

Dear Members of the Lehigh Community:

As many of you may be aware, Lehigh University was the subject of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that was prompted by a complaint filed with OCR earlier this year. The complaint alleged that Lehigh permitted a racially hostile environment to exist on its campus by not appropriately responding to incidents of harassment based on race. Since the filing of the complaint, the University has cooperated fully with OCR's investigation, providing all requested information to demonstrate the University's legal compliance with regulations enforced by OCR and expressing its willingness to resolve the complaint.

Today the University entered into a Voluntary Resolution Agreement with OCR. The Agreement can be read in its entirety here at:

http://www.lehigh.edu/~inis/diversity/Voluntary_Resolution_Agreement_Lehigh_ Univ.-9-26-14.pdf

As stated in the Agreement, there was no finding by OCR of any violation by the University of any regulations enforced by OCR. While this Agreement resolves the past complaint, we remain steadfastly committed to improving Lehigh's campus climate and ensuring that our community is free of harassment or discrimination. We have welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership with OCR to learn how we can take actions to make our campus inclusive and in full compliance with the laws prohibiting harassment and discrimination. The Voluntary Resolution Agreement lays out a number of actions Lehigh agrees to take as a means for us to continue and strengthen these efforts.

OCR is responsible for enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. OCR's investigation included the review of the University's response to the egging and painting of racist language at the UMOJA House last November and a review of the University's policies, procedures, and programs regarding how the University addresses complaints of harassment or discrimination and how we seek to educate our community to prevent such incidents.

The Voluntary Resolution Agreement between the University and OCR sets forth a number of steps and the University agrees to implement these, many of which focus on training and education. The agreed measures would be fully addressed and implemented beginning this academic year and include the following:

- An anti-discrimination statement issued to all students that underscores the University's commitment to an environment that does not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin. The statement will be posted in prominent locations and published on Lehigh's website.
- Revision of the University's Harassment Policy, which will continue to include a prohibition against, and procedures for addressing racial harassment, as well as other forms of harassment as currently addressed in the University's policy. The policy will

include prohibitions of the harassment of students by other students and the harassment of students by faculty, administrators and staff. The revised policy will outline specific steps to be taken in response to complaints of harassment.

- Training on racial harassment that will be provided to all faculty, administrators and University personnel charged with supervising students. The training will specifically address the responsibility to report incidents of possible harassment, reporting procedures, and instruction on how to recognize, prevent and address harassment.
- A series of student-focused remedies for racial harassment that will include a committee – which will be the Council for Equity and Community – to provide a forum for discussing matters concerning discrimination or harassment, increasing student awareness, and suggesting improvements to increase the effectiveness of the University's programs.
- Maintenance of data, and a period of annual reporting of data to OCR, that will include reports on incidents involving allegations of discrimination and harassment, action steps taken in response, documentation of disciplinary sanctions and remedial efforts, and listings of preventive actions.

From the outset, Lehigh pledged its full cooperation with OCR's investigation and we have – and will continue to – work toward a goal of making the University a more diverse, welcoming and inclusive living, learning and working community.

Members of the Lehigh community – students, faculty and staff – have played an important role in pointing out how we need to improve. Many of our actions have built upon and addressed issues raised by members of our community.

We have also expressed our realization that this journey and this work is never finished, and will require constant vigilance, commitment and cooperation among everyone in our community – students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners and supporters – to be certain that we continue to evolve and to embrace the values of inclusion and respect for all as stated in [The Principles of Our Equitable Community](#).

This past year has been one of notable progress among groups like the restructured and re-energized Council for Equity and Community (CEC), and programs such as the Summer Scholars Institute, which debuted this past July to help first-generation students succeed at Lehigh. We recently dedicated a renovated UMOJA House, which is already offering enriching and engaging programming for the entire campus. More than 500 members of the Lehigh community recently attended diversity and inclusion workshops hosted by the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble (C.I.T.E.), and many more events, programs and projects are planned for this academic year.

As an institution of higher learning, we are in a unique position and have a valuable opportunity to maximize these moments for reflection and critical examination, for candid dialogue and for thoughtful and effective action.

The Agreement we have entered with OCR will build on our momentum, help us sustain our progress and will no doubt lead to a better Lehigh for all of us.

Sincerely,

Kevin Clayton '84, '13P
Interim President

Patrick V. Farrell
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs