Date: July 12, 2011
To: Student Focus Group Research Team
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    Dr. Anne Tellett, David Comer, Lea Carr, Hli Vang
From: Campus Climate Leadership Team
    Chancellor Lendley Black, Dr. Jackie Millslagle, Dr. Bilin Tsai, Dr. Vince Magnuson,
    Dr. Sue Maher, Judith Karon, Gibran Hashmi, John King, Bill Wade, Dr. John Arthur,
    Susana Pelayo-Woodward
Re: Response to 2010-2011 Campus Climate Survey - Focus Group Report

Over the past year, UMD has initiated a dialogue and engaged the campus in a critical conversation about campus climate. In order to better understand the experiences of African American, Latino/Chicano, Asian, American Indian and International students at UMD, a team of faculty and staff was commissioned to conduct a series of focus groups. The 2010-2011 Campus Climate Survey - Focus Group Report you submitted last month is both a culmination of your research and a starting point for future efforts to advance inclusion and social justice at UMD.

Thank you for your considerable effort, extensive analysis, and excellent synthesis of the five focus group discussions you conducted last spring. The results of this research project as presented in the 2010-2011 Campus Climate Survey - Focus Group Report captures the experiences and perceptions of African American, Latino/Chicano, Asian, American Indian and International students at UMD. This response seeks to convey our commitment to create a learning and working environment that embraces the values of equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the university, and to understand and eliminate those elements of our campus climate that exclude, disrespect, and undermine the success of all of our students especially underrepresented students. Secondly, we affirm our intent to use your recommendations to inform future work. Finally, we wish to describe some of the progress made this year within the broad framework of the Campus Climate Initiative.

Your findings clearly show that there is room for improvement with regards to creating an inclusive campus climate. Many of the students have experienced feelings of isolation and vulnerability. They often experience the campus as an unwelcoming place with limited support for and understanding of what it is like to be a member of a racial, ethnic, national, etc. minority group. The Report presents several specific recommendations in the areas of policy, curriculum, workforce diversity, community relationships and resource utilization. We have discussed these recommendations and incorporated many of them in our priorities for 2011-12. In addition, we
recognize the value of this work and intend to build a robust and accountable system in order to assess the campus climate on a regular basis.

That being said, we are encouraged that a number of students also expressed positive aspects of their experience at UMD. Some are impressed with the recent efforts of the institution to build a better climate at the university. Others stated that many of their instructors created an atmosphere where diversity was discussed and respected. Students also mentioned the positive role that diverse faculty play in creating an inclusive community. In addition, students noted the role that the Multicultural Center plays in providing programs and activities that help educate the larger campus community on issues of diversity. These are strengths we need to recognize and enhance.

The 2011 Campus Climate Study Focus Groups Report has strengthened our understanding of the campus climate with regards to inclusivity. We note that many of the recommendations align with projects that were initiated during 2010-11. Some examples are listed below:

- **Multicultural Living Community**

  A Multicultural Living Community (MLC) has been created for fall 2011. The MLC is open to incoming first-year freshmen students interested in a multicultural living and learning experience. Students who are chosen for this living/learning community will engage in opportunities to explore complex issues of identity and ethnicity, will reach into and beyond their own cultural background, and learn about the experiences of others.

- **Training**

  Kathy Obear of Alliance for Change provided a training/orientation program for staff and faculty. The goal of this program is to intentionally build institutional capacity and it represents a sustainable effort to embed the values of social justice into the work and training of students and staff in Admissions, Housing and Residence Life, Athletics, Office of Cultural Diversity, First Year Experience and Students in Transition, Recreational Sports Outdoor Program, Kirby Student Center, Kirby Leadership Program and the new faculty orientation program.

- **Diversity Post-Doctoral Fellows**

  Three Diversity Post-Doctoral Fellows have been hired for academic year 2011-12 and will be affiliated with the Departments of English, Sociology-Anthropology, Foreign Languages and Literatures, and History.
Review and Update Policies and Procedures

Considerable work is ongoing in two important areas: reporting incidents that undermine and degrade the campus climate and the academic search process. Revised procedures in both areas will be implemented this summer accompanied by extensive websites.