

Thoughts From The President

Diversity Statements and Positions

2014 — 2017

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May 20, 2014 — Announcing Tobacco Free Simmons

A message from Tobacco Free Simmons Committee

Key Topic(s):

- The creation of the Simmons Tobacco Free Committee
- Transition to tobacco free campus

Diversity Issue(s):

- Addiction
- Socioeconomic class

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Promoting health and wellness of Simmons students, faculty, and staff
- Supporting all members of the community in managing the challenges of becoming a tobacco free campus.

July 18, 2014 — Simmons College President Helen Drinan Expresses Support for Jailed Cambodian Leader Mu Socha

Key Topic(s):

- Expression of dismay and disappointment in the arrest and detention of Mu Socha
- Relationship with and significance of Mu Socha as a political figure

Diversity Issue(s):

- Democratic rights (particularly in Cambodia)
- Social and economic justice
- Domestic violence
- HIV/AIDS-related issues

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Providing a student-centered culture that promotes transformative learning at every level, enabling each member of our community to reach his or her potential while respecting the innate freedom, opinion, and dignity of one another.
- Mentoring a generation of leaders to think critically about how local actions may constitute the building blocks of large-scale change in a community or country.

November 5, 2014 — Announcement of Undergraduate Transgender Admission Policy

Key Topic(s):

- The undergraduate admission policy for transgender students
- Thanking the Transgender Task Force

Diversity Issue(s):

- Trans inclusion
- Gender identity and expression

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Fostering inclusion and welcoming diversity within our community
- Commitment to the inclusion of transgender individuals
- Striving to be a welcoming place where a range of gender identity and expression can exist

December 4, 2014 — Reflections on Recent Grand Jury Decisions in Ferguson and New York

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- Grief for the families of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and others whose lives have been forever changed by violence
- The grand jury decisions in Ferguson and New York City.

Diversity Issue(s):

- Systemic racism
- Police brutality

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Pride in Simmons students who have led the organizing efforts in the city to protest with others
- Encouragement to not ignore what happened and to support those in our community who are suffering most.

April 16, 2015 — Tobacco Free Policy Update

A message from SNHS Dean Judy Beal and the Tobacco Free Simmons Committee

Key Topic(s):

- Transition to tobacco free campus

Diversity Issue(s):

- Addiction
- Socioeconomic class

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Supporting all members of the community in managing the challenges of becoming a tobacco free campus.
- The Simmons Health and Counseling Centers will offer support for students who would like to quit smoking, including individual counseling as well as smoking cessation strategies and prescription options.
- The Office of Talent and Human capital Strategy continues to provide resources through its medical provider BCBSMA for faculty and staff enrolled in Simmons's employee medical plan

November 18, 2015 — Community Update

A message from Lisa Smith-McQueenie, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

Key Topic(s):

- Events on campus

Diversity Issue(s):

- Race, culture and community
- Campus climate

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Sharing information to keep all members of the community informed

February 1, 2016 — An Update on the Ten Demands

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- Update on the Community Meeting held on Wednesday, January 27, 2016.
- 10 Demands and the Students of Color Inclusion Council (SOCIC).

Diversity Issue(s):

- Increased inclusion and support on campus for students of color
- Mental and physical health
- Improving campus climate

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Increasing outreach to students, educating them about existing resources for mental and physical health
- Exploring expanding hours of Simmons health and counseling services
- Creating incident-specific programming, including community meetings, to support students of color when traumatic racial events occur either on campus or in the world beyond our doors.
- Establishing supplemental, on-boarding activities tied to orientation for students of color
- Initiating an advising/mentoring program to better connect students with faculty, staff, and alumnae
- Delivering ongoing, rigorous diversity training for students, faculty, and staff
- Redesigning the Simmons Course to incorporate complex racial history of Boston
- Auditing the curriculum to determine whether courses appropriately incorporate the contributions of people of color and women, and redesign those that do not, as appropriate
- Holding open feedback sessions with students and faculty to discuss where the curriculum needs revision or enhancement
- Reviewing student course evaluations to ensure diversity-related questions are included
- Educating students about their civil rights as students, citizens, and community members at Simmons College
- Adjusting policies to ensure students have clear processes for addressing a complaint when they believe their rights have been violated
- Strengthening the relationship between professional student recruitment efforts and our multicultural student organizations

- Identifying a space for a Multicultural Student Office on the Academic Campus and begin planning process to establish a Multicultural Student Center
- Affirmatively hire faculty and staff through processes consistent with representing the demographics of our labor markets and educate community about current demographics that shape labor availability for Simmons
- Supporting faculty of color with a mentoring program
- Assisting students of color in managing needs for financial aid, and providing workshops on finding and applying for scholarships outside Simmons, completing FAFSA forms, planning for post-graduate life, and other processes particularly challenging for first generation students
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion commitments are incorporated in the strategic planning efforts, which are expected to be completed in the spring.

