October 20, 2015

Professor Robert Reid-Pharr
Distinguished Professor of English

Ms. Yosette Jones-Johnson
Assistant Vice President for Faculty & Staff Relations

Professor Donald Robotham
Director, The Advanced Research Collaborative

Dear Robert, Yosette and Don,

Your request for a response to the Diversity Task Force Report affords me the opportunity to thank those who served on the Task Force, especially Robert Reid-Pharr, who chaired it. It also permits me to detail the Task Force recommendations that were adopted last semester and to explain the status of other recommendations that we hope to adopt. Please feel free to share with other committee members.

The Report covers Student and Faculty Diversity, and features some specific recommendations in the area of the sciences. I agree with much of the Report, and would propose that we work collectively to build a culture of diversity and inclusion at the GC. Doing so will mean ensuring that diversity and inclusion join those institutional goals that form our mission—that is, that they become central to our scholarly activities and operations—not least of all by extending our efforts beyond my office and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, so as to reach all of the faculty, students and staff who make up our GC community. Multiple reports on best practices document that universities achieving success in diversity and inclusion are driven by heightened awareness, creative approaches, and continuous and committed work. As a first step in that direction, Interim Provost Lennihan has charged all Strategic Planning Committees with the requirement that they integrate diversity and inclusion in all of their planning proposals. Important initiatives in expanding the pipeline of doctoral students from underrepresented groups are also being taken in other areas, including the recently announced Humanities Alliance (with LaGuardia Community College) and the Bridges to the Doctorate proposal.

Many of the detailed recommendations of the Task Force Report will be adopted. For example, we are already making headway in improving the recruitment of minority faculty, and program diversity committees are already functioning. In what follows, I detail actions already or soon-to-be-taken with regard to the Task Force recommendations:
Student Recommendations

*Increasing the number of MAGNETS to 16*

The Interim Provost and I are committed to seeing greater support for under-represented minority students and to see their overall number increase. One issue in the admissions process—how to mainstream access of minority students to core student financial aid funds—is especially critical. For that reason, I am pleased to report that proposals being discussed by OEODP and Associate Provost Olan would use Magnet funds to incentivize programs to use their GCFs to admit more students from underrepresented groups, thus countering what I gather to be common practice among some programs to withhold offers to minority students from their GCF budgets. Input from this committee into that discussion would be welcome by OEODP and the Provost’s office.

Here I note that last year, in addition to general recruitment funds, $2,000 top-ups to GCFs were offered to programs to support the recruitment of under-represented minority applicants. 22 offers were approved and 7 were accepted. The Graduate Center continues to face the challenge of steep competition from institutions offering thousands of dollars in support than our best offers.

*Program-level Diversity Committees*

Last year Associate Provost Olan asked that each Program establish Diversity Committees. Some Programs have been very responsive; and follow-up is taking place this year. Associate Provost Olan also asked each Program (including the health sciences) to submit diversity recruitment plans with proposed budgets. The Provost’s office approved and disbursed $73,000 to support those program plans. The Provost’s office has received diversity recruitment plans for the 2015 – 2016 year, and is working to fund them within the constraints imposed by the funding cuts that we have received from the Central Office. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee may wish to invite Associate Provost Olan to a meeting to discuss these issues further.

*Recruitment Officer to report directly to the President*

I endorse this recommendation, but the funds necessary for the line will need to be identified. When we can proceed, I would welcome the input and involvement of the GC Committee for Diversity and Inclusion.
I also endorse and have directed the Provost’s Office to act on the following recommendations:

- One all-programs meeting per semester on Diversity and Inclusion
- Annual report to the Recruitment Officer- until one is in place to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee

*Expanding Pipelines to the Doctorate: Important New Student Initiatives*

One of our major constraints is the small pool of doctoral applicants from underrepresented groups. Accordingly, we are taking significant steps to expand this pool.

