

Sarah C. Mangelsdorf
President, G. Robert Witmer, Jr. University Professor



September 19, 2019

John Saltmarsh, Ph.D.
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RE: 2020 Carnegie Classification Application Update

Dear Dr. Saltmarsh:

In April, the University of Rochester submitted its application for the Carnegie Elective Community Engagement Classification. On July 1, I became Rochester's eleventh president, succeeding interim President Richard Feldman. Also on July 1, the University welcomed an inaugural vice president for equity and inclusion, Mercedes Ramírez Fernández. Mercedes is leading a newly constructed Office of Equity and Inclusion, whose extensive portfolio connects to community engagement on many levels. In light of these changes in senior leadership while our application is under review, I am writing now to underscore the University's commitment to community engagement and provide assurance that our community engagement efforts remain a key priority. The change in leadership offers an opportunity to evaluate our infrastructure and ensure that we are proceeding in the most effective way.

The application sought details about the University's dedicated infrastructure for community engagement – specifically, what kind of campus-wide coordinating infrastructure exists to support and advance community engagement. As we stated, the University of Rochester has a decentralized administrative structure with a small, central administration, and that community engagement is coordinated at multiple locations across the University, including the Rochester Center for Community Leadership (RCCL) in the undergraduate College; the Center for Community Health and Prevention (CCHP) in the Medical Center; the Office of Government and Community Relations; and the Student Bridges Committee, which consists of community engagement leaders all across our campuses. The subject of some discussion and review has been how best to optimize the way we coordinate our many activities and initiatives in this space.

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Our application outlined plans to strengthen and prioritize community engagement at the University by creating a centralized coordinating infrastructure, with the goal of being implemented prior to the 2019-20 academic year. I remain unequivocally committed to the coordinated infrastructure, but I have decided to extend the timeline for implementation of the leadership function described in our application so that I can better understand the institution's needs and determine the necessary changes that most appropriately align with our institutional goals. As a further update, I am working with my senior leadership team to develop strategies for properly resourcing our community engagement initiatives, and our new vice president for equity and inclusion will be an integral part of the philanthropic effort and implementation plan. We will soon launch a community engagement steering committee, co-chaired by our vice president for government and community relations and new vice president for equity and inclusion, that will serve to streamline, coordinate, and communicate our efforts around academic and community relations aspects of engagement. That steering committee, which will include the vice provost for academic affairs, the assistant dean of students and director of the Rochester Center for Community Leadership, the director of community health policy and education at the Center for Community Health, and selected community members, will build on the substantial progress made during the process of compiling our application to coordinate the vast array of our engagement activities at a central level.

I look forward to building on the efforts of my predecessors, President Richard Feldman and President Joel Seligman, to strengthen the University's critical function as an engaged partner in our community, ensuring that our structure is optimized to meet our goals. I welcome an opportunity to speak with you or another member of the selection committee if you have questions about the presidential transition or our commitment to community engagement going forward.

Sincerely,



Sarah C. Mangelsdorf
President

G. Robert Witmer, Jr. University Professor

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