



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BROWN UNIVERSITY

CHRISTINA H. PAXSON, PRESIDENT

September 29, 2022

Sent via Electronic Mail

Dear Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board,

Thank you for your service on the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board (DIOB) during the 2021-2022 academic year. The DIOB performs an important function in ensuring there is clear and transparent oversight of Brown's efforts to create and sustain a more diverse and inclusive community.

We are writing in response to your annual memo dated May 20, 2022, which we have discussed with Professor Matthew Guterl, chair of the DIOB, over the summer. It is our hope that this response helps inform the work of the DIOB in the coming academic year.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for the preparation of such a thoughtful memo. We were especially pleased that the committee acknowledged the progress that has been made on increasing the fraction of Brown faculty from historically underrepresented groups (HUGs). We are excited to share that, as of this summer, the University achieved the publicly stated goal from 2014 to double the fraction of faculty from HUGs. This accomplishment is the result of deeply collaborative and dedicated efforts from faculty, staff, and administrators, and we are confident that this is an integral step to further enhancing academic excellence at Brown. Although Brown can be proud of this achievement and others, we strongly agree with your assessment that there is much more work to be done, including, but not limited to, improving Brown's ability to retain an increasingly diverse faculty; attract and support HUG medical students and faculty; and address issues pertaining to staff recruitment, retention, and promotion. This moment marks an important opportunity for reflection about the work ahead.

In addition, we want to express our gratitude for your warm welcome of and partnership with Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity Sylvia Carey-Butler who joined Brown in August 2021. As you know, Vice President Carey-Butler leads the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, and oversees Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan implementation, Title IX and gender equity, and more. She has had a terrific first year, and we are excited about her plans, including a new initiative focused on building partnerships with select Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We are also pleased to continue supporting her commitment to report annually on the status of the action steps arising from the Task Force on Anti-Black Racism, which completed its work in 2021.

We want to begin by addressing some of the issues around staff that were highlighted in your memo. We share your appreciation for the substantive progress that multiple administrative offices — working together — have made with respect to data and metrics for diversity and

inclusion goals, and we appreciate the DIOB's adherence to confidentiality on a range of sensitive issues related to reporting on identity and personnel.

There are several staff-focused planning efforts underway, so we thought we would use this memo as an opportunity to provide an overview of these various workstreams. As you may know, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Sarah Latham is chairing the Future of Work steering committee, which is developing the framework, tools, and training programs that administrative units across Brown can use as they implement flexible work arrangements. She is also leading internal planning efforts around the University's compensation philosophy and enhancements to the salary and promotion process.

In addition, and perhaps most relevant to the DIOB, this fiscal year we expect to conduct a University-wide compensation and promotion analysis. This work follows an external compensation and equity analysis, conducted in 2021, of staff pay within grades across race and gender groups at Brown. We noted in the DIOB's memo a concern about variances in data related to pay, though last year's analysis confirmed the absence of any statistically significant differences in compensation across race and gender. Given our commitment to fair, equitable, and competitive compensation, we recognize the importance of updating these analyses and, in particular, assessing whether there is equity in promotion.

Brown is embarking on this necessary and important project to ensure we are able to recruit, retain, and promote staff of all backgrounds and at all levels. As a part of this process, we have asked senior administrators to consult with the DIOB and the Committee on Faculty Equity and Diversity (CFED) in the coming year to ensure these efforts are aligned with existing community conversations on these important issues. It is important to note that while much of the detailed analyses will remain confidential and private due to the nature of personnel records and individual demographic information required under federal reporting obligations, we are committed to being transparent about the results of this work with staff to the extent practicable.

The DIOB also identified an issue around the self-reporting of race and ethnicity by Brown employees. While there are limitations around what the University can do to address this critical gap in data, we will do more to encourage (although not require) employees to voluntarily provide this self-identification information in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs' regulations. During the fall semester, Brown intends to invite all employees, who haven't already done so, to voluntarily self-identify their race, ethnicity, disability and/or veteran status so Brown has a more complete understanding of its employee demographics.

We also want to highlight that there will be a campus-wide climate survey this academic year, in the spring of 2023. Regularly surveying the campus on climate-related issues is a best practice that helps us to better understand and serve members of our community. It is also best practice to select an external firm to implement the survey to build confidence in the confidentiality and integrity of responses. The Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will work with campus partners to hire an external firm to develop and launch the survey, which was last administered in 2019; analyze the results; and communicate key findings to the campus.

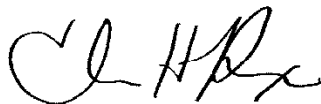
These planning efforts and analyses will require significant attention and resources, but we think it is important that this work happens in parallel. We encourage you to engage Executive Vice President Latham, Vice President Carey-Butler, and others as this work progresses during the academic year.

Given the attention of the DIOB to undergraduate and graduate admissions over the last several years, we want to highlight a critical issue related to admissions that is particularly important this year. As you are likely aware, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide two cases that challenge the use of race and ethnicity as a plus factor in college admissions. In August, Brown signed on to an [amicus brief](#) filed in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of holistic admissions practices that foster diversity, which is critical to our ability to attract and matriculate the most talented students across the world. The cases will be heard on October 31, 2022, and the decision is expected to be issued in late June 2023. In the meantime, Eileen Goldgeier, Vice President and General Counsel, is working with the appropriate offices to advise and guide efforts to plan for possible changes in legal requirements for admissions for the College, Graduate School and our professional schools.

Finally, we appreciate your comments on the importance of leadership, particularly in senior administrative appointments, as well as your specific feedback on the presentations of Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity Sylvia Carey-Butler, Vice President for Campus Life Eric Estes, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Sarah Latham, Vice President for Human Resources Marie Williams, and the former Dean of the School of Professional Studies and current Dean of the Faculty Leah VanWey. A commitment to diversity and inclusion is critical to the long-term success and engagement of senior administrators. We have had several significant leadership transitions in recent years and are optimistic about the opportunities for incoming leaders to build on existing efforts to strengthen our culture and community.

Again, we want to thank you for your service and commitment to diversity and inclusion at Brown. Your contributions to the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board are essential to helping the University achieve its diversity and inclusion goals. We look forward to the important progress we will make together in the coming year.

Sincerely,



Christina H. Paxson
President



Richard M. Locke
Provost