

February 5th, 2025

Thank you for the invitation to speak.

It has been a fast moving 8 months since I took office as Senate President and last spoke to you.

One of the things I have come to greatly value about the role of President of the University Senate is the opportunity to consult and collaborate with Senior Administrators and Officers of the University, the Senate, and the broader University community to address problems and issues of significance to our Institution.

I am heartened by President Koppell and Provost Gonzales's willingness to both listen and share their perspectives, and, I am deeply appreciative of my colleagues on the Senate Executive Board who work with me on guiding Senate business. I've come to think of the Executive as 'my team,' but in reality, they are 'OUR team' of dedicated individuals. Indeed, one of the defining strengths of the Faculty and Staff here at Montclair State is their overwhelming commitment to the University's mission and its students.

One of the recent challenges we've faced occurred a week before the start of the Spring 2025 semester. Faculty and Staff learned of a broad-based classroom shortage. Some course sections were asked to pivot to the online environment or face being cancelled. This switch of modality for what may have been dozens of classes left little time for students to change their schedules, and find courses that correspond with their preferred learning environment. We are awaiting the collection of data and its analysis.

When the report is ready, I am hopeful that OUR team- the Senate Executive, the Senators they lead, and Senior Administrators will come together to find solutions that work effectively for the wide range of pedagogy and our diverse student body. Substantive consultation with stakeholders leads to better outcomes, and increases everyone's sense of belonging.

As we look ahead, it is clear that we will face many changes and uncertainties in the near future from the impact of Executive Orders coming from the Federal government, to demographic shifts and the consequent stresses to higher education, to challenges in adapting to technological change.

In these challenging times, I encourage the University's Senior Administrators to be proactive, rather than reactive, in consultation and communication across the University. Ongoing and sometimes rapid change is best handled with robust two-way communication that allows for a joint effort and genuine inclusion of stakeholders.

The University Senate is prepared for, and looks forward to, continuing to support robust communication and partnership with the front-line Faculty, Staff and University Community.

Thank you.