**Sampling of Presidential Communications on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**May 2018**

Dear Roger Williams University community,

We are at the end of our year-long series “Talking About Race, Gender and Power,” and our first-ever Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Ame O. Lambert, is approaching the end of her first full year on the job. But while we should appreciate the challenging and compelling conversations we’ve been having on campus, we should recognize that today we find ourselves not at an end point, but at a beginning.

As a University, we are beginning to act on one of our core values – to be inclusive; to welcome and value all expressions of diversity and identity; to actively promote inclusion and prepare students to challenge societal norms and to thrive in a culturally diverse and global society.

We are beginning to see that value reflected in the incoming class now taking shape for the fall semester: Of the first-year students who’ve made deposits, 17 percent are students of color – up from 12 percent at this point last year. That change reflects a 75 percent increase in the number of enrolling black/African-American students and a 28 percent increase in enrolling Hispanic/Latinx students.

We are beginning to act on the valuable insights and concrete proposals that surfaced on Jan. 23 when more than 300 RWU students, faculty and staff joined members of the greater community for “Thriving RWU 2030: A Summit on Diversity and Inclusion.” Many of those insights are reflected in the action plans that five task forces are now working on, charting a course for turning ideas and aspirations into equity and reality.

We are beginning to reflect and respond to the inspirational and thought-provoking speakers who came to campus over the past year – including “Me Too” movement founder Tarana Burke, anti-racist scholars Ibram Kendi and Robin DiAngelo, and Beverly Daniel Tatum, author of “ ‘Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?’ and Other Conversations about Race.” The School of Law hosted several unforgettable speakers, including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stanford Law Professor Richard Thompson Ford.

We are beginning to recognize that we are not immune to the sexism and sexual harassment, the transphobia and homophobia, the racism and xenophobia, the anti-Semitism and bigotry that we’ve witnessed all too often on the national stage. We are grateful to voices across campus that have helped us reflect on our own policies, practices and shortcomings. And we invite you to continue to engage.

We are beginning to create a broad range of new programs and initiatives, such as a student initiated black Living Learning Community that has already attracted 14 members, a queer employee/student mentoring program and a faculty/staff mentoring program for high-potential students who could benefit from additional support. Those new beginnings include the hiring of our first LGBTQ coordinator and the opening of the Gender and Sexuality Center, the first Lavender Graduation celebrating the success of LGBTQ students, the School of Continuing Studies’ partnership with the first Gateway to College National Network program in Rhode Island, and the start of a “New and Dangerous Ideas” digital magazine, which provides a valuable new forum for social justice issues.

We are beginning to bond and grow through employee affinity groups. For example, our women’s employee affinity group created three caucuses – for women faculty, women in leadership and early-/mid-career women – that have been leading powerful conversations and designing initiatives to empower women across campus. And the Title IX office, women’s collective and fem society are organizing many important events to help us build an equitable, just and safe culture on campus.

We are beginning to include diversity and inclusion in employee orientations, performance reviews and job descriptions.

We are beginning to look for ways to restore an ombudsman position at the University.

We are beginning, in ways large and small, to capitalize on the momentum that faculty, staff and students have built. The accompanying report provides further details, and we encourage you to take a look at what divisions have done over the last year by visiting [www.rwu.edu/go/diversity](http://www.rwu.edu/go/diversity). We also encourage you to share your own diversity activities so we have a repository of what is happening across campus.

As Dr. Lambert notes, “The work of diversity, equity and inclusion is complex, hard, long-term and nonlinear. And the cumulative impact or progress is often only recognized by stepping out and looking back.”

At the same time, she says she is incredibly grateful to the partners across campus who work hard on a daily basis to ensure that we are an equitable institution and that students and colleagues from all backgrounds are supported. “I look forward to continuing to work together to make our RWU vision a reality,” she says. “Onward!”

Onward, indeed.

We are listening. We are working. We are just beginning.

Donald J. Farish,

President

**February, 2019**

To our Campus Community:

Roger Williams University recognizes that it would not be the institution it is now and cannot be the institution it aspires to be without the significant contributions of women employees. We are committed to recognizing, supporting and empowering the amazing women of our campus community.

Please find below information on several initiatives that have been implemented or are in progress to support this goal.

**Recognition:**

Please save the date for the RWU Celebration of Women event: April 2nd, 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Sailing Center

**Community, development, support and advocacy**

The RWU Women’s Affinity Group supports women on campus through collaboration, networking, and professional development.  We recognize that women’s experiences on campus vary and seek to promote the satisfaction and productivity of women employees from across all sectors of the institution.

