

Statement from Dean Ira Solomon regarding our commitment to inclusivity

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Ira Solomon

Over the past weeks and months, the Freeman School has been carefully planning a return to campus that prioritizes the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff. You will see many adjustments within our buildings, including de-densification of seating areas, new cleaning and sanitizing procedures, protective shields, and plentiful hand sanitizer stations. You will also see the results of new initiatives, including a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art update to classroom teaching

technologies, to provide an engaging, interactive experience for all Freeman students, whether students are in the classroom with the instructor on any given day, or learning from an alternate location.

However, ensuring the well-being of our community goes beyond measures aimed at safeguards against COVID-19. We are also dedicated to undertaking measures to ensure our Freeman School is a welcoming and inclusive environment for all, especially students of color. Tulane has committed to this process through a variety of new initiatives, including a broad-based racial equity education program for students, faculty and staff; new funding to support efforts serving marginalized groups on campus and leaders on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; community discussion forums; a focus on recruitment and retention of employees of color; and a renamed and reimagined Presidential Commission focused on supporting diversity and improving the campus climate and resources for underserved communities at Tulane.

The Freeman School is strongly supportive of these Tulane initiatives to take action to uplift our students of color, and is examining ways we can take action within our Freeman community. Several initiatives are being considered now and we are hopeful that we can announce them within the next few weeks and months. As one example, I am appointing a task force charged with reviewing the art in our two buildings- both on the uptown campus and our Central Business District facility. You may ask-- Why art? The answer is that art is a very powerful visible signal of an organization's values. This task force will review the art currently on display and make recommendations about a process for assuring that that the art in our buildings represents the diverse and inclusive community we are, and strive to be. This is but one, initial step to ensure our Freeman School learning environment inspires pride in all of our students, faculty and staff. Going forward, you can expect additional Freeman initiatives aimed at increasing equity, inclusion and diversity at our School.

Together with Tulane, the Freeman School is committed to making our University an inclusive and supportive home for all. We stand fully beside our students, faculty and staff of color, and look forward to welcoming them back to a community dedicated to building a caring, equitable environment for all.

-Ira Solomon, dean