



*Office of the President*

September 30, 2020

Black Unity Forum

c/o:

Sky Arbuckle

Lexxi Clinton

Emily Newsome

Avery Pennywell

Jasmine M. Tobias

Bri Tollie

Jessica Dixon Weaver

Ashton Woods

Dear Black Unity Forum Members,

Thank you for the important conversations about race on campus, and for your dedication to making SMU a better place for all of us. I thank you for coming together, combining your similar concerns within SMU's Black community.

Since receiving the action plan from the Black Unity Forum, the President's Executive Council, the deans, the Chief Diversity Officer and I have been reviewing the four goals as well as the action items and desired outcomes. We have responded to each of the goals and proposed action items in the same spirit in which they were presented, moved and encouraged by your statement, "We deeply care about our university." And we commit to working with you over the coming weeks, months and years "until every Mustang enjoys equally the value they possess at SMU."

Attached to this letter is a Statement of Commitment from the Board of Trustees, passed Friday, September 18, expressing its commitment to racial inclusion and access. The Board affirms its support of the Administration's work with the Black Unity Forum to address the issues raised in the Action Plan and thereby improve the quality of life for Black members of our community. This Statement of Commitment underscores the seriousness that the entire leadership of the University brings to making significant, permanent improvements in the quality of life and opportunities for the Black community, which will also benefit other underrepresented groups on our campus.

I am grateful for your willingness to demonstrate your concern for SMU by leading us in these conversations about race and what it means to be Black@SMU. This was not easy, but your service to this University will make us better in every way.

The conversations we have had over this summer were important to moving us toward this reality. I look forward to the continuation of our work together.

Best Wishes,

R. Gerald Turner

**World Changers Shaped Here**