April 6, 2015

Dear MUSC Family,

In light of the recent national attention around hate speech, religious intolerance and other bias-related incidents, I feel compelled to reiterate the Medical University of South Carolina’s community-wide commitment to creating an inclusive experience for the lives we touch.

MUSC is committed to equal opportunity for its patients, faculty, staff, and students. To that end, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status or other legally protected characteristics. More importantly, we recognize a diverse and free community is critical to the success of a great university, and MUSC has a long-standing commitment to fostering an atmosphere of tolerance, understanding and interconnection with each other and with the world around us. MUSC’s equal opportunity policy is essential to our mission of excellence. Whether providing patient care, educating students, or making new research discoveries, we must make ALL of those who touch MUSC in some way feel like they are in the right place, and that they belong here.

A diverse university community breeds innovation, and innovation is the key to better healthcare. The more open we are to different opinions, ideas, expertise, education, culture and background, the more flexible, effective and accurate we become as an academic medical center and biomedical research leader in a constantly changing industry. This approach also fosters the development of tolerance and open-mindedness, preparing our students to become active, engaged citizens within a democratic society.

MUSC has become more diverse and inclusive over the years, but we still have work to do. As you know, our board and leadership have made a commitment to diversity and inclusion excellence as a foundational priority by approving a strategic plan. The Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Committee, charged in October 2014, has been hard at work to better understand where we are, learn about key ways to develop and positively influence inclusion initiatives, determine measurable goals for the journey, and support and celebrate our results along the way.
The only way to realize a diverse and inclusive community that reflects our values of Compassion, Collaboration, Respect, Integrity and Innovation is through community members engaging in vibrant dialogue and working together to gain knowledge and solve problems. Our university community must be a safe place for all of its members. We must stand up for each other. We must value each other’s contributions. We must reflect the level of inclusive excellence that we espouse. Incidents like the ones at Duke, Oklahoma University and in the state of Indiana recently, remind us that we all must stay vigilant, speak out against hate and intolerance, and reiterate our commitment to who we are.

If you witness or experience any intolerance, bigotry or discrimination at MUSC, please let someone know. You may talk with any member of management or leadership, your Dean’s office, or speak with someone in Human Resources, and/or call the MUSC Compliance Hotline @ 1-800-296-0269. If you would like to learn more about how to help make MUSC a more diverse and inclusive university, please visit our Diversity & Inclusion home page: http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/muscdiversity/ and learn how you can get involved.

Yours in service,

David J. Cole, MD, FACS
President