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Update on equity programs in response to "I AM U-URI Unity in Difference"

Thomas R. Dougan
University of Rhode Island

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To: I AM U – URI Unity In Difference
From: Thomas R. Dougan, Vice President for Student Affairs
Date: June 29, 2010
Re: Update on diversity-inclusion efforts

I hope you are enjoying your summer and not working too hard.

The following is a summary of efforts and plans in progress that may be of interest to you.

During student orientation, Provost DeHayes distributed to all students the book “A Hope in the Unseen” as well as bookmarks that had the URI Cornerstones inscribed. Chip Yensan and Jason Pina talked with parents of these students and presented the Cornerstones emphasizing respect for differences, personal responsibility and respect for property. Framed copies of the Cornerstones are in the process of being distributed to offices and buildings throughout campus and each residence hall will have a poster version of the Cornerstones placed in a visible location for fall opening.

The Student Affairs Division, led by Housing and Residential Life, has made at least \$30,000 available for diversity programming for next year and at least a portion of these dollars will focus on programs conducted by majority and minority student groups working together.

The Bias Response Team, led by Dan Graney, is finalizing their work and response protocols should be in place for Fall Term as well as a process for tracking these complaints and compiling this data.

Chip Yensan has been working closely with the Student Senate leadership on the addition of basketball and sand volleyball courts. At least three sites have been identified and we are optimistic these will become a reality next year.

The Student Affairs Technology and Communication Committee continues to work toward a University-wide calendar and better ways to communicate with students. Recognizing that they couldn't do this work themselves, they have joined forces with University College, the Development Division, Information and Technology and others to address this University-wide issue.

Visual reinforcement of inclusion, diversity, respect and civility are being developed and will be displayed throughout our residence halls, as part of HRL's “building great communities” theme for the coming academic year.

I will be asking the Student Affairs Professional Development Committee to focus on Cultural Competencies and building an inclusive campus environment as an overall theme in their work. This summer we are hosting a videoconference that focuses on 10 items one needs for a diverse and inclusive campus community.

President Dooley has requested funding for a Chief Diversity Officer for FY 2012. The Strategic Budget and Planning Council will be making final FY12 budget recommendations by the end of July.

I also encourage you to follow up on several of your other proposals: social justice living-learning community with Mr. Yensan, fall retreat with me, gender neutral restrooms with Mr. Yensan, etc. etc. Let me know if I can assist in any way.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Enjoy the rest of your summer.