June 3, 2020

Dear Red Raider Family,

I begin this message acknowledging its length, and I ask your patience as I find it necessary to cover many points and steps that must be considered as we move forward. It has taken me several days to gather my thoughts and find an appropriate way to address our community. I write to you today with honesty and candor, reflecting on our individual and collective accountability, giving a glimpse into the work ahead while recognizing the complexities of the time and the issues at hand. I appreciate you allowing me to share this message with you.

On Saturday, May 30, 2020, President Schovanec issued a letter to our Texas Tech University family addressing the brutal murder of Mr. George Floyd in Minnesota. I echo President Schovanec’s commitment, and I am devoted to engaging, supporting, and celebrating our community through diversity, equity, and inclusion. The recent acts of racism and racial violence are extremely upsetting and heighten the concerns of so many in our community. These acts violate everything we stand for as a Red Raider community. As your Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, it is my responsibility to foster community-wide conversations and ensure that we are focused on education and action that creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. Working together over the last 2 years, we have begun to make progress addressing the complex questions of racism, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Working together, we have developed new resources, programs, and events for our campus and community.

We have no intention of walking away from our efforts to move this work forward, and we have not let COVID-19 closures and restrictions put our plans on hold. Here are some of our current actions:

- All new first-year and transfer students will be required to complete a new online training course, Voices for Change, that addresses diversity, identity, bias, and inclusion.
- The required student organization leaders training will include a diversity, equity, and inclusion component.
- The Campus Inclusion Resource Team (CIRT) is active and engaged. The online reporting mechanism is active and is updated as incident reports are received.
- Our admissions team has continued to recruit and enroll more Black/African-American students and students from other underrepresented and minoritized communities. As a result, we have seen a double-digit increase in the number of Black/African-American confirmed students as well as increases in our Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian student groups.
Calling campaigns have been made to diverse student applicants.
A letter from the VP/CDO is sent to every newly admitted student.
A fall recruiting event is being organized for Lubbock students. Plans will be coordinated and adjusted as social distancing and other restrictions related to the pandemic continue.

- **Student Intersectional Leadership Council (SILC)** has developed programs in support of the various cultural heritage months. They are also planning a series of town hall events for the coming year.
- **Raider Education Department (RED)** has been working with the Center for Campus Life and Red Raider Orientation along with various other offices to develop a core set of workshops for students.
- **The Office of the Provost** has created a **Campus Climate Resource page**.
- The Office of Institutional Diversity, the Office of the President, and the Office of the Provost began hosting monthly Faculty Search Committee Training sessions. We have recently completed a shortened video that will serve as an interim option until we can return to in-person meetings.

As we make plans to return to campus, know that the action items we outlined in our town hall meeting in March remain a priority. The following actions will resume upon our return to campus:

- Form the leadership committee that will help plan the development of a new Black Cultural Center at Texas Tech.
- Develop a Texas Tech Inter-Cultural Center in the SUB.
- Increase the display of art and other works by artists from diverse backgrounds, including Black and African American artists.
- Organize events to promote and enhance connections between Texas Tech and the East Lubbock community.

The **Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion** provides a host of programs and services to support students of all ages – from kindergarten through college. The Office of Institutional Diversity has several resources for faculty, staff, and community engagement and we’re developing a number of new online resources that will be available through the DDEI website. In partnership with the Texas Tech Library, we’re developing a virtual book list covering topics such as the history of diverse groups in the U.S., how to be anti-racist, and how to be an ally to minoritized and marginalized communities. We continue to develop new resources, training, and educational experiences that will be shared through our website and in-person when we return to campus.

Over the past several days, I have received many emails, text messages, and phone calls from members of our Texas Tech family and local community members asking what they can do to help. I have heard from individuals who are people of color, and many who are not. The questions have come from individuals who span the religious, gender, social, and political spectrum, including those from urban and rural communities. They are each wondering what they can do to help address and resolve these issues. I tell each of them, there are no easy answers. Today, we have a host of questions, and much work to be done.
Over these last few days, I felt it was important to provide our community with examples that demonstrate the critical work we have already begun as well as the realization that we have more opportunities to work together, and, indeed, collective responsibility in making these necessary changes. This is not the work of one group over another – we must all be active change agents. We must hold ourselves accountable while being educated on the issues and encourage one another to do the same. What impacts one community impacts all. Below I provide a few reflective statements taken from a list developed by a multicultural scholar that was created in 1994 (Raible, John) and revised in 2009.

I share these as a starting point for your consideration:

____ I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.
____ I continually educate myself about racism and multicultural issues.
____ I recognize my own limitations in doing anti-racist work.
____ I raise issues about racism over and over, both in public and in private.
____ I realize "it's not about me" personally. I can be objective and avoid personalizing racial issues as they are raised in conversation.
____ I can identify racism as it is happening.
____ I can strategize and work in coalition with diverse others to advance anti-racist work.
____ I attend to group dynamics to ensure the inclusion of people of color.
____ I support and validate the comments and actions of people of color and other allies (but not in a paternalistic manner).
____ I listen carefully so that I am more likely to understand the needs of people from marginalized groups.
____ I can adopt and articulate a person of color's point of view when it is useful to do so.
____ I can accept leadership from people of color as well as from white people.

The reflective statements below, again excerpted from the same list, identify areas where individuals can explore potential challenges to their understanding or engagement in this work:

____ I am not clear on the words people of color prefer to use to identify themselves.
____ When people of color point out racism as it is happening, I feel personally attacked.
____ I rely on people of color for education about my own (and institutional) racism.
____ It is important to me to point out examples of "reverse racism" when I see them.
____ I speak for people of color and attempt to explain their positions.
____ I view myself as a mediator between people of color and other whites.
____ I see my role as interpreting the behavior of people of color for other whites.
____ I prefer to spend time and energy dealing with my personal feelings and issues rather than moving the anti-racist agenda forward.
____ I intellectualize about the struggle rather than live it daily.
____ I wait for people of color to raise white people's awareness.
I believe that every member of our Texas Tech community has been impacted, to some degree or another, by the events of the past few months. We work to address these issues of equity, fairness, and racism that seem to permeate our society without check or balance, while families face record unemployment and food insecurity. One of my colleagues, a fellow member of our Texas Tech family, lost two dear friends, both African American males, to COVID-19. His 22-year-old African American son now fears for his life when he leaves their home. We've now lived through months of this increased stress, fear, anxiety, racism, and bias. Our fears are compounded by nightly news stories and posts across social media that remind us of the even greater issues we face. There are still many unanswered questions as we make efforts to change our old normal to a new normal where the life, health, safety, and the ability to gather without fear are the norm and not the exception. These issues are enough to leave even the strongest among us exhausted. I acknowledge that is where I am – as an African American woman, married to an African American man, mother of two African American sons and an African American daughter, “Sassy” to a multiracial grandson, and a host of friends and family who come from diverse background, my fears and concerns are more than there is space or time to write here. As Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, I have an opportunity to help educate and support our campus in finding ways to do something to address and mitigate how these factors and stressors impact our community.

We have a responsibility to understand our role in fostering and facilitating a campus community committed to our collective well-being. Education and action are fundamental to this progress. Yesterday we shared the following links via the Texas Tech University social media posts. These links represent a few of our Texas Tech University offices and units that provide educational resources and programs that you might find helpful. Please take a moment to become familiar with them:

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resources at Texas Tech University:

- [Texas Tech University Campus Climate: What it is and why it matters](#)
- [Texas Tech University Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#)
- [Raider Education Department (RED)](#)
- [Student Intersectional Leadership Council (SILC)](#)
- [TTU and Lubbock LGBTQIA Resources](#)
- [Texas Tech University RISE Campus Inclusion Resource Team (CIRT)](#)

Some of you are looking for ways to get involved in your local community. We also provided the links below through the university's social media accounts. This is a list (certainly not comprehensive) of a few community and service organizations that directly impact our greater Lubbock area, local communities, and youth. Service to others is a great way to connect and actively engage in making a difference. Please visit their websites to learn how you can engage with them.

Greater Lubbock Community Organizations:

- [Lubbock Community Engagement Task Force](#)
- [Boys and Girls Club of Lubbock](#)
We must understand the realities that some experience, and make sure no person feels unsafe or targeted or is made to feel less than another simply because of the color of their skin, their country of origin, and so many other identities and characteristics. Together, we can work to make our community a place where diversity is welcome, racist acts are not, the voices and experiences of Black/African American members and those from other minoritized and marginalized groups are heard with compassion and understanding, and those who have power and privilege use them to advance the cause of social justice and equity. As members of our Texas Tech family, we have a responsibility, individually and collectively, to do our part to ensure that no one is left to feel alone or that they need to be anything other than themselves to be valued and cared for.

Enough for now. Let’s get back to the work at hand.

Yours in the work,

Dr. Carol A. Sumner
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer
Texas Tech University