Dear Members of the Commission on Women and Gender Equity in Academia,

Thank you for the incredible effort you put forth this past year on gender equity at the University of Rochester. We sincerely appreciate the time that was devoted by the members of the Commission, the identification of areas of concern, and the articulation of many positive steps we can take to be leaders in this very important area.

Equity is crucial if we are to achieve the goals and aspirations laid out in our new University Vision and Values statement. Over the past year, in AS&E we have particularly focused on what we can do to improve gender equity. The AS&E deans have met every two weeks to outline an agenda of items that we believe are important to address. Many of the issues we had identified and already begun working to address are also highlighted in your Report. However, your Report provides new areas to consider and important suggestions for changes that we hadn’t yet developed and we now plan to tackle moving forward. In this letter, we provide a starting point for ongoing discussions about our approach to address issues of gender equity in AS&E and as part of broader university efforts. We understand that the scope of inquiry for the Commission was very large, and hence the Commission focused on faculty with some discussion of post-docs and graduate students. In what follows, we have included some comments about work we are doing in AS&E related to staff and undergraduate students as well, where appropriate. We welcome any thoughts you have and are happy to meet with the Commission at any time to discuss our progress on these issues.

Thank you again for the hard work that went into putting this Report together and your shared commitment to make our University ever better!

Sincerely,

Rick Waugh, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Sciences and Engineering
Gloria Culver, Dean of Arts and Science
Wendi Heinzelman, Dean of the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Beth Olivares, Dean for Diversity
Jeff Runner, Dean of the College
Melissa Sturge-Apple, Dean of Graduate Studies
David Williams, Dean of Research
Ensuring a Culture of Respect: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

The Commission has identified a number of important steps the University can take to ensure that our community is aware of the issues, trained on how to address them, and ensure a culture where sexual misconduct and harassment are not tolerated. We agree with many of the recommendations provided in this section of the Report and particularly highlight a few areas below in which AS&E has been or plans to be engaged.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take to address the issues of misconduct and harassment

- **Support for faculty and students to help address concerns**: “[H]owever, she advised me that if I reported anything, it would end up tarnishing my reputation.” “… failure on the part of their supervisors or others to provide them appropriate guidance toward a satisfactory resolution of the problem.” This should never happen. The faculty and graduate students in AS&E have Ombudspersons who can help provide advice about issues such as these, and all faculty and students should know that these resources exist. John Barker, Senior Associate Dean of the Faculty, now serves as faculty Ombudsperson, and we are working with central administration to develop ombuds programs accessible across the institution. However, we recognize that we need to provide better (consistent and frequent) training for faculty so they know where to send those who ask for help if they themselves cannot provide relevant, accurate, and appropriate advice. We must also improve our mentorship training for new faculty as well as provide opportunities for departments to host periodic mentor training for their entire faculty.

- **Identify and address repeated offenses by an individual**: In keeping with the recommendations of the White report, we are supporting efforts by central administration, using our academic honesty procedures as a model, to develop a formal system to track complaints.

- **Provide training to graduate students and post-docs on healthy advisor relationships**: “I think a seminar on how to politely tell your boss to stop making sexist comments would be very useful.” A monthly workshop series for AS&E graduate students was established this fall to address important topics associated with graduate study and graduate life, including specific workshops on healthy advisor/mentee relationships, self-care and utilizing resources, and conflict management and prevention. In addition, a collaborative effort between Graduate Studies and Niki Pizzutelli, Assistant Director of Student Support Services from CARE, focused on prevention through working with over seven individual departments to address student concerns, needs, and relationships. Niki has also extended her outreach to administrators and staff who work with graduate students in AS&E through workshops on “Handling Students in Distress”. The AS&E Graduate Student Association also partnered with Niki in presenting workshops on negotiating relationships with professors. In the upcoming year, we plan to extend this programming to post-doctoral fellows in AS&E.

