



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Office of the President™

August 21, 2017

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Following the aftermath of the tragic events in Charlottesville and other demonstrations in our country and at other universities, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that at Texas Tech we denounce these displays of racism and hatred in all its forms. In times like these, it can be difficult to navigate the complex interaction among personal morality, beliefs and citizens' rights, but, it is a goal of the University to offer an example of how to strike an appropriate balance. As we begin the 2017 academic year we need to reaffirm our commitment to fostering an environment supportive of an inclusive and diverse community, while ensuring freedom of expression.

As an institution of higher learning it is incumbent upon our administration, faculty, staff and students to promote an atmosphere of open dialogue. This is not a license for those who engage in racist speech or actions to promote ideals of hatred, or diminish our inclusive and diverse culture. At Texas Tech, we must ensure that our community in all its diversity has the opportunity to come together in mutual respect and thoughtful debate. This is a critical time to share our thoughts, opinions, beliefs and concerns. Universities and colleges are our country's epicenters for this type of discourse and Texas Tech should aspire to be a leader in the cultivation of ideas and solutions to these issues affecting our university and the broader society.

Throughout the coming year, we will provide opportunities for formal discussion of public issues through panels, forums, and other gatherings that will allow us to hear all perspectives in the hopes of creating a better understanding of our differing beliefs, while mutually respecting others' freedoms of thought and expression. One opportunity is a new series titled, "Civil Counterpoints." This series, which was developed by several faculty, features forums for students and faculty to discuss current relevant issues in an open and civil manner. The first session, "Speaking Freely: The Need for Opinion Diversity," took place this past spring with additional sessions planned for the upcoming fall and spring semesters. In the same spirit, the Student Government Association, in conjunction with the Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, is preparing a summit for campus student leaders this fall. Our goal is to incorporate the student voice into the Civil Counterpoints narrative in the future.

This fall's freshman class will be the most diverse ever enrolled at Texas Tech, but we must still improve and intensify our efforts to recruit and retain students, staff, and faculty of color. Starting last spring, the Office of Enrollment Management has developed strategic recruitment efforts for both African-American and Hispanic students. Aside from a variety of recruitment efforts, they have identified 130 predominantly African-American high schools in the Dallas and Houston areas that will be a focus of our recruitment efforts. We have hired staff who live in remote locations serving underrepresented student populations and have bilingual staff members

in all recruitment centers. Our progress in recruiting a diverse faculty and staff has not matched the improvements we've experienced in our student population. The Provost and I will engage the deans and chairs in a review of the processes in place and actions we should take to address the opportunity to improve our recruitment and hiring.

These are just a few examples of actions and ways we hope will bring together members of our community to enhance the culture that we value. I would appreciate hearing other thoughts and ideas from you on what more we can do to promote inclusiveness, diversity and freedom of expression while ensuring a place where students, faculty and staff are safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lawrence Schovanec". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Lawrence Schovanec  
President