DAC Recommendation: A More Inclusive and Respectful Workplace

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The recommendation to create a more inclusive and respectful work environment (Category #1) may be the most important one—I see it as the foundation upon which everything else must rest. How else can we collaborate more effectively in our work? How else can people feel secure enough to communicate effectively with one another? How else will we get good ideas from everyone? The School will not be the best possible place to work, and we will not be completely effective in carrying out our mission, unless everyone here is valued and feels that they are valued. I suspect that our culture is better than most on campus, but information generated in our planning process has made it clear that we can and must do better. A key part of this initiative involves figuring out how to do a better job of breaking down irrelevant differences that make it harder to collaborate effectively in our work. We must become a place where everyone is viewed as a colleague who has a significant role to play and who is valued equally regardless of that role.

 I'm not sure how to accomplish this objective, and I need your help as we implement the recommendation. We are looking for more than superficial, feel-good change—it involves more than asking people to be nice to one another. It is deeper than increased civility. I will appoint a committee to help figure it out, but I also am interested in hearing your ideas now. Do you agree that this is an important issue? What steps could we take that might make a difference to you? Should we concentrate on making progress in the course of our regular work together, or are there special things we might do to make a difference? Are you interested in working on this initiative? Let me know what you think.