching and excellence in support services.

Also, as all of higher education rebounds after a global pandemic, it should come as no surprise that institutions that paid attention to technology transformation that supported both faculty innovation and student connection *and* technology infrastructure redesign for business process efficiency and effectiveness will be in better service to their mission post-pandemic. At Montgomery College, **our in-depth work in "Cloud-First" digital transformation, online course development and support, OER adoption and simulation technology, disciplined decision-making coordination for software and hardware acquisition and implementation, information security strategy and privacy, accessibility in technology, and robust professional development and change management has positioned us well as being highly effective stewards of private contributions, taxpayers contributions, and student investments.** My leadership approach in this area-listening to stakeholders, engaging content experts, anticipating the market, making critical decisions, and celebrating the journey-would amplify the strengths of NSC in this space.

Commitment to Expanding Collaboration. Allies. and Community Impact

Doing this work also recognizes that political acumen and fundraising prowess are essential for the college president, and I have developed deep competence in this space. **I enjoy considerable respect by our local, state, and federal elected officials as I respect their time, listen to their concerns, and advocate for my students and college with integrity, information, and insight. I am a trusted partner, and my team and I work deliberately to enjoy that trust and integrity.** As such, I have provided significant and noteworthy advocacy leadership at all levels on several key policy and practice issues, such as DACA and the Maryland Dream Act, economic and workforce development, educational access for incarcerated learners, transfer reform, basic needs insecurity among college students, and financial aid policy reform. Moreover, this same approach follows me in my fundraising work on behalf of the college: partnerships, integrity, clarity, mission-focused philanthropy, and teamwork. I enjoy the confidence of our donors because they are well-stewarded, are provided with high-quality data, and understand the potency of their gifts to the college. And when a potential gift and partnership has not advanced the mission and work of the college, my team has felt empowered to recommend the actions from which I have made decisions grounded in a clear and unparalleled set of values that has served the college community well.

As a result of how I comport myself, my leadership has been recognized on a local, state, and national level, including being one of only two community college presidents to ever receive the prestigious Academic Leadership Award by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Unknowingly nominated by the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, I was also named a White House Champion of Change for my leadership in advancing the dignity of education and work for those reentering society from the justice system. **Our community partners see me as an informed and engaged presence, and I am tremendously proud of the work my colleagues and I have co-created to advance both our institutional mission and our value proposition to be one of the most relevant community colleges in the country.**

Moreover, I am an active and impactful servant within my local community, and I contribute significantly to the leadership pipeline by building internal capacity through my Presidential Innovation Leadership Institute. Also, ensuring qualified and engaged leaders for the sector in a national pathway to the college presidency has been important to me as well as I have served as a mentor and presenter since its inception for the highly acclaimed Aspen Institute's Rising Presidents Fellowship.

Finally, I would like to conclude this narrative of why I am uniquely qualified to be the next president of Nevada State College with a more intimate portrait of DeRionne. Who I am and what do I bring with me to this work?

- I am a **student of the higher education ecosystem**, having attended both a public land-grant institution and a private Jesuit institution; taught at one land-grant university, two comprehensive community colleges, and one online state university-and what I know for sure is that education is the only thing that can change the trajectory of an individual, a family, and a community.
- I know that leadership matters-and how one chooses to build leadership capacity and confidence in others matters even more. **Co-creation, clarity, communication, and collaboration are a sacred trust I bring to my work**, and the high expectations and respect I have for others informs both how and why I do this work.
- I **trust students and believe they are why we do the work-and** I am uncompromising bold in that perspective. I lead from it, I dwell in it, and I hold myself accountable from that place. What happens in the classroom, in support areas, in offices and spaces, and in decisions should be about their well-being and success.
- I hold **joy, gratitude, kindness, integrity, dignity, and inquiry as essential personal values-and** I bring these characteristics to my work and interactions.
- I believe **inclusive excellence and diversity are glorious, essential, and affirming for all, making organizations stronger, impactful, and resilient-and** I know that the absence of these things are not only short-sighted but also self-defeating.
- I am a proud graduate of the Chicago Public Schools system; a former food stamps and public assistance recipient; a first-generation college completer; **and an advocate and warrior for access to equitable, life-transforming (and in some cases life-giving education) for all who seek it to improve their lives and the communities in which we live and serve.**

The words of Maya Angelou inform my ethos: "There is no greater agony than holding an untold story inside of you." **What I know for sure is that higher education exists to create spaces for untold and unrealized stories yearning to be heard and actualized.** Nevada State College knows this, and it would be an honor to serve this mission.

Sincerely,



DeRionne P. Pollard, Ph.D.

Curriculum Vitae

DeRionne P. Pollard, Ph.D.

