

June 24, 2020

Dear Department of Psychology's EDI Committee members and all signatories of the Open Letter to the University of Calgary;

We have taken time to reflect (both as individuals and as a collective Executive Leadership Team) on the Open Letter, and the meaningful challenges that it presents to us as leaders here at UCalgary. We have also taken time to note, with gratitude, the names of all of you who are signatories to this Open Letter; we thank and acknowledge you all for the important statements that you are making. We appreciate the considerable care, wisdom, and compassion that clearly went into developing the Open Letter and the specific calls for action that it presents.

We are personally pained at the injustice of the deaths of George Floyd and all others that came before him, and unfortunately after, that are a direct result of police brutality – brutality that stems from systemic racism and institutional failure to hold perpetrators of race-based violence accountable. We also mourn the loss of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada – and all those that have been taken from us because of hateful acts and indifference to those acts. Systemic racism results in differential health outcomes. It impacts access to and performance at universities. It is a crisis that impoverishes society.

We denounce anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and racism in all forms. The University of Calgary is a research university that values equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). [Calgary's Commitment to Anti-Racism](#) asserts that it is no longer adequate to simply not be racist, it is time to be anti-racist. As leaders in the Calgary community, we must hold ourselves to the highest standards.

As you noted in your letter, we have taken steps to make the University of Calgary a diverse, equal and inclusive environment. The first priority of the university's academic plan, which was built with feedback from the ground up, is prioritizing people. Given the feedback received – all of the activities and initiatives in that priority are written with an EDI lens. We know there is more to do.

The challenges relating to racism require much more than institutional statements and letters like this one. Systemic racism requires a longitudinal journey of listening, learning, compassion, and commitment to change, followed by action. We recognize that these challenges begin with us as an Executive Leadership Team. Fortunately, we are surrounded by a community of wise and committed colleagues. We will turn to you, as proponents and signatories of your Open Letter – and all members of our UCalgary community – to help us and guide us in this journey. We are fortunate to have the support and expertise of Malinda Smith, our new incoming Vice-Provost (EDI), and Michael Hart, our Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement, as strategic advisors on our institutional journey. We commit to learn from Malinda and Michael and all members of our community, and to work purposefully and with urgency in our efforts to combat racism, within our university and within our broader society.

While these developments put us on a path to progress, we acknowledge these actions in themselves will not be enough. As members of the campus community, especially as upholders of the value of higher education and research, each one of us can and *must* do better. If we are really going to tackle the key issue of systemic racism, we must work as a collective to do so. We will continue to strive to create the environment where all people feel welcome, equal and able to firmly address unacceptable, discriminatory behaviour.

Systemic racism exists and we allow it to live on when we fail to address it meaningfully and with urgency. There is systemic racism at UCalgary and it is incumbent upon us to tackle this challenge with vigour and purpose.

We know that many of you want to hear details from the Executive Leadership Team on specific anti-racism initiatives that we will undertake. This letter is confined to us asserting a commitment to work actively as institutional leaders on these challenges; specific initiatives -- both existing and new -- will be discussed, developed, and launched in partnership with our university community and those affected by racism.

Silence or inaction on this critical issue is not an option. As the university moves forward, our actions will be substantive, thoughtful, and driven by our deep commitment to inclusivity and justice.

Yours sincerely,

Ed McCauley
President and Vice-Chancellor

Dru Marshall
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

William Ghali
Vice-President (Research)

Linda Dalgetty
Vice-President (Finance and Services)

Bart Becker
Vice-President (Facilities)

Nuvyn Peters
Vice-President (Advancement)

Karen Jackson
General Counsel