

January 13, 2016

An open letter to the ISU community:

As we kick off a new semester, I would like to thank the many individuals and groups who have met with me regarding our diversity-related goals and initiatives. These conversations are vital to our institution's strength and its future. I am proud of the robust history Indiana State has in providing quality educational opportunities to a diverse student body, and I want our institution to continue to build upon this heritage by creating an environment of inclusive excellence that helps our students succeed.

Indiana State has had a diverse student body since its first year of operation. According to *"A History of the African American Student Experience at Indiana State University 1870-1975"* by Crystal Reynolds, the Indiana State Normal School enrolled its first African American student in the summer of 1870. In reviewing campus records and photos from our history, it is clear to see that Indiana State's commitment to access and opportunity has been constant. This commitment has helped shape our institution and has had an immeasurable impact beyond our campus.

All Sycamores should take pride in the advances Indiana State has helped lead and the trailblazers our institution has produced. For example, Indiana State had the first black athlete (Clarence Walker) to participate in a national basketball tournament during the days when our team was coached by the legendary John Wooden. In the early 1960s, Indiana State welcomed dozens of Cuban refugees through a special project designed to help these professionals become proficient in English and teaching methods so that they could teach Spanish in Indiana's public schools. This first-in-the-nation program provided these highly competent refugees with a new profession while also addressing a critical shortage of Spanish teachers in the state.

Indiana State's distinguished history also includes many examples of student activism which have led to concrete improvements such as the creation of the African-American studies program and what is now known as the Charles E. Brown African-American Cultural Center. In more recent times, students successfully advocated for a new student fee to make our current Student Recreation Center a reality.

These are but a few examples of important ways our institution has evolved to address student needs and concerns. This work must continue for both Indiana State and our students to succeed in today's world. Our diversity efforts continue to grow and advances made in recent years include:

- Our overall enrollment growth has included significant increases in enrollments of minority students. African-American student enrollment has grown by almost 35 percent since 2010. Latino enrollment has nearly tripled. In total, U.S. minority student enrollment has increased by more than 1,100 students since 2010, a gain of about 50 percent. International enrollment has also experienced growth, nearly doubling from 2010 to 2015 to surpass 1,000 students.
- The number of African-American and Latino full-time faculty has grown by 62 percent from 21 in 2009 to 34 in 2015.
- The percentage of female full professors to total full professors has grown from 25% in 2009 to 32% in 2015.
- The number of minorities serving in exempt staff positions has grown from 46 in 2009 to 65 in 2015.
- Special attention has also been paid to diversifying our police force. Of our 26 police officers, 4 (15%) are African-American, three of whom are command personnel including one at the Lieutenant level.
- All campus residential, office, classroom and event facilities have ADA access, and all new construction and major renovation undertaken since the ADA legislation was approved 25 years ago has met or exceeded ADA standards.

- Health care and other benefits were extended to same sex domestic partners in 2005.
- Title IX efforts have included the addition of women's soccer (2000), women's golf (2006), and women's swimming and diving which will begin competing this fall. Mandatory training (It's On Blue) for all students, faculty and staff on preventing sexual violence was also implemented this academic year.
- African-Americans have been selected to serve as SGA presidents, trustees (student and other), senior administrators and alumni leaders.
- A concerted effort to utilize the services of minority-owned business has also taken place. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Indiana State extended \$2.68 million in contracts to minority vendors up from \$1 million in 2008-2009.

The national concern over diversity has increased significantly due to a variety of incidents across our country. Concerns have also been raised on our campus, and I have spent a significant portion of the past few weeks meeting with students, faculty and staff to hear their concerns. These groups include:

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| • SGA Executive Committee | • Physical Disabilities Group |
| • SGA Senate | • Spectrum (LGBTQ Student Group) |
| • Free ISU Student Group | • LGBTQ Faculty and Staff |
| • Diversity Council | • Asian/Pacific Islander Affinity Group |
| • Local Human Relations Director | • Women's Group |
| • Social Work students | • Staff Council |
| • Black Student Union | • Various alumni of color |
| • Black faculty and staff (2 groups) | • International Students |
| • NAACP Student Chapter | • African-American Alumni Council |
| • HOLA (Latino Affinity Group) | Executive Committee |

As indicated previously, I have heard a wide range of opinions during these meetings regarding our campus climate with the majority of these groups expressing pride in being part of the ISU community and a general level of comfort with being on our campus. Collectively, they have also expressed a desire to work together to make improvements. As two immediate outcomes of these meetings, I have asked Joshua Powers to form an advisory group on our disabilities services, and I have asked Diann McKee to conduct an annual assessment of facilities to determine what barriers to accessibility exist and to utilize the results to inform our facilities master planning and annual maintenance and improvement projects.

This is definitely a time of change and forward momentum. As announced last fall, the Office of Diversity has been divided into two areas (Multicultural Services and Programs within Student Affairs and Inclusive Excellence within Academic Affairs) with an expansion of staffing and a significant growth in base budgets. Previously, the Office of Diversity had an operating budget of \$37,095. The new Multicultural Services and Programs Office has been given an operating budget of \$132,709. The Special Assistant to the Provost for Inclusive Excellence is a new position that did not exist previously. In addition to adding this position, a budget of \$136,450 has been established. These are significant base-budget allocations that were based upon the plans and expectations for these new areas.

