



October 10, 2016

To the Murray State University Community,

A few weeks ago I wrote about how Murray State is the Marketplace of Ideas. It is with that in mind that I write today and ask that you join others and me in furthering Murray State's role in being the Marketplace of Ideas—especially in this time of vitriolic rhetoric and the issues that divide and separate rather than unite us.

Over the past year, and with increased intensity, we are witnessing a time in the history of our country where issues of race, equality, social justice and concerns of personal safety are being raised. These are difficult questions and discussions. There are no easy answers or silver bullets. We have seen demonstrations and protests at many universities across the country. We have experienced on our own campus, and throughout our community, divisive messages of intolerance, prejudices and furthering stereotypes. Each of these incidents raised serious questions that we must examine, reflect upon and understand—not only from our own perspectives, but also from the view and vantage points of others. We must also not only think about our own immediate community, but also reflect and examine the national scene and understand the current context.

As a member of the Marketplace of Ideas, we have a moment in time to make a significant difference in the lives of our students and all members of our community. I believe, at this moment, we can expand on the Marketplace of Ideas and provide a true and valuable learning experience for all of us. This is also following our community pledge and its four principles of accepting one another, learning from one another, creating an atmosphere of positive engagement and challenging bigotry.

To create this environment of sharing, reflecting and learning, I am asking for your help and leadership. There are many individuals within our community who have ideas on how best to address and discuss the issues that are before us dealing with race, privilege and power, social inequities, prejudices, the power of culture diversity and the role of a university to empower new ideas, thoughts and actions.

I am asking you to share ideas and provide advice and wisdom. We have created a Google form for you to present ideas that will further the discussion of these issues, provide opportunities to explore solutions and assist Murray State in our goals of inclusion. These ideas may be forums, all-campus reading events, changes in the way we conduct our work and business, new programs or numerous other ideas you may have. Each idea will be considered by a small group of individuals and we will chart a course forward that will enable us to shine

light on the issues and allow all members to reflect, engage and learn through this process. While the ideas should be focused on university-wide impact, individual college/unit ideas are also welcome and will be shared with the appropriate individual(s). The Google form is located [here](#). Please respond by Friday, November 18, 2016.

As part of this effort, we are focusing the 2017 Presidential Lecture as a time in which we highlight the issue of race relations and to have the speaker (or speakers) address and talk specifically about our own university, our past and our future, as the Marketplace of Ideas.

As a member of our community, please talk with your colleagues and peers and provide ideas on what we can do over this academic year to make systemic to advance our goals of education, learning and engaging to make a significant difference in the lives of whom we touch and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bob Davies', with a stylized, cursive 'B' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bob Davies