The racial justice movement underway in our nation is the most important and far-reaching collective reckoning with the racial legacies of our history since the Civil Rights era. As a campus community we should ask, and have been asking, how is Rollins College engaged with this movement?

The answers are inspiring. As we begin to close out this academic year, I would like to provide a reflection on a number of important initiatives that the Rollins community has been pursuing. This thoughtful, intentional work will continue to evolve at Rollins; I trust that the energy generated this year establishes a firm foundation for our efforts going forward.

The issues we are addressing do not lend themselves to easy solutions. This message is not one of celebrating achievements but signaling our collective persistence. The work begun this year, amplifying our longstanding efforts at diversity and inclusion, is being integrated across campus into both small and large-scale initiatives. This has been a community effort, and I am proud of and inspired by everyone’s contributions. But the change still needed in our nation, and on our campus, requires that we stay with this work next year and every future year.

The common theme that runs throughout this year’s initiatives is learning: taking responsibility for our own learning, enhancing learning in the classroom, and rethinking learning environments beyond the classroom. Again, I do not share all of this to say we are “done.” Far from it. But I do believe it is worth chronicling the many initiatives undertaken this year with urgency, as it demonstrates our pervasive commitment and highlights the intentionality with which our entire community is approaching this work.

Institutional changes:

- Starting in June 2020 and moving forward, the College will honor Juneteenth as a campus closure day, encouraging the community to participate in local Juneteenth celebrations and educational experiences.
• The College permanently removed nine stones honoring individuals with ties to the Confederacy on the Walk of Fame. The stones are now in our Archives.

**Trainings and workshops:**

• The College’s Administrative Council, approximately 45 of our most senior administrative leaders, including myself and my Cabinet, participated in a series of seminars led by national leaders in racial justice and equity training on topics around diversity and inclusion and the responsibility of leadership.
• The Administrative Council also read and discussed a new essay by Jack Lane, Weddell Professor Emeritus of American History and our College Historian, titled “An Uneasy Imbroglio: Rollins College and Race in the Era of Segregation, 1885-1954.”
• The Center for Inclusion and Campus Involvement has led more than 230 faculty, staff, and students as they participated in 17 impactful, year-long anti-racism learning groups.
• Rollins was awarded a collaborative Diversity and Inclusion Grant by the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) under the writing leadership of Claire Strom and Matt Nichter. The goals of the CREATE (Competency-Rich Education for Anti-Racist Teaching/Learning Environments) program are to increase colleagues’ awareness of key issues and theories related to equity and inclusion and to expand colleagues’ ability to identify inclusion gaps on their campus and in their communities. After participating in trainings offered through the Associated Colleges of the South during the fall semester, the facilitator team of Missy Barnes, Abby Hollern, Mary Robinson, and Josh Savala has led five workshops this semester for more than 120 participants. Seven total workshops will be held during the spring semester, which should reach more than 160 staff and faculty participants.
• Our Human Resources team delivered the “CUPA-HR 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Forming Challenge” program to a group of 50 faculty and staff. The program covered four different racial justice themes intended to create greater understanding of the intersections of race, power, privilege, oppression, and equity.

**Academic initiatives:**

• Faculty in the Olin Library Archives created a digital archive entitled *Pathway to Diversity: A History of Race Relations at Rollins*, which was presented to the campus in January.
• Eighty-two academic courses have been identified as having a core focus on advancing racial and social justice, with more in development for the 2021-22 academic year.
• Student-specific initiatives include, but are not limited to, RCC Readings and orientation sessions. We are developing more initiatives that impact the day-to-day learning of our students, so that every student will be engaged in this important work in various ways during their time at Rollins.
Our students have clamored for more courses directly on the subject of race and racism, and for more opportunities in our curriculum to study these issues. In response, this week we announced two new academic offerings for next year on critical race theory and African-American philosophy, which will be another opportunity for students to connect with the rich body of scholarship that has long existed in American thought and practice.