February 11, 2016 — Creating a Welcoming and Supporting Campus Climate

A message from the President's Office by Lisa Smith-McQueenie, Assistant Provost for Diversity & Inclusion

Key Topic(s):

- How we can create a welcoming and supportive campus climate for all

Diversity Issue(s):

- Racial discrimination, biases, prejudices, and exclusion

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Strengthening the systems and identifying the resources to address bias, discrimination, and harassment
- Intensifying our follow-up with students after a crisis or traumatic event
- Establishing pre- and/or post-orientation "on-boarding" activities for students of color as a supplement to summer/fall orientation
- Devising a cohort model among students with the goal of encouraging and creating opportunities for peer support.
- Holding monthly meetings or gatherings, some with an open agenda and others focused on timely topics
- Publicizing scheduled community meeting opportunities
- Regularizing drop-in hours in critical offices
- Initiating an advising/mentoring program to better connect students with faculty, staff, and alumnae/i
- Identifying best retention practices and benchmark current Simmons practices against them
- Identifying a space for a multicultural student organization office

February 18, 2016 — Developing Diversity Training

A message from the President's Office by Katie Conboy, Provost and Senior Vice President

Key Topic(s):

- Plans on developing diversity training at Simmons
- Responding to concerns raised by Students of Color Inclusion Council

Diversity Issue(s):

- Racial discrimination, biases, prejudices, and exclusion
- Campus climate
- Inclusion of students marginalized on the axis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, sexual identity, age, ability, and national origin
- Microaggressions
- Stereotype threat

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Identifying a consultant or combination of consultants to conduct basic diversity and inclusion training for faculty and staff
- Establishing biweekly meetings called "Talkin' on Tuesdays" to address topics as bystander awareness, racism, preparation for the teachable moment, and creating an inclusive classroom environment
- Re-broadcasting a series of webinars on "Racial Climate on Campus" that have general applicability to Simmons
- Partnering with the YWCA Community Dialogues on Race and with Community Change Inc. for events that will promote campus dialogues on race.
- The Center for Excellence in Teaching and the Faculty Senate creating book-group discussions
- Library staff creating a diversity and inclusion resource guide
- Supporting for faculty and staff members to deepen their knowledge about and appreciation for diversity
- Students need training to understand how to support each other as peers in their academic, professional, and social lives.

February 25, 2016 — Students' Civil Rights

A message from the President's Office by Vice President & General Counsel Kathy Rogers

Key Topic(s):

- Addressing the fifth demand of the 10 Demands
- Student civil rights
- Current Simmons policies

Diversity Issue(s):

- Discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, religion, and disability
- Bias incidents, harassment, etc.

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Calling for a review of Simmons's Statement on Non-discrimination and Grievance Procedures
- Creating an on-campus committee to evaluate and recommend revisions to policy
- President Drinan and Kathy Rogers providing the requisite education and guidelines related to civil rights
- Working to provide more detailed and thorough information and to clearly define and publicly promote a fair and judicious grievance process

March 17, 2016 — Understanding and Applying for Financial Aid

A message from the President's Office by Vice President & General Counsel Kathy Rogers

Key Topic(s):

- Addressing concerns raised in 10 Demands about financial aid
- Describing current realities and policies surrounding financial aid at Simmons

Diversity Issue(s):

- Socioeconomic class
- Intersection of race and class

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Enrollment staff looking at ways to make a Simmons education more affordable to all students and to educate students on financial aid literacy
- Creating financial aid seminars
- Aspiring to someday provide full-need financial aid awards for students

March 24, 2016 — New Multicultural Student Organization Office

A message from the President's Office by Lisa Smith-McQueenie, Assistant Provost for Diversity & Inclusion

Key Topic(s):

- Creation of Multicultural Student Organization Office

Diversity Issue(s):

- Multicultural safe space

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Opening the office by the middle of April

March 31, 2016 — Diversity and Inclusion in Marketing Materials

A message from the President's Office with Cheryl Howard '71, Vice President of Marketing

Key Topic(s):

- Marketing strategies for recruitment
- Photos used in marketing

Diversity Issue(s):

- Representation, showcasing marginalized students
- Tokenization

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Striving to create marketing materials that can inspire all people to want to join the Simmons community
- Balancing showcasing students, faculty, alums, and staff of different backgrounds with not misrepresenting current diversity on campus or tokenizing members of the community

April 07, 2016 — Reviewing Curriculum for Diversity & Inclusion

A message from the President's Office with Provost and Senior Vice President Katie Conboy

Key Topic(s):

- Responding to the specific curricular concerns that have been raised in one of the 10 Demands

Diversity Issue(s):

- Lack of contributions of women and minorities in 'canon' of different disciplines

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Ensuring that across all degree programs (though not necessarily in each course), multicultural and diversity content is readily and identifiably present.
- Implementing a college-wide process of systematic course review and revision inside the schools
- Launching an intensive reworking of *The Simmons Course*

April 14, 2016 — Recruiting a Diverse Staff

A message from the President's Office with Vice President of Talent & Human Capital Strategy (THCS) & Title IX Coordinator, Regina Sherwood

Key Topic(s):

- Staff diversity
- Recruitment strategies

Diversity Issue(s):

- Age/generation, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability status, gender and gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, Veteran status, etc.

