MLK-Unity March

Introduction

I am proud to be a part of this march that honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From this broader perspective, the events of the next several days take on unusual significance for three fundamental reasons:

1) Of course, it is fitting and important that we remember and honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of our great national leaders.

2) The events we have planned are also designed to focus the University's attention on both the importance and the challenge of our efforts to build a model of the type of pluralistic, multicultural community necessary to serve America in the years ahead.

3) And, of course, by coming together to participate in these activities, we recognize the importance of community— that only by working together, with love and respect, can we move toward Dr. King's dream of a nation united.

Inspired by Dr. King's memory, we have set aside this time to come together as a community...to march together...to find inspiration in a life lived heroically for others...to celebrate and learn from the lessons of this life,...to renew our individual and collective commitment to create a multicultural community in which each person is valued and respected.

This march symbolizes for me what we are trying to achieve at our University:

People working together,
walking down a new road.
A road that will call for commitment and hard work from each one of us as individuals...
We all know that change is not easy---not in ourselves of in our institution.

Dr. King's Legacy

But the life of Dr. King teaches us that change is possible. He taught us that the power of ideas, the power of a great teacher, the power of courage and love,
can overcome prejudice and hatred.
The power of people joined together in a common cause
to change the world.

What can we do?
Each one of you, in your own work, can play a part in
making the ideals of Dr. King a living reality by
helping to build a more caring community on this campus.
For just as we must learn to value our difference, we must
also be bound together by our common values and purposes.
Every one of us must help to build that sense of common bonds,
of caring, of compassion, of community.
I hope all of you who have joined in this march today
are also taking part in the many extraordinary programs
and events planned to honor Dr. King today.
They honor Dr. King and his legacy, and they are
meant to help us draw strength from that legacy

to meet the challenges before us today.
I know I speak for other members of the University
when I thank the students for organizing this
Unity March and giving us all the chance to join
together to affirm our deep personal and institutional
commitment to remove all barriers to the full participation
of all groups in the life of our University.