



October 20, 2020

Dear Mercy community,

We are writing to share with you an update around Mercy High School's next steps around equity and inclusion. Through listening sessions in September, moderated by Michelle Black, Black students, alumnae, parents, faculty, and staff shared their experiences at Mercy. Their reflections on the past, together with their hopes for a more equitable and inclusive Mercy community, are gifts to our entire community. We again commit ourselves to ensuring that all of our students experience the fullness of a Mercy education.

Our next step is an invitation to the wider Mercy community to participate in two sessions where we can share the themes that emerged from the listening sessions and offer an opportunity for reflection and dialogue. You are invited to sign up for a session [here](#).

Catherine McAuley wrote, "The simplest and most practical lesson I know...is to resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow."

In Catherine's spirit, we are taking some important steps forward. As we shared in our last communication, Niakia Cheese is now our director of equity and inclusion. Over the last five years, Ms. Cheese has served as Mercy's director of development, and she is a respected member of the Mercy community. Ms. Cheese is also the moderator of Mercy's Black Awareness Club, which had been formed in the 1990s and ceased to exist about 2011. It has been reestablished this fall. I invite you to read Ms. Cheese's [letter to the community](#).

Beginning this fall, a newly created Mission, Inclusion & Equity Committee will provide strategic advice and guidance on our institutional efforts in a number of areas, including leadership and governance, hiring and professional development, communications, alumnae engagement, and student life. One of the committee's first tasks will be to review Mercy's existing efforts in these areas and make recommendations to the leadership team and the Board of Trustees on institutional goals. We are deeply grateful to Karen Ross Blake '82 who will chair this committee. Ms. Blake, an accomplished businesswoman, brings extensive volunteer leadership experience and a deep affection for Mercy High School to this role. A member of St. Pius X Church, Ms. Blake and her husband Stephen K. Blake are the proud parents of two sons who are graduates of Loyola Blakefield.

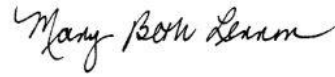
We close with sincere thanks to all who participated in the listening sessions. We also extend a special thanks to Shanna Williams Edmond '95, P'20, president of the Alumnae Association,

who joined leadership team members and trustees on the calls. We are committed to building our Circle of Mercy and we continue to invite your participation in this work.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kevin G. Burke in black ink.

Kevin G. Burke P'10  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Handwritten signature of Mary Beth Lennon in black ink.

Mary Beth Lennon'85  
President