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Working with hiring managers on diversity statements within job descriptions that affirm our commitment to a diverse candidate pool
- Creating job announcements, particularly for senior staff positions, that highlight Simmons's preference for candidates with demonstrated experience working on issues of diversity
- Prioritizing candidates who have experience with diversity and inclusion initiatives in their work history
- Investing in professional, third-party, Recruiting Certification Training for all College Recruiters
- Ensuring that search committees for senior level positions represent diverse individuals
- Ensuring search committees, department leaders, and hiring managers have a "Diversity Toolkit" comprised of guidelines and resource materials to support inclusive searches and recruiting techniques for attracting diverse candidates
- Centralizing decisions on candidate selections and share feedback with various members of the community in the selection process
- Centralizing the College's resume database, enabling hiring managers to consider diverse candidates for multiple roles throughout the year
- Enabling THCS to share the race and ethnicities of candidates who voluntarily disclose that information, providing candidate pipelines to staff hiring teams
- Tracking and reporting metrics for increasing our outcomes and accountability in hiring diverse candidates
- Collaborating with the Diversity & Inclusion Council to identify potential members for an Onboarding and Retention Council

April 28, 2016 — Student Organizations & Initiatives Supporting Diversity & Inclusion

A message from the President's Office with Assistant Provost for Diversity & Inclusion, Lisa Smith-McQueenie

Key Topic(s):

- Student organizations and upcoming initiatives that support diversity and inclusion at Simmons

Diversity Issue(s):

- Organizations, safe spaces, events, and initiatives relevant to marginalized students

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Simmons strives to be a place where every individual can participate in and feel that they are a valued member of the community

May 05, 2016 — Ten Demands Update: May 2016

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- 10 Demands
- The administration leader for plans/actions on each demand, a brief overview of our progress to date and details on work that will be done in the near future

Diversity Issue(s):

- Racial inclusion and equity on campus

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Coordinating a Student Health Advisory Committee consisting of Wellness Ambassadors to enhance support for students of color and advise the Counseling and Health Centers
- Developing plan for a Multicultural Student Center and other programming; review and evaluate initiatives undertaken in spring 2016.
- Executing trainings according to this schedule: Operating Team & Deans training (summer 2016 and winter 2017); faculty seminars on teaching for inclusive excellence (January & May 2017);

Workshops on recruiting a diverse faculty (spring & summer 2017); Diversity, Inclusion & Equity workshops for staff (Timing TBD); training for students (Timing TBD)

- Developing additional academic and co-curricular activities, including work to fill curricular gaps; comprehensive approaches to assess the classroom and school experiences of students; and revisions to school-based structures and processes to include student representation
- Creating a website page to publicize process and other resources available to students, faculty, and staff who experience discrimination
- Legal Department presenting a workshop for students on legal protections available to them, and two workshops for faculty and staff to enhance their collective understanding of their legal responsibilities around Simmons students' rights
- Inviting a guest speaker on campus to present to students on their civil rights
- Examining and resolving the potential of Ethicspoint for use by students to report racial incidents on campus and other incidents of hostile environments and intolerance
- Expanding the number and value of Community Based Organization partners
- Developing a planning committee to include students, alums, faculty, advancement, and other staff who will meet beginning in June to map out the scope, location, and resources for a Student Multicultural Center
- THCS Director of Recruiting completing Diversity Recruitment Certification Training in May 2016 and working with hiring managers to improve diversity recruiting
- College University Personnel Associates training THCS staff on strategies and techniques for inclusive search committees (summer 2016)
- Holding Financial Aid workshops in the fall to coincide with the U.S. Dept. of Education new early FAFSA cycle
- Holding a virtual Scholarship Match event for May 6, 2016
- Returning to the strategic planning work, informed by the Diversity & Inclusion Plan, and submitting the strategic plan to the Board of Trustees for approval in October 2016

May 12, 2016 — Diversifying Our Faculty

A message from the President's Office with Provost and Senior Vice President Katie Conboy

Key Topic(s):

- One of the Ten Demands that focuses on recruiting a more diverse faculty to the College

Diversity Issue(s):

- Diversity in hiring

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Creating and sustaining an operational environment that truly respects the power and efficacy of a diverse workforce

November 10, 2016 — The Presidential Election

A message from President Helen Drinan.

