

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY  
STATEMENT BY THE KSU ACADEMIC DEANS  
FEBRUARY 2016

As members of the Deans' Council, we, the academic deans, are fully supportive of President Papp's commitment to Kennesaw State University as a diverse and inclusive learning community, and the further steps toward this goal outlined in his January 2016 University Update.

All universities have a responsibility to create and maintain an environment conducive to the robust exchange of ideas, speculation, experimentation, and creation of knowledge. Universities must prepare students to be productive and engaged members of an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce and society. Students should leave the university with the knowledge and dispositions to, in the words of Professor W.E.B. DuBois, "judge what the world is and what greater minds have thought it might be," and to make personally and socially meaningful contributions to that world. A university is incapable of meeting these obligations without welcoming and meaningfully including a wide array of people, cultures, viewpoints, and ideas.

We recognize and commend the KSU community for its efforts toward becoming a welcoming and vibrant community. Such efforts have been fruitful, earning the University a 2015 Excellence in Diversity in Higher Education Award. Please know that we, as the Deans' Council, remain committed to continuing the forward movement in the colleges and in the university, generally.

We are pleased with the University's recently expanded Equal Employment Opportunity statement, noting that a robust exchange of ideas can truly only occur in an environment in which students, faculty, and staff believe they are safe to express ideas, and in an environment receptive to their contributions. As some of the University's senior academics, we uniformly believe that fear and isolation can chill the very intellectual exchanges and experiences the University encourages. While disagreement and cognitive dissonance are natural in higher education, the University must also teach (and demonstrate) that the robust exchange of ideas can occur in a civil and supportive intellectual community.

We appreciate the results of the 2014 Campus Climate Study, and encourage the faculty, staff, and students of our colleges to utilize those results in each college's strategic plan, creating actions steps toward maintaining and expanding the University as a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive learning environment. We encourage all units of the University to continued introspection and self-challenge, asking whether the environment of that unit suggests a commitment to pluralism and inclusion where all views and voices are welcome.

At the University level, we, the Academic Deans, are committed to continuing discussions with the University's Chief Diversity Officer, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and other shared governance units in the University toward the common – and yet very uncommon – goal of our University being a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and purposefully vibrant community of learning and intellectual inquiry.