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Stetson University
Campus Climate Open Forum 2
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6:00 p.m.

Welcome!

>> Good evening, Hatters and thank you for tuning in to this second open forum for diversity and inclusion and campus climate. I'm Chris Roellke the tenth President of the Stetson University and also professor of American studies and thank you for taking time out of your schedule to join us. I have roughly 15 minutes of remarks focused on my early learnings at Stetson, some of my own thoughts about diversity and inclusion and outline important commitments I and some of my colleagues are prepared to make as we try to move Hatter Nation forward on issue of inclusion and diversity. I also want to thank Luis Maldonado Stetson class of 2001 for serving as our moderator and we will hear from Rina Tovar Arroyo, Ranell Mason and our Vice President for student life Lua Hancock. Should you have questions at any point tonight please put them in the chat box and Luis will bring them forward during the final half of our time together. You should also know in advance that I also welcome at any time individual interactions, questions, concerns, et cetera and you should feel free to reach me directly at President@stetson.edu. I may not get back to you right away but I will pledge to get back to you soon. I welcome any and all of your questions. In advance thank you for indulging me in some opening remarks. First as many of

our conversations moving forward will center on issues of identity, on sense of belonging and on the lived experience at Stetson I do want to acknowledge my own identity in these conversations. While I have dedicated many decades of work in education to promote equity and access in education, particularly as it pertains to finance, I do want to acknowledge the many advantages I have enjoyed throughout my life because of components of my identity, including but not limited to my gender, my race, my sexuality, my religion, my family's access to education and health care than a host of other sociopolitical components of my upbringing and my lived experience. It's also my belief that leaders in all settings must be willing to demonstrate humility, vulnerability and perhaps most importantly particularly as a leader of an educational institution demonstrate a commitment to continuous listening, continuous reflection and continuous learning. It's also my hope that we commit ourselves to this, a commitment to continuous learning, continuous reflection and continuous listening and also commit ourselves to the important characteristic and disposition of humility. Tonight it's also important that I acknowledge all the dedicated work that has taken place long before my arrival at Stetson, with regard to inclusion and diversity. Tonight does mark the 16th consecutive week we have held webinars to keep our community informed in real-time of developments associated with Stetson's COVID-19 response, preparations for next week's 2020 election, our experiences within intercollegiate athletics -- our partnerships with public health officials and civic leaders and Stetson's commitment to diversity and inclusion around racial justice and how our students, faculty and staff experiencing life at Stetson in a context of a once in a century set of challenges. In some cases we

have succeeded beyond expectations, in other cases we have struggled or perhaps even fallen short and had to rethink our strategies, deployment of resources and our collective vision moving forward. I have learned many things during my first 120 days here at Stetson and I would like to share a few of those learnings with you. Stetson generally but I believe importantly has embraced themes of kindness, empathy, and agency and an exceptionally challenging context, a context that is challenging educationally, residentially and also economically. I'm pleased to report due to careful planning and compliance we have performed better than anticipated in our response to COVID-19, however it's also important to acknowledge that considerable anxiety and public health concerns persist at Stetson and nationally and we must remain vigilant in mitigating the transmission of this virus. Both external and internal events centered on racial justice have amplified, very happily amplified from divergent political perspectives and as I mentioned earlier the uncertainty in next week's election has contributed considerably to additional anxiety. I'm also pleased to report in my learning here that Stetson does enjoy a generally positive and collaborative relationship with the local community as evidenced by open communication, cooperation with local and regional health providers and officials, city and county government and local law enforcement. However we also need to acknowledge due in part to the sociopolitical context we are experiencing is less welcoming for some members of our community than for others. And finally despite considerable efforts over time to promote equity and inclusion, the data and associated narratives do point differential experiences at Stetson based on a number of demographic characteristics, most notably race and gender but also employment category. The

way in which we have been dialoguing and developing action plans around inclusion and diversity is as follows: The central question has been, how do we use kindness, empathy and agency to first, meet the needs of particular communities, second, provide as many opportunities as possible for multicultural exchange, and third, how do we create an environment in which all members of our community feel valued and can participate fully in engaging pluralistically to make our community stronger? Finally I would like to assert that like our approach to battling a global pandemic this work at Stetson in my view is about promoting public health and safety. Particularly for the most vulnerable among us. And so with a Stetson education we move forward for all. I think if we think about these issues in the frame of public health and safety we are much more likely to go under the resources necessary to move us forward and much more likely to be experiencing a collaborative spirit. In short, I would like to thank you for the opportunity of affording me to lead Stetson and I really and genuinely am beyond excited about our future work together and also want to thank you, thank all of you for the considerable time and effort you have expended to promote the health and safety of our community, including around issues of race and inequality. Each of you has played and will continue to play a critical role in ensuring we move our students forward in their path to their degrees even in the context of a global pandemic and in a sociopolitical unrest. I would like to conclude my remarks with reiterating the commitment I made as your President as we develop a vision and concrete strategies for our work together. I commit to practicing kindness, empathy and agency, in other words shared ownership in all interactions with the Office of the President. As I reported last time I commit to

