

## FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

In 2001, I appointed the Diversity Council and charged its members with several tasks including the development of an institutional strategic plan for diversity. After developing mission and vision statements and a definition of diversity, the Diversity Council turned its attention to the need to gather a variety of data and assess the climate for diversity at the University. The Council recognized that such data would provide valuable and necessary information for use in the development of the strategic plan.

I am pleased to share with you the final report of “Climate Assessment Project.” The report suggests several challenges we must meet in fulfilling our responsibility to prepare students for life and work in a civil democracy in the twenty-first century. The results also serve as a foundation for the development of a strategic plan for diversity that will prescribe concrete action plans to assist academic and administrative units in meeting these challenges.

At the heart of this diversity initiative are two of the five themes we have emphasized over the past several years:

- it’s about people, and
- students are paramount.

To become the University we strive to be, we must eliminate disrespect and harassment and foster a community in which everyone feels welcome. To serve our students well, their education must include exposure to a variety of cultures and international perspectives and opportunities to develop character, conscience, citizenship, respect for others, and social responsibility.

The challenges embedded in this report should rest at the core of the planning for the future of our institution. Therefore, I ask that you support the Diversity Council in their efforts to create a strategic plan for diversity in order that we, as a University community, might come to embody and embrace the multicultural future that lies ahead for all of us.

**Joseph A. Chapman**  
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