1. Mellon Foundation Grant of $3.1 million to establish a Humanities Teaching Alliance with LaGuardia Community College. La Guardia is one of the most diverse Community Colleges in the country with 60% of the 15,000 students at La Guardia being foreign-born from 156 countries speaking 118 different languages. Come Fall 2016, 27 GC doctoral students will be placed there as the first step in the mentoring process. We have conceived of this as the first phase of a much broader Pipeline Program involving at least 2 more Senior Colleges in the follow-up years. It is our intention to pursue this expansion of the program once this first step has been completed.

2. Bridges to the Doctorate Proposal. The Associate Provost for the Sciences and the Executive Officer of OEDP are collaborating with the Department of Biology, Brooklyn College and the SUNY Downstate Consortium on a Bridges to the Doctorate Project which seeks to increase the representation of students from underrepresented groups in STEM programs. This represents another important step to expand the Pipeline Program and to expand the number of minority students in the Sciences.

These programs—combined with the proposed incentive scheme and the work of the program diversity committees—should widen the pipeline for underrepresented groups to enter doctoral programs here at the GC and elsewhere.

*Faculty Recommendations*

*Building a climate which fosters diversity with special emphasis on diversity in terms of African American, Latino and Asian American faculty and students*
'Climate' activities are already taking place through the promotion of a range of varied activities across several units of the GC including IRADAC, RevAmStudies, CPCP, ARC and others. An excerpt from last year's Strategic Plan Report is attached. It lists many of the activities last year that supported our diversity and inclusion goals. We must ensure these types of programs and activities are sustained, expanded and strengthened.

Survey all programs to determine which are deficient in diversity hiring targets at the program level: Humanities and Social Sciences: 6 hires over 3 years in related fields: emphasis on those who work on class, race, gender, sexuality.

Significant progress was made along these lines in 2014-2015. Of 8 offers made to faculty from underrepresented groups, 6 were accepted, 1 was declined and 1 remains outstanding.

2 Visiting Professorships to be established

I endorse this recommendation in principle, and have directed the Office of the Provost to determine feasibility by reviewing costs.

3 Postdoctoral awards to be established to rotate on a competitive basis

I also endorse this recommendation in principle, and have directed the Office of the Provost to determine feasibility by reviewing costs.

The sciences

a. Establishment of a Committee for Diversity in the Sciences (4 student members)
b. 6 Full Professors Central Line
c. 2 Visiting Professorships
d. Partnership Appointments (Rockefeller, AMNH et al)
e. 2 Postdoctoral awards (2 years each) who should be members of the Committee
f. Promotion of events/activities CUNY-wide which highlight and celebrate the activities of scientists from underrepresented groups
g. Faculty Director for Committee with administrative support staff

These are significant—and in many cases, costly—recommendations, which, because of the position of the GC relative to other CUNY campuses, require coordinated planning. Because we must increase diversity in the sciences, I welcome them all the same. To that end, I have directed the Provost’s Office to consult with EOs so as to ensure that areas of special concern
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to the GC (e.g., neuroscience and theoretical sciences) can be leveraged in support of diversity goals, and that one of the Science EOs be invited to join the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

In general

Annual Climate Surveys

I endorse this recommendation and have directed the Office of Institutional Research to develop and draft a survey.

Website and Homepage improvement

I endorse this recommendation, and request that the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion supervise and monitor website and homepage improvements.

Visibility Officer to improve our visibility to students and faculty.

Increasing visibility is integral to our success; as such, it follows that the Recruitment Officer (discussed above) should be tasked with developing a plan that includes increasing visibility.

Gender, Sexuality and Persons with Disabilities

These are valuable parts of the diverse and inclusive community that we wish to build. I welcome recommendations from the Committee that speak to these issues.

Retention of Students and Faculty

The Task Force Report did not make any recommendations on the issue of the retention of students and faculty from underrepresented groups. I call upon the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to consider retention issues at its earliest opportunity.

