



Dear Members of the DePaul Community,

I wrote you at the outset of the winter term, inviting all of us to reflect on race at DePaul. Today, I am pleased to write again, reflecting upon the responses so many of you sent and informing you of the actions we will undertake as a university community.

We love this university. We love the broad inclusiveness of its mission. We love actively seeking out those at the margins who are without easy opportunities and creating pathways for them. Faculty and staff mentor, teach, and support that work in myriad ways. Students, too, lead and support one another.

And yet we know DePaul's noble ideals require humans to bring them to life, and we humans are not always noble or even acutely aware. Our motives are mixed; our courage fails; our vision can be myopic. And so, we must constantly encourage one another along the way.

In his famous essay, "As Much Truth As One Can Bear," James Baldwin succinctly wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced." (New York Times Book Review, January 14, 1962)

That line came to mind as I read our students' responses. In truth, staff and faculty responded to the invitation, but it was our students who responded at greatest length. They described DePaul as a "home," and spoke genuinely from their hearts when doing so, yet they've also asked us to think about our conduct in very practical ways.

- They spoke of our faculty's well-meaning intent to draw out important conversations on race, but also of the unwelcome pattern of turning to students of color in the classroom to assume the burden of explaining racism to their peers.
- They spoke of a mismatch between their entirely civil conversations with fellow students on campus and the shockingly racist and sexist comments they read from our students on social media, such as Snapchat and YikYak.
- They spoke of experiencing racial profiling in the ways we ask our students of color to prove they are DePaul students when they are gathered in our library, student center or on campus grounds.
- They shared concerns about support services where they must describe their personal or financial situations at counters where other students can hear those details. Our staff is student-

centered and responsive, but our students sometimes find such experiences shaming and desire a more private place to speak.

There is much more. To fully honor the insights I received, I am attaching links to several documents for your review. The first is a document created by the Black Student Union summarizing the [concerns and proposals](#) of a number of DePaul's students of color. The second is [my own summary](#) of a two-hour meeting in which the BSU students, Provost Marten denBoer and I discussed that document and many more experiences they chose to share orally. (The students have given their permission for me to share these.) I also am attaching a document produced by the President's Diversity Council summarizing [all the feedback](#) received by staff and faculty about their experiences of race and privilege at DePaul.

We'll need open hearts to listen to the members of our university community, listening attentively rather than defensively to what they are telling us and then thinking together about how we might serve them even better than we did yesterday.

Toward that end, I am providing a link to one last document in which the President's Diversity Council [proposes a work plan](#) to address many of the issues that have been raised. As you'll see, they are ambitious in their intentions and timing. They hope to get started this very week and continue their work through the summer and upcoming year.

None of this is the final word, of course, either in the experiences that have been shared, or the responses that have been proposed. Others will be consulted and better ideas no doubt will be offered. I'm proud and grateful nonetheless of the students who took the risk to trust us with their experiences. I'm grateful as well for the selfless immediacy with which many of you have volunteered to rise to the challenge and think how our day-to-day activity might better mirror our ideals.

You and your good hearts are a beautiful reflection of DePaul at its best. As we think about our world – and our small microcosm of that world here at DePaul – know how proud and grateful I am to work with people of such great heart.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.  
President