

**Subject:** Progress Toward a More Inclusive Lawrence

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**From:** Mark Burstein

**To:** STUDENT-L, FACULTY-L, STAFF-L

Dear Lawrence Community,

It has been more than seven weeks since I sent you an email with a Framework for a More Inclusive Lawrence, identifying essential steps we need to take together to become the community we want to be. I want to thank the many Lawrentians who have invested time and energy to enhance and implement this framework. I am writing now to provide an update on our efforts.

Many of the several hundred students, faculty and staff who attended the Campus Community Gathering on January 7 asked, "What does *inclusive* mean in this context?" Creating an inclusive campus requires all of us to strive to sustain a community in which every member is nurtured and valued, no matter their background, and in which discriminatory words and actions are not tolerated. It also means we need to foster a learning environment that supports difference of opinion, of approach, and of experience. It is not about creating a community in which we all agree, but rather an environment in which we can all thrive and learn from our differences.

Change is not easy and it also takes time. The cultural change we need to meet our aspirations for Lawrence will require all of us to play a part and to hold each other accountable. Alumni have reminded me of our focus to combat homophobia in the 1990s. Those who were part of that effort know that it took more than ten years to educate, to share experiences and to learn to embrace difference. Although the work is never complete, climate surveys over the past several years illustrate the progress we have made in this area. That effort could serve as a model for the work we now need to accomplish together to combat racism.

As a community, we established this winter a framework for a more inclusive Lawrence, which focused on the following areas: learning, resources, safety, enhanced diversity and dialogue across difference. So far we have made progress in expanding support, enhancing course requirements and offerings, adding safety-related processes and clarifying policies. We have also begun the process of training ourselves for this work through cultural competency workshops.

Below is a progress report of our efforts to date and highlights of the work to come:

### **Learning**

- Based on a proposal presented last October and unanimously endorsed by the Committee on Curriculum in December, Provost Burrows and I have authorized the Ethnic Studies Steering Board to begin a search for a tenure-line appointment in ethnic studies. Based on the cycle that is common for academic searches, we hope that tenure track candidates can be brought to campus early next academic year with the plan of a new colleague joining us in fall of 2017. In the meantime, to assure that we can begin offering additional courses in ethnic studies at the start of the 2016-17 academic year, ethnic studies faculty have started a search for a one-year adjunct faculty member who can begin teaching this fall. These additional resources will provide significantly more curricular opportunities for students to study race and identity.

In addition, next academic year, Brigetta Miller, associate professor of music education and an enrolled member of the Stockbridge Munsee (Mohican) tribe, will teach two ethnic studies courses

related to Native American identity, history and culture. Also, Thelma Jimenez-Anglada, assistant professor of Spanish, who will join the Lawrence faculty this fall, will teach a course on Latino-Latina literature: *SPAN 466 Latin@ Studies* (in English). Details of these courses will be provided in the future on the class schedule found on the Lawrence website.

- Based on a recommendation from the President's Committee on Diversity Affairs (PCDA), the college engaged [InciteChange!](#), a firm specializing in cultural competency training. Fifty staff members, including the president's cabinet, senior staff and members of the PCDA attended a five-hour training session on cultural competency in early February. Two additional sessions, attended by 70 members of the Lawrence faculty, were held over midterm reading period. The college is in the process of determining how to expand mandatory training to the entire staff and members of the faculty who were unable to attend the initial sessions.
- The university has removed the word "foreign" from the general education language requirement, acknowledging that languages we teach (Spanish, French, German and others) are spoken by linguistic communities within the United States as well as abroad. Students who come to Lawrence speaking a language other than English (Hmong, Navajo, Farsi, etc.) can satisfy the requirement through a variety of options. Associate Dean of the Faculty Bob Williams is clarifying these options in the university catalog and will notify faculty advisors to help guide students through the process.