Administrative Staff

Similarly, the Task Force did not consider the issues of diversity in our administrative and support staff. I call upon the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to integrate this area into its ongoing work.
Conclusion

Diversity and inclusion are crucial variables in our academic mission. By expanding pipelines, coordinating with program faculty diversity committees, and putting in place an admissions incentive protocol, I am confident that we will enhance student diversity. Because the scale of faculty and administrative hiring is more directly affected by the $4.2 million budget cut that the GC received in FY 2015, our approach in enhancing faculty and administrative diversity must be especially effective. That so many of our recent faculty offers have been made and accepted reflects the progress already made.

I am grateful to the Task Force for its report and look forward to receiving future recommendations from the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Sincerely,

Chase F. Robinson
President
Appendix I: Partial List: Graduate Center Events Promoting Diversity (Fall 2014- Spring 2015)

Advanced Research Collaborative

- Radical Archival Practices and the Digital Humanities: Elizabeth Dillon
- From Citizenship to Cit(y)zenship: Changing Borders of Social Inclusion in Europe: Yuri Kazepov
- Unequal by Design: Socioeconomic Inequalities and State Level Safety Nets, 1994-2012: Sarah K Bruch and Marcia Meyers
- The Widening Divide Revisited: Economic Inequality in Los Angeles: Paul Ong
- New York’s Creative Ecosystem: ‘Imperial Project’ or Creative Arts: Sharon Zukin
- Chronicle of Illustrious Women of the New World: Patricia Tovar
- By Her Grace: Slavery and Spirituality in the Making of Atlantic Africa: Kwasi Konadu
- Reflection on the Performance of Exile: Deportation as a Theater of Cruelty: David M Brotherton
- New York’s Recent Experience with Participatory Budgeting: Celina Su
- Neoliberalism and Hegemonic Feminism: Hester Eisenstein
- Behemoth: Giant Factories and Discourses of Modernity: Joshua Freeman
- Music and the Political Expression and Mobilization of Second-Generation Immigrants in Urban Europe: Marco Martiniello
- The Children of Muslim Immigrants in School: Comparative Perspectives from Europe: Karen Phalet
- To Be A Muslim: The Making and Unmaking of Religious Boundaries in Europe: Karen Phalet
- Immigrants, Precarity and Low-Wage Labor: Ruth Milkman
- The Anti-Slavery Origins of the Civil War: A Conference
- Heidegger’s Black Notebooks: A Conference
- Ebola Virus in West Africa: Panel
- New Perspectives on Slaveries in the African World: A Symposium
- The Nigerian General Elections: Panel Discussion
- Resisting Vulnerability: A Symposium

Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies

- Suite Habana: Screening and Panel
- Cuba and Its Exile: Political Generations
- Brazil’s Politics: Post-Election Dynamics
- Mexico-Brazil: Literature and Culture
- Shifting US-Cuba Relations: Perspectives on the US-Cuba Agreement of Dec 17
Contemporary Challenges of the Cuban Economy
• US-Cuba Relations: Past, Present, and Future
• Chile as a Development Model?
• Colloquium: Thirty Years of Re-Democratization in Brazil
• Cuba: Art of the Special Period
• Update on the Cuban Economy and US-Cuba Relations

Center for the Humanities
• Afro-Latino(a) Now Forum
• Denationalization of Dominicans of Haitian Descent
• States of Violence: The Diaspora Responds
• Tierralismo Good Earth Tour: Screening and Conversation
• Aqui Estamos: The Struggle of Caribbean Latino Artists
• Congo-Cuba in New York: Palo Mayombe Music, Dance & Religion
• Caribbean Epistemologies: Black Ethnics about Race, Ethnicity & American Social Science

