



## Office of the President

August 31, 2020

Dear students, faculty, and staff:

As we enter our third week of classes, I want to thank everyone for all you have done to enable us to be on campus this fall and to adhere to our health and safety protocols.

Over the summer, I created the Moving Forward Together Steering Committee and charged them with developing and recommending a comprehensive plan that puts into action Presbyterian College's commitment to create a more perfect and inclusive campus for all. The work of the Committee was reviewed by the College's leadership and Board of Trustees. The Board's resolution receiving the report of the Moving Forward Together Steering Committee may be found in the Diversity and Inclusion section of PC's website. The Board also asked that I provide recommendations for actions based on the Committee's report which I did on August 6, 2020 by:

- Issuing a Statement of Accountability and Apology; and
- Sharing a schedule of actions to implement various recommendations of the Steering Committee.

Today, I want to provide you with an update on work being undertaken to implement *Moving Forward Together*. Initially I committed to focus on the following recommendations that could be developed and implemented quickly:

- Adopting a definition of racism;
- Annual Training in diversity, inclusion, equity and anti-racism for all faculty, staff, administrators, and students; and
- The creation of a Student Conduct Committee charged with developing programs and policies to guide situations involving student conduct.

As noted in my earlier communication, I support the definition of racism proposed by the *Moving Forward Together* committee. As such it will serve as one of the key components of our future actions.

I have also asked Dr. Booker Ingram, Dr. Joy Smith, and Ms. Barbara Fayad to recommend a training program and members to be considered for the Student Conduct Committee. They have made their recommendations and I have accepted the following:

- **Annual Training:** We are in the process of entering into a contract with EverFi for online training for all students, staff (including administrators) and faculty. Work is beginning under the leadership of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Campus Life, and the Vice President for Human Resources and Title IX to begin the installation of the training modules, developing the processes for implementation, and opening the courses for campus wide training this fall.

- **Creation of Student Conduct Committee:** I am pleased to announce that the following members of our campus community have agreed to serve on the Student Conduct Committee:
  - Drew Peterson, Associate Dean of Students, who will serve as the convener of the committee in its work this fall.
  - Rev. Racquel Gill, Associate Chaplain, Office of Religious Life and Multicultural Engagement
  - Dom Jones, Residence Hall Advisor
  - Kennedy Wright, Officer - Multicultural Student Union
  - Noah Burkett, Senator - Student Government Association
  - Dr. Kate Anderson, Assistant Professor of Psychology
  - Dr. Kirk Nolan, Associate Professor of Religion
  - Dr. Austin Shull, Assistant Professor of Biology
  - Dr. Philip Perdue, Assistant Professor of English and Communications
  - Marissa Buck, Assistant Director of Student Involvement (Greek Life), Campus Life
  - Officer Jon Baker or a designee, Campus Police
    - Dr. Ingram, Dr. Smith and Ms. Fayad will serve as *ex officio* advisors to the committee

Please join me in thanking those who have agreed to serve and to undertake this important work.

As noted in my August 6 communication, between today and December 31, 2020 the following actions will also occur:

- The Student Conduct Committee will begin to create policies and guidelines that reflect our priorities;
- We will examine policies on interviewing and identifying candidates for positions, though I will note that we need to make sure any policy changes are compatible with legal requirements or other regulations;
- We will explore what is involved with greater transparency on bias incident reports, but again we need to make sure that any policy changes are compatible with legal requirements or other regulations, especially in terms of maintaining required privacy for those involved;
- We will share recommendations on curricular changes with the faculty.

While there is much work to be done for the remainder of 2020 and beyond, we are taking actions that commit us to *Moving Forward Together* and making PC a welcoming place for all. Each of us plays a key part in the success of this work. It requires each of us to have patience and persistence but most importantly we must be willing to listen to each other. We must first listen to understand others, not to respond or judge them. I challenge each of us to spend some time getting to better know someone who is different from you in ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or who has beliefs that are different from yours. This will enable us to move forward and come together, appreciating and respecting our differences.

Again thank you for your commitment to making each of us and PC better.