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**Subject:** Truth and Reconciliation at Lawrence University

Dear Lawrentians,

Welcome to the Fall 2018 term! The first couple of weeks on campus is an exciting time that affords us the pleasure of reuniting with old friends and making new ones. It is also the time for us to take up, in earnest, the task of ensuring that Lawrence is an inclusive living/learning environment. This means that everyone can find a place to belong and has the support they need to reach their unique potential. To this end, we are embarking on a restorative process examining the changing dynamics of our institutional engagement with diversity, both contemporary and historic. The process will entail identifying points of cultural conflict, pain and struggle that have impeded the intellectual, social and professional development of members of our community. We will work to acknowledge, without blame, the complex history of diversity on campus and continue a process of healing from the extraordinary divisiveness that has become the norm over the past few years in U.S. society and on college campuses.

This campus based process will differ from those undertaken by nation states. Instead of uncovering atrocities such as genocide, we will be discovering problems that suggest changes in university practices and personal habits that will allow us to be more authentically inclusive. Consider for example the fact that Lawrence University was founded as a co-ed institution in 1847, a time when few colleges educated men and women together. In that way, from it's beginning, Lawrence advanced the cause of gender equity. However despite this fact, today only about 30% of full professors are women. In terms of ethnicity, we are proud to acknowledge the fact that we had our first African-American and Native American graduates in the 1800's. None-the-less, currently we have students of color and employees who feel they don't belong because of racism. We will use the information gathered from this process to inform our ongoing efforts to chart a better course together. This initiative is called **Truth and Reconciliation at Lawrence: Enhancing trust, empathy and learning on campus.**

Although we will have a number of structured activities planned to guide us in our truth-seeking, **you can begin this process on your own today.** This can be accomplished without attending a program or committing much additional time. You can begin this process simply by listening to others; that is actively listening to them. Often when we communicate, what we consider listening is in fact attending to others just enough to formulate a response in order to make our point. But what I am asking you to do is listen with the sole purpose of understanding what the person you are speaking with really means to say, not to make your point, change their mind or win a debate. While you might be confronted with some things that are difficult to hear and that clash with your current world view, you will also find moments of connection, shared positive emotions, in which you clearly see your common humanity.

These "micro-moments of connection" are what Barbara Fredrickson, the Kenyan Distinguish Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill calls love. And with practice we can strengthen our ability to experience shared positive emotions such as empathy, love and compassion. Research suggests that this not only benefits us in the moment but

increases our capacity to balance equally valid negative emotions. In fact, it seems that expanding our capacity to co-experience these positive emotions allows us to work with others creatively to bring about positive systemic change without burning ourselves out. This is why 'loving large at Lawrence' is critical. So I encourage you to start your truth-seeking today by inviting people to be part of conversations in which your only goal is to understand.

We will officially kick-off our Truth and Reconciliation at Lawrence initiative with a discussion of the results of the comprehensive campus climate survey conducted Spring term of 2018 during two town hall meetings. **Both Campus Climate Town Halls will take place in the Warch Center Cinema. The first will be held on September 20, 2018 at 11:00am-12:30. The second will be held on September 25 at 7:00pm-8:30.**

Another way to help ensure that we are an inclusive community to attend Advanced Upstander Training. This is an interactive workshop that provides you with the skills you need to safely interrupt situations of harassment, bullying or other forms of bias when you are a witness to such behavior. **Advanced Upstander Training will take place September 19 in the Warch Center Esch Hurvis Studio at 1:00pm-5:00pm.**

We are also continuing our Cultural Competency Lecture Series. It begins with a lecture by Jesus Smith, assistant professor of Ethnic studies entitled, **Cultural Appropriations, What Is or Isn't: Understanding the complexities around race, culture and consumption on September 25 from 11:15-12:15 in the Warch Campus Center Esch Hurvis Room.** Look for a Office of Diversity and Inclusion Calendar of Events later this week for more ways to get involved with this work. You can find additional information about these and other programs on our website and Facebook page.

I would also like to make you aware of a staff change. Kim Jones recently resigned her position as Title IX Coordinator. We are currently conducting a national search for a new 12 month, full-time coordinator. While the search is underway, Emily Bowles will serve in the interim role. Along with a number of academic positions, Emily has been an instructor of Gender Studies and English at Lawrence. She has also worked at a sexual assault crisis center. Dr. Bowles has a Ph.D. from Emory University in English with a certificate in Women's Studies. The Title IX office also has a new location, 101 Brokaw Hall.

In conclusion I would like to wish you much academic success and love in the coming term. And I leave you with one of my favorite quotes by Herman Hesse to help you achieve this. "It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him [her, them] for what he is."

Sincerely,

Kimberly Barrett, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion  
and Associate Dean of the Faculty

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