

**Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Restraint
Final Report**

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Members of the Ad Hoc Committee

David Steiner, *Chair*

Elise Pas

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Alex Triantis

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Phil Spector, *ex officio*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Restraint was charged by the Johns Hopkins University Council with providing recommendations on how the policy of institutional restraint on external matters – adopted by the President, Provost, and Deans – should apply to sub-units of the university, such as departments, institutes, and centers. From September 2024 to March 2025, the Committee undertook a careful review of policies and practices at our own and peer universities; consulted broadly with faculty in divisional shared governance bodies and other faculty forums convened for this purpose; and deliberated at length across multiple Committee meetings. *See Appendix A.*

There was not a unanimity of views in the Ad Hoc Committee.

The following recommendations were endorsed by three out of five members of the Ad Hoc Committee:

- All sub-units of the university are encouraged to adopt a practice of restraint when it comes to all external statements.
- This practice of restraint should be recommended rather than subject to binding rules for sub-units.
- Four principles should guide the decision of a sub-unit as to whether to issue a statement about external events.
 1. A sub-unit should only issue statements that are informed by the academic expertise of people within the sub-unit, and about topics within the specific mission, interests, or functions of the sub-unit.
 2. A sub-unit should refrain from issuing emotive statements, such as statements of sympathy, solidarity, or condemnation, in response to external events.
 3. A sub-unit that chooses to issue a statement should add a disclaimer that the sub-unit is speaking on its own behalf and only on its behalf (or that the leader of the sub-unit is speaking on their own behalf or only on their own behalf).
 4. A sub-unit that intends to issue a statement on external events must adopt procedures that include protections for dissenting views within the sub-unit and that are applied consistently to all such statements. *This principle is intended to be binding rather than advisory.*
- This posture of sub-unit restraint should apply to any message by the sub-unit as an entity on external events, or any message by the leader of a sub-unit on external events in their capacity as the leader of the sub-unit.

One member of the Ad Hoc Committee would apply the university's policy of institutional restraint to all sub-units (institutions and centers, departments, and faculty senates).

One member of the Ad Hoc Committee would apply the guidance in this memorandum to institutes and centers, but apply the university leadership's policy to departments and faculty senates.

BACKGROUND

On August 14, 2024, the President, the Provost, and the Deans sent a message to faculty announcing a posture of institutional restraint on statements on external matters. *See Appendix B.*

The message described how, “as leaders of Johns Hopkins University, we are often called upon in the face of global, national, or local occurrences to issue public statements on behalf of the institution.” They continued: “Often those seeking such statements want us to identify and condemn the actors whom they regard as principally responsible. In other cases, those seeking statements simply desire an expression of concern or sympathy for the persons directly affected by the incident in question.” They explained that they had “arrived at a strong commitment to make institutional statements only in the limited circumstances where an issue is clearly related to a direct, concrete, and demonstrable interest or function of the university.” The message explained that “not issuing a statement will be our default in the great majority of cases we are likely to face.”

The message pointed to three rationales for this posture. *First*, “the very idea of an ‘official’ position of the university on a social, scientific, or political issue runs counter to our foundational ethos . . . to be a place where competing views are welcomed, challenged, and tested through dialogue and rigorous marshaling of evidence.” *Second*, these statements “can excuse the absence of meaningful action to bring the community together in challenging moments, take up difficult questions, and learn, discuss, and debate together in a mutually respectful and supportive manner.” *Finally*, such statements “foster an expectation that the institution will speak on a wide range of topics and a perception that when we decline to do so, it is a signal that the issues or the concerns of affected community members are unworthy of our attention.”

The message closed by explaining:

[W]e are eager to engage faculty colleagues in an examination of whether this posture of restraint is appropriate not only for university leaders and deans but also for departments, centers and other units of the university. We will be working with the Johns Hopkins University Council to develop an answer to this question over the course of the fall term and to solicit broad input from the university, including divisional academic advisory boards and senates.

