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MULTI-FACETED MLK DAY COMMEMORATION PLANNED

PROGRAM FEATURES READINGS, PANEL DISCUSSION AND MUSIC.

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | January 17, 2020*Above: Students march during 2019 MLK Day event**Read time: about 1 min*

With contributions from students, faculty and local leaders, Christopher Newport University will commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, January 20. Classes will not meet from 3-6 p.m. so that all students, faculty and staff can participate in the university event.

At 3 p.m. the university community will gather on the Great Lawn for music and reflection. Participants will then march to the Diamonstein Concert Hall at the Ferguson Center for the Arts for a program designed around the theme "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," the title of an address King delivered in Newport News in 1958.

President Paul Tribble, who as a U.S. senator in 1983 voted to establish MLK Day as a federal holiday, will offer welcoming remarks. The program includes readings and a panel discussion of King's message, moderated by Cynthia Allen-Whyte ('97), president of the Alumni Society and a community leader. Panelists include Hampton City Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jeffery Smith, United Way President and CEO Steve Kast ('87), Christopher Newport history professor Dr. Laura Puaca and Bonner Service Scholar Nick McCormick.

The program will also feature performances by the Christopher Newport Chamber Choir and Student Oratorical Contest winner Ahmed Elzamzami. Newport News Sheriff Gabe Morgan will offer closing remarks. Morgan is a member of the Board of Visitors and chair of the University Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

At 8 p.m. the Honorable John Charles Thomas, retired justice of the Virginia Supreme Court, will address the

university community at a President's Leadership Program event honoring Dr. King.
