



*The Bernard P. McDonough Center
for Leadership and Business
at Marietta College*

Dear Incoming McDonough Scholars of Cohort 29,

President Abraham Lincoln once said, “we can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.” President Lincoln recognized that part of becoming a leader is understanding perspective. When you begin to understand more about your predispositions, your biases, and your perspectives, you are taking your first step to becoming a better citizen of an increasingly interdependent world. The EXCEL Workshop will be your first step in learning more about yourself and the world around you.

You are entering Marietta College and the McDonough Leadership Program on a new and level playing field. One of the most beautiful, and perhaps unsettling, aspects of coming to college is that you have the opportunity to be anyone that you want to be. In the coming years, each of you will decide what activities you want to participate in, whom to build relationships with, and what type of person you want to become. While it is important to retain the attributes that make you who you are, this is also a time to choose the aspects of yourself that you want to develop and in the process, you will likely discover more about yourself than ever before.

College is a place in your life to grow and begin to realize your place in the community that surrounds you. The EXCEL Workshop is designed to challenge and inspire each of you to test your perspectives. In doing so, it is my desire that you expand your views as you mature as an individual. As you prepare to embark on this journey of self-discovery, remember that you have the support of the 28 Cohorts that have embarked on this journey before you as well.

You are about to take part in a Workshop that will provide the building blocks of life long friendships and aspirations. The friends that I have made through this process will last a lifetime, and the amount of information that I have learned about myself and others continues to grow. It is my hope that each of you will have a life changing experience in your next four years, starting with EXCEL. You have a strong team of EXCEL Leaders, McDonough Faculty and Staff, and an institution ready to welcome you and provide you with unforgettable experiences and memories to last a lifetime. As you begin this process, I encourage each of you to always seek out the roses far more often than the thorns. Welcome to the family, Cohort 29.

Best always,

Gene Neill '16
2015 EXCEL Workshop Coordinator