

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | December 2019

The University of Michigan is well known for its long-standing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the University of Michigan-Flint, our continued progress as a public institution of higher learning that serves not only our students but the Flint region and the State of Michigan depends on our ability to create and sustain an environment that ensures every member of our community has the opportunity to contribute and succeed. Educator, philosopher, and former University of Michigan professor John Dewey reminds us about the importance of *environment* – we do not educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment; whether we let chance environments do the job or design environments for this purpose makes a great difference.

At UM-Flint, broadening access and inclusivity are keys to creating the environment for education and success. Our student groups and faculty/staff committees continue to work to make UM-Flint a vibrant community of people from many backgrounds where everyone feels a sense of belonging. And we must seek not only to leverage institutional resources across the University of Michigan but also to share best practices and knowledge that allows us to be leaders and best.

In this spirit, today I am pleased to announce our renewed commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Michigan-Flint through the formation of the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee**. Drawing from the model and principles in place at UM-Ann Arbor, UM-Flint's DEI Committee will lead broad-based institutional efforts to further promote an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all members of our campus community, with the specific charge of developing and advancing a DEI action plan at UM-Flint. This plan will include specific, achievable, and sustainable short-, medium-, and long-term goals and actions as established by the committee.

To lead campus-wide DEI efforts, Dr. David Luke will serve as Interim Campus Diversity Officer, effective immediately. In this role, Dr. Luke will provide overall leadership for a comprehensive approach to build a vibrant culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at UM-Flint. Dr. Luke will partner with key campus and external constituents to identify training and development initiatives and cultivate learning and work environments in areas such as cultural competency, gender differences, disability, power and equity issues, inclusion, and other topics designed to increase awareness and support DEI values.

Dr. Luke and a member of the faculty will co-chair the DEI Committee. Committee membership will be comprised of a DEI Lead from each school and college, each university division, faculty and staff councils, the undergraduate and graduate student bodies, as well as the Provost's Office. The committee co-chairs will report on the committee's progress to the Chancellor and Cabinet. The DEI Committee faculty co-chair and membership will be announced in January. The committee will begin its work in the Winter 2020 term.

The work formerly led by the Women's Commission and the Diversity Council will be integrated into this broader DEI Committee structure and scope, and will help to inform its work. Major themes that emerged from the 2016 Campus Climate Assessment Survey will be reviewed by the DEI Committee and used in the development of the future strategic direction of DEI actions and initiatives at UM-Flint. The work of the committee will be further guided by foundational underpinnings of DEI best practices as well as through the contributions of content and subject-matter experts throughout the process.

As we transition into this new campus-wide structure, I would like to acknowledge members of both the Women's Commission and Diversity Council. Although they will no longer exist as independent entities, the

work of both groups contributed to the foundation of the DEI Committee and I thank them for their service over the years.

Moving forward, all DEI Committee-related information can be found at the following link: [UMFlintDEI](#).

As we approach a new decade, there is no greater work to be done than to foster the conditions and create the environment for our students, faculty, and staff to learn, grow, and thrive. The work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will be critical to our success and is our collective work together. Thank you in advance for your engagement with this important initiative.

Best wishes and Go Blue!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deba". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Deba Dutta