The Johns Hopkins University Council formed this Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Restraint in August 2024. The Ad Hoc Committee consists of faculty members and a dean from the University Council, and was supported by ex officio non-voting members from university administration. *See Appendix A.* The Committee convened 12 times to discuss this matter, met with 11 shared governance bodies across the university, and convened three focus groups of faculty. The

Committee also reviewed a host of materials, including peer institution policies and a collection of statements by JHU sub-units.

This document will sometimes refer to different categories of sub-units. The Committee chose to partition the sub-units as follows, based on how faculty typically become members of the sub-unit:

- Departments (to which faculty typically are appointed by the university)
- Centers, institutes or programs (with which faculty typically choose to affiliate)
- Faculty senates (to which faculty typically are elected by colleagues)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: The recommendations below reflect the views of three of the five members of the Committee.

References to “the Committee” or “we” throughout reference the views of these three members. The views of the two other members can be found at the close of this document.

Following its deliberations, the Committee concluded that a posture of institutional restraint is appropriate and needed for sub-units.

The policy of restraint set out by the President, the Provost, and the Deans in their August 14, 2024 message was animated by three concerns – such statements run counter to the ethos of the university as a place where competing views are welcome; they crowd out the actual work of the university of education and deliberation in response to external events; and they signal that the concerns of some members of our community are more worthy of recognition than others.

Broadly speaking, we take the view that these same concerns also extend to statements by sub-units. A sub-unit that announces an official view on a controversial or contested issue does risk casting a shadow of orthodoxy on the sub-unit, and signaling that there is an accepted perspective – not only to faculty with nonconforming views, but also to students and staff within the sub-unit. We heard from faculty who were concerned that these statements have become obligatory in a way that can create impossible choices for the leaders of sub-units – and crowd out the core mission of the sub-unit. Finally, a statement, if not carefully framed, also carries a risk of implying to outsiders that the university or division is endorsing the statement or position.

But the Ad Hoc Committee does not believe that the ideal response to these concerns is to import the standard of restraint in the President, Provost and Deans’ message wholesale to sub-units.

The standard in their August 14 message read as follows: “We—as university leaders and deans—have arrived at a strong commitment to make institutional statements only in the limited circumstances where an issue is clearly related to a direct, concrete, and demonstrable interest or function of the university.”

This standard is entirely sensible for statements on the part of institutional leaders. But we believe it would not adequately embrace the unique situation of sub-units.

There are a few reasons for this. The first is that the “interest or function” of a sub-unit can be different than the “interest or function” of a university. A fundamental illustration of this fact is that the mission of a number of sub-units is to advocate for change in external events. The BSPH Center for Gun Violence Solutions seeks to develop solutions that inform, fuel and propel advocacy to measurably lower gun violence. The SOE Institute on Education Policy issues reports that explore and comment on the wisdom of K to 12 school reform measures. The SAIS Alperovitch Institute for Cybersecurity Studies seeks to identify opportunities to strengthen national, industrial, and personal security, enhance commerce, and formulate effective policies in the digital domain. While it would be out of scope for the university as an institution to comment on questions of gun policy or K to 12 school policy reform or national cybersecurity initiative, it would be difficult for these sub-units to do their work without commenting on these questions and other circumstances external to the university.

Complicating matters further is that a posture of restraint at the sub-unit level raises its own questions that touch on faculty equities. For example: Would a posture of restraint affect the ability of a center to put out a research report or policy brief? What about dissenting faculty voices in the sub-unit – where the implication might well be that they support the statement of the sub-unit just by virtue of being a member? Who decides whether a statement or message by a sub-unit or leader of a sub-unit steps over the line from related to an interest of the sub-unit to unrelated? What about the statements of faculty senates—bodies that exist to represent the views of others in their school? These are the sorts of questions that faculty raised in our meetings and forums, even as many acknowledged the need for a posture of institutional restraint at the university level.