- **Expand training to foster prevention**: We also agree that additional (and better) education and training is needed. The University’s Diversity Learning Series Core Team is working to develop new annual training that should address this need; this training will be implemented for the first time this fall. Additionally, new elements are being incorporated into AS&E faculty orientation, and additional training may be expanded to complement university efforts. We also have and will continue to hold lectures/seminars that openly discuss this topic and therefore will heighten
awareness and enable open conversation (e.g., the AS&E Deans conversations on topical challenges series).

- **Aggregate reporting to monitor progress**: We agree that it is important to provide transparency on what issues we face as a community related to harassment and misconduct. Anonymized aggregate reporting should be provided by the University and we are committed to supporting those efforts. This reporting provides one basis among others (see below) for objectively measuring whether our efforts are having their intended impact.

- **Check in with community members for monitoring and evaluation**: We will implement periodic “check-ins” and surveys of our community to see how we are doing and gauge the impact of new policies and procedures. AS&E graduate students were surveyed on programming and training received to ascertain student perceptions of the effectiveness of these services. This fall, AS&E is planning to survey all faculty and staff in our departments to understand issues of climate, and to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement in the different departments. Our goal is that through this process, we might identify best practices and share these with all the departments in AS&E. Continued communication and opportunities for community feedback and input will be essential for monitoring progress and for future improvement.

- **Highlight particular vulnerabilities for departments with gender imbalance**: “[U]nderrepresentation of women in a specific department was related to increased odds of gender-based harassment occurring within that department.” This is an important statistic, and directly highlights the need to create more gender-balanced departments, a goal we have been working hard on for several years but with more determination this past year in AS&E. In addition, we need to be sure that faculty within departments where there is a gender imbalance (and in particular, those departments with only one or two women) really understand that the potential of harassment and other inequities occurring in that department is higher and thus they must be especially vigilant to ensure a respectful work environment. We will work to ensure that this important observation and its implications will be incorporated into chair training modules that will be required of all AS&E chairs. In depth training of our department chairs will be a new program starting this Fall. Moreover, to help bridge departmental silos for women who are underrepresented within their domains, the AS&E deans have sponsored social networking events for female faculty in the School of Arts & Sciences and the Hajim School of Engineering; these events will continue on a semester basis.

- **Identify options to manage harassment that doesn’t meet the legal definition**: We agree that behavior that is inconsistent with our values must be addressed and managed to ensure a respectful and healthy work environment for everyone. We will work with the AS&E community to develop an AS&E policy to address inappropriate behaviors that do not rise to the legal definition of harassment, including potential actions that might be taken to address these behaviors. Some of this has already begun with the implementation of a non-academic grievance policy for graduate students and trainees that was a collaborative effort with the AS&E Graduate Student Association. However, broadening this is important and work will be undertaken in coordination with broader university efforts. Furthermore, we expect the implementation of restorative practices to be particularly valuable in these cases.

- **Develop management plan templates**: This is definitely an important aspect of the new Intimate Relationships policy. We have, in fact, seen a rise in the awareness and thus request
for such plans in AS&E, and this has enabled us to develop a clearer understanding of what is needed in these plans. We are working with the University Office of Counsel to provide summary examples of the kind of information that needs to be included in these plans for faculty and staff in AS&E.

- **Aim to reduce harm to others in developing disciplinary actions**: “It is crucial that the design of these disciplinary actions takes into account the rights of other affected parties, such as student who may be harmed by limitations placed on their faculty mentors.” We agree that this is an important aspect that should be taken into account when deciding on disciplinary actions. However, there is great variety in the types of situations that will arise, and there are many nuances. We are committed to addressing this concern, but this is an area that requires much thought and shared insight as we work to determine how best to address the potential for harm associated with disciplinary actions.

- **Reinforce Vision and Values to promote a change in culture**: We agree that we all need to reinforce the Vision and Values to promote a change in culture. We will discuss adding questions related to the Vision and Values to the annual faculty reporting document (FARS) as well as the staff annual evaluation in MyPath. Our Vision and Values will also be highlighted to graduate students and post-doctoral fellows through onboarding activities and within student handbooks. We will also include language about embracing and supporting the Vision and Values in new offer and reappointment letters for faculty and staff. If we truly embrace these values, we need to hold each other accountable to them and make it clear that they are important indicators of our expectations for the performance of every member of our community.

### Ensuring a Culture of Respect: Restorative Practices

We appreciate the focus on restorative practices as a means to address violations that do not rise to the legal definition of harassment. We agree that this approach has many advantages in healing and creating healthy communities. We very much support incorporating restorative practices into our handling of offenses, and have begun providing training sessions this summer to enable our faculty, staff and administrators to learn how to implement restorative practices in their own interactions and when dealing with conflict. We will continue direct restorative work with affected individuals throughout the coming year. Beginning in the fall, we anticipate implementing train-the-trainer sessions, so as to develop a cadre of well-informed individuals across campus who can help to imbed these practices within various processes and procedures. In addition, we are planning restorative workshops on topics such as racial equity, power and gender relations in the #MeToo era, and others. Central administration and other units are also participating in some of this training, and recent conversations on this topic have included members of the Board of Trustees and AS&E’s National Council.

### Creating a Diverse Community: Faculty Hiring

The suggestions for faculty hiring are all excellent; many of these we already incorporate in AS&E. In particular, all search committees receive training in best practices for effective faculty recruiting. We have also created a manual that is shared with all search committees that outlines these best practices and our expectations for the search to be an open and inclusive search. We have worked very hard especially over the past year to expand the applicant pool via outreach and by supporting target-of-
opportunity hires. Additionally, we have expanded the criteria for evaluation of candidates beyond simply looking at their research accomplishments. Moreover, we have added information about the importance of diversity into our job ads and the search process. We agree that cultivating a healthy campus culture is perhaps the most important thing we can do to attract diverse faculty to our departments. We will continue to work with our search committees and departments to focus on all of these aspects of recruiting.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to faculty hiring

- **Address best practices for recruiting a diverse faculty:** In AS&E, this year we asked departments when justifying the “short list” of candidates they wanted to bring for interviews to provide information not just about the candidate’s research but about other things they would bring to the department. The goal is to ensure that search committees consider diverse criteria and take a more holistic approach when evaluating candidates.

- **Commit resources commensurate with the magnitude of the effort:** There are resources available to help departments recruit diverse faculty, including support to attend the Compact for Faculty Diversity as well as support for Target of Opportunity hires (several offers of which were made this year, in particular). In addition, we have hired John Barker as Senior Associate Dean of the Faculty to help develop fundraising strategies for FDI and SBAI.

- **Address the representation of gender nonconforming individuals:** We agree that this is a very important issue and that we may need to increase our search committee training for awareness on this concern. If the Commission uncovered any issues that these individuals specifically report facing that are unique from the general gender issues, it would be helpful if the Commission could share with the AS&E Deans what these issues are so we can work to address them.

Creating a Diverse Community: Student and Trainee Recruitment

We agree with the best practices outlined for student and trainee recruitment and are reaffirming our commitment to diversity and equity explicitly when recruiting students. Currently, we survey students who turn down our offers to learn more about the factors that played in their decisions, particularly for our diverse applicants. The AS&E Director for Graduate Recruiting is working to determine how best to communicate this information to our faculty and departmental admissions committees such that we can address barriers to admissions and recruitment.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to student/trainee recruitment

