Dear Campus:

We extend our warmest welcome to all of you as you prepare to join us at the University of Utah or return to campus after the summer break.

Following up on the message sent last week about events across our country and here at the U, we want to remind you we value an inclusive campus and want all in our community to feel welcome here. Our institution is dedicated to free exploration and exchange of ideas, and in that process, we expect everyone to be treated with respect and dignity.

There is simply no place for violence or hate on this campus. We condemn all hateful, bigoted, racist, and violent acts and words in the strongest possible terms. Our response to these despicable acts and words will be to call them what they are, and we encourage you, too, to speak up loudly against them. The appearance of two racist posters, which specifically impacted black members of our campus community, horrified us and revealed that our current protocols for communicating with the campus about acts of bigotry and racism must be more immediate.

If you experience or witness a bias incident at the University of Utah, please report it to the Office for Inclusive Excellence at 801-585-5994 or online. This begins a dialogue and promotes education on our campus as we work together to build a culture of inclusion and safety.

We also want to provide you with resources you may find useful and let you know what steps we are taking to address these critical issues and promote civil discourse at the University of Utah.

- Faculty fellows will offer faculty and staff diversity training via the Transforming Classrooms into Inclusive Communities project, sponsored through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence. Contact: David Derezotes, social work professor and Peace & Conflict Studies director, david.derezotes@socwk.utah.edu; or 801-585-3546 and CTLE info@utah.edu; or 801-581-7597.
- Irene Ota, diversity coordinator for the College of Social Work, is available to provide anti-discrimination response training on demand for 10 to 24 participants. Contact: 801-581-8455 or irene.ota@socwk.utah.edu;
• A comprehensive website on campus safety and an awareness campaign will launch this fall.
• A panel discussion featuring campus scholars will be held to discuss freedom of speech, hate speech, and civil rights laws.
• The Office for Inclusive Excellence will sponsor an awareness campaign on microaggressions.
• Administrators are meeting with various student groups to address concerns and engage in dialogue.
• An information campaign, with a website, posters, and a video, will launch this fall to provide an update on the initiatives proposed at the Open Dialogue on Racial Climate held in November 2015.
• A diversity initiatives website, designed to keep the campus community informed about diversity programming, hiring, policy, and large conferences, has been designed and recently launched.

The start of a new academic year is an exciting time for all of us, and we look forward to working and learning together here at the state’s flagship university.

Warm regards,

David W. Pershing                      Ruth V. Watkins                      A. Lorris Betz
President                               Senior Vice President                Interim Senior Vice President
University of Utah                      for Academic Affairs                 for Health Sciences