The Committee is also mindful that even as several peer universities have sought to apply their university policy of institutional restraint to sub-units, a closer look shows that the standard at the sub-unit level is often quite different than the one for university leaders such as presidents and deans. For example, consider Harvard University, which announced a rule that “[t]he university and its leaders should not . . . issue official statements about public matters that do not directly affect the university’s core function”, but then clarified that “programs, centers, institutes and clinics” that “translate knowledge into action through reports, white papers, and client representation” may continue to “engage in their ordinary academic work, including policy advocacy and recommendations in white papers or reports, but this work should reflect or link to evidence-based academic work or reasoning that is reflective of academic expertise.”

Finally, the Committee believes a posture of restraint at the sub-unit level principally should take the form of guidance rather than binding rules for all three categories of sub-units.

Our conversations with faculty made plain that it would be jarring at a moment of uncertainty in higher education to create what might be perceived as an entirely new set of binding prescriptions, on pain of penalty, on what faculty can say and how they can say it. The Committee also was mindful that new rules of institutional restraint for sub-units – when applied to the vast tapestry of centers, institutes, and programs at a research university of our scope – are likely to give rise to a number of interpretive questions that it would be better to work through in the first instance through principles or guidelines rather than binding rules.

One final consideration is that a review of statements of the last several years revealed few instances where statements by a sub-unit raised the sort of issues that animate a principle of institutional restraint. To be clear: There have been statements that have overstepped the bounds of the principles we have laid out here and that gave the Committee real pause. But at our own university, such statements have not been a frequent or recurring problem. The Committee believes this is in part because our university – one of the universities that played a role in the development of early principles of academic freedom – has a robust culture of faculty speaking in their own scholarly or personal capacities, rather than opting to speak through a department or other sub-unit. As a result, questions about whether sub-units are speaking, or in what capacity, tend mostly to occur at the margins – say, when sub-unit websites post faculty articles or op-eds.

As we explain below, there is one area where we believe a binding rule is appropriate.

Otherwise, the Committee trusts that in light of the above context, guidelines will address any use of these statements, and will strike the appropriate balance. But the Committee encourages university leaders, at appropriate intervals, to ask the faculty to review and reassess the landscape to determine whether these guidelines appear to be working well.

Standard

We believe four principles should guide the decision of a sub-unit on whether to issue a statement about external events.

- The first principle is that a sub-unit should only issue statements that are informed by the academic expertise of people within the sub-unit and about topics within the specific mission, interests, or functions of the sub-unit.

This standard means that a hypothetical Center on Crime and Sentencing Policy should be able to author a report on crime legislation, and a hypothetical Institute on Technology Policy should

be able to comment on semiconductor manufacturing rules. But the Center on Crime and Sentencing Policy should not issue statements on manufacturing policy, and the Institute on Technology Policy should not comment on criminal justice reforms across the country. Of course, individual faculty in those sub-units are always free to comment on either of those topics, or any other topic, either individually in their scholarly or personal capacities or together with other faculty. They simply should not do so through the mouthpiece of the sub-unit itself – which converts an individual view into an institutional comment.

This principle also incorporates the “interest or function” standard of the university-level posture of restraint. We believe that statements that meet this university-level standard are de facto permissible. For example: A sub-unit should be able to comment if a government wanted to cut funding to the sub-unit or a field of study encompassed by a sub-unit. However, coordination on such a statement with appropriate university administration offices is encouraged so as to be informed by any broader institutional strategy.

Finally, a sub-unit or leaders of the sub-unit should always be able to discuss or reference the research or other work of individual faculty members in the sub-unit.

This first principle is broader than the university-level rule. We believe this broader standard should go hand in hand by a set of additional responsibilities and protections. These are set out in the three principles that follow.