Key Topic(s):

- Responding to the results of the election and the reaction of the community

Diversity Issue(s):

- Political views, fears, bigotry
- Protests
- Threat of deportation

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- It is imperative that we hear and respect voices and opinions across the political spectrum
- Finding opportunities to engage the community in continued conversation about how we can move forward in the civil and productive ways

December 01, 2016 — Diversity & Inclusion Update #3

A message from President Helen Drinan.

Key Topic(s):

- Update on responding to 10 Demands
- Inclusivity goals and progress

Diversity Issue(s):

- Campus climate
- Political climate
- Post-election response
- Responding to bias incidents

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Planning more diversity training sessions for summer and fall to accommodate additional faculty
- Planning online training for part-time and online faculty
- Preparing the next phase of diversity and inclusion professional development for faculty, which will be offered starting in fall 2017
- Implementation of “final” Bias Response Protocol by fall 2017
- Striving to create an environment free from bias, prejudice, discrimination, and hurtful/hateful acts that can prevent each member from thriving

January 26, 2017 — Diversity and Inclusion Update #4

A message from President Helen Drinan, Vice President for Communications, Diversity & Inclusion Cheryl Howard, and Assistant Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion Lisa Smith-McQueenie

Key Topic(s):

- Update on responding to 10 Demands
- Inclusivity goals and progress

Diversity Issue(s):

- Campus climate
- Diversity in recruitment
- Responding to bias incidents

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Implementing a [Bias Response Protocol](#) to inform, instruct, and support those who have been affected by bias.
- Scheduling more dates in 2017 for the “Teaching for Inclusive Excellence” seminar to accommodate all full-time faculty
- Planning for the next phase of diversity & inclusion professional development

January 30, 2017 — Executive Order on Immigration: Simmons Responds

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- Executive order on immigration issued by Trump administration

Diversity Issue(s):

- Immigration
- Xenophobia, Islamophobia

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Upholding the federal and state privacy rights of students and employees in the event that law enforcement authorities request that we disregard them
- Ensuring that Simmons Public Safety Officers have no access to, and make no inquiries about, the immigration status of an individual
- Confirming that Simmons Public Safety Officers do not enforce immigration laws or participate with Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) or U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in their work
- Avoiding discrimination of any kind on the basis of immigration status
- Continuing legal employment practices which have never included the use of E-Verify, a government website used for checking the legal work status of an individual
- Requiring government agents, including ICE, to follow applicable procedures for obtaining access to private information (including immigration status) about students and employees
- Declining to provide private information to government agents unless compelled to do so by a valid warrant, a judicial order, or both, and only then after the determination of our legal obligations to comply by our General Counsel and external legal advisors
- Providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all members of our community

February 09, 2017 — Politically Partisan Speech on University Campuses

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- Student reactions to January 30 message
- Political speech and partisan speech

Diversity Issue(s):

- Political stance and notions of neutrality
- Social justice

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Providing an environment of openness to, and respect for, individuals and ideas of all sorts
- Guaranteeing a free and unfettered exchange of those ideas
- Preserving access to the financial resources by which the majority of our undergraduate students and many graduate students attend Simmons is one of my [Drinan's] fundamental responsibilities to Simmons students and to our community as a whole
- When the actions of political leaders threaten our ability to maintain a free, open, and diverse Simmons community, I will not hesitate to speak out

February 24, 2017 — Support for Transgender Students

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- The recent reversal of the Education and Justice Department's joint guidance directing school districts and colleges to enable transgender students to use facilities that correspond with their gender identity.

Diversity Issue(s):

- Transphobia

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Remaining fully committed to the inclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals
- Striving to create a culture in which transgender and gender non-conforming students feel safe, supported, and fully included and are availed equal opportunities to education

March 23, 2017 — Our Women's College Designation

A message from President Helen Drinan

Key Topic(s):

- Student reaction to February 24 message

Diversity Issue(s):

- Transphobia; inclusive language
- Women's college designation

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Continuing protection and support for transgender and gender non-conforming students and our efforts to be women-centered
- Without changing legal *designation* as a women's college, using the term "women-centered college" in everyday language, communications, and activities to describe the college communities and admission policy

April 20, 2017 — Diversity and Inclusion Update #5

Key Topic(s):

- Update on responding to 10 Demands
- Inclusivity goals and progress

Diversity Issue(s):

- Campus climate
- Diversity in recruitment
- Responding to bias incidents
- Equity

Commitments and Positions Expressed:

- Providing the opportunity to 160 faculty to participate in the Inclusive Excellence Seminar
- Planning for the next iteration of the Inclusive Excellence Seminar (II)
- Developing plans for training opportunities to include experiential sessions with trained facilitators and (hopefully) offering the first opportunity to student-facing staff members this fall
- Becoming more mindful of *equity* and its necessity in any truly democratic community