devoting 100 percent of the President's discretionary budget to student, faculty, staff and community led diversity and inclusion efforts up to \$50,000 annually for at least the next 3 years. In the first year I'm pleased to commit half of this amount to the student life area, specifically the Office of diversity than inclusion and the other half to the academic enterprise, teaching resources devoted to issues of inclusion and diversity. I have committed to creating a very high level President's advisory council on diversity and inclusion to promote engagement of prominent aluminum my and community members that reflect the Stetson student population. The President's advisory council will consist of a combination of appointees from the faculty, the student body, the staff, alumni, the Board of Trustees and very importantly in my view, members of our local communities in Gulfport and in Deland. I commit to supporting an implement 360-degree professional performance evaluation for senior leaders that report to the President and also commit to 360-degree evaluation for myself. It's critical all senior leaders continuously reflect on their own behaviors and hold ourselves accountable to all members of the community we serve. I commit to sustaining and consistent and visible communication channels on monk and between all constituents of the University, including students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni, Board of Trustees and community/regional partners. Tonight is an example of one mechanism for keeping those lines of communication open and there are many others. Our last open forum I also outlined a sample key commitments each of my senior colleagues has made to move us forward. Our faculty and students through the senate and student government association have also been deeply immersed themselves in developing a set of commitments and strategies,

including statements on anti- racism and curricular and cocurricular initiatives moving forward with all deliberate speed. Finally, I'm pleased to report tonight that I just signed a national pledge along with hundreds of other chief Executive officers on supporting more inclusive workplaces. This pledge among other things commits Stetson to making our workplace to having complex and often difficult conversations about diversity and inclusion. To implement and expand anti-bias and anti- racist training, to share broadly both best and also unsuccessful practices and to make inclusion and diversity a key strategic priority with our Board of Trustees. Again, thank you for joining us tonight. As I have been preaching since my arrival at Stetson on July 1, kindness not only matters, it enables us to listen, to engage with others unlike ourselves and consider the past we can forge together to make our community in fact the world, a better place. Again thank you, it is the greatest honor and privilege of my life to be serving as your President and I look forward to your questions tonight and always. If I can have others join me in the screen I have some wonderful introductions to make of some very important Stetson colleagues. I'm pleased to report to you tonight that joining us an extraordinary Stetson volunteer, Luis Maldonado who currently serves as chair of the student affairs committee on the Stetson University Board of Trustees. He is from Memphis, Tennessee, earned BA in English in 2001. He was Magna Cum Laude and honored as class commencement speaker and also a recipient of awards for social activism and public service and named one of the state's top 20 student leaders by Florida student leader magazine. Following Stetson he graduated from University of Florida college of law, cum laude where he was a two bar fellow and public service fellow. He was also honored for volunteering

hundreds of hours for pro bono service through the pro bono project. Luis is passionate by paying it forward, which he has done through student and professional mentoring and endowing scholarships in memory of his two mentors. One at Stetson and one at the University of north Florida. Luis has contributed to the Stetson community as a guest and keynote speaker and through support of Master of Fine Arts of the Americas and the Davis endowed scholarship, and many funds and initiatives and also to the history and English departments. He's also an avid athletics fan. Also supported the woman's lacrosse and men and women's cross country teams and men and women volleyball. Before 2017 Luis served on Stetson college's arts and sciences advisory board for 5 years, 2012-2017 and was part of the I know inaugural class. Rina Tovar Arroyo has been an active participant in these webinars we conducted over the last 16 weeks including 7 with the alums around the country. We were joking I hope she's not counting her volunteer hours at Stetson because they're quite considerable. She graduated from the School of Business with BBA in 2000 in management and marketing and certified paralegal for Mason international corporation in Tampa, Florida. After graduate interesting Stetson she joined banker's life insurance group in the annuities department and she worked as a compliance coordinator, analyst and paralegal for the headquarters. In 2009 she moved on to be a corporate paralegal in clearwater, Florida and joined Mason corporation in 2011. She's a member of the national association of legal assistants and the Tampa Bay paralegal association and served as a member of Stetson's alumni board since 2006 and now serves as its chair. A familiar face to many welcome back Rina Tovar Arroyo assistant Vice President for development alumni engagement and as

you know she's been at Stetson since 2005, she strives to build authentic relationships with aluminum my so she understands where their talents and resources might connect with the University to have the greatest impact on the current student experience. Before joining Stetson Rina was at another private institution throughout the country and in 2013 flown was presented with region 3 award for outstanding service to students. My thanks to my colleagues and friends who are on the screen for joining us tonight. Go Hatters!

