

Subject: Toward a More Inclusive Lawrence

Date: Wednesday, November 25, 2015 at 2:59:43 PM Central Standard Time

From: Mark Burstein

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

Dear Lawrence Community,

When I interviewed to be president four years ago, what struck me most about Lawrence were the strong connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Every interaction displayed a common purpose and a shared vision of our University. Encountering a community driven by this impulse, to connect with and to support one another, to consider the University first, made my decision to join Lawrence a simple one. Events over this past week have further highlighted the importance of working together to make Lawrence a more welcoming and supportive community in which all students can thrive.

It is clear we have work to do to become the inclusive community we aspire to be. By the beginning of winter term the administration will offer a response to the requests submitted to Dean Lauderdale and me. I hope the actions we take will provide more opportunity for all of us to better understand central questions around race, identity, and the searing impact of racism. I also believe we must continue to take steps to ensure that all students, faculty and staff at Lawrence can thrive and feel at home on campus and in Appleton. Recent events have convinced many members of our community who spoke with me that these steps must be taken.

I believe we can restore the bonds that connect us as a community of learning and exploration. Freedom of inquiry and expression forms the bedrock of our education; it prepares Lawrentians for success in the greater world. As we strive to become a more inclusive community, in which respect for difference is the norm, we also need to ensure that different points of view and interests can be shared and discussed. I believe we have the will and the ability to sustain such a learning community if we work together.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and a restful break. Over the next few weeks members of the administration and I will work to develop ways for us to continue to make progress toward our goal of creating a better Lawrence. I look forward to the start of Winter Term when we can pick up this community conversation and take up this vital work together.

Yours,

Mark

Mark Burstein
President, Lawrence University