Center for Jewish Studies
• Jacob Poznanski's Diary and the Litzmannstadt Ghetto
• The Holocaust in the Courtroom: Famous, Infamous & Unknown Trials
• Jewish Materialism: The Shattering of the Rabbinic Tradition & Rise of Nationalism
• The Socialism of Fools: Reflections on the Rise of Left-Wing Anti-Semitism
• Italian Jews in Context: Relations, Exchanges, Networks
• How Could This Happen? Explaining the Holocaust
• History as Witness: Jewish Historians Take the Stand
• Eran Riklis: A Personal Cinematic Voyage
• Why Study Conversion and Radical Assimilation?
• Anxieties in Conflict: The Kidnapping of Anna del Monte
• I Remember
• Isaac and Antichrist in the Archives

Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies
• Open House on Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies
• Studying up in the Americas: Critical Excursions into Privilege
• Slave Studies in the Forty Years since the Publication of Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery
• Puerto Rican Studies Initiative (5 sessions Nov. 2014 – April 2015)
• Hacia un Nuevo Paradigma Integracionista en el Mercosur? Contextos y Desafíos de la Coyuntura mas actual
• Citizenship and Empire: the Impact of the Jones Act on the People of Puerto Rico
• Mexican Spring: Sowing Seeds of Resistance from Ayotzinapa to NYC Commission for Truth: Prof. Felipe de la Cruz Sandoval and Parents of the 43 disappeared children share their testimonies
• The Demographic, Economic, and Social Transformations of the Colombian Origin
Population of New York city Metropolitan Area: 1990-2010
• YAI Latino Conference

CLAGS: The Center for LGBTQ Studies
• GayBorhood and the Politics of Safe Spaces
• Seminar in the City: Queer Sex Work in the City
• Queerness in Athleticism
• LGBTQ Scholars of Color Network Launch
• Rough Around the Edges: Peggy Shaw in Conversation (Performing Que(e)ries)
• Annual Kessler Lecture: Cathy J Cohen
• CLAGS & QUNY Open House
• Queerness and Disability
• Queer Aging
• Dusan Malkovic: Queer Studies in Belgrade
• Carl Olof Berg; The Andrology of Showroom
• Butch Pumps up in Pumps: Gender, Performance and Ballroom Culture in Detroit
• Film: Kate Bornstein is a Queer & Pleasant Danger
• Conference: 2015 LGBT Health Conference
• Queers & Comics Conference: Alison Bechdel Keynote
• CLAGS Pre-Pride Fundraiser Party
• A Conversation with Janet Mock

Center for the Study of Women and Society
• New Materialisms – Tales of Motherwork: International Conference

Gotham Center for New York City History
• Black Entertainers in New York City (Gotham Center)
• New York’s Legal Landmarks
• The Progressive Era Reconsidered
• A History of New York in 101 Objects: Sam Roberts
• The Dress Rehearsal for McCarthyism: the Struggle for Free Speech at CCNY, 1931-1942
• The Race Underground: Boston, New York and the Incredible Rivalry that built America’s First Subway
• Jackie Robinson’s Brooklyn

Leon Levy Center for Biography
• Coming of Age in Midcentury America: Morris Dickstein and Gary Giddins
• William P. Kelly in Conversation on Whitman and Crane
• Cosby, Pryor, and the Biography of African-American Comedy
• Scott Berg in Conversation with Gary Giddins
• Leon Levy Biography Lecture: Richard Holmes
• Biographies by Fellows: Hammer on James Merrill, Ehrlich on Eduardo Chibas

ILETC RISLUS: (Institute for Language Education in a Transcultural Context and
Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society
• Examen CELU y la enseñanza de español de Argentina (ILETC)
• Inaugural Roundtable on Heritage Language Education (ILETC)
• Research on Language and Education in New York City and Beyond. First Annual Forum: RILUS-ILETC (Institute for Language Education in a Transcultural Context)

Immigration Seminar Series (Sociology Doctoral Program)
• How Did Immigration Reform Become Mission Impossible: A Roundtable
• One out of Three and 103 Orchard: Tenement Talks: Nancy Foner, Phil Kasinitz and Margaret Chin
• Everyday Illegal: When Policies Undermine Immigrant Families: Joann Dreby
• The Politics of Immigration and Citizenship: Past as Prologue
• Growing Up Muslim in the United States: A Conference