The Endeavor Center for Faculty Development has built antiracist teaching resources for faculty and is offering workshops on Designing for Equity, Social Justice, and Anti-Racist Teaching.

Our science faculty, led by Kasandra Riley, have been awarded a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence grant to support their efforts in creating equitable learning and success for all Rollins students interested in the sciences.

Community and campus engagement:

I have convened and meet regularly with the Racial Justice Advisory Group, which I ask to provide advice to me in my office on how best to steward and advance racial justice at Rollins. The group includes Allisa Gilliean-Crump, Matt Hawks, Abby Hollern, Zaire McCoy, Micki Meyer, and Eric Smaw.

Three of our athletic coaches are serving as advisors to a new student organization, “Athletes 4 Change,” whose mission is to engage, educate, empower, and evolve collegiate student-athletes on issues of social injustice, systemic racism, and the power of voting in the endless pursuit of equality.

Student organizers planned a meaningful Stop Asian Hate panel to spotlight campus voices and educate around the importance of allyship.

Students engaged in critical research and dialogue to select the 2021 RCC Readings with a focus on racial justice.

The Black Student Union raised more than $4,000 to donate to the Hannibal Square Heritage Center through its Change Starts Here fundraising efforts.

Beginning with orientation and throughout the year, students engaged in meaningful dialogue and facilitated trainings on racial and social justice.

The Cornell Fine Arts Museum (CFAM) now features art exhibits that respond in real time to current events to highlight inequities and promote empathy, reflection, and engagement.

National engagement and networks

2021 Institute on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center

Rollins was recently selected as a “Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation” (TRHT) Campus Center. This well-recognized initiative, offered by AAC&U, aligns with Rollins’ mission and strategic priorities, and will help guide our institution through this critical transition from achieving widespread individual transformation across campus to the institutional transformation that will help us mobilize our campus as a site of and for truth and racial healing, internally and within our local community.
The history of Rollins’ relationship with the surrounding community reveals intermittent progress in advancing race relations and racial justice. Therefore, for this project, we have engaged in community partnership with Winter Park Public Library Director of Education Ruth Edwards.

Many have asked how we can translate the good conversations and work that took place in our racial learning groups. How do we become a hub of knowledge and provide others with tools for change? We have already been invited to expand our anti-racist learning group models into area schools. Through this key partnership, additional alliances will be explored with Winter Park civic and equity-focused organizations and community centers, as well as local K-12 schools.

- Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA)

Rollins has joined the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA), launched by the University of Southern California Race and Equity Center in November 2020. We are now one of 67 Alliance member institutions.

This new association brings together the finest liberal arts colleges in the country to amplify our efforts to address racial justice on our own campuses and in our nation. By linking presidents, deans and directors, and faculty across the country in collaboration, there is every reason to think we will make progress in the area of racial equity.

The Racial Justice Advisory Group, Susan Singer, and I are participating in monthly sessions exploring equity dilemmas and issues of race and racism on liberal arts college campuses. Each of these three-hour learning sessions addresses a particular aspect of racial equity and focuses on strategies and practical approaches.

In addition, presidents of Alliance member colleges are meeting quarterly to share strategies, seek advice, and identify ways to leverage the Alliance to collectively impact racial equity in higher education. Our membership also includes access to three campus climate surveys and a virtual resource portal where everyone in the College will be able to access tools such as case studies, videos, slide decks, and more.

Published pieces:

- Faculty and staff from many different areas of the College have been civically engaged as public intellectuals by publishing op-eds, essays, and articles, giving interviews, and conducting training sessions on racial justice. A list can be found here.

So many in our campus community have made the commitment. Whether you developed curriculum, facilitated a discussion, guided an activity, or participated in a group this past year, I am genuinely grateful for your reflection and for continuing to be engaged as we move forward.
We look forward to sharing this important work in the months ahead and making real strides and lasting changes to advance our campus's racial equity.