>> Go Hatters. Thank you Dr. Roellke for that wonderful introduction. Good evening everybody, I'll start since I was the last one introduced. I'm so thrilled to be here with you this evening. As Dr. Roellke said I'm currently serving as the assistant Vice President for development and now I am also serving as the interim Director of the Office of parent and alumni engagement. While the University conducts a responsible transparent and comprehensive search with a diverse candidate pool for the new Director of the Office of alumni and parent engagement. In this role I have had the joy of reconnecting with many alumni who I have not seen for years and that has been a blessing in the past two weeks since I've been serving in this role. Since the beginning of our new pandemic virtual world the alumni and parent engagement team has hosted 2-3 virtual events each week for the Hatter nation and I'm very proud of the hard work they've done and the neat part is that numerous alumni and faculty members have served as panelists and guest speakers for most of those events. And now to wrap up the team and the alumni board are moving full-steam ahead for virtual homecoming 2020 which is next week. We're all really excited about it. And I'm so happy to be here with you, again this evening and I'm going to turn it over to

my good friend Ranell Mason who is our alumni board President to greet you next.

>> Thank you Rina, I appreciate it. Good evening everyone. I'm also glad and honored you're joining us this evening. Piggy-back off Rina before I provide an update regarding the alumni board I would like to personally invite you to register and attend homecoming 2020. This year all events are virtual so no matter where you are, where you find yourself, I hope you will be able to join us. We're going to place the link for registration and information in the chat box. It should be on the right side of your screen so if you look there, the link will be provided. Now I would like to provide a quick update regarding the great work the alumni board has been doing since April with regards to better engagement of our diverse alumni network. April a decision was made the bylaws needed to be revisited and it was determined with the changes taking place around the world, at the University, multicultural committee under the board was greatly needed. Visioning and planning work went into the structure and plans for the committee over the summer. On September 18, 2020 new bylaws were passed which include a multicultural committee. All very excited and if you allow me to share the purpose, mission and structure of the committee. The purpose of the committee is to strengthen the bond between diverse alumni, students and University through strategies, programs and initiatives. Alumni association and its board. The mission of the committee is to uphold the welfare of multicultural alumni a University fostering a nor more inclusive community. Lastly but certainly not any less multicultural committee will be comprised of up to 8 members. This will include a committee chair, alumni Board Members and associate members in and around the Stetson community. The development of the committee is in its

infant Z we're making great strides to have this committee formed in December. Once all committees have been formed we'll post information for each committee and its representative chair on the alumni board website and also we will provide this link in the chat box so if you would like to save it and revisit it sometime in early December we should have everything on there. And lastly, if you would like to submit a nomination for the alumni board, the multicultural committee please do so, we have a forum that is available online. The forum is a web page so welcome to as many nominations as you would like and we provided this link in the chat box for you this evening. Thank you again for your time. I look forward to seeing you all soon and certainly at homecoming 2020 on the Stetson campus. Thanks so much and back to you Luis.

>> Good evening, thank you so much for joining us. We're definitely excited to have you. To sort of piggy-back on some of the items Dr. Roellke touched on in terms of my background I'm presently a member of the Board of Trustees but specifically the chair of the student affairs committee which is a committee that's near and dear to my heart because I was very actively involved in all of the diversity related affinity groups on campus. So I was part of the second iteration of what is now kaleidoscope but it was common ground where I served as President. I helped with my roommates at the time establish a Hispanic organization call Hola where I served as President of that as well for a time. I did everything from help bring the aids quilt to the campus to bring Stetson's first drag show to the campus. I participated in the Indian student association and their dances of their various festivals. And so I am all about diversity and inclusion and thrilled that we're doing this. I'm a first generation college student so I'm, you

know, working on items related to serve those students as well and most recently I decided to make a gift to the University to help it study its multicultural history to examine what it's done in its past as well as help us chart a course for the future. So I will kind of open it up first with a video that we received from one of our Hatters, one of our alums. Ella. Will you please key that video?

>> Hi President Roellke, my name is Ella Shepherd the class of 2010. I have two sort of points to make today. I was really outraged so I was looking for policies that the University holds that would make it inappropriate, make it so the University could hold her accountable for this and so we the community that cares about Stetson could also point to this and say, no, see this is not okay. But I didn't find anything like that and I'm just curious why doesn't Stetson have a policy in their student code of conduct that condemns racist behavior? Also, that same code of conduct should be in the employee handbook, the handbook is not available to the public P I did search for that. Irrelevant haven't able to find it. I think the employee code -- the employee manual, employee conduct should be public and I'm curious as to why it's not. Mostly curious as to why there is not a policy in student code of conduct that condemns racist behavior.