IRADAC: Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean
• IRADAC Advisory Board Meeting
• CUNY CASE meeting
• IRADAC Fellows Meeting
• IRADAC Fellows Meeting
• Works in Progress: Herman Bennett -'Soiled Gods: Disciplinarity & the African-European Encounter in the Fifteenth Century'
• Dissertation Discussions: Philip Kadish
• Works in Progress: Marta Effinger - Staging Migrations toward an American West: From Ida B. Wells to Rhodessa Jones
• Digital Diaspora: Sean Jacobs, Tiffany Aliche,
• The Question of Africa: M. NourbeSe Phillips, S. Hartman
• Bring Back Our Girls: Obiageli Ezekwesili, Rev. Dr. Herbert Daughtry, Peyi Soyinka-Airewele, Okey Ndibe
• IRADAC Fellows Meeting
• The Question of Africa: Will Alexander, Aldom Nelson, Evie Shockley, Brent Edwards, Marcella Durand
• IRADAC Advisory Board Meeting
• Center for Black Literature
• Dissertation Discussions: Ian Foster
• Works in Progress: Cheryl Fish - Where we are is a matter of architecture: June Jordan and Buckminster Fuller's 1965 'ArchiTextual' redesign of Harlem and the Rhetoric of Urban Renewal
• Black Women in Jazz: Debbie Carter, Dona Carter, Brenda Fair
• Dissertation Discussions: Tristan Striker
• Works in Progress: Moses Phillips - African American "Classical" Musicians: Exceeding hegemony and debunking the myths
• Dissertation Discussions: Velina Manolova
• Works in Progress: Maria Bellamy - Haunting the African Diaspora: Responsibility
and Remaining in Caryl Phillips’s Crossing the River

- Geographies of Resistance: Stuart Hall Memorial Conference
- Gloria Thomas Memorial Lecture: Stuart Hall Conference
- Dissertation Discussions: Ashley Williard
- IRADAC Fellows Symposium, 1:00pm – 5:00pm, Room C204
- Lorde/Hemphill Memorial Lecture: John Keen
- AFCP/Music Event

Live @365: A World Music Series

- City of the World: Roman Diaz Afro-Cuban Music Ensemble

Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center

- Eric Bogosian: Operation Nemesis
- New York Premiere of “Heritages”: A Film by Philippe Aractingi
- Building the “Model Ottoman Citizen”
- Levantine Kandahar: Islamism in Northern Lebanon
- Do Muslim Women Really Need Freedom? Feminist Politics After Mahmood
- Textual Sutures and Translations: From Virginia Woolf to Sabrina Kherbiche
- Shattered Rhymes: The Life and Poetry of Erez Briton
- FJK Dance: Fusion of Culture and Dance
- Knowing Otherwise: The Armenian Community of Istanbul and Grandmothers’ Lullabies
- Screening of ‘Come to My Voice’
- New Frameworks: Turkey, Spain and the Question of World Literature

Public Programming

- Political Printmaking: Faviana Rodriguez and Lionel Cushing in Conversation
- The Paradox of Liberation: Michael Walzer in Conversation with Anne-Marie Slaughter
- Globalization, Technological Change, and Inequality: Jeffrey Sachs and Paul Krugman in Conversation (Economics Doctoral Program)
- Inequality and Climate Change: Joseph Stiglitz and Nicholas Stern in Conversation (Luxembourg Income Study and the Advanced Research Collaborative)
- Bill T. Jones in Conversation with Robert Reid-Pharr (IRADAC and ARC)
- The Power of Legacy: Letty Cottin Pogrebin in Conversation with Marcia Ann
- Gilespie Conversations in the Commons with Peter Beinart: The Future of US/Iranian Relations: Michael Doran and Trita Parsi