- The second principle is that sub-units should refrain from issuing emotive statements, such as statements of sympathy, solidarity, or condemnation, in response to external events. For example, a hypothetical Center on Crime Policy should feel free to set out a report on crime policy, consistent with the first principle. But it should not express its condolences to the victims of some crimes but not others. This principle reflects the Committee’s view that these emotive statements are particularly harmful in a sub-unit because they can create a hierarchy of sympathy – conveying to all in the sub-unit, but also those who are reliant on the sub-unit for their grades or livelihoods, that some victims are worthy of compassion, while others are less deserving of attention.
- The third principle is that a sub-unit or leader of a sub-unit that chooses to issue a statement should add a disclaimer. In the case of a sub-unit issuing a statement, the disclaimer should say that the statement is “on behalf of the sub-unit, and only on behalf of the sub-unit”. In the case of a leader of a sub-unit, the disclaimer should explain that the leader is “speaking only on my own behalf.” The goal here is to ensure that the sub-unit or the leader of a sub-unit is crystal clear as to who is speaking and who is being spoken for – and to protect against the risk that the statement inadvertently will be seen as speaking on behalf of colleagues elsewhere in the division or the university, or on behalf of the university itself.

In this way, a disclaimer in this context is in the spirit of rules in other settings that make clear a disclaimer is expected in circumstances where the use of the name or affiliation with the university creates a risk that the faculty member might be seen as speaking on behalf of others at the university. For example, the JHU lobbying policy says: “Per the JHU Use of Name Policy, affiliates shall include a disclaimer as necessary to state that the views expressed by the affiliate do not necessarily reflect the views of the University and that the affiliate’s opinions are their own.”

- The final principle is that a sub-unit that intends to issue a statement on external events must adopt procedures that include protections for dissenting views within the sub-unit and that are applied consistently to all such statements.

This principle is animated by a concern that these statements in sub-units can raise unique questions of fairness and representation that implicate the views of non-conforming voices.

Though we do not intend to prescribe actual procedures for all divisions and sub-unit, we observe that those procedures could include, among other elements:

- Notice to other members of the sub-unit and an opportunity to comment.
- An opportunity to vote, possibly through a secret ballot.
- A standard under which a statement is considered adopted (e.g. unanimity, supermajority, majority).
- The members of the sub-unit who have the right to vote (e.g. tenured faculty, untenured and non-tenure-track faculty, graduate students, staff).
- An opportunity for those who disagree with the statement to publish dissenting views.
- A requirement that statements should be signed by those who agree.

The Committee does not take a position on which of these options should be addressed in a set of procedures. But the Committee does believe that a sub-unit that is interested in making a statement should create a specific set of procedures in advance and then consistently follow those processes to respect the rights of all views in the sub-unit.

Although the Committee recommends that a sub-unit that wants to issue a statement (for example, a statement by the sub-unit on a policy issue on a website) must establish some sort of procedure, a leader of the sub-unit who is issuing statements such as a monthly message on a website or in a newsletter should be exempt from this rule. Requiring the leader of a sub-unit to follow a process in all such cases would be too cumbersome. The Committee believes instead that the rights of individuals in the sub-unit can be protected by the requirement that the leader of a sub-unit issuing a statement should instead issue a disclaimer making clear that they are speaking on her own behalf, and not on behalf of the others in the sub-unit.

Scope

This posture of sub-unit restraint should apply to any message or portion of a message commenting on external events by the sub-unit as an entity, or any message or portion of a message commenting on external events by the leader of a sub-unit on external events in their capacity as the leader of the sub-unit. This posture of sub-unit restraint does not apply in any respects to any individual faculty member speaking in their own personal or scholarly capacity.

These statements most often will take the form of messages or imagery on the website or newsletter of the sub-unit – but can also take the form of reports by the sub-unit, verbal remarks by the leader, the posting or reposting of materials on an official sub-unit social media account, and any other message where individuals are communicating through the official voice or platform of the sub-unit rather than in their individual or scholarly capacity. For purposes of this posture of sub-unit restraint, an institutional statement does not include any administrative activities of the sub-unit – the concept does not extend to academic appointments, invitations of speakers, hosting of conferences, or the like.

CONCLUSION

The spirit of the recommendations in this report is that faculty should strive to confine their comments on external events to scholarly statements that are connected to the core expertise of the sub-unit, and that take precautions to ensure the views of the sub-unit are not imputed to those within or without the sub-unit who may disagree.

