



A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRESIDENT

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.

January 6, 2021 was a day marked by historic extremes.

Democrat candidates Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff were declared the winners of Georgia's run-off elections, signaling a powerful and major shift in political thought and demographics in the Peach State, the greater South and the composition and power structure in the U.S. Senate.

And, in Washington, DC, homegrown terrorists – empowered by the President's baseless claims of election fraud – stormed the Capitol in an attempt to disrupt and invalidate the Electoral College's certification of Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Kamala Harris as the next President and Vice President of the United States. Such rampant and illegal activity is a grave insult to the democratic process, which must reflect the will of the people and not the misguided wishes of an entitled subgroup.

The world was shocked and appalled by the spectacle of such lawlessness. Shocking as well was the lack of response on the part of local and federal law enforcement. The hypocrisy is staggering: peaceful protests by Black Lives Matters advocates have been treated with unnecessary force and unjustified violence, but a mob bent on subverting the will of the American people was, in many instances, given a free pass to do as they pleased.

The destruction wrought upon the Capitol Building and the threat to the safety and well-being of the members of Congress did not come out of nowhere. The nation has no choice but to address the divisive and destructive elements that have long existed in our society. Systemic racism, economic and social inequality, a degraded level of political discourse: these and other issues must be dealt with. These attitudes are the product of fear, greed, and ignorance.

The task facing America's educators is clear, and I believe community colleges provide an example and serve as a vehicle for the kind of thought and action required in this troubled day and age.

On any given day on a community college campus, a marvelously diverse student body gathers to learn through dialogue and interaction with their instructors and fellow students. People of all ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and genders are included – and all welcome. Ideas are exchanged, projects are collaborated upon, means of solving problems are tried and tested. Preconceived assumptions and misconceptions fall by the wayside in the light of knowledge.

Hostos' dedication to justice on all levels, in every sphere, is as strong as it was when the College was founded in 1968. The institution is committed, as part of its goal of equal access for all, to providing the communities it serves with a forum to examine the critical issues we face.

While acknowledging the gravity of the riot and insurgence at the Capitol, I am impelled to point out the fact that the attempt to derail Biden and Harris' certification failed. They will assume office later this month and initiate what we all hope will be a newer and brighter era in the nation's political life.

Let us all strive to play a part in continuing to foster the civil, respectful, diverse, inclusive society we wish to live in. Change is never easy. But it is inevitable. And it is happening now.

Mil gracias y bendiciones,

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Interim President

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