In recent weeks there have been important discussions about race and diversity, here on campus and around the nation. The diversity and inclusion issues we face as a society are significant, with multiple, deep, historical roots that reach into the present. They are important for every institution to address, including universities. For our University, inclusion has an additional fundamental significance because of our commitment to a culture of rigorous and open inquiry, which demands a rich mix of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. It is crucial that we continue to cultivate a campus climate that welcomes talented faculty, students, and staff of all backgrounds, and that we attack bias, discrimination, and harassment that can threaten that culture and the individuals within it.

This fall, several groups of faculty and students have raised issues about various aspects of climate on campus and called for a variety of actions to address climate issues and promote inclusion. We have considered those statements, and believe the best immediate way to move forward is to take three initial steps, with the expectation that these will inform subsequent activities.

First, we will undertake two campus climate surveys. The first of these will examine the climate with regard to sexual misconduct and sexual assault and will be complete within six months. The second, for which planning has begun, will focus on diversity, inclusion, and the climate for underrepresented groups, and will be completed at the earliest possible date after the first survey. We will work closely with faculty to shape and administer these surveys.

Second, we will convene a Diversity Advisory Council consisting of faculty and students, chaired by Professor Adam Green, reporting to the President and Provost, and coordinating with the Deputy Provost for Research and Minority Issues. This council will advise us on broad approaches to issues of campus climate and specific further steps we can take to increase the diversity of our faculty, students, and staff. It may also make recommendations on programming and educational opportunities. This committee will complement and elevate the ongoing work of the Diversity Leadership Council and many other bodies at the University, College, school, and divisional levels already devoted to promoting diversity and inclusion. The committee will consider diversity broadly, but its first task will be to address concerns about the climate for underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

Third, ongoing attention and discourse about these matters are important and we will sponsor an event early in the Winter Quarter to begin broader discussion of issues related to diversity and inclusion. More information about this event will be available soon. That event will naturally flow into ongoing efforts to provide enhanced opportunities for dialogue and education, beginning each year during Orientation Week for incoming students and continuing through the full cycle of University activities.

These steps represent the next stage in what must be an ongoing effort, and you will hear more steps in months to come. This is an institutional commitment and a responsibility we all share as members of this community, and we thank you for your continuing dedication to these issues.