>> Thank you very much for submitting the question in advance and they're great questions and I'll try to respond as best I can. First, you're absolutely correct there should be stated policies and procedures when we do have incidents of bias and hurtful behavior and student community standards we call it we have a section of harmful behaviors which I think does include language around behaviors that should not be tolerated in our community. I think in particular, to respond to your question more fully, it would be helpful for us to have additional policies,

particularly as they pertain to social media which often takes on a life of its own with regard to language and behaviors that can be painful for members of our community. So I'm eager for us to move forward on being a bit more specific when it comes to issues of anti- racism and what our expectations are both in person and in virtual formats. We've had some unfortunate incidents on campus through Zoom bombings, et cetera so I think it's important for us to keep those policies and procedures modernized. With regard to the employee piece I did consult in advance with our Provost and I think we would like to acknowledge that we have some good language in there around making sure that all employees abide by our stated mission and values but we probably have more work to do when it comes to actually having anti- racist language in our employee handbook and I personally don't have any objection to it being made public on our website. I think that could be helpful for future employees of Stetson to be able to see what our policies and procedures are. So I personally have no objection to that so it's a very, very good suggestion. Ella was also kind enough to indicate a second question which was about pointing to some of our peer institutions doing some excellent work with regard to inclusion and diversity and specifically spoke to some of the strong efforts that are being made at one of our partner institutions it, Valencia college. So I would like Lua Hancock to join us because she has further insights on our ongoing collaborations with Valencia.

>> Thank you and I wish I could see all the beautiful faces of our alumni. I miss you. It's not homecoming just isn't going to be the same. But I will share that I appreciate Ella's question and emailed her back but to share with everyone Valencia has a program called the peace and justice institute and if you're in

central Florida I highly recommend you check it out. Their programming, workshops almost all which is almost free to the community, some online and some in-person are fantastic. Last summer 2019 we sent a cohort of faculty and staff to the educator's institute which is an intensive 1 week seminar for justice in the classroom and I've gone to their diversity week which is sort of like our values day, extended on their campuses and we hosted the peace and justice institute faculty and leaders on Stetson's campus in 2019 as well. And we've been discussing ways that potentially the students who graduate, that program is just a certificate program at this point but students that graduate in peace and justice could have an academic pipeline to come to Stetson potentially in our honors program so they met with some of our faculty and staff and obviously COVID has us a little distracted on some of the curricular initiatives but I look forward to getting back to them to work on what the next steps could be in partnership with the peace and justice institute. So thanks for the suggestion, Ella.

>> Lua thank you and if I may chime in with a little more context on that. One thing I'm deeply passionate about and Luis and Lua both know this is I think there's also great potential to do greater collaborations with local area partners such as Valencia and Daytona state and the City of Deland and the county more broadly and our community in Gulfport so it's a personal passion of mine to proceed with the gaps between theory and practice to give the students the opportunity to engage with the local area community so I hope you will take that in the spirit which it's intended I think your comments and questions are spot on. We don't necessarily have to reinvent the wheel, some things here in Stetson which is one of the reasons I signed the CEO pledge. We will be honest about

our failures we're going to be honest about our successes and I think it would be great for Stetson to champion the things we do well, such as community based learning. I think that's a huge part of our component here at Stetson to try to put ourselves on the map in important inclusion and diversity work. I've gone on too long but again thank you Ella thank you for taking the time to submit a video and encourage others to do so as well.

>> Yes, thank you Ella. The next question we have up is from our Law School campus and the student asks, how do we as students work to indicate to our peers that we actually do not all just get along and that we're concerned with more than just passing the bar when some of us are in such a minority position on campus? If it's not important for them to know now, it won't be important in the future either when they're representing minority clients in the future.

>> Yep, excellent question. I also appreciate that it was coming from the college of law. College of law in some ways in my early time here has really done some very, very interesting work on inclusion and diversity, including some fascinating work around green benches that have a very controversial history in that region of Florida. And I just think that some of the creativity and innovation that's coming out of the Law School with regard to inclusion and diversity is terrific. That's a side note. Let me address this question specifically. I would like to refer back to my early remarks which I think it's really critical for all of us to -- the dispositions are just as important I think as whatever particular policy tweak or strategic initiative we might undertake, humility, kindness, empathy and the ability to listen. And the ability to try to put yourself in someone else's shoes. Those are dispositions. Right? Those are more than an educational institution so

we should be able to share divergent perspectives on critical issues in our community whether they be about race, sexuality or religious affiliation, so I encourage all of us which has been difficult to do during this anxious time of the pandemic, to really take a step back and take the opportunity to listen. I really think that will go a tremendously long way toward allowing for divergent voices to be heard for those that have been historically disenfranchised to be heard so I'm really hoping all of us in an educational institution would be open to hearing and learning about those divergent perspectives. I know it's a more generalized answer but I would like to make the case that the dispositions we bring, the difficult conversations are just as important as the conversations themselves. If I'm making any sense at all on the screen. Which is the idea that we bring us our full selves to the conversation. We bring our humble selves to the conversation. We bring our openness to the conversation. We take the time to listen and make sure that all these voices are heard, including among staff members, including among folks that are junior faculty, folks that are perhaps even adjunct faculty who don't have the same protections for their voice that others in our community might have. So again I hope you'll tolerate a more generalized answer to that question but I think the dispositions are vitally important to move Stetson forward both at the college of law and the Deland campus.