## Resources

- The search for a vice president for diversity & inclusion and associate dean of the faculty is underway. We have engaged [Carrington & Carrington](#), an executive search firm based in Chicago, to conduct a national search for this new position, which will report to the president and provost jointly. We have also formed a [search committee](#) to work with Carrington & Carrington consisting of three students, two staff members, four faculty members, the provost and the president.
- I am pleased to announce that Pa Lee Moua has been promoted to associate dean of students for diversity. This change in title represents the importance of Associate Dean Moua's work and her leadership of a number of initiatives. A search has begun for a Diversity Center coordinator, reporting to Associate Dean Moua. The position has attracted significant interest; more than 60 applications have been received to-date. The search committee will consist of various Student Affairs staff, the associate dean of students for diversity, the dean of students, and Diversity Center student staff. The position is anticipated to start by the beginning of Spring Term.
- Staff continues to review the needs of, and options for, a relocated Diversity Center. We anticipate identifying this space and conducting a move in order to have a new Diversity Center open by Fall Term 2016. In the meantime, the Diversity Center hours have been expanded. It is now staffed and open from 9 a.m. to midnight.
- Need-based financial aid for study abroad has been increased from a cap of \$5,600 to \$8,000 per term to make it possible for more Lawrence students to study abroad. This amount will be indexed to future comprehensive fee increases. Our goal is to provide full-need financial aid support for study abroad, which will be possible when additional funds are raised.
- A Diversity and Inclusion section of the Lawrence University website has been created and may be found by clicking on [Diversity and Inclusion](#) on the footer of every page of our website. Rather than continuing to rely on campus-wide emails on our diversity and inclusion efforts, future updates will be posted to this section of the website. Many community members have asked what they can do to help with the important work on diversity and inclusion at Lawrence. I would

recommend viewing resource materials, which can be found [here](#). Also, if you want to provide direct feedback, search committee and PCDA members can be found on this website.

## Safety

- We have developed a [Bias-Motivated Incident Report Form](#) that has been added to both the Lawrence website and the LU Safety App. The report itself has been streamlined with the objective of making it easier for students, faculty and staff to report bias-motivated incidents. This is meant to serve as an educational tool to help us better identify and monitor incidents of bias on campus, and to provide a means of discussing and working through incidents. Data from these reports will aid the PCDA and other university entities in appropriately tailoring educational opportunities for the campus community.
- Related to the report form is the Grievance Procedure, which is one means of adjudicating disputes between members of the Lawrence community. Associate Dean of the Faculty Bob Williams has revised the process in an effort to streamline and, hopefully, clarify the procedure. We expect it will be ready for consultation with the Faculty Governance Committee, the full faculty and LUCG by the end of Winter Term. Until this process has been reviewed and revised, the existing procedure will be used as applicable.
- The Faculty Governance Committee has formed a working group of students, faculty and staff led by Peter Gilbert, Alice G. Chapman Director of the Seeley G. Mudd Library, to examine social media practices and to consider steps to assure that members of our community will not be threatened by means of these electronic channels. We expect to hear ideas from this committee in Spring Term.
- Campus Safety has expanded its ability to provide escorts across campus. Security officers have had refresher training regarding responsiveness. An additional officer will be available from 4 p.m. until midnight, five days a week, during the academic year. A second vehicle has been added during this time period to facilitate better escort coverage and response time.
- In the past, we have relied solely on the City of Appleton's video infrastructure to gather data on events on College Avenue. This technology has limited the police department's ability to investigate bias incidents and other safety concerns. We are about to begin a trial program with more advanced technology supplied by our IT department. If this program is successful, we will implement the new technology to improve camera coverage of College Avenue as it runs through the campus.

## Dialogue across Difference

- Staff members from the Office of Student Affairs are finalizing a contract with [Sustained Dialogue](#), a firm that helps higher education institutions to build more cohesive and engaged campus communities. We will begin our collaboration with them during Spring Term.

We plan to hold an expanded version of the January 7<sup>th</sup> community gathering early in Spring Term to build on the success of the first event. I will be in contact by email with more details as the date approaches.

I would like to thank the members of the Lawrence community (faculty, staff, students and alumni) who have invested many hours over the past months to make these initiatives possible. I am particularly thankful to the students of color who spoke to a number of groups earlier this year, and to members of the PCDA who have been involved in all the searches now underway.

I know that substantial change does not happen overnight, or in just a few weeks. Much work lies ahead. We must all remain committed to our efforts to ensure that Lawrence becomes a more welcoming, supportive, and inclusive community for all.

Yours,

Mark

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