



June 24, 2020

Dear University Community,

Central State University is at a pivotal moment in history as the world experiences a pandemic and a social movement for justice in parallel. As we transition from the stellar leadership of Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Hammond, it is paramount that we put our best foot forward by building on the legacy of where we have been, understand where we are, and determine a responsible strategy for where we want to go. The true fabric of the institution is its students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, board of trustees, and community stakeholders.

One of the most significant changes that the institution experiences is that of the University President. Chairman Mark Hatcher and I have worked with Dr. Jackson-Hammond over the last several months to ensure a smooth transition. Best practice shows that a critical step in any transition is an external body of subject matter experts to assess and advise leaders during the transition and onboarding. Therefore, as the incoming President, I have established “The Blue Ribbon Task Force.” This team is made up of individuals with decades of experience in Higher Education Administration, Land Grant Institution Administration, Admissions and Recruitment, Technology and Distance Learning, Business Administration, and Senior Level Executive Management.

### **Purpose**

The primary objective of the Task Force is to gather and review pertinent data and information from multiple areas of the University. The team will make recommendations based on their experience, expertise, the current climate, and the current position of the University. The outcome will help guide us through our new strategic plan focused on effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability, as the *Strategic Plan 2014-2020...Creating a Promising Tomorrow*, expires June 30, 2020. We will have an inclusive, comprehensive process including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community stakeholders. A final report of the Task Force’s assessment will be shared with the CSU stakeholders.

### **Blue Ribbon Task Force**

The members of “The Blue Ribbon Task Force” are **Dr. Mortimer Neufville** (*Task Force Chair*) - President and CEO of the 1890 Universities Foundation, **Dr. Alton Thompson** - Executive Director of the Association of 1890 Research Directors, **Dr. Alvin Goldfarb** - former President and Professor Emeritus, Western Illinois University, **Dr. Retia Walker** - former Dean and Vice President, University of Kentucky, Southern University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, **Dr. Gloria Bonner** - former Dean of Education and Assistant to the President, Middle Tennessee State University, **Dr. Robbie Melton** - Dean of Graduate Studies, Tennessee State University and former V.P. Technology, Tennessee University System,

**Dr. Taqua Lewis** High School Senior Counselor - Jefferson County, Board of Education,  
Birmingham, Alabama.

Central State University has a rich heritage, a strong foundation and is uniquely positioned to propel forward. As our institution continues to experience growth, adjust to the new climate, and conform to new generations and periods of transformation, we need to be deliberate and exhaustive in determining that path forward.

Thank you for your unwavering support of our beloved institution.

For God, For Central, For State!



Jack Thomas, PhD  
President-elect  
Central State University



Mark Hatcher, Esq.  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Central State University