

Our Continuing Conversation

Dec. 7, 2015

Colleagues and Students,

We are in a remarkable moment of transformation and change on our campus. Events here and across the country have stirred us toward constructive and intense dialogue about how we build a more inclusive environment. We are called to think, talk, and unrelentingly act so that every member of our university community can know and feel that they belong here.

I have been inspired by the conversations across every platform about the future of the mural in Memorial Hall, hallowed space that must serve to welcome people from different walks of life, and all manner of background, color, creed, identity and perspective. I made the decision to temporarily shroud the mural out of respect for long-term expressions of concern that could no longer go unanswered; and because I believe heightened awareness and broad dialogue can provide an educational environment that better reflects our collective values.

We will not destroy or remove or permanently hide the mural, but we will make the story told in the atrium of Memorial Hall more complete. We will place this important work of art, brought to life by the remarkable talent of one of our own graduates, in the explicit and accurate context of the sober realities of our shared history and our advancing understanding of race, gender, ethnicity, and identity. To that noble end, I appreciate the conversations occurring across our campus and the multitude of constructive suggestions we have received as we chart the path forward.

The mural serves as an important fulcrum of conversation, but it is certainly not the only – nor the most important – issue raised by our students, staff, and faculty as we hold ourselves accountable for the work we must do to build a better, more inclusive community.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to our open, thoughtful, and positive dialogue about important, and sometimes very uncomfortable, issues. I appreciate the spirit of partnership and commonness of purpose at work on our campus. I am profoundly grateful to our students for their leadership and to the members of our faculty, whose recent open letter contains a thoughtful and thorough set of priorities for change and improvement. We are committed to carrying out our shared responsibilities – many of which are manifest across various priorities in our [Strategic Plan](#) – in concert with all in our community across campus.

I welcome more contributions to our dialogue and more suggestions to "pres@uky.edu".

I assure you we will continue to work in earnest until everyone in our community can truly know and feel that all of us, together, are what makes the University of Kentucky.

Sincerely,

Eli Capilouto
President