



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BROWN UNIVERSITY

CHRISTINA H. PAXSON, PRESIDENT

May 21, 2021

Dear Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board,

Thank you for your service on the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board (DIOB) during the 2020-2021 academic year. The DIOB performs an important function in ensuring 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 4, 2021. It is our hope that our response helps inform the work of the DIOB in the coming academic year.

We also 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 importance of the launch of DIAP Phase II — the second phase of implementing *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University* — which was led by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED), as well as the continued progress that has been made on increasing the fraction of Brown faculty from historically underrepresented groups (HUGs). Although Brown can be proud of these achievements, 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; attracting and supporting HUG medical students and faculty; and addressing issues pertaining to staff recruitment, retention, and promotion.

We want to begin by addressing two action items from DIAP Phase II that were highlighted in your memo. The first concerns diversity in undergraduate admission. As you know, last year we asked the Office of College Admission to develop an internal strategy and plan to attract and recruit a more diverse undergraduate student body, with a focus on increasing applications and yields for African American/Black students. The early indications from acceptances for the Class of 2025 is that the strategy is already proving to be successful. Dean of Admission Logan Powell would be delighted to meet with the DIOB to confidentially review the components of this initiative, as well as provide a progress report based on this year's matriculation data. I'm sure that Dean Powell will be delighted to share final results after the waitlist process has concluded.

The second item from your memo concerns plans articulated in DIAP Phase II to create a working group to develop fine-grained data analyses that provide information on the areas within the University where more attention to compositional diversity and/or climate is needed. Last year, under the direction of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, a postdoctoral scholar began to conduct data analysis on equity and diversity matters. In parallel to these efforts, a working group co-led by OIED and the Office of Institutional Research, has been convened and begun the early work of discussing a strategy to approaching this data work. As noted in the action items in DIAP Phase II, the charge of the working group is to establish a University-level commitment to disaggregate data by race and gender whenever possible and to

design and implement a plan to seek data collection and develop communications on religion, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity. The working group includes representation from a number of key units across campus, and the original goal was to complete their work by the end of this calendar year. Since the Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity plays a major role on this particular action item, the work may extend into early 2022 as the search for a new VP is currently underway. We encourage the DIOB to meet with this group in the fall term to discuss potential areas of analysis.

We appreciate your comments on the importance of leadership, particularly in senior administrative appointments, as well as your specific feedback on the presentations of Dean of the Faculty Kevin McLaughlin, Dean of the College Rashid Zia and Dean of the School of Professional Studies Leah VanWey. We agree that a commitment to diversity and inclusion is critical to the long-term success and engagement of senior administrators.

One point you made in your memo — that it is essential for academic and administrative leaders at Brown to be driven by a genuine intellectual curiosity about diversity and inclusion — is particularly important. Intellectual curiosity is what motivates the desire to understand areas of concern and make constructive changes. As you noted, we have had a number of transitions in senior leadership in the past year and, with the recent announcement of Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration Barbara Chernow's upcoming retirement, we will be filling another role that is critically important to Brown. For these and any future transitions, we will follow your advice and seek leaders who are both committed to *and* curious about diversity and inclusion.

Your memo rightly acknowledges the series of terrible and tragic incidents of the past year that have further raised awareness of the depth and severity of anti-Black racism and anti-Asian hate and violence in the United States. During the extraordinarily challenging circumstances of this year, our community has been committed to actively engaging with these issues with persistence and resolve.

We have explored with persistence and rigor the many ways racism permeates daily life for so many in our country. As you noted in your memo, Associate Professor Andre Willis and Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity Shontay Delaloe co-chaired a Task Force this year that is making recommendations on how Brown can address anti-Black racism. The purview of this Task Force was distinct from, but complementary to, the charge of the DIOB. Although some of the recommendations of the Task Force dovetail with aspects of Phase II of the DIAP, others are stand-alone projects or initiatives. Following consultation with select groups, including the DIOB, the recommendations and the University's response to them will be issued in June. We look forward to informing the DIOB about the implementation of activities arising from the report as the year progresses.

We appreciate your raising concerns about the disturbing increase of violence and hate directed at Asians and Asian-Americans in the United States. This year the University worked to ensure that there were appropriate support and resources for members of these groups as well as educational opportunities for members of community to foster greater understanding. As it pertains to DIAP Phase II, while Asians and Asian-Americans do not fall under the University's

definition of historically underrepresented groups, we recognize that these groups deserve attention in the coming year. We agree that a disaggregated analysis of the experiences of Asian and Asian-American students, faculty and staff is an essential first step, and the working group referenced above has that task within their charge.

While it was not raised in your memo, it's worth noting that the University also continues its efforts to support international students and scholars, as well as engaging with our legislators and educational associations on issues related to immigration and DACA. Addressing issues of accessibility also is a focus of work of OIED, the Division of Campus Life, University Human Resources and other offices at Brown in the year ahead.

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 us achieve our diversity and inclusion goals. We look forward to the important progress we will make together in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. H. Paxson', written in a cursive style.

Christina H. Paxson
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. M. Locke', written in a cursive style.

Richard M. Locke
Provost