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To: The John Jay College community

Re: **Sharing the Climate Review Report & Next Steps**

One of John Jay's greatest strengths is its diverse community. Fostering a campus climate of inclusion and belonging for all of our members is crucial to advancing our broader educational mission. That's why last semester we initiated a campus-wide [Climate Review](#) process led by external experts at [Working IDEAL](#). The Working IDEAL team has now submitted their report and recommendations, and I write today to share their [report](#) with our entire community and to outline our plans for implementation, further study where needed, and tracking progress.

The report highlights John Jay's strengths and opportunities to build on this foundation. The report is based on information that the Working IDEAL team gathered through open forums, interviews, online feedback forms, and focus groups on campus last semester, as well as their review of quantitative data on climate, which had been gathered by CUNY and our own Diversity Committee over the past few years. The report and the recommendations are Working IDEAL's, but I am grateful for the broad campus participation during the process that informed the report, as well as for faculty and staff engagement during the summer to provide feedback to Working IDEAL on their draft recommendations.

We all can be proud of how the report reflects the feedback from students, faculty, and staff about how we value our unique mission and our collective commitment to the College's success, as well as the range of programs and services we offer to support and care for our students. The report identifies these as key strengths in our community. But as the report observes, the newest research and best practices show that there are ways that we can increase inclusion across microclimates on our campus and improve some of our structures, practices, and resources. I am eager now to focus together on digesting and learning from the insights shared by our external partners, and to move toward implementation of recommendations or further study where needed.

As shared last spring, the recommendations from Working IDEAL are organized around seven themes:

1. Shared Values and Belonging
2. Respectful Learning and Working Environment

3. Expanding and Coordinating Resources for Reporting and Response
4. Communication and Transparency
5. Leadership Development, Strategic Capacity, and Support
6. Training and Other Resources for Holistic Prevention
7. Timeline, Reporting, and Accountability

The specific recommendations are guideposts for how we can strengthen our campus climate. But this work will require all of us to work together to build on our strengths, address our weaknesses, and make the changes necessary to ensure that our community becomes a model of inclusion.

Already, I am excited that we have addressed some of the recommendations, and work is under way on others. Some additional recommendations can be implemented in the near term, while others will require a longer term, and still others will need further study and consultation with our community.

I welcome your thoughts on the report's findings and recommendations, as well as on the next steps and implementation plans we have identified. I look forward to hearing from you at Town Hall or via the website [feedback form](#) on the Climate Review page. I also look forward to discussing the report and recommendations during regular campus meetings with student leaders, faculty, and staff. Outlined below are the initial steps we will focus on as we move forward.

### **Outline of Implementation Plans and Next Steps:**

#### **NEAR TERM**

Below are some of the recommendations on which we have already taken action or on which we are making plans to address in the near term.

#### **Leadership & Staff**

The report makes recommendations for creating a long-term staffing plan that ensures we have staff focused on prevention, compliance, and equity and inclusion, as well as full staffing for the Women's Center for Gender Justice. The report also recommends strengthening the mission and structures of the Diversity Committee, and creating faculty and staff diversity plans. In response to these recommendations:

- I am pleased to announce the creation of a new **Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity & Inclusion**. This office will be led by a new vice president, who will be identified through a national search and who will report directly to me. Elevating this role and expanding its focus on equity and inclusion reflects the critical connection between this work and achieving our mission. The creation of this new office and new senior leadership team role also recognizes that a College-wide vision and strategy is needed to effectively build a strong culture of inclusion and belonging at John Jay. The incoming vice president will work to further refine long-term staffing plans for the office that balance both compliance and

prevention functions, as well as to reimagine the mission and structures for the Diversity Committee. During this search, I am grateful for the continued expert leadership of the Office of Compliance & Diversity by **Gabriela Leal**, our Interim Director of Compliance and Diversity, who is joined by **Robert Kim**, Interim Senior Investigator.

[\[Recommendation 3.3, Recommendation 5.2, and Recommendation 6.8\]](#)

- As a first step, **Provost Yi Li** has developed and announced a new five-year faculty hiring plan with a focus on promoting diversity. This faculty hiring plan will be paired with new plans for improving retention and inclusion among the faculty that will be developed with support from the new **Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity & Inclusion**.

[\[Recommendation 5.3\]](#)

- I'm happy to highlight again that the **Women's Center for Gender Justice** has reopened under the leadership of **Professor Erin Thompson**, the new Faculty Director of the Center. Erin is joined by **Michelle Garcia**, who is serving as the Interim Deputy Director, and **Jessica Greenfield**, who continues to serve as the gender-based violence prevention and response advocate in the Center. A search is also being launched for a new role of part-time LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator who will develop and implement a range of programs for LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming students. [\[Recommendation 6.7\]](#)

### **Shared Values**

The report recommends that we develop a statement of the core values that can build community and strengthen belonging, and share those values with new students, staff, and faculty during orientation and onboarding.

