

**Subject:** our enduring commitments

**Date:** Monday, November 14, 2016 at 8:58 AM Central Daylight Time

**From:** Mark Burstein

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

Dear Lawrence community,

Many have asked me over the past few days if the election results change the University's aspirations. My answer is no. From our founding as one of the first co-educational colleges in the country, we have been a learning community dedicated to creating an environment where differences can be discussed, studied, and experienced. Since our founding we have striven to create an inclusive community in which all members can thrive no matter who they are or where they come from. This core commitment of our institution and our educational and community efforts to reach this goal have become more vital as trends in society pull in the opposite direction.

One of the saddest aspects of this past election cycle was the tendency to demonize those who hold a different point of view. We, at Lawrence, and at colleges across the country, need to fight this impulse, to work to understand diverse trends in society as we try to ensure an inclusive campus community. Freedom of expression, diversity, and inclusion are core values and remain central commitments of the Board of Trustees and the administration.

I have never been more proud of Lawrence. Over the past few days I have seen and heard of many efforts to come together, to reinforce our learning community, and to ensure that every one of us feels safe and can find a way to engage in this important dialogue. I want to thank all of you who have joined in this essential effort. We must redouble our efforts to renew our community every day, to keep this a place where difference is celebrated and where true learning is possible.

I have faith that we can fight societal trends that splinter communities along lines of individual difference, that we can continue to come together to learn from and celebrate with each other. Please contact me or other colleagues in the administration if you have ideas that can reinforce our efforts.

Good luck with completing the fall term and I look forward to seeing you when you return to campus in January.

Yours,

Mark

**Mark Burstein**

**President, Lawrence University**

Sampson House, 711 E. Boldt Way | Appleton, WI 54911-5699 | Office 920.832.6525