During the 2018-19 academic year, the Women’s Affinity Group has:

       Organized monthly brown-bag meetings to discuss campus-wide initiatives

       Established caucus groups, designed to address topics uniquely experienced by particular groups of women on campus. (Existing caucus groups are: Women Faculty, Early-Mid Career Professionals, and Women in Senior Management)

       Hosted the Advancing Women Leaders/RWU Women’s Leadership Institute (September, 2018) sponsored by the Offices of the President, Provost and Executive Vice President

       Sponsored the Women’s Professional Development Series

* Designed a Women’s Mentoring Program, to be launched this spring. Please register by February 25 to be involved in the mentoring program. The affinity group aspires to strengthen and grow their community. All women are invited to attend and participate in the Women’s Affinity Group monthly meetings and events explore the women’s caucus groups, if applicable to them.

**Policies**

In support of whole and complex lives, RWU is proud to have become a flexible workplace with policies that support remote working and alternate work schedules. While a flexible workplace supports the lives and needs of all employees, research tells us that women disproportionately shoulder care-giving responsibilities and a flexible workplace is a best practice for supporting the retention and advancement of women.

**Learning and Development**

Please stay tuned for information about conversations related to creating an inclusive culture and being an inclusive manager that will be forthcoming this spring and summer.

**Recruitment**

Representation matters. The research is clear that the presence of women impacts the organizational bottom line, especially when women are represented in leadership ranks. We have instituted unconscious bias training for search committees and launched an equity ambassador program. While there is a lot more work to do, the last few years have seen progress. Forty percent of Cabinet Vice Presidents, 50 percent of Deans and 60 percent of Assistant/Associate Vice Presidents are women.

The research is clear that the support and satisfaction of women in the workplace is contingent upon the institutional climate as a whole. We are committed to ensuring that our climate is supportive and empowering for all women and we need support from stakeholders across our campus to do this. Area supervisors and colleagues are urged to support participation in Women’s Affinity Group meetings and sponsored events as well as flexible work schedules when possible. We know some events occur during regular business hours and encourage adaptability. Your support is fostering a more positive, inclusive campus for everyone and promoting more engaged and productive employees.

Sincerely,

Andy Workman

Interim President

Jerry Williams

Executive Vice President & Sponsor of the Women’s Affinity group

Ame Lambert

Vice President for Equity & Inclusion/CDO

**Providence Journal: My Turn: By Ioannis (Yannis) Miaoulis**

Posted Jun 15, 2019 at 12:55 AM

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   This spring, the students crossing graduation stages throughout Rhode Island and beyond are stepping into a world of rapid demographic and technological change that fundamentally has altered organizations and the nature of work itself. At the same time, they inherit a global society with pressing environmental and cultural challenges and stubborn inequities.

These realities are at the forefront of my mind as I prepare to assume the presidency at Roger Williams University later this summer. If our institution is to live up to its mission of building the university the world needs now, we must work with partners in business, government, and community organizations to support and develop the next generation of leaders, a group that will be more diverse and inclusive than any that has come before.

This begins with a commitment to developing an entirely new kind of talent pipeline, one that includes groups historically underrepresented in education and in workplace leadership: women, people of color, first generation learners and workers, immigrants, and other minoritized people. For too long, too many have faced barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential, depriving the community of the full benefit of their contributions at huge cost to our economies and our collective quality of life.

I have seen these barriers firsthand, and I have committed my career to advancing underrepresented people. During my tenure as dean of Tufts University’s School of Engineering, we increased the number of female undergraduates by 30 percent and also significantly boosted the proportion of female faculty members to 25 percent. But there is still much work to be done.

A recent report from McKinsey & Co. and LeanIn.org titled, “Women in the Workplace 2018,” found that while women are earning more bachelor’s degrees than men and are asking for promotions and negotiating salaries at the same rate, “The proportion of women at every level in corporate America has hardly changed. Progress isn’t just slow. It’s stalled.” Further, a striking statistic in the report is that the number of women in management will only grow one percentage point in 10 years if we don’t take action. The narrative and progress for people of color, and more acutely women of color, is even more dismal. This is why we must partner to reimagine and grow the talent pipeline and create new pathways and training for women and minoritized populations.

RWU is poised to launch an equity action plan focused on dramatically increasing access to those who have been historically excluded from higher education and from our campus. It is a critical first step. However, we must engage the communities beyond our walls and go well beyond just educating for technical competence. To create the workplaces the world needs now, we must share a commitment to develop the socio-emotional competence, and provide the education and mentoring needed to help emerging professionals to navigate in organizations and roles where they are underrepresented.

To thrive in a dynamic, evolving world, we must reimagine our institutions so they look like the world, modeling and providing an environment of what employers need and being innovative and responsive to the true macrocosm and dynamics of the changing global workplace. This is what will ensure thriving economies and a high quality of life for all. We cannot achieve this alone. It is in our nature as an institution to work beyond our walls and collaborate with business, government and community organizations to strengthen society through the power of higher education and workforce training. Indeed, our mission of being the University the world needs now compels us to do so.

*Ioannis (Yannis) Miaoulis is the president-designate at Roger Williams University. He is a former dean of the Tufts University School of Engineering and former president director of the Museum of Science, in Boston.*