- I am pleased to share that a volunteer team of faculty, staff, and students has been formed to articulate a draft values statement that the community can respond to. The team will work under the leadership of **Professor Karen Kaplowitz** with pro bono support from expert facilitators at [Point Made Learning](#). Once finalized, Human Resources and EMSA will work to incorporate these values into onboarding for new faculty and staff, and new student orientation. [\[Recommendation 1.1 and 1.3\]](#)

### **Training**

The report makes a host of recommendations related to training of faculty, staff, and students on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It will take time for us to work together across offices to study these recommendations, identify opportunities for collaboration, prioritize our efforts, and marshal new and existing resources. But we are not waiting:

- The **President's Leadership Council** has begun participating in a multi-part training led by our partners from [Point Made Learning](#). The sessions focused on equity and inclusion, exploring issues around race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, immigration status, and identity. [\[Recommendation 6.3\]](#)

- Next semester, the **Provost** and **Office of Compliance & Diversity** are partnering to pilot training on these topics in academic departments with an external trainer who has expertise in working with faculty. Based on feedback, we will determine how to expand in the following semesters. [[Recommendation 6.3](#)]
- As recommended by the report, all staff members responsible for receiving reports in the **Office of Compliance & Diversity**, **Public Safety**, **HR**, and **EMSA** have received free training in trauma-informed perspectives through a partnership with the NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. [[Recommendation 3.6](#)]
- The **Office of Compliance & Diversity** will work with **EMSA** and **HR** to build additional training on Title IX and non-discrimination policies into upcoming faculty and staff onboardings and new student orientations. [[Recommendation 6.5 and 6.6](#)]

### **Data, Reporting, Communication and Transparency**

The report recommends that John Jay broaden disclosures on climate data and improve its website to support reporting and response. It also recommends incorporating more informal channels and options for reporting and resolving complaints, while further clarifying existing channels and options.

- Our **Communications** team is working with the **Office of Compliance & Diversity** to revise and streamline our web content for the Office of Compliance and Diversity. This page will become part of a comprehensive website “refresh” to better align the College’s web presence with its priorities and streamline the content to provide easier access to key information. [[Recommendation 4.1](#)]
- **DOIT** and the **Office of Compliance & Diversity** are in the final stages of procuring a new tool that will dramatically improve efficiency in investigations, enable better tracking of complaints, and identify emerging trends to support prevention efforts. The tool will also allow the College to report disaggregated data on complaints and investigations. We are committed to instituting these best practices consistent with privacy requirements. [[Recommendation 3.4](#)]
- The **Office of Compliance & Diversity** is developing new pilot protocols for informal options to resolve complaints and we plan to implement an option for anonymous reporting. The office will be working with CUNY and other institutions experienced in these approaches as we refine our processes in these areas. In addition, the refreshed website and other communication tools in development will help further clarify these channels and options for reporting and resolving complaints. [[Recommendation 3.1](#), [Recommendation 4.1](#)]

### **Accountability**

It is vitally important that our work to implement the Climate Review recommendations be inclusive and collaborative. Changing our culture is everyone’s responsibility. I recognize that

change is hard and only possible if we hold ourselves accountable to seeing the results now and in the future. To ensure that we are making progress, we will measure our progress regularly and report on those success markers on this webpage and in messages to the community, and we will remain transparent if we need to do better. If you have questions or suggestions regarding accountability, please submit them via the website [feedback form](#) on the Climate Review page. [\[Recommendation 7.1\]](#)

## LONGER TERM

There are a number of additional recommendations that we will move forward, but which will require a longer time period to implement:

- **Training:** As noted above, given the number of recommendations related to training, we have work to do to support additional, effective training programs that foster and sustain a respectful workplace and learning environment. While some training efforts are already underway or planned, it will take time and coordination from the new **Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity & Inclusion** to work across offices. This collaborative work will need to creatively leverage existing efforts and new funding sources to support additional training and resources for our community members in and out of the classroom. This may include tools and training to apply shared values, teaching guides, feedback tools, peer coaching, elements of classwork and curriculum. This effort will build on work already in progress, such as work in the Teaching and Learning Center that is focused on enriching the inclusivity of the curriculum and supporting culturally sustaining pedagogical strategies. [\[Recommendation 1.2, Recommendation 2.3, Recommendation 5.1, Recommendation 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6\]](#)
- **Annual Reporting:** We are also committed to creating and publishing an annual report from the new **Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity & Inclusion** on our complaint data to provide greater transparency around the enforcement of policies. [\[Recommendation 4.2\]](#)

## FURTHER STUDY NEEDED

There are a number of areas where further study and consultation with our community is needed to determine next steps. This includes considering the recommendations for creating a voluntary statement of respectful conduct, exploring options to address bullying and abusive behavior that harm the community, including through formalized reporting channels that fall outside the scope of the Office of Compliance & Diversity, as well as evaluating the potential value of applying the Behavioral Intervention Team model to address disruptive conduct in the workplace. These conversations will be led by the new **Office of Diversity, Compliance, Equity & Inclusion**. [\[Recommendation 2.1 and 2.2, Recommendation 3.2 and 3.5, Recommendation 5.3\]](#)

This is an important moment for us and I know we are all dedicated to seizing this opportunity to nurture a respectful and inclusive campus climate that we can all be proud of. I thank you

again for your participation and contributions to this collaborative effort and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Karol V. Mason*

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