



November 30, 2016

Dear NYU Community,

Around this time last year, many members of our community gathered for a [listening session](#) during which dozens of our students shared their disappointment with how they were being treated at NYU. It was a heartbreaking moment for everyone involved, and one that compelled us to take stock of our current environment and renew our commitment to improving our community. The University Senate Executive Committee created the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force](#), which includes students, faculty, and administrators, as an immediate outcome of that session and charged the Task Force with recommending specific actions the University should take to ensure that all members of our community feel like they belong at NYU.

The very first official meeting of this presidency was with the Task Force; in the months since, this issue has never lessened as a priority. We believe that the work of the Task Force is critical to ongoing progress toward our shared goal of producing the structural, institutional, and systemic changes necessary to strengthen the state of equity, diversity, and inclusion at NYU for long into the future.

The Task Force will present an interim report to the University Senate on December 8. In advance of that, we are pleased to report on the Task Force's progress to date and, more importantly, on the concrete actions the University has taken so far in response to the Task Force's recommendations.

Chief Diversity Officer

In response to one of the earliest Task Force recommendations, NYU has commenced a search for a Chief Diversity Officer. This senior-level administrator will report directly to the President, work in close partnership with the Provost, collaborate across schools and units, and participate on the President's Senior Leadership Team. The CDO will lead the development and implementation of a strategic vision and operational plan that systemically advances diversity, equity, and inclusion as core components of the university's mission. The CDO will be supported by human, financial, and technological resources necessary to achieve University goals.

The [search committee](#) includes faculty, students, and administrators whose expertise, experience, and demonstrated commitment to both NYU and to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion make them ideal partners in the search to fill this critical role. Three members of the Task Force serve on the search committee. The bulk of the committee's work will take place this semester, with concluding work in January and February. The committee will nominate a maximum of three finalists to the President. We hope to be able to announce the incumbent as early in the Spring 2017 semester as possible. In the meantime, the committee welcomes

nominations and suggestions from all members of the NYU community via email to dcramer@imsearch.com or to any of the search committee members.

Assessment

The Task Force also recommended that NYU embark on its first-ever climate study, which will help us to gain a better understanding of how our students and employees experience the living, learning, and working environment at NYU, as well as to identify specific actions to address any shortcomings. We have hired a well-regarded consultant, [Rankin & Associates](#), which has worked with nearly 200 campuses and institutions, to assist us with this work. The comprehensive climate study will focus on our primary constituencies - our students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The process of developing the survey will be consultative and transparent; the survey outcomes will be shared broadly and become a foundation upon which NYU will benchmark progress toward making the University a model institution for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Climate Study Working Group (CSWG) Core Team comprises a subcommittee of the Task Force and also includes representatives from the President's Office and other NYU units. The core team had its first meeting on November 8. The 18-month project will commence in earnest in January. Focus groups should occur during the Spring 2017 semester to inform the development of the assessment tool, which will be administered during the Fall 2017 semester. The CSWG will operate under a policy of transparency and will share updates to the entire NYU community at regular intervals throughout the project.

Data Collection, Tracking, and Reporting

The Task Force has encouraged the university to revise methods for collection and sharing data to support the mission of enhancing equity, inclusion, and diversity at NYU. In the [April report to the University Senate](#), the Task Force recommended that the university take affirmative steps to develop systems that ensure the integrity of all identifying information it collects about students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The Task Force further recommended that systems be put in place to make diversity-related data as available as possible, including designating an office responsible for regularly collating, analyzing, and reporting the findings from these data.

The university now has a coordinated process in place to monitor and report on student enrollment data and will share employee data as soon as possible. NYU employees can help to ensure that the University has the most accurate data by visiting the "Personal Information" section of the Workday tab in NYU Home and updating the information therein.

Faculty Hiring

The Task Force has also encouraged the University to strengthen its commitment to increasing faculty diversity, with a focus on faculty from underrepresented groups. Every school has its own practices for hiring. The President and the Provost are in discussions with each school about how to adapt those practices to ensure increased diversity. Moreover, the Provost's Office and the Office of Equal Opportunity offer trainings, toolkits, and other resources to assist search committees in their efforts to yield robust, diverse candidate pools.

Bias Response Line

During last year's [listening session](#), many students noted that they did not know where to turn

when they experienced bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior within the NYU community. The Task Force leadership heard similar criticisms during various listening sessions with employees. As a direct result, NYU has launched a [Bias Response Line](#) (BRL) as a mechanism through which members of our community can register these types of experiences. Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or, if warranted, investigation according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Task Force has offered suggestions on the pilot phase of the BRL roll out. The BRL team will report its initial findings to the Task Force in December and then share its learnings with the wider community, with the goal of fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment at NYU. Please share any suggestions you may have with a [Task Force member](#) or with the BRL team via email to bias.response@nyu.edu.

Affirmative Statement

Our community also called for the development of [an affirmative statement](#) of the University's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion that will serve as a compass as we seek to improve our operations in the future. Several students, faculty, and administrators provided input during the drafting phase of the statement, which the Task Force has refined and its co-chairs have endorsed.

Increased Resources

The University has increased its investment in longstanding programs that have effectively supported equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, including the Academic Achievement Program, the Opportunities Programs, and the Center for Multicultural Education and Programs (CMEP). CMEP recently hired a new Director and Associate Director, and opened its new and expanded space on the 8th floor of Kimmel.

NYU has also increased its investment in successful Provostial programs to widen the pipeline for scholars from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and to support recruiting, retaining, and promoting NYU faculty from under-represented racial and ethnic groups. The Task Force will also help the University think about how to enhance services for persons with disabilities.

The Work Ahead

During the recent [NYU Together](#) event that was part of Inauguration Week activities, the Task Force outlined its current work, which is now focusing on five primary objectives:

- 1) identifying outcomes NYU should be striving to meet when it comes to equity, inclusion, and diversity;
- 2) determining what goals we should set to attain those outcomes;
- 3) determining what programs and policies must be instituted to achieve these goals;
- 4) identifying what resources it will take; and
- 5) producing a final report for the community.

Much more is underway. We look forward to improving efforts to communicate information about all of the good work being done across NYU—by individuals, departments, schools, and units. Task Force members will continue to engage all of the community to help NYU be a truly cosmopolitan intellectual home for all and to strive ever more powerfully for equity.

The changes we seek require leadership and institutional partnerships. We are fortunate to have both. I, Provost Fleming, and the University's Senior Leadership Team have asserted our unwavering commitment to these shared efforts. The President's Office has dedicated both human and financial resources to assist the Task Force.

We all recognize that the work of advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion is ongoing. Human diversity is always evolving, and it is impossible to tap, fully, the true talent that lies in humankind. But we will not stop until we at NYU, as a global university, do everything we can to get closer to that goal. We invite you to participate in this work by sharing your ideas through the newly launched [Task Force IdeaScale website](#).

Sincerely,



Andrew Hamilton
President



Charlton McIlwain and Gabrielle Starr
Task Force Co-Chairs

