

Eagle Nation:

I promised as we began this academic year that I would remain in touch about our efforts to build a safe, diverse and inclusive environment at Georgia Southern University.

Many of you have told me and other campus leaders that you are ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work in support of this effort throughout our Georgia Southern community. But you also worry that too few of us are listening, or that too little will be done to move us forward together.

We need to get to the root of those concerns, and the issues that feed them.

We are taking action.

A nationally-recognized consultant will be asked to assess our current strengths and weaknesses related to issues of diversity and inclusion.

Your opinions and involvement in this process are vital and necessary. The consultant is being directed to talk to you, our entire University community, through a series of town hall meetings on all three campuses.

A comprehensive report will be developed and shared with you for feedback before formal adoption. The report will serve as a roadmap for our efforts, and give us a way to hold ourselves accountable for our progress.

Parallel to this opportunity, we want to hear more about your experiences and what you think should be done. Planned workshops, activities for students and faculty presentations will additionally take place throughout the year across our campuses to encourage conversations and the sharing of ideas.

Transparency in how we do this is required.

I have directed that a link to “[Diversity and Inclusion](#)” resources be prominently displayed on the University homepage. The site will include news and events as well as information to educate, inspire and create dialog as well as provide opportunities for feedback.

You will also receive monthly emails updating you on our progress as well as related news and upcoming events.

As I have said, there is no question that as a public institution of higher education, we believe in the First Amendment and allowing our students, faculty and staff to express themselves, their ideas and their opinions.

There is also no question that as a public institution, we will follow all required laws and policies that protect both free expression as well as campus well-being and safety.

Diversity and inclusion reflect this institution's core values. We have an opportunity to strengthen those values, and I am asking you to help us.

This work for many will not be easy or quick. Change never is. It may also make us uncomfortable. But I am asking each of us to be honest, to engage with each other, to listen and to try to make sense of what we are doing now and what we may need to do to be better.

We will share more over the coming weeks and months. Thank you for all you do to make our Eagle Nation soar.

Sincerely,  
Shelley C. Nickel