- **Recruit under-represented graduate students:** In AS&E, we have a staff member, Liz Daniele, the Assistant Director for Graduate Diversity in the Kearns Center, committed to the recruitment and retention of under-represented graduate students. Liz attends up to a dozen recruitment events each year that target potential applicants who are women and underrepresented minority (URM) students. She networks with AS&E’s external REU students, many of whom are women and URM. For the past eight years, the Kearns Center and the Office of Graduate Studies have hosted an annual AS&E Graduate Visitation Program for students from under-represented backgrounds, who spend a few days on campus learning about our graduate programs and meeting faculty and students. The Kearns Center also hosts multiple visits each year of McNair
and other research program directors and students who are interested in our graduate programs. These efforts have increased in the past two years, and have seen success in terms of substantial increases in the number of applications we have received from these populations. Over the past several years, the Kearns Center, the Hajim School, and the Office of Graduate Studies have jointly applied (thus far unsuccessfully) for external funding to pilot various kinds of graduate enrollment efforts aimed at increasing diversity; we continue these efforts.

- **Expand efforts to use best practices for nurturing a diverse pipeline:** We agree that it is important to promote the participation of women and minorities in fields where they are under-represented. Incorporating best practices, we will continue to foster all available pipelines for our graduate, post-doc, faculty and staff positions.

**Creating a Diverse Community: Staff Recruitment and Hiring**

The suggestion of longer hiring timelines helping to create a more diverse pool would certainly be ideal. However, this is often difficult in practice due to the immediate needs to fill any given open staff position. We support having HR create a central repository of candidates, both internal and external, who might be interested in employment opportunities at UR, such that these names can be drawn upon when a position opens up in order to diversify the pool of staff position candidates.

*Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to staff hiring*

- **Training staff search committees:** In the spring of 2018, AS&E began providing training on diversity, equity and inclusion for search committees for staff positions of pay grade 54 and higher, similar to those provided for faculty search committees.

**Creating a Diverse Community: Retention and Career Advancement**

Retention and career advancement are important issues. We are working to ensure that all faculty have proper mentoring and are educated on the procedures and expectations for career advancement.

*Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to retention and career advancement*

- **Presentation of values and philosophy and revise annual evaluation process to incorporate values and philosophy:** We are working to incorporate the values and vision into our new faculty orientation and annual evaluations.
- **Mentoring:** We will be including information about mentoring in the new faculty guidebook and web pages, and we will gather information about the impact, need and problems in our current efforts in the survey of faculty (mentioned above).
- **Clear expectations for career advancement:** We have implemented procedures to make expectations more clear in AS&E for reappointment as an Assistant Professor and for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, including an annual workshop open to all junior faculty where the deans discuss the process and criteria for tenure and answer any questions faculty have about the process. It is expected that each department review the status of its Assistant and Associate professors annually and provide them feedback about what is needed for successful career advancement. Since there is not one given path for advancement, we have used annual faculty feedback to individuals as a means of communicating progress, concerns,
and suggestions. We will continue to work with departments to ensure the rigor and efficacy of these reviews, and obtain feedback via periodic climate surveys and direct consultation.

- **Properly monitor promotion and tenure committees:** If departments use ad hoc internal groups, as opposed to committees of the whole, the deans review the assigned committees. In addition, we review the list of possible external reviewers and the letter and materials that will be sent to external evaluators. After departmental review and votes, we obtain a document that outlines the process and steps taken along the way, and we review the committee report, all external letters and the materials that were submitted by the faculty members. Lastly, we obtain from each voting faculty member a statement about the case and their support (or not) for the case for promotion. All of these are reviewed by the appropriate dean(s), who makes a recommendation to the Provost. In the case of a promotion with tenure, an ad hoc committee assigned by the Provost also reviews all the materials and makes a recommendation. This is the existing promotion process and, while none of it was devised to “monitor” the committees, in essence the system sets up a review of the departmental process, allows comparison of departments, and has multiple layers of review of materials. We are open to possible changes, such as inclusion of a non-departmental faculty member to sit on the departmental committee, but such changes would need to be fully vetted by and endorsed by the AS&E faculty.

**Creating a Diverse Community: Orientation and Onboarding**

Orientation is an important part of onboarding new members of our community. While we have held new faculty orientation for a number of years in AS&E, this year we are revising and revamping the orientation program in a number of ways, as outlined below. Additionally, we are creating a faculty manual that will address many of the issues raised by the Commission. We expect this to be an important resource that faculty can access as questions or issues arise.

**Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to orientation and onboarding**

- **Creating a faculty manual for new faculty:** AS&E is in the process of developing a faculty manual that will address many of the issues raised by the Commission.
- **New faculty orientation:** Beginning this year, we are including teaching/instructional track faculty in our new faculty orientation and training, and expanding this training to include in depth conversations about the university’s vision and values; policies and procedures; mentoring; and expectations we have for research, teaching and service.
- **Provost Office training:** The Provost’s Office is currently revising its on-boarding and development for new academic leaders and chairs; AS&E will work in conjunction with this group to ensure that our chairs receive the resources they need to feel confident in their roles.
- **Orientation for graduate students:** With respect to the orientation and onboarding of graduate students, each year there is a one-day orientation for all incoming students held prior to the start of classes. This past fall, we completed a substantial examination of our current approach and have reworked the orientation in order to provide AS&E graduate students with more information and in-depth discussion around policies, procedures and services including student support, Title IX, code of conduct, and disability resources. In addition, we are developing an AS&E specific graduate student handbook that highlights our vision and values, AS&E policies, as well as information for students and trainees. Moreover, we are asking each department to
develop a student/trainee handbook that includes policies, standards, review, and procedures specific to that program.

Creating a Diverse Community: Representation on Campus

We deeply appreciate the Commission having identified this issue with regard to the positive impact that this can have with respect to representation on campus.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to representation on campus

- **Susan B. Anthony mural**: In the last few years, AS&E commissioned a mural of Susan B. Anthony in the tunnel below Dewey Hall. This was done in exactly the spirit of this recommendation.
- **Hajim Wing Art**: When selecting art to put on the walls of the Hajim School wing this past year, we wanted to ensure that the images were welcoming to all. We selected photos submitted by our students during their study abroad experiences, choosing the photos to ensure that a diversity of experiences as well as backgrounds and cultures were all represented in the images.
- **Continued focus on increasing representation**: Increased public recognition of women and minority leaders is necessary, including invigorating efforts to identify honorific awards for faculty in these categories.

Creating a Diverse Community: Representation in Leadership

Leadership training is definitely needed, and the AS&E deans have been discussing opportunities to send faculty to training workshops such as the Women in Leadership conference being held at Harvard in October. We will continue to explore these opportunities to develop our faculty into effective leaders.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to representation in leadership

- **Support for professional development**: There are many resources that we will work to make available to AS&E faculty that discuss best practices as well as opportunities for learning and training. An AS&E website on diversity is being developed and will aggregate such information.
- **Fund for professional development**: The AS&E Deans are working to make funds available that faculty can apply for to attend professional development workshops. There will be two application windows each year where faculty can apply to receive funds to attend training outside the University of Rochester. We will be developing the application process over the summer and will advertise this to the community once the portal is ready to receive applications.

Creating a Diverse Community: Mentorship

Effective mentoring is important, and we need to train our faculty on how to be effective mentors to more junior faculty as well as post-docs, graduate and undergraduate students; we also need to educate faculty and post-docs/graduate students about how to most effectively be mentored. While ensuring diverse mentoring is important, we must be careful not to overburden women and others under-represented in our departments.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to mentoring
• **Discussion of mentoring in offer letters**: This year, the Hajim School added a specific paragraph on mentoring to all offer letters, providing the name(s) of initial mentors for the candidate and the expectation that they will become mentors to more junior faculty as they mature in their careers. Plans are to include this in future offers in Arts and Sciences. The hope is that this will set the expectation from the very beginning that mentoring is important on our campus.

