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From: Interim President Martin Schimpf <president@boisestate.edu>

Date: Tue, Jun 4, 2019 at 8:59 AM

Subject: President's Letter – Campus Efforts on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

## A letter from the President



Dear Colleagues, Friends and Students,

When I began my term as interim president of Boise State University, I made a commitment to build on the efforts begun by the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. While the work is not progressing as quickly as many would hope, I want to share with you some of the efforts underway.

It is clear to me that students, faculty and staff across campus understand the importance of Boise State being a leader on inclusive



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MARTIN SCHIMPF  
Interim President

excellence – not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is vital to maintaining our ability to serve our students into the future.

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In order to hold ourselves and the institution accountable, we must repeatedly articulate our aspirational goals. There are six areas that the Commission determined should drive our decisions:

- Leading with Inclusion and Diversity
- Fostering a Sense of Belonging and Being Valued
- Increasing the Diversity of our Community
- Achieving an Inclusive Instructional Climate
- Supporting our Campus Community
- Communicating Effectively

While a great deal of work remains to be done in each of these areas, we have taken tangible steps to improve recruiting practices with the aim of boosting the diversity of our hires; expanded training for faculty, staff and students; and added support for marginalized students on campus.

Below is a summary of investments, changes, and other efforts underway that I hope will provide a foundation for the campus-wide work yet to come.

### **Investing in Inclusion**

- We've set aside \$25,000 to be allocated to departments to expand their searches through additional advertising in media that will attract a more diverse pool of candidates.
- Student Affairs has committed to providing \$30,000 in annual support for multicultural student events, such as Pow Wow, Rainbow Graduation, Black Graduation, Project Dream for Tomorrow, and others.
- We recently added a new position in Student Affairs to support first-generation students and students of color.
- We continue to increase financial support for basic needs such as the Food Pantry, housing, emergency loans, mental health, and food insecurity.
- The Graduate College set aside funding for six Graduate Fellowships designed specifically for underrepresented minority students, which are awarded competitively to faculty who successfully recruit these students.

### **Expanding Voices Across Campus**

- We're working with students and the Boise State Black Alumni chapter, which was recently launched after approval by the

Alumni Board, to recruit a sorority and/or fraternity to campus that would focus on service to the black community.

- We've invited a first-generation student to sit on the student success taskforce, which has developed a plan for closing the success gap for Pell eligible students. The group is currently focused on outreach and support to first-time in college freshmen who live off campus.
- We've added the celebration of Indigenous People's Day to the academic calendar.

### **Boosting Diversity in Our Workforce and Student Body**

- We're gathering baseline data on the diversity of individual departments and position classifications to identify those that are particularly deficient when it comes to the diversity of their employees.
- The State Board of Education has invited DACA students to apply for Opportunity Scholarship funds, and is working on developing a special tuition structure for Native American students. In the future we hope to support this effort with the creation of an American Indian liaison position in Student Affairs.
- We've developed a course on graduate school preparation for underrepresented students, which will be initiated in the fall.
- Our Million Dollar scholars program is currently partnering with the Commonwealth Mariana Islands to bring their students to Boise State.
- The university revised its search committee training curriculum to include a section on identifying and addressing implicit bias in hiring decisions.
- Search pools now undergo statistical analysis for assessing the number of underrepresented candidates in the pool. When appropriate, search efforts are extended in order to increase the diversity of the candidate pool.
- Our Bridges to Baccalaureate partnership between CWI and Boise State is specifically aimed at encouraging and supporting underrepresented students in health-related science research fields.

### **Training Across Divisions**

- We received a grant to initiate the BUILD Forum and offer CTL workshops throughout the year that are designed to recognize and reflect upon our perceptions around implicit bias in the classroom and workplace. Dozens of faculty and staff have gone through the program and many more are in process — as many as there is capacity to accommodate.

- Several departments in Student Affairs have completed an Inclusive Excellence audit using a tool developed by Francisco Salinas, in order to determine where they need to continue strengthening their protocols, policies and practices.

### **What's Coming Next**

- We've been working with the State Board of Education to create a line item in their legislative budget request for starting a Parent's Academy, which would provide knowledge to parents of first generation students about college access and affordability.
- We've implemented an option in our student system that allows students to use their "preferred name" instead of their legal name, and recently vetted the addition of new pronouns in the system with the faculty senate. In the fall we will develop training for faculty and staff on how to utilize the new pronouns.
- We have further expanded our need-based scholarships for next year.
- We're working to increase access to Experiential Learning by those who can't easily participate because of work or family obligations through programs like alternative breaks, WorkU, internships, and other part-time work opportunities. Those efforts include direct funding for students to enable their participation.
- The Provost's office will be adding a position dedicated to diversity and inclusion issues that impact, and are impacted by, faculty.
- The Gender Equity Center, Title IX and other campus departments are submitting a proposal to the U.S. Department of Justice for funding to provide LGBTQIA+ focused sexual misconduct prevention and response programming.
- Boise State is launching the Gender-Based Violence Community-Coordinated Response Team. The team brings together university staff and students with community organizations committed to understanding, responding to, and reducing stalking, sexual assault, and relationship violence. The group will identify campus needs related to gender-based violence and implement preventive measures and responsive interventions that are collaborative, informed, holistic and inclusive. The efforts will complement those of our existing CARE team, which focuses on case reviews, by initiating efforts to improve system response and prevent future instances of gender-based violence.
- A university proposal to the NSF Bridge to Doctorate program is in final stages of review; if funded, the grant will create twelve additional doctoral-level graduate assistantships for students from underrepresented groups.

- The Title IX Coordinator joined a statewide committee dedicated to implementing programs to prevent and respond to sexual violence in marginalized populations.
- The Gender Equity Center and Title IX Coordinator are working in partnership with the Ada County Domestic Violence Court to increase student access to resources in the courts and community.
- University leaders are mapping a path to Boise State becoming an official Hispanic-Serving Institution recognized by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

In order for continued structural changes to be effective and sustainable over the long term, they need to be instituted and championed by a permanent president — and I have every confidence that Dr. Marlene Tromp has the background, experience and drive to take Boise State to new levels of diversity and inclusive excellence. Of course, she won't be able to do it alone, and she won't have to. There is a groundswell of passion across campus to make Boise State University more than simply diverse and welcoming, but a truly inclusive home for all Broncos.

Martin Schimpf  
Interim President



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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