>> Thank you Dr. Roellke and thank you to the student who submitted that question. Another question related to actually from the Law School and it's asking about when there are inappropriate actions that students take whether it's about open hatred or bigotry, what does Stetson do and how does it show it's taking prejudice, racism bigotry on campus seriously?

>> That's great and I think that's very much connected to the prior question in my view. We do have a more robust processes than in the past I think and I want to commend, I said in my opening remarks there's been a lot of work that preceded me at Stetson and I want to acknowledge that work. Creating a bias education support team on both campuses. I had such great conversations with the leadership team at the college of law. I would say that one of the things you saw in the campus climate survey which is an upside and I don't want to tell just all the good news but one of the better outcomes of 2016 to 2020 is a higher degree of comfort among members of our community to report incidents of bias. Right? And discriminatory behavior. Right? That's a good sign. It's not perfect. It doesn't mean we're all fine but it does suggest something about a comfort level to come forward when somebody feels as though they have been wronged or if someone behaved in a way that's outside our community expectations. In my view that's a step in the right direction. Having done an awful lot of work at Vassar College which I almost said Vassar College in my opening remarks because I spent the last 21 years of my life there, so I apologize for that. I'm all Stetson, believe me but having spent time developing our Title IX procedures at Vassar one of the things that was an important outcome is we saw a skyrocketing in reporting. That's a good thing. That's a good thing. It doesn't mean it's easy, it doesn't mean when we engage in a process those that are victims of that feel as though they've been completely received justice, but I think the fact that we have an increased reporting of bias is a positive thing and we should not be afraid of that. Again we're educational institutions. Right? So when something happens that is outside of our community expectations and is

hurtful or painful, we need to have an avenue in which that can be addressed.

Right? Because we're an educational institution. I can't hear you Luis. Perhaps you're muted.

>> So the next question asks since the last campus climate survey there doesn't seem to be much movement. What will be done differently this time?

>> Great. I think that's a common frustration I've heard in my accelerated listening and learning tour on the community in my first 100 days here is that we think it's great that Stetson committed itself to do campus climate surveys every 4 years and I think we have not been very successful and I think my colleagues would agree with this, despite considerable effort and tenacity and interest and engagement on these issues we haven't been particularly good or strong about identifying, again those successes and those failures and communicating those successes and failures broadly and transparently to the community. Luis I know for example you yourself just committed some of your own resources to try to document more fully and thoroughly those success points and those challenges over time, like creating a timeline of our work on diversity and inclusion. I think that's vitally important. I think we should not necessarily beat ourselves up about our failures but we should use them as a learning opportunity to move us forward and being transparent about those failures is a positive step. So I don't know Luis if you want to speak further to the flange you just funded but I see that as a very positive investment.

>> Sure. So the project is still sort of very much in its infancy. But its goal is to provide a student an opportunity to work with faculty and perhaps more students, more than just one, to do sort of a research of what Stetson has done

both from admitting its first black student, everything fast forward to having gender neutral bathrooms and exploring everything in between. When certain organizations came on board, when, you know, Stetson started offering same sex partner benefits, just a range of issues that the University has tackled and sort of highlight either why some of those things have gone well, identify areas of improvement and areas for additional growth. So, you know, I think I share what you said the initial of these talks that happened a couple weeks ago, that we can't really understand where we're going unless we understand our history and hopefully this initiative will put it somewhere, where we can see it visually, kind of see where we've gone and identify our hard points and where necessary help us examine some of our lower points. Just to have that progress that we all are searching for today.

>> Luis I thank you for that contribution. Not only your financial contribution but also the contribution tonight to why that's important. I do think interrogating is very important. Some of our past experiences at Vassar that went through a shift, quite an intentional shift trying to get first generation college students and more diverse faculty we engaged in historical interrogation and one of the outcomes was fascinating, it was historical markers on the campus. For instance at one point in Vassar's history there was a residence hall designated for black students. And nobody really ever knew that was -- that took place and having a historical marker when people visit that space they know this is part of the trajectory of the history with regard to inclusion and diversity. We also didn't shy away from having a marker and set of demands the students wanted the curriculum to be more inclusive of their needs and the community and so on. So

rather than doing those as things we need to brush under the rug I think there's potential to celebrate some of those markers and celebrate some of those progress points. Again not to suggest we don't have more work ahead of us, but that there are people that came before us that have worked their tails off to try to make this community a more inclusive and more welcoming and those things should be acknowledged.

>> Absolutely. Just a reminder to folks please go ahead and type your questions in the chat box so that we can make sure to get some of that live participation. But at this time I'll go ahead and move on to the next question that was submitted in advance. Bear with me one second. I guess this one is asking for a little bit more of a drill-down. So what specific next steps do you have for improving black lives and for racial justice at Stetson? I know you've covered some of that through designated your discretionary fund and at the same time, you know, folks in response to this question if you have recommendations, put those in the chat box too then maybe we can explore some of those together.