• **Opportunities for informal mentoring and networking in the School of Arts and Sciences and the Hajim School of Engineering**: Beginning this year, we have created opportunities for our women faculty in the individual schools to meet in social settings. These gatherings have provided opportunities for our faculty to meet each other and benefit from sharing concerns and developing solutions to issues faced by our faculty. Creating this sense of community is very important, and we plan to continue these gatherings moving forward.

• **Hajim Women Alumni Network**: In the spring, utilizing the Meliora Collective, we began the Hajim Women Alumni Network. The goals of this group are to help develop connections among alumni of the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences or alumni from other schools with connections to the field of engineering who are interested in supporting and promoting women in engineering, and to foster mentoring relationships and other connections between current women students in the Hajim School and those in the Hajim Women Alumni Network. We held our first in-person gathering in early June, with 25 alumni and current students attending, providing a valuable sense of community as well as opportunities for networking and mentoring among the group.

• **Recognition of mentoring**: We will discuss ways we might be able to recognize and reward effective mentoring more broadly in AS&E.

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**Towards a Culture of Equity: Equity in Compensation and Support**

Equity in compensation and academic responsibilities is an important issue. We would appreciate having access to the example “system to evaluate faculty performance in a systematic fashion [that provides] greater transparency around compensation” that is used in the Department of Neurology.

**Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to equity**

- **Salary study**: In AS&E, we have completed a faculty salary study that is mentioned in the Commission’s Report. We have continued to work on understanding the initial findings and to understand what must be done in the future to close the gap. We have also been closely looking at equity raises as we move forward.

- **Training for graduate students on equity issues**: In recognition of gender differences in compensation and support in academia, this past year, through the Career Center, we presented a workshop to all current AS&E graduate students on negotiating salary and compensation.

- **Gender bias in teaching evaluations**: The Curriculum Committee has submitted a proposal to the Faculty Council regarding changing course evaluations so as to mitigate gender bias, in line with research and best practices. The Faculty Council had a brief conversation on this topic in their last meeting in Spring 2018, and will take this matter up again the fall.

- **Equity in responsibilities**: We agree that evaluating the distribution of opportunities, responsibilities and service is important. We plan to perform such an evaluation in AS&E, and
have changed how we asked some questions on our annual faculty activity reports (FARs) to facilitate such an evaluation.

Towards a Culture of Equity: Work-Life Balance and Family-Friendly Policies

It was very helpful to see the comparative study that the Commission completed on our peers with respect to on-campus childcare and resources for eldercare.

Steps AS&E is taking/plans to take related to work-life balance

- **All-gender and family restrooms:** We recognize and appreciate the need for more all-gender and family restrooms, and we have added this need into the planning for any renovations and new construction. For example, we are working towards creating all-gender and/or family restrooms in the new Hutchison Hall addition. Furthermore, over the past few years, all-gender and/or family restrooms have been added in Wilson Commons, Rush Rhees Library and Douglass Commons.
- **Lactation rooms:** We have added lactations rooms where possible around campus, including a lactation room in Douglass Commons and a new lactation room that will be available soon in Hutchison Hall.
- **Family-friendly transportation options:** We are working to develop “family-friendly” parking options, with a few reserved spots for those who need to leave campus regularly or expectant mothers, as well as the ability to request a ride to one’s parking spot whenever needed. This is currently in a trial run and will be advertised to the community after the trial period completes and we have the full system in place.
- **Family-friendly meeting times:** Beginning in the fall, AS&E instituted a recommendation, which has been followed in scheduling AS&E Faculty Council and Council of Department Chairs meetings, that all meetings be kept within the hours of 8AM to 5PM to accommodate family needs.
- **Addressing needs moving forward:** The AS&E Deans meet every two weeks to discuss issues related to equity, and family-friendly and work-life balance concerns are important ones that we address. We meet with groups on campus that can provide suggestions and ideas in this area, including the Susan B. Anthony Institute (SBAI) and the Frederick Douglass Institute (FDI), as well as other groups that might have suggestions or ideas to help us make AS&E more family-friendly and to help our faculty and staff achieve work-life balance.