January 31, 2016

Dear MUSC Family,

I want to take a moment to share some thoughts on the Decorum Policy that the Board of Trustees passed today. As many of you know, protesters disrupted our December Board session with verbal interruptions, physical intimidation, and inflammatory language and signage calling for a "riot." The Decorum Policy passed today is designed to prevent such behavior and permit our Board members to perform their duties without the specter of hostility and threats.

(Policy available at this link: http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/administration/board/index.html)

It is important to understand that as President of this university, the senior leadership team and I are personally committed to diversity and inclusion. We have been working very diligently to move diversity and inclusion forward through a broad and serious initiative that touches every part of the MUSC community. Nearly 18 months ago, with the Board’s full support, we established the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion. Two Board members sit on the council and I take an active part in the meetings, listening to the differing perspectives and insights of a diverse representation of community members. The council is doing good work and is a direct conduit for sharing important diversity and inclusion issues with the Board. This council gives the people of our community -- and I mean those both inside and outside of MUSC -- the opportunity to join with us and be part of our intentional advancement toward a more diverse and inclusive MUSC.

Making an impact takes community, purpose, stubbornness and time, but we are making real progress. As just one example, the senior leadership of this university has five African-Americans out of 17 at the table. That represents nearly 30 percent of our leadership. That has never happened before at this university and it is an accomplishment that is worth noting.

Every Board agenda is open for items from the Diversity and Inclusion Council to be added. Through this council, the community has a clear opportunity to speak to the Board. We look forward to the time when diversity and inclusion will be an intrinsic part of our institution’s fabric but until then, you have my personal commitment and that of our
leadership team that we will continue to move forward for the betterment of our institution and our greater community.

Yours in service,

David J. Cole, MD, FACS
President
Medical University of South Carolina