



March 30, 2016

Diversity & Inclusion Task Force Members,

As I have met with people across all segments of the University over these past several months, the topic of diversity and inclusion has been a recurring theme. Almost everyone at NYU knows of the Task Force that the Senate has created to address this topic and we all owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude for your willingness to give your time, expertise, and emotional energy to this important task.

Your charge is an expansive one and will involve examining many parts of the university, our current practices, and our ways of thinking in order to develop a set of recommendations, the first of which you will submit to the University Senate next month. As you progress in your work, I want to raise some initial actions that I think we should advance over the near term, and that are based on my conversations with many of you and with other members of our community. My goal in doing so is to ask the Task Force to work closely with the University administration to ensure that our efforts are as effective as possible and to lay a proposed foundation upon which we can all build.

Of course, nothing that is mentioned here is intended to pre-empt any proposals from the Task Force. And, to be sure, what I offer here is a beginning, not a full agenda. I look forward to any and all recommendations; these are simply proposals that I feel are important, structural predicates to a full effort to make NYU a more diverse and inclusive institution.

I believe that the University needs a senior-level professional who will have overall responsibility and accountability for leading efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion affecting all segments of the University. The first step in that direction—something on which my office would work with the Task Force—would be a considered analysis of how best to embed this position in the University structure; the objectives of this role; the qualifications of ideal candidates; and the appropriate resources to support the position. My initial view is that this position should report directly to the President, and I believe the position must have a title that communicates the seriousness of the University's commitment.

At the same time as we pursue a high-level position, I feel we should institute robust mechanisms for assessing how race, diversity, and equity are being experienced and felt at NYU. In order to identify the best policies for NYU, we need to find ways to understand, acknowledge, and address the sometimes painful experiences of members of our community. Again, I hope we can work together to determine how best to progress on this effort.

I expect there will be proposals regarding the use of resources that arise out of your deliberations and from the assessments mentioned above, as well as from the individual who will lead the University's diversity programs. For the time being, the University will be augmenting funding to current programs that I believe are demonstrably beneficial and can be part of an early effort to confront important needs. To that end, we will build on the efforts of Cybele Raver, Vice Provost for Research and Faculty Affairs, to develop the pipeline for scholars from under-represented races and ethnic groups, as well as those of Ulrich Baer, Vice Provost for Faculty, Arts, Humanities and Diversity, to support recruiting, retaining, and promoting NYU faculty from under-represented races and ethnic groups.

Additionally, we have already increased staffing and doubled programmatic funding for the Center for Multicultural Education and Programs (CMEP), led ably by Monroe France, Assistant Vice President for Student Diversity. We are currently interviewing candidates for an Associate Director position and will launch a search for a Director in April. Given these enhancements to CMEP, we are also significantly expanding CMEP's current physical footprint on the 8th floor of Kimmel. We plan to complete the expansion by September 2016.

We will also be consulting the Task Force on the development of a senior-level hire who will address student concerns about cultural competency across the global network.

I am pleased to tell you that we are on track to launch the Diversity & Inclusion hotline next week. This hotline will allow students, faculty, staff, and administrators to report incidents of intolerance wherever they may occur across NYU's global network.

Finally, while actions speak loudest, words and symbols are still important. To that end, I intend to post on the NYU website an affirmative statement of the University's ongoing commitment to enhancing our efforts to promote a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment at NYU, both in NYC and throughout our global network. I want to be sure that every student, faculty member, and employee knows where we stand on this pressing issue of our time.

Again, I emphasize that these are beginning steps, ones on which I hope we can work collaboratively. In addition, we have many faculty whose research and teaching concern these areas. I will continue to rely on their expertise and I hope the Task Force will consult them as you develop your recommendations. I also look forward to working with you on the fuller agenda, which includes discussions about the most appropriate mechanisms to raise sensitivity and awareness throughout the University, as well as the proposals that have been put forth by various stakeholders in our community.

Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,



Andrew Hamilton
President