>> Excellent. And it gives me a great opportunity to also highlight as we're going to go through homecoming, coming up in a week, you should also know there's also a wonderful opportunity for the Office of diversity and inclusion has put together a celebration and interrogation of our history, 50 years I believe resistance to transformation is the title and I don't think it would be a surprised to too many alums you may have seen it on social media there's a continuing set of recommendations that have been made by the Office of diversity than inclusion that draw from 12 recommendations that were made back in 1970 so here we are in 2020 and some of that work is still incomplete. So as I am your new President

one of things that's been so interesting to me is to really listen and learn and here is my take. Lots of great pockets of efforts have taken place around these issues. We take a step back when hurtful things happen and painful things happen such as bias incidents and when things happen outside Stetson gates that happen nationally that are quite painful and horrific at times. Right? So we've got to make sure that we are keeping our feet to the fire on making progress for our community and that we are always working toward being mission consistent, values consistent at Stetson. Why do I raise that? Because one of the challenges I think that lies and I'll take responsibility for this because I think it's on my plate to do, all these wonderful pockets, the faculty working on anti-racist statements, right, we've got, you know, I just did an accessibility tour with a student of ours that is wheelchair bound to understand better how does the campus try to move forward in terms of universal design so this student's experience and students like her have the opportunity to navigate this campus more safely and in a less frustrating manner. Right? So all these wonderful well intended things but I think what we're lacking and this is not unusual among peer institutions, we're lacking coordination of that effort, we're lacking transparency around those efforts, we're lacking a universal commitment around some of these initiatives, but I have been actually blown away by the way this community and again most of my experience thus far has been centered around Deland although I've connected with the community in Gulfport because of the COVID I haven't been able to physically be there and interact with them as much as I have on the Deland campus but I see a tremendous amount of positive energy around this and as your new President one of the great things I want to do is try to capitalize on

that extraordinary energy and the wonderful ideas that have already been put forward. Right? So we don't have to necessarily reinvent the wheel. The community has spoken via the campus climate survey, through a number of robust conversations that happened in individual offices, the staff advisory council has spoken, the equity and inclusion group has spoken, the black student association has spoken. Now I think what our community is looking for is a concrete clear set of actions that we can take to move ourselves forward. By the way that still doesn't mean we're done with the conversations. Those conversations still need to occur but I see one of my jobs here in my early time at Stetson an to try to make sense of the lay of the land which I'm working diligently to do and what can we do right away and what can we do strategically for the longer Hal and I think you should hold me accountable to make sure we provide clarity and transparency and frankly some energy around moving us forward. And I know that there's impatience out there justifiably so but we are in an environment where every single dollar we are watching and we cut our budget by \$17 million and some of this frankly is going to be resource intensive. Some of this work is not free. Some of this work does require additional investment. I have not been shy for the need of more investment with the Board of Trustees. We just had our meetings last week. Luis you were part of them and the next meetings will be focused quite intentionally around issues of diversity and inclusion including some part of our discussion, particularly in the context of student affairs with your leadership where you tackled it head on in your committee meeting. That's a long winded answer but again as I'm trying to learn so quickly and so fully about the Stetson University community I think one of my central tasks literally by the

first of year is to really leverage the work that's already been accomplished at Stetson and bring some clarity and transparency to that.

>> And just at the trustee level what I can share in terms of commitment to this issue because it's part of our charge for the student affairs committee is diversity and inclusion issues. So as the President mentioned I did make it sort of the center of our committee meeting but beyond that I've engaged in discussions with the multicultural student council chair on the Stetson campus, the Deland campus I have spoken to the President and Vice President to talk about their platform which also includes diversity and inclusion initiatives and each reeled out to the student bar association over at the Law School and we'll be trying to make other points of contact over there to sort of explore these issues, as well as I went on the website. I tried to see where can I find what information about diversity and inclusion and in doing that I learned there's not one central place, for example like on the Office of diversity and inclusion website that shows what Stetson has for those populations. So part of it is a marketing issue and as I'm looking at things critically and making contact with different points of the University it helps us all move the needle to something we care about as alums, as my position on the Board of Trustees but also just as good people. So I'll move on to the next question. It says Stetson has a best which is bias education and support team. Process that handles reports of inappropriate behavior. Is it possible for Stetson to share data on that team's work?