The Committee closes with its emphatic view that nothing in the posture of restraint outlined in this report should be seen as limiting any individual faculty member from speaking in an individual or scholarly capacity. And so, to be clear: Faculty in their individual or scholarly capacities reserve their full and unfettered right to issue emotive statements, to comment on areas outside of their area of expertise, and to do so without disclaimers or procedures as long as they are acting consistent with other university policies. They can make these statements individually or collectively; verbally or in writing; openly or anonymously as they see fit in accordance with existing university policy. The conclusion the Committee reaches here is that sub-units of the university should take care to be thoughtful in how they use their affiliation with the university, and the consequences of those statements for themselves, their colleagues, and the broader Johns Hopkins community.

– David Steiner
Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional
Restraint, on his own behalf, and two other
committee members.

ABSENCE OF UNANIMITY

There was not a unanimity of views on the Committee. The members of the Committee explain their areas of disagreement below.

Three members of the Committee (authors of the majority view) join in making the following statement:

In our judgment, the majority of our Johns Hopkins University faculty colleagues are not in favor of our prescribing binding rules to regulate the ability of sub-units, departments, or senates to speak in a collective voice. We endorse this view. At the same time, we fully understand that speaking with a collective voice as a unit of the university carries risks that should be fully appreciated. Our guidelines, as described in this document, are intended to minimize that risk.

We are endorsing guidelines rather than rules because we believe that our faculty colleagues across Johns Hopkins University will respond positively to this approach. Rather than trying to create and enforce restrictions on collective statements, we believe that thoughtful guidelines will lead to the judicious use of collective statements based on the careful judgment of our scholarly community.

We believe that these guidelines should apply to all three kinds of sub-units since there are different but equally legitimate reasons why each may wish to speak collectively:

- Of the three categories of sub-units, a center or institute has the most focused expertise and can speak with that appropriate authority.
- A department is a collection of faculties whose domains of scholarship, while certainly different in their particulars, have brought them together with scholars whose broad interests they share. Moreover, even in a large department, there are multiple opportunities for faculty to interact and to benefit from the views of colleagues.
- A senate speaks for a cross-disciplinary group of colleagues that nevertheless are substantially distinguishable from those who represent other schools. The professional view of those who work in public health, for example, may be very different from those who speak for the performing arts. A Senate has a voice that is unlike that of a specific department, is distinct, and recognizable. The very fact that it speaks for a whole school will give the statement weight that a departmental voice may lack.

One member of the Committee makes the following statement:

I believe that the university-level restraint should be extended to all officially constituted bodies, be they departments, centers and institutes, or senates. I acknowledge that this is not necessarily the view of the majority of JHU faculty, but I believe such a policy is best given the current climate.

One member of the Committee made the following statement:

I believe that the university-level restraint should apply to departments and senates, while the guidance in this memo should apply only to centers and institutes. I fully support the rights for individual faculty to provide statements based on their academic expertise, or multiple faculty to sign-on to joint statements based on such expertise.

With regards to departments, in many ways they are like “small schools,” and in fact in some cases a single department has more faculty than some of the smaller Hopkins schools. Faculty are hired into departments and they don’t have the freedom to hop in or out as they do with a center affiliation. While our document provides guidelines suggesting that sub-units develop processes whereby faculty can opt-out of implicitly backing statements, it will nonetheless be an awkward situation for a department faculty member who chooses to do so - particularly a junior faculty member - and invoking an opt-out principle may suggest that departments are not as open to heterodox views. A center focused on a specific area, or even a group of faculty with similarly focused interests who voluntarily get together to issue a statement, seems to provide the more appropriate vehicle to issue a statement.

Regarding senates, the senators do voluntarily agree to be nominated or serve, so that is different from being a department member. They are expected to make decisions in the best long-term interests of the faculty and the school. However, as in any democratic system, elected senators’ views and decisions don’t necessarily align with those of *all* faculty. I’m not sure that a body that doesn’t reflect the opinions of all faculty should issue a statement in lieu of it coming directly from a specific group of faculty who opt-in (and who may have the most relevant domain of expertise on the subject). While there could be caveats attached to the senate’s statement that the views expressed do not necessarily represent those of all faculty, this starts to get too nuanced.

APPENDICES

Appendix A | Work of the Committee

List of members

David Steiner, *Chair*
School of Education

Elise Pas
Bloomberg School of Public Health

David Savitt
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

Alex Triantis
Dean, Carey Business School

Cynthia Wolberger
School of Medicine

Lainie Rutkow, *ex officio*
Executive Vice Provost

Nadia Oussayef, *ex officio*
Senior Director, Policy and Research, Office of the President.

Phil Spector, *ex officio*
Office of the President

Meetings of ad hoc committee

September 11, 2024
September 27, 2024
October 15, 2024
November 1, 2024
November 15, 2024
January 16, 2025
January 24, 2025
February 7, 2025
February 13, 2025
March 4, 2025
March 12, 2025
March 31, 2025

Meetings with shared governance bodies

October 2, 2024	SOE Faculty Senate
October 7, 2024	KSAS Faculty Senate
October 10, 2024	BSPH Faculty Senate
October 31, 2024	CBS Faculty Advisory Council
November 7, 2024	BSPH Chairs
November 12, 2024	SAIS Faculty Senate
November 12, 2024	WSE Faculty Senate
November 13, 2024	SOM Faculty Senate
November 20, 2024	SON Faculty Senate
November 26, 2024	SOM Dean and Vice Deans
December 13, 2024	Peabody Senate

Faculty forums

December 5, 2024
December 6, 2024
December 11, 2024

Appendix B | Message from President, Provost and Deans

On institutional statements from the university

August 15, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

As leaders of Johns Hopkins University, we are often called upon in the face of global, national, or local occurrences to issue public statements on behalf of the institution. These requests are usually grounded in a sense of connection to the values and purpose of our university and our common humanity, and on the occasions when we have issued such statements, we have attempted to choose our topics and words carefully.

In recent years, requests for institutional statements have increased in frequency. The subjects upon which we have been urged to speak have varied widely—human rights violations, acts of discrimination, changes in health regulations, incidents of targeted violence, military conflicts, and natural disasters, among others, have led to calls for a university statement. Often those seeking such statements want us to identify and condemn the actors whom they regard as principally responsible. In other cases, those seeking statements simply desire an expression of concern or sympathy for the persons directly affected by the incident in question. However, we must recognize that taking institutional positions can interfere with the university’s central commitment to free inquiry and obligation to foster a diversity of perspectives within our academic community.

As is the case with many of our peers, we have been weighing the value, appropriateness, and limitations of such institutional statements. We—as university leaders and deans—have arrived at a strong commitment to make institutional statements only in the limited circumstances where an issue is clearly related to a direct, concrete, and demonstrable interest or function of the university.

We write today to share our reasoning on this important issue and to clarify and deepen our commitment to a posture of restraint.

To begin, the very idea of an “official” position of the university on a social, scientific, or political issue runs counter to our foundational ethos—articulated most clearly in our [Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom](#)—to be a place where competing views are welcomed, challenged, and tested through dialogue and rigorous marshaling of evidence. The university is the site, more than any other institution in our society, where the process of truth-seeking through intense and open contestation is given pride of place. Although institutional statements may feel warranted, consoling, or, at times, even necessary to guide the university through difficult moments, experience has shown that they can be counterproductive, and even at odds with our core mission. These statements can too easily fuel a perception that there are approved or endorsed “institutional” views on political or social issues, which may, in fact, conflict with the views of members of our

community. They risk interfering with our truth-seeking function and compromising the ethos and credibility of the institution in the process.

Additionally, institutional statements can be perceived as performative or rote: They can excuse the absence of meaningful action to bring the community together in challenging moments, take up difficult questions, and learn, discuss, and debate together in a mutually respectful and supportive manner. They also can unintentionally model for our students that the only, or best, avenue for engaging with issues is to make public statements, obscuring that there are more effective ways to make change in the world.

