

Colleagues,

Last week we promised to update you on our plans for taking on the essential work of building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive company. We're grateful to all of you who have taken the time to share your thoughts, ideas and concerns. This note details our next steps, which we've divided into two major efforts, one focused on our responsibilities as an employer and one focused on our responsibilities as a news organization.

## **The Work Across the Company**

In conversations and on Slack over the past few weeks, we have heard from many black colleagues, and other people of color around the company, that they do not feel sufficiently part of decision making, feel fully valued in our culture, or see a clear path for advancement. This is something we must change.

To tackle these issues, we will need to bring the same focus, investment, and accountability to hiring, developing, supporting and promoting our people — and particularly people of color — as we do to producing our journalism and running our business. And we will need to build a more intentional, open and inclusive culture together, so that every colleague feels able to do their best work, advance in their careers and shape the success of The Times.

To do that, a team of senior leaders will work with outside experts and people from across the company to develop an ambitious, long-term strategy for making The Times more diverse, equitable and inclusive. We will start with the following questions:

- How do we do a better job of ensuring that people of color are fully represented in leadership?
- How do we ensure equitable hiring and promotion practices?
- How do we hold leaders and managers across the company accountable for progress?
- How do we actively shape our culture to feel more open and inclusive for people of color?
- What new behaviors, capabilities, resources and processes do we need to enable all of this?

This work will be led by three senior executives: Amber Guild, SVP and president, T Brand; Anand Venkatesan, SVP, Strategy and Operations; and Carolyn Ryan, assistant managing editor. Over the next month or so, they will assemble a diverse advisory council, work with experts to shape a plan and share updates about how interested colleagues can participate. And they will deliver a strategy by the end of the year, so that they have time to consult widely, consider options carefully, and build buy-in for the sustained effort and long-term commitment that will be required to drive progress.

We will also take a few other actions as that broader work kicks off. The entire top of the company — executive committee members, masthead editors, desk heads and department heads — will participate in training on racial equity and inclusion. Our Talent & Inclusion team will provide access to training and resources for all staff, and work with department leaders to provide additional support where needed. And a team of journalism and business side colleagues is exploring ways for people throughout the organization to have their voices heard, and the ways we want to constructively interact with one another.

## **The Work in the Newsroom**

At the same time, the newsroom leadership is embarking on a major effort to ensure that The Times fulfills our commitment to diversity in every aspect of our culture and our journalism. The team will be led by two of the newsroom's masthead leaders: Joe Kahn, managing editor, and Monica Drake, assistant managing editor.

This separate undertaking is an essential step in creating a more modern news organization that benefits from the wisdom of a larger and far more diverse staff. As our culture evolves towards greater collaboration, this group will work to ensure that the newsroom is a place where journalists can debate stories, exchange ideas, and candidly disagree, challenge and learn from one another. It will wrestle with a number of big questions, including:

- How do we make sure diversity is reflected in critical decision making in all parts of our newsroom?
- How can we make sure diverse perspectives influence the way we conceive, build and edit stories?
- How should our coverage evolve to serve a broader and more diverse audience?

Their first priorities will be to select team members, assess the many ideas that have already emerged from around the newsroom and identify some initial steps to improve inclusive editorial collaboration. Their long-term goal is to recommend enduring improvements to the way our newsroom works. This will be a working group that communicates with the newsroom regularly and will deliver a far-reaching report in early 2021.

The insights and recommendations from this newsroom group will be shared with our colleagues in Opinion as well. Katie Kingsbury, acting Editorial Page editor, has already begun making changes and examining broader questions specific to the department — including reimagining the Op-Ed — as the team works through its leadership transition.

## **Our Ongoing Commitments**

The Times has continually transformed itself to thrive in changing times. These efforts are an essential part of the broader transformation of our company and its culture we've

undertaken in recent years. They will ensure that a more diverse staff can help a larger and more diverse audience better understand the world in all its breadth, complexity and nuance.

As we take on this important work, we will hold fast to the same commitments that have guided us throughout this transformation: Our fierce commitment to journalistic independence and covering the world without fear or favor. Our belief that our pages must reflect the range of voices and ideas shaping the world. Our insistence that we treat each other and our collective workplace with respect. Our dedication to providing our journalists the support and security they need to do their essential work.

This work will take time to do well, and we'll make mistakes along the way. But we'll benefit from the passion we've heard in every corner of The Times as we strive to make a better company for each other and a better report for our readers.

*AG, Dean, Mark, Meredith*