>> That's a great question and I don't want to avoid it we're going to ask Savannah Griffin who manages the process to join us but Savannah before that is it okay if I add one more learning of mine at Stetson, which is it may be

controversial when I say this but it's what I believe. I think Stetson has invested a considerable amount of resources in having outside consultants come, including managing the campus life and diversity campus climate survey. All of that I think is vital and we should not shy away from having outside expertise moving forward but my overall take is now it's time for Stetson to look inwardly much more. And not necessarily rely so much on hiring outside folks. There is tremendous energy and expertise right here, right here in Deland and right at Gulfport. That's my early assessment. Now it's a question of how do we mobilize those resources into action plans. So I wasn't cranky about outside consultants but I would like us to invest in ourselves more with strategies as opposed to continuing to hire people from the outside because I think we have done that work and I think it's now time for resourcing these things internally. Sorry, I side-tracked that but wanted to get that in.

>> Hi, I'm Savannah the Executive Director of community engagement inclusive excellence and I serve on our bias education support team, which has been around for 2 and a half years now. But as you can imagine we have been building our systems and protocol and building our team and so we now have a team of 5 faculty and staff that serve on our BETS team and we do our planning to release our report from the 2019/2020 academic year which goes from August of 2019 to August 1 of 2020. And we're hoping to have that posted on our website no later than December. I'm hoping sooner than that. We're just finalizing some of the data and making sure the report is complete. We did receive a large number of reports last year and so that's why it's taking us some time and it is a new system and we're looking at other institutions and building our

processes off best practice. So we're hoping to have that in December and then email communication will go out when it is posted for people to review.

>> Thank you, Savannah. We did receive a comment that reads the inclusion is the goal and diversity is a fact of life. There aren't issues of diversity than inclusion, racism and bigotry are the issues. Call it out. Thank you for engaging in the conversation and committing to action. Thank you for the comments. I don't know if anyone else wants to tackle sort of the pocket there of diversity and inclusion to discuss what those mean or at least what those mean to us at Stetson.

>> I'll just chime in first. I very much appreciate the comment. I think sometimes we fumble around the language and the language is indeed important and I think whoever submitted the comment, I think you're spot-on.

>> Bear with me a second. I'm having some issues with one screen while trying to look at the other. We received one question about the composition of different working groups and committees. It asks we typically see the same students, faculty and staff serving on committees, working groups, et cetera. How will you ensure better representation in the post survey subgroups?

>> That's great. I would like to call on my colleague Lua Hancock to chime in here. I was smiling a little bit because we had a lot of internal conversations about that and that problem of the same people coming, it actually is something that we've been thinking about with regard to these webinars. Right? So we can be proud of having 16 or so consecutive weeks of webinars but are we reaching as broad an audience as we need to reach? Very legitimate question. Lua perhaps you can speak to that.

>> I can and I'm just going to take a little latitude to go back to the question

before this too because I think it is so vital. So really, you know, the work and I'm still learning too but just to describe it from my current phase of learning, when you look at diversity percentage wise representation, you know, on our campus although there is still work to do with the student population, especially in Deland which is where I spend most of my time I would say there is a lot of diversity in different areas such as socio-economic status. I've actually never worked at a place with such diverse socio-economic status which brings a beauty to the community like Luis mentioned as a first generation graduate himself. That ability and I know students who have graduated from Stetson who have done this personally to break multigenerational poverty, et cetera, it's unbelievable to be a part of in any way and that learning it brings to our community is so beautiful. Also the other demographic groups, ethnic demographics being the one I think that right now is so vital in America then what do you do with that diversity, right? Just because people come to campus they don't feel necessarily that events there speak to them. All the actions we take, all the events we hold, all the ways we speak, who we invite to the table sends constant messages about who is supposed to be there and who we think isn't supposed to be there so as we move towards inclusion in our curriculum and spaces and social events and language and websites, we have a lot of work to do to be honest and this doesn't even get to equity. The fact we know that studies show that faculty of color beings especially women of color are more likely to get evaluations from their students that are harsher. If we know that to be true what are we doing about that and there's multiculturalism which is a whole other thing. So we sometimes use the terms interchangeably which we shouldn't and if you do work towards one of the

columns it's not going to meet the other goal so we have to be purposeful so I will get off my soapbox and tell you the exciting news about the committees. I was a little worried especially during COVID time when we announced the working groups from the campus climate survey that people wouldn't volunteer, honestly. We're all sort of overwhelmed. We took out a lot of the breaks. So faculty and students and staff are just going, going, going. And I'm amazed by the response of students, faculty, staff, alumni some of which are some of the regular players and a bunch of which are not which is really great. I think that, you know, people realize at this moment that being passive is part of the problem. I hope. At least that's what I'm seeing in the people who are on the committees then we also have to do a good job of noticing, looking at and analyzing who might not be present and do we want to do asking of ear people that can be there so it's a vital question, thank you so much and I'm hopeful at least that the current committees look to have much more diverse representation.

>> Thank you, Lua. Another question/comment we received. I guess I have a number of concerns it reads regarding discretionary spending. I suppose it strikes me that guest speakers are actually less effective dollar for dollar than recruiting and retaining faculty with anti- racist competencies. Is there a plan?

