

## **April 21, 2017**

## To our friends and fellow members of the Messiah College community,

We, as representatives from the student body during the 2016-2017 academic year, would like to express our appreciation for the many Messiah College community members who have made issues relating to diversity, racial reconciliation and inclusion a priority within the college's mission.

Throughout the past few years, we have seen this prioritization exhibited in many events and programs. These initiatives include, but are not limited to: sponsorship of faculty and students to attend the Civil Rights Bus Tour; responsive forums on national issues; selection of Bryan Stevenson as the 2017 commencement speaker; support for the Special Assistant to the President on Diversity Affairs, Dr. Bernardo Michael, and the work he has done; book discussions for administrators and faculty on works such as *The Trouble I've Seen* and *America's Original Sin*, which address issues of racial justice; featuring speakers such as Rev. Gabe Salguero and Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas at events such as chapels and symposiums; and hiring faculty members who are known for their work in such areas, such as Drew Hart and Todd Allen.

We hesitate to list our appreciation for specific individuals for fear of leaving others out of this letter. As we have reached out for aid in planning events and hosting discussions on these issues, we have found open doors awaiting us in many administrators, staff members, faculty members and advisors.

We hope that this letter will serve both as an expression of thanks and an encouragement to continue this work for future generations of Messiah College students. We recognize that we have not yet arrived at a perfectly inclusive campus. Indeed, we know that we will never be able to achieve this. Nevertheless, we have seen the attitudes and programs listed above carry us far and we have felt the love of Christ evident in them.

Many thanks for the work that is happening here. May God bless you as you continue to care for Messiah College in various capacities and, through doing so, to continue to proclaim "Christ preeminent" in our lives and on this campus.

In Christ, Messiah College Student Body 2016-2017

This letter was drafted on April 21, 2017 by several student leaders and supported by many students, as indicated by their signatures on the following pages. Those students who drafted the letter are as follows: Jake Edmunds (Student Body President), Julie Heisey (Student Body Vice President), Jocelyn Chavous (Student Government Association Vice President for Diversity Affairs), Leslie Giboyeaux (Chair of Multicultural Council), Alana Anthony (President of Human Rights Awareness), Abigail McBride (Student Activities Board Vice President for Cultural Engagement) and Jamie-Claire Chau (Student Body President-elect).

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