Education

Loyola University Chicago/ Doctor of Philosophy, 2005

Specialization: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

[Dissertation] *Conversations of Consequence: A Study of New Faculty Preparation and Acculturation in Community Colleges*

Iowa State University/ Master of Arts, 1995

Major: English

[Thesis] *Terry McMillian: Pop Icon or Brilliant Storyteller? A Question of Literary Value*

• *Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society* • *Graduate Teaching Excellence Award*

Iowa State University/ Bachelor of Arts, 1993

Major: English Minor: Religious Studies

• *Iowa Student as Critic Writing Award* • *Dean's List*

Experience

Montgomery College/ President

2010-present, Rockville, MD

Supervised by a 10-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor of Maryland, I serve as the chief executive officer of the College. Directly reporting to the President are the Chief of Staff/Chief Strategy Officer; the Senior Vice Presidents (4) of Academic Affairs, Administrative and Fiscal Affairs, Advancement and Community Engagement, and Student Affairs; the Chiefs (4) of Analytics and Insights; Compliance, Risk, and Ethics; Equity and Inclusion, and Governmental Affairs; Special Assistant for Board Operations; and the General Counsel. Located in Montgomery County, MD, the College serves 55,000 students and has an annual operating budget of \$312M (FY21) and a six-year capital improvements budget of nearly \$95M. Montgomery College employs over 1900 faculty and staff on three campuses, two educational centers, and multiple community sites.

Significant leadership accomplishments include:

- Implemented "one College" philosophy and alignment after three campuses were accredited as a single institution and developed new institutional mission, vision, and values statements leading towards the College's strategic plans MC2020 and MC2025
- Developed new participatory governance policy and system to expand employee engagement and enhance college-wide decision-making and communication

- Implemented strategic internal communication and outreach to employees and students, including but not limited to bi-semester Town Meetings, weekly written and video written communications to college community, monthly "Food For Thought" employee dialogue sessions, teaching non-credit seminars for students, governance council Q & A sessions, and several other initiatives to ensure deep knowledge of and engagement with the College community
- Oversaw development of new institutional colors, mascot, and athletic redesign, led NJCAA reclassification from Division III to scholarship-granting Division I and II in most sports while advancing Title IX compliance and program rejuvenation
- Reorganized the student services division, including the hiring of a new Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, to ensure focus on comprehensive student experience, college-wide accountability, and campus coordination
- Reorganized the academic affairs division, structuring leadership and alignment for college-wide focus and disciplinary expertise
- Created the Offices of Institutional Compliance, Risk, and Ethics; Office of Equity and Inclusion; and the Office of Analytics and Insights to ensure institutional focus and transformation in key business intelligence and organizational development practices
- Co-created ACES (Achieving College Excellence and Success), a college success, coaching, and scholarship program to increase access and success of new majority, first generation, and underrepresented students in College populations, in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and the Universities of Shady Grove
- Implemented focus on "people stewardship" of college employees, leading to new and improved processes meeting ethical expectations and professional development at all levels of the organization, built a robust team of trained investigators to manage employee concerns, improved search committee operations and support, and implemented a search advocate program.
- Led and closed (and exceeded goals) of a 7-year, \$30M comprehensive campaign through the Montgomery College Foundation
- Created and raised fund for the Innovation Fund, a grant program to encourage and amplify faculty, staff, and student innovation
- Negotiated and formed the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology (PIC-MC), the first life sciences park in the country on the grounds of a community college, which includes the first new hospital in Montgomery County in 40 years as the anchor tenant, and also led the formation of a new educational foundation to support and coordinate the work of PIC-MC
- Launched the Student Success Scorecard that measures student success in three milestone categories and disaggregates to ensure equitable analysis and action
- Expanded early college and dual college programs by over 50% in the last five years where the College now serves nearly 2000 students annually
- Led institutional re-accreditation which produced full eight-year reaffirmation by the Middle State Commission on Higher Education
- Planned, advocated for, and delivered major and minor capital projects (science and math facilities, student services, general

- purpose classroom, parking garage, and significant deferred maintenance and technology projects), totaling over \$500M
- Consolidated administrative services into one facility through the Montgomery College Foundation, saving the college approximately \$40M over the next 20 years
- Reimagined the college's community engagement work around community-based engagement centers to build relationships with emerging communities, new majority/BIPOC communities, and underserved populations (incarcerated)
- Support and lead workforce and economic development initiatives of the region through high-impact and responsive programming, grants, and convenings in such areas as biotechnology and biomanufacturing, health sciences, clinical trials management, and entrepreneurialism

University of Maryland Global Campus/ Instructor

2016, Adelphi, MD

Taught DMCC810: Leadership and Change for the Doctoral Program in Management in Community College Policy and Administration. Part of the University System of Maryland, the University of Maryland Global Campus is an online state university offering undergraduate and graduate education serving over 50,000 students each year.

Las Positas College/ President

2008-2010, Livermore, CA

Served as the chief executive officer and reported to the District Chancellor. Reporting to the President were the Vice Presidents (3) of Academic Services, Administrative Services, and Student Services; the Executive Director of the Las Positas College Foundation; and the Director of Institutional Research and Planning. Located in Alameda County, the College served 10,000 students and had an operating budget of \$40M and a \$230M capital bond program.

