

## 2.A General Principles

The University of Michigan has, as one of its core values, an abiding commitment to sustaining a community in which the dignity of every individual is respected. Key to this value are efforts to foster and nurture an environment of civility and mutual respect. At the University, we live and work in a culture that defines itself in terms of intellectual exchange, appreciation of individual differences, and respect for each individual's personal dignity. The University's blend of students, faculty and staff from many backgrounds is a great resource and we all benefit from the mix of perspectives that is enriched by the unique experiences and insight that each person brings to our community. It is the understanding and appreciation for other points of view and richness of experiences that creates and sustains an environment that is inclusive and respectful.

As one of the world's great public institutions of higher education, the University of Michigan is committed to being an inclusive, multicultural community where differences based on race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability status, color, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, culture, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, height, weight, and religion are welcomed, nurtured, and respected. This commitment to various forms of diversity is a long-standing one. The first African-American male students were admitted to the University in 1868; the first women in 1870. This long-standing commitment to provide a pluralistic and welcoming academic environment stems from many sources, including the conviction that diversity is essential to creating an intellectual and social climate that promotes the freedom of thought and creativity so fundamental to academic inquiry, discovery, and learning.

The principle of an open and accepting community was first articulated in the statute establishing the University, which proclaimed in 1837 that "the University shall be open to all persons who possess the requisite literary and moral qualifications." Interpretation of this principle has evolved over the generations. Nevertheless, students and faculty continue to come to the University of Michigan to learn the hard task of crossing the boundaries of race and culture, to engage across what James B. Angell called the "artificial distinctions of conventional society." The University continues to strive to make educational and professional opportunities available equally to all members of our richly diverse society, and remains deeply committed to the notion that diversity is central to the identity, integrity, and mission of this University.