

Update To Campus on the OCR Voluntary Resolution Agreement
January 26, 2015

Dear Members of the Lehigh Community:

In late September, we shared information about the Voluntary Resolution Agreement between the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and Lehigh University. As noted in our campus message to announce this agreement, the agreement reflects Lehigh's commitment to improve our campus climate and work toward a campus community that is free from harassment and discrimination. We are making significant progress on a number of key commitments of our agreement and we wanted to update you on this activity:

- **Equal Opportunity Compliance Coordinator Position:** We are happy to report that we have filled this newly created position. Karen A. Salvemini, Esq., officially joins Lehigh today, and will be responsible for coordinating the University's efforts and initiatives to ensure compliance with all equal opportunity laws, as well as engaging the campus community in educational initiatives and implementation of best practices in the reporting and response to incidents of discrimination and harassment. A magna cum laude graduate of Widener University School of Law and DeSales University, Karen is a former associate of the Rhoads & Sinon law firm in Harrisburg, where she gained significant experience in civil litigation and equal opportunity compliance. As part of the staff of the Office of General Counsel, she will be the university's primary point of contact for all equal opportunity compliance issues, including bias response incidents. Although creating this position was not required by our agreement with the Office for Civil Rights, we are confident it will be an important element of our compliance and campus climate initiatives.
- **Education & Training on racial harassment (including required online training):** An online training tool is now available to all students, faculty and staff, which will help educate members of the campus community about all forms of harassment. This builds on our existing efforts to familiarize various groups and departments on campus with the University's Harassment Policy through direct presentations. Over the past few months, more than 30 in-person presentations on harassment and/or gender violence have been made to more than 1,000 individuals, including faculty, staff and students. All of you received an email in mid-December that included specific information about the online tool that will expand this training to everyone at Lehigh. Please go to [Online Harassment Training](#) for additional information, including registration instructions and answers to frequently asked questions about the online tool. We expect that all faculty, staff and students will complete the online training by March 1, 2015.
- **Revision of the University's Harassment Policy:** A committed group of more than 20 faculty, staff and students has been formed to review and revise our current policy. The group had two very productive meetings in November and December and will continue their work in the spring semester. The revised policy will outline specific steps to be taken in response to complaints of harassment. We will provide members of the community with an opportunity to review and comment on the revised policy before it is adopted by the Board of Trustees.
- **An anti-discrimination statement:** A statement will be issued to all students that underscores the University's commitment to an environment that does not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment

based on age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital or familial status, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The statement will align with the revised university harassment policy and will be shared on the university's website and in prominent locations across campus.

- A series of student-focused remedies to prevent and eliminate racial harassment: This work will involve Lehigh's Council for Equity and Community (CEC), which will continue to be fully engaged in these efforts. Members of the committee – which include faculty, staff and students – will further the substantial progress made over the past year. Their efforts include education and programming, fostering dialogue, training and regular communications to campus. The CEC will also serve in an advisory role to review policies proposed for the Lehigh community, and will reach out to faculty and students to incorporate their input and suggestions as we move forward.
- Maintenance of data, and a period of annual reporting of data to OCR: We are currently tracking incidents of harassment and discrimination across campus so that we are able to determine patterns and trends from incidents that may arise and develop programming and additional initiatives to address them. The new Equal Opportunity Compliance Coordinator will continue these efforts.

An additional element of our agreement with OCR is the creation of a climate survey, which we will administer annually. The last survey that involved all students, faculty and staff was conducted in 2007. Since 2007, the university has also annually continued to survey graduating students on climate issues and analyze this data. Some of the very candid comments offered by survey respondents have informed our understanding of the key issues involved, as well as the policy decisions we are making to address them. Examples of these include an institutional focus on retention of under-represented student populations, and the creation of programs such as Academic Transitions, the Summer Aid Program, and the more recent Summer Scholars Program, which helped incoming students develop relationships with supportive administrators and better prepare for Lehigh's rigorous academic environment.

A number of Lehigh faculty and staff with research expertise in this area will work on creating the campus climate survey, which will be administered during 2015. After completion of the survey design, but before its use, OCR will need to review and approve the survey. We want to be certain we can maximize this opportunity to gain valuable input from all students, faculty and staff.

Although much work has been done, there is much more to do. We are encouraged by the level of commitment on the part of all university constituencies, from students, staff and faculty, administration, and the Board of Trustees. This degree of engagement has been extraordinary and, we believe, unprecedented in Lehigh's history. We invite you to stay informed on our university-wide progress by visiting the redesigned Diversity and Inclusion website at www.lehigh.edu/diversity, where you can also learn more about numerous opportunities for engagement.

We will keep you apprised of developments related to our OCR agreement in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Clayton '84, '13P
Interim President

Patrick V. Farrell
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs