

Dear Campus Community, particularly Participants in the Open Dialogue on Racial Climate:

Last Friday, November 20th, students, staff, faculty, and administrators marched and filled the ballroom at the Student Union for a passionate, illuminating open dialogue on racial climate in our lives and at the U.

We heard many things in Friday's discussion that humbled and deeply moved us. We came away from our dialogue with a sincere recognition of accumulated pain, and a sense of your feeling of the aggressions you have experienced. We now know, in ways that are new and truly saddening, what this has cost you. We want you to know that we do not think racial microaggressions are just an academic term in articles or text books.

We saw and heard you express your experiences in every personal story, example, and request for action. We also know, now, that the consequences of racial microaggressions are racial battle fatigue, as articulated in the research of one of our own faculty colleagues. We must continue to become better educated on how the history of institutionalized privilege, indeed our own blind spots, perpetuates injustice. With your help, we are ready to take quick action.

We also heard that we must accelerate change at the U, in order to address injustices, create a stronger, better university, and foster a community that is truly welcoming to students, faculty and staff from all backgrounds.

In enacting change, we must earn, not assume, your trust. We pledge to do so in ways that will be meaningful. We will begin by examining our own privilege. There will be no "blue-ribbon" task forces convened to investigate if racism is real. That would be disingenuous. We already know the sources of your frustrations. We will instead begin to make additional real changes that will come from the best advice and leadership—students, faculty, administrators, staff—to shift the center of this University to one that is more racially inclusive and just.

May this past Friday mark a turning point for all of us and for the University. In the coming days, reflecting on and moving on the things you said to us, we will share—after consultation with student leaders—the next concrete steps we will take.

We know these actions will create a better university for all of our students.

Thank you for all that you risked—again—to be heard, to make this hearing matter.

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