

Welcome Remarks at Colleges of the Fenway Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast
January 20, 2017

Good morning, friends and colleagues. On behalf of the MassArt community, I welcome you to our college for the 19th annual MLK gathering. During today's program, you will hear from representatives from five COF institutions, who will share how Dr. King's work has impacted their lives.

Dr. King reminded us, drawing on the words of nineteenth-century abolitionist Theodore Parker that "the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Those words continue to resonate. President Obama, motivated by the calling to trace that arc and move it toward its good end, reminded us to believe in the audacity of hope.

Of course, not every day is sunny. Not every day seems hopeful. Dr. King worked to get us through dark days. He assured us that truth and justice will prevail. He encouraged us, reminding us that when we grow impatient and frustrated and we ask, "How long?", we should hear and repeat the refrain, "Not long!"

Dr. King taught us not only that we must pursue justice, but that we must pursue it in a particular way. In a 1957 sermon he said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that."

I am hopeful because I get to spend my days, as you do, working with the next generation of hopeful young people who will bend that moral arc even more toward its just end.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of the truly great leaders in our nation's history. He is a hero to me. As we celebrate him this morning, I hope you will leave hopeful and that in your work, even when things appear dark, that you will mark your days with light and love.

David P. Nelson
President