Significant leadership accomplishments included:

- Led institution through successful reaccreditation self-study and campus evaluation visit
- Coordinated with the District to lobby for over \$1M in congressional earmarks
- Developed and initiated an integrated internal planning process that promoted coordination and accountability
- Led the development of a new strategic planning process, program review, and non-instructional review
- Led successful opening of three new college facilities and managed campus activities for \$233M capital improvement bond
- Maintained enrollment targets and developed balanced budget
- Enhanced internal communication through the development of monthly meetings with college community and monthly President's Report
- Increased recognition of Las Positas College within the Tri-Valley service area and state through strategic partnerships and communication techniques, including a monthly community newsletter, a Presidential Advisory Council and Community Leadership Day.
- Expanded and led institutional initiatives related to equity and diversity

College of Lake County/ multiple positions

1995-2008, Grayslake, IL

Vice President for Educational Affairs 2005-2008

Assistant Vice President for Educational Affairs, 2002-2005

Founding Faculty Coordinator and Assistant Professor of English,

Center for Excellence in Teaching Learning, 1998-2002

Assistant Professor of English, 1995-1998

Completed career at the College of Lake County as the chief academic officer of the college and reported to the President. Reporting to the Vice President were the Assistant Vice Presidents (2) for Workforce and for University Transfer; 9 Academic Division Deans; the Executive Director of the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts; and the Assistant Director for Educational Affairs Operations. Located in Lake County, IL, the College served 18,000 and had an operating budget of just under **\$100M.**

Significant leadership accomplishments included:

- Co-led accreditation action team that analyzed and recommended reforms to improve structure, communication, and participation in governance system
- Negotiated first adjunct collective bargaining agreement and negotiated full -time faculty collective bargaining agreement in the shortest period of time in college history
- Developed and implemented restructured budget process within Educational Affairs
- Developed process to assess and meet instructional technology needs
- Led curriculum development process, including the implementation of curriculum planning software
- Implemented and led **AQIP**, a continuous improvement-based form of accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission
- Provided oversight of two construction projects, which included renovation for several programs (dental hygiene, medical imaging, phlebotomy, physics, and geology)
- Convened the High School Advisory Council, an advisory group composed of representatives from district high schools, to identify emerging trends and issues, review research about students, develop new student success programs, align curriculum, and enhance partnership opportunities
- Founded and led the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, a professional development program to enhance teaching and learning at the college, support the development of faculty, lead instructional design projects, assist faculty in formative and summative assessment strategies, and amplify the student success ethos of the college through robust and relevant professional development
- Developed, implemented, and led nationally-recognized new Faculty Institute, a three-part professional development program for new faculty
- Developed specialized professional development program for adjunct/part-time faculty
- Developed courses in Early American Minority Literature and Modern American Minority Literature
- Earned tenure in Spring 1998

**Selected Current
Professional/Community
Activities**

Board of Advisors, Universities of Shady Grove
Board of Advisors, Center for First-Generation Student Success
Board of Directors, Capital Area Food Bank
Board of Directors, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Executive Committee Member, Maryland Association of Community Colleges Board of Directors
Member, Aspen National Transfer Advisory Board
Member, International Women's Forum, DC
Member, Postsecondary Leadership Circle for Parents, Ascend of The Aspen Institute
Member, Silver Spring Chapter of The Links
Member, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Gamma Alpha Epsilon Zeta Chapter
Mentor, Aspen institute's Rising Presidents Fellowship
Peer Evaluator/Team Chair, Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Subscribers Advisory Board, United Educators

**Selected Previous
Professional Activities**

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Board of Directors, AACC 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, and AACC Presidents Academy Executive Committee
College Board's Community College Advisory Panel
ESource Board of Directors
Generation Hope Board of Directors
Higher Education Research and Development Institute Advisory Board
Higher Learning Commission **AQIP** Reviewer
Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers
Maryland Campus Compact
Montgomery County Business Development Corporation
National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs, National Scholarship Selection Committee
O.P. Jindal Community College (India) International Advisory Board
Strathmore Arts Center
Tech Council of Maryland

Selected Professional Honors

Community Champion Award, Latin American Youth Council/Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers, 2021

Champion of Excellence Award, Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce, 2020

Community Leadership Award, Telemundo Washington DC/Montgomery County Hispanic Heritage Celebration, 2019

Distinguished Alumna Award, Iowa State University, 2019

Darnen Award, Loyola University Chicago, 2018

Academic Leadership Award, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2017

Visionary Award, Washington Area Women's Foundation, 2016

Washingtonian's 100 Most Powerful Women, Washingtonian Magazine, 2016, 2012

Emerging Leader Award, American Association of Community Colleges, 2015

White House Champion of Change for Reentry and Employment, 2014

Leader of the Year, Leadership Montgomery, 2013

The Daily Record's Influential Marylander Award, 2013

Minority Business Leader Award, Washington Business Journal, 2013

Washington Business Journal's Women Who Mean Business, 2012

East Bay Woman of Distinction, 2009

Outstanding Young Alumna Award, Iowa State University, 2008

YWCA Woman of Achievement, 2006

Chairman's Award for the Most Influential African American of Lake County, 2006