>> I have an agreement that I think we need to invest in ourselves. As best as we can. And I don't mind sharing I shared in my opening remarks it's not as though I have a tremendous amount of discretionary money. I'm a Board of trustee member here, perhaps he would like to boost my discretionary budget but again my intent of giving half of that \$50,000 to the student side and academic side was trying to again prioritize this as investing in ourselves and people. I

learned even as a candidate as your President that Stetson really runs on people power. It really does. It runs on people power as many higher institutions of higher education do. You have dedicated folks to work their tail off to try to make this place operate. We saw that an extraordinary effort in real-time during this global pandemic. We're seeing it right now with regard to our work on anti-racism, including wonderful incredible stepping up by our student leaders, and incredible stepping up of our faculty of color to do race in the 21st century. One other thing as I was reflecting on our conversation and I hope it's helpful, I think the other thing I learned in my experience as a higher education leader is that our students particularly ones that are most marginalized don't want to just see the leadership when the crisis happens. Right? You want to see the leadership in more organic settings when it's not crisis time. Right? And I think that's really something I learned over my career that is really important that you want to be able to build trust organically outside the time of a crisis. So that when a crisis does hit and they will come, they will come. That there's a better opportunity to move and cut to the chase in terms of solutions. So I felt Luis compelled to want to share that that it's something I'm continuing to learn about but something I have learned previously as well that impersonally committed to meet students and faculty and others that come to us from a marginalized community to develop that trust and that relationship outside a crisis. Now regretfully and it's not a complaint but since I have arrived we have not been out of crisis mode. Right? So I look forward to those ongoing conversations, I look forward to the times when we're not smack in the middle of a set of crisis to build that relationship because I think that can really move a community forward if you get to meet

people outside of crisis moments. You get to understand and listen and hear about their lived experiences outside of a crisis. That can be really powerful.

>> Thank you Dr. Roellke. We received a comment which said they agree with the comment about outside consultants and believe it is essential to commit to regular climate surveys and increasing participation significantly.

>> Yep. Again I appreciate all those that are chiming in with the remarks. I agree with that. I agree and I think my colleagues and faculty more broadly would also agree with that. We do want to constantly assess ourselves and constantly keep our feet to the fire on these issues. I also believe strongly, you know, I've been doing the kindness mantra so much this year so far, I absolutely believe that gets contagious. I absolutely believe kindness can be contagious and so if we can all commit ourselves again to those dispositions of humility, kindness, empathy and agency I'm convinced we will get to a better place at Stetson University.

>> Thank you. And I guess one thing that in terms of action items some of the questions asked about specific action items but I'll just throw it out again. For me as a student it was important not just to see that there wasn't a Latino organization and there wasn't an LGBTGNCQ organization like I took it upon myself to really others to try to create one and I think as a community that's something that we're doing either, you know through these discussions but also, you know, the President said at the beginning email him at President@stetson.edu with your suggestions about, you know, what you think we can all do to move forward.

>> Luis thank you and it gives me an opportunity to indicate that maybe I'm

being redundant but we have these extraordinary sets of ideas that are in a different -- coming from different parts of our constituencies. Right? And I also want to acknowledge that we're in a recession and in a very challenging time where our students are very worried about being able to afford their education next semester and the semester afterwards. Because of our economic context, I think it's vital that we be able to really come together around a set of a smaller number of priorities. Right? Because we're not -- let's be honest with one another, honesty is important. We're not going to be able to do it all tomorrow. And so one of our challenges that lies ahead for the senior team, for the faculty, for the students, student leadership is what are the two, three things we really want to invest in because we don't have the ability -- and I don't think it's frankly useful to throw money at the problem. What we need to do is come around a set of guiding principles, dispositions, agreements, that we can afford and we can move forward on together. So I am thinking all the time about resources as I said earlier, a lot will come down to resources. Regretfully we're not in a position right now where we have ample resources at our disposal so it's going to require again I think some dispositional work, some behavior work that frankly doesn't cost a dime.

>> And I see that we have reached the top of the hour here and we do have some closing slides that we would like to review.

>> Luis huge thank you to you and to my other presenters, fantastic! You folks energize me tremendously. Thank you for your commitments. Thank you!

>> Again I mentioned this earlier but we have the next race in the 21st century T black girl magic Friday October 30, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. that's our next piece

of wonderful work. Again all done on volunteer time and I want to thank those folks that have led that effort. I would be remiss if I didn't share with you I hope you stay safe and you stay well, this is an extraordinary time in our country. We are having a little bit of a spike here in COVID transmission. We need to remain vigilant in that. We've got a very high stress election coming up next week. Let's all not only care for each other but let's also take care of ourselves. Right? I think that's vitally important also. Do the kind of self-care you need in order to thrive here at Stetson. It's a big part of the puzzle. Thank you for tolerating my long narratives. I appreciate your participation and please do email me at President@stetson.edu with anything that's on your mind. Thank you, stay safe and well!

>> Thank you for joining us this evening.