Elonda Ervin is heading up the new Office of Multicultural Services and Programs within the Division of Student Affairs. Her role is to provide resources, services, and programs that promote and assist in the retention and graduation of multicultural students at Indiana State. Advisory groups also will be formed to assist with this area. Current plans include the development of several new resource centers including a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center, a Women's Resource Center and a Latino Cultural Center. These groups will work collaboratively with the African American Cultural Center. The 7th floor of HMSU is being renovated to provide space for these new areas along with office space for international student groups. Initial plans call for each of the centers to have lounge space, electronic

and print materials, and educational resources for all students. The renovation will begin at the end of this semester with an official opening of the 7th floor this fall.

The Special Assistant to the Provost for Inclusive Excellence position was created to coordinate university-wide policy development related to diversity issues and to work on attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff. Nolan Davis has been serving in this role and had established an aggressive plan that included developing a recruitment and retention plan to help further diversify our faculty and staff. Just before Winter Recess, Nolan announced that his personal goal of working for a historically black college and university has been realized. He is moving to his home state of North Carolina to become the Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Elizabeth City State University. We are sorry to see him go but wish him well in his new role.

Provost Mike Licari has appointed Joshua Powers to lead our inclusive excellence efforts on an interim basis on top of his role as Associate Vice President for Student Success. Josh previously served as co-chair of the Diversity Council and also led our Opportunity Hire program designed to help diversify our faculty. Provost Licari will be having conversations with various campus leaders regarding the qualifications candidates should possess for this position, and he will launch a national search later this spring with the goal of filling the position before the new academic year begins. The position will not carry tenure unless an internal candidate who already has tenure is selected.

Other changes that are currently in progress include:

- Mandatory diversity training will begin this fall for all University College students and advisors, orientation leaders, residential life staff, new employees, coaches and student athletes. A task force headed by Dean Linda Maule is working to select the training module.
- A remodeling of the Charles E. Brown African American Cultural Center will take place this summer. Plans for the renovation include new furniture, paint, finishes and fixtures along with upgrades to the lobby, completing the Cultural Center library, creating a new multipurpose classroom/lecture space, updating the conference room, and updating the lower multi-purpose space with new sound equipment. The renovation will occur during the summer of 2016, and the center will reopen this fall.
- An interim student grievance policy has been put in place with expectations that a proposal for the permanent policy will work its way through the governance process to be ready for the Board of Trustees to consider at its February 19th meeting.
- The Council on Diversity will be reconfigured to include representation from each affinity group.
- An Assistant Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life for NPHC and Multicultural Greek Organizations has been created and will be working on a full-time basis with the African-American fraternities and sororities as well as working to develop new multicultural fraternities and sororities. Conversations are currently taking place with several African-American sororities about their recolonization on our campus with at least one expected to return yet this spring followed by others during the 2016-2017 academic year.

This work must continue. To ensure that it does, the university must work collaboratively to incorporate diversity-related goals, benchmarks and initiatives into the new strategic plan currently in development. The strategic plan is actively reviewed throughout the year, and progress is audited and reported to the entire campus and public at large. The best way to keep these concerns in front of everyone and to stimulate change is to make sure they have a prominent position within the new strategic plan.

Attaining some of our goals will not be easy, and progress may be incremental. One area of particular concern is in the recruitment and retention of African-American faculty. Colleges and universities across the country are ramping up efforts in this area and yet the pool of African-Americans with terminal degrees is small and in some fields almost non-existent. Attention needs to be paid to increasing the

number of African-Americans seeking doctoral degrees, something that will take years to address. This should not deter us from setting goals and benchmarks, but patience and understanding of the reality of the situation will be necessary. Similarly, there must be recognition of the limited resources that are available to spread across these important strategic areas. Attention to the goals, a collective desire, and hard work will lead to success.

I would ask that all of you give consideration to what you feel should be addressed by the strategic plan, how progress should be measured and what steps are necessary to ensure that progress happens. Come to the town forums and stakeholders meetings which are scheduled as follows:

- January 25, 2 to 5 p.m., HMSU Dede I -- Campus Town Hall Meeting
- February 9, 1 to 3 p.m., HMSU Dede I – Campus Town Hall Meeting
- February 10, 7:30 to 9 p.m., HMSU Dede II – Student Strategic Planning Session with SGA, President Bradley, Provost Licari and Vice President Willie Banks
- April 6, 2 to 5 p.m., HMSU Dede I – Campus Stakeholders Meeting
- April 27, 3 to 5 p.m., HMSU Dede I – Campus Stakeholders Meeting

If you cannot attend or do not have an opportunity to share your thoughts, email them to me at president@indstate.edu or to the Provost at mike.licari@indstate.edu.

I would like to thank you for all that you do for our university, and I look forward to working with you to make it even greater.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Bradley
President