

September 3, 2020

TO: The CTX Community

FROM: President Donald Christian

RE: Next Steps in Addressing Racial Equity and Justice

My memo of July 16 outlined a plan by which Concordia University Texas would address the issue of racial equity and justice with a laser-sharp focus on increasing success for students of color at our institution. The initiatives described below outline specific steps we will take to ensure that CTX students of color will retain and graduate at rates equal to all students. As noted in the previous memo, this outcome will take time as we put the necessary initiatives in place that a) align with our overall strategic direction; b) become embedded in the practices of the institution; and c) are monitored against specific measures that lead to the intended results. Let me briefly address each of these items:

- A) **Strategic Planning:** Beginning in October, we will re-launch our strategic planning for 2026, working with the Balanced Scorecard Institute to create a robust and executable plan. We will align our work on racial equity and justice within the overall themes, results, and strategic objectives for the institution. This will ensure that the University's emphasis on racial equity and justice receives the resources and attention needed over the next five years.
- B) **Embedded Practices:** Because much of what needs to be accomplished will result from repeated practices over time, the initiatives noted below will include a series of ongoing activities. Creating policies, practices, and continuous accountability will take committed leadership, external expertise, and execution discipline with a focus toward specific measures.
- C) **Measurable results:** Creating the right measures by which we will hold ourselves accountable is a critical part of the strategic planning process. The execution and reporting cycle used in our current strategic plan will continue to be used in this effort.

I also know how important it is for our employees of color to know that Concordia is supporting them and providing an environment in which they can thrive and fully live out their vocations. To that end, we will also measure employee satisfaction over time with the intended outcome of assuring that a majority of employees of color will be satisfied with the campus cultural climate as it relates to racial equity and justice in particular.

The first two initiatives launching immediately include **Leadership Training** and **Policy Review, Revision and Development**. These were chosen for several reasons: a) helping our leadership recognize, understand and actively work to challenge their biases will support the work of other initiatives; b) policy work will create the foundation upon which other initiatives can be launched and sustained; and c) both of these initiatives can operate independently outside of the strategic planning process for 2026. I have asked Lynette Gillis to own the Leadership initiative and Dan Gregory to own the Policy initiative. Each of them will choose a co-owner who will assist them in their work. We have also talked with both Jelani Consulting, LLC and the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity who will come alongside and provide expertise and training for these initiatives.

My promise to you includes several items:

- A commitment to execution of this plan. I promised our community five years ago that we would build a strong foundation that would support us long into the future. I believe we have done that and can now build on that foundation with our next strategic plan, including this specific objective.
- A commitment to regular reporting and updates. Just as we have consistently shared our strategic plan results, this objective will receive the same type of attention. Results will be available on Tornado Times and shared through memos from my office.
- A commitment to transparency. Throughout my presidency, I have worked to create a culture of candor, whether it be sharing the results of our culture survey, quarterly financial updates, or intentional listening sessions across the university. This will be no different as we all engage in the hard work of ensuring racial equity and justice for all.

Finally, I would not have been able to consider or launch this objective without the company of good people and good books. Dr. Elizabeth Medina will be joining me as Co-Chair of this objective. Her expertise and passion in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion is paramount toward making this a reality. Dr. Kristi Kirk will be joining me in receiving personal coaching in the area of bias recognition and leading an organization through change in this area. Reading books such as *White Fragility*, *How to Be an Antiracist*, the novel *Kindred*, and our common reader *A Dream Called Home* all have shaped my thinking and commitment to this cause. We can – and will – be a place where ALL students are not only welcome, but also succeed.

## **INITIATIVES:**

1. **Leadership Training:** CTX leadership is engaged in ongoing, intentional training that addresses racial diversity, equity, and inclusion.  
GOAL: All individuals serving in leadership roles recognize and acknowledge their racial biases and are empowered and equipped to address issues of racial inequity
2. **Data-Driven Decisions:** CTX collects, identifies, receives, and uses data to make decisions that impact success and equity for students of color  
GOAL: A process is in place that ensures accurate data is regularly received and reviewed in a systematic manner; interventions are developed and implemented to create effective pathways to success for students of color
3. **Policy Review, Revision, and Development:** CTX policies and associated practices will support the intentional removal of barriers and increased access to services and resources for students and employees of color  
GOAL: Students and employees will indicate a level of overall satisfaction with institutional policies and practices focused on creating a more racially diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for students, staff, and faculty of color

4. **Intentional Curriculum:** The CTX curriculum engages students in content, thought, and discussion on racial diversity, equity and inclusion in an intentional and ongoing manner, equipping graduates with the tools and skills to create a more just society  
GOAL: Students will graduate with the ability to articulate a clear awareness and understanding of racial equity and justice, what they believe about racial equity and justice, and how these beliefs can lead to action throughout their lives
5. **Public Dialogue:** The CTX community engages in regular dialogue on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. This dialogue is known for its honesty and openness while creating a space for all voices to be heard.  
GOAL: Graduates of the institution will have the ability to engage in discussion and dialogue around racial equity and justice
6. **Employee Recruitment and Retention:** CTX creates and implements policies and practices that provide greater opportunity to employ and retain people of color  
GOAL: As Concordia's employees more fully reflect its student population, students of color will be more engaged in the life of the campus and feel greater affinity and safety
7. **Ongoing Education and Training:** CTX has a greater capacity to support success for students of color by developing individual and departmental understanding of racial equity and justice  
GOAL: Increasing numbers of employees and students will have the tools and skills to engage in ways that positively impact racial diversity, equity, and inclusion across the institution