Moreover, such statements foster an expectation that the institution will speak on a wide range of topics and a perception that when we decline to do so, it is a signal that the issues or the concerns of affected community members are unworthy of our attention. Why do some domestic or international conflicts or crises command our institutional attention, while others are regarded as less salient? As the tide of statements has risen across the university, it has become clear that the more statements we publish, the more injurious the slight to members of our community when we decline to issue a statement in response to some other incident. This pattern not only undermines our commitment to inclusivity but also erodes trust in institutional leadership and, as noted earlier, compromises our core mission as a place of open inquiry and diverse perspectives.

For these reasons, we will restrict our communications to the standard we have articulated—limiting our statements to those occasions where an issue is clearly related to a direct, concrete, and demonstrable interest or function of the university. This means that not issuing a statement will be our default in the great majority of cases we are likely to face. We acknowledge that the line between those issues that implicate a core interest of the university and those where the impact is less direct is not always easily drawn. But the inevitability of hard cases is not an argument against the approach we are adopting, which we believe will address the lion's share of cases that typically confront the university. Against this benchmark, for instance, a decision by government to reduce our permitted scope of activities might well justify a statement, but an event that has occurred internationally or nationally and that has no direct or concrete impact on our capacity to discharge our mission would not.

Critically, this posture of restraint does not mean the university will be unresponsive or unfeeling in the face of controversy or tragedy. Our priority is to respond to the events around us through the channels that are our university's core strength and time-honored calling—creating knowledge, engaging with ideas, and bringing discoveries and care to the world. When an external event affects members of our community, our university's focus will be to engage interested members of our community in educational and community programming that addresses the topic. Where appropriate, the university can offer direct support and engagement for those among us who are affected by the matter.

Further, our commitment as university leaders to embrace a policy of restraint is not meant to signal that members of the community should retreat from the world or the priorities of our institution. Indeed, our faculty, students, and staff engage the communities around us in countless productive ways, and we will continue to encourage our scholars to bring their ideas and expertise to inform the critical issues of the day. With the opening of the Hopkins Bloomberg Center, our capacity to serve as a platform to explore these issues has been magnified. And the university will remain unwavering in its commitment to values and aspirations in areas of strategic importance such as those embodied in foundational documents like the *Ten for One* and the *Second Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*.

Finally, we are eager to engage faculty colleagues in an examination of whether this posture of restraint is appropriate not only for university leaders and deans but also for departments, centers and other units of the university. We will be working with the Johns Hopkins University Council to develop an answer to this question over the course of the fall term and to solicit broad input from the university, including divisional academic advisory boards and senates. Of course, the dedication to institutional restraint will not apply to any individual faculty member speaking in their own scholarly or personal capacity. Again, the intent of this commitment is to extend the broadest possible scope to the views and expressions of our faculty, bolstering the freedom for them to share their insights and perspectives without being concerned about running counter to an “institutional” stance.

Ours is an extraordinary institution, a place furthered by the courageous interrogation and boundless discovery of our colleagues. The project of the university as an institution is to create the conditions for that exploration, discovery, and engagement, even for controversial or disquieting ideas. Against that overarching and foundational goal, we believe that the policy of restraint to which we are now committing ourselves is timely, principled, and critical for the continuing relevance and mission of our university.

Sincerely,

Ron Daniels,
President

Ray Jayawardhana,
Provost

Fred Bronstein,
Dean of the Peabody Institute

Christopher S. Celenza,
James B. Knapp Dean of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

Theodore L. DeWeese,
Dean of the Medical Faculty and CEO, Johns Hopkins Medicine

Elisabeth M. Long,
Sheridan Dean of University Libraries, Archives, and Museums

Ellen J. MacKenzie,
Dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health

Christopher C. Morphew,
Dean of the School of Education

T.E. Schlesinger,
Benjamin T. Rome Dean of the Whiting School of Engineering

James B. Steinberg,
Dean of the School of Advanced International Studies

Sarah L. Szanton,
Dean of the School of Nursing

Alexander Triantis,
Dean of the Carey Business School

