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May 4, 2020

Dear Nely Rodriguez and Kimberly Daley:

I am writing with an update in response to your 2018 correspondence addressed to the University of Michigan Board of Regents, on behalf of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Washtenaw Solidarity with Farmworkers, pertaining to labor standards and human rights in the agricultural industry and food supply chain.

As you know, I asked the President's Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights (PACLSHR) to examine the issues raised within your letter. After research and discussion, the committee made recommendations to me and we met to discuss their findings. The PACLSHR's recommendations, as well as my response, are enclosed.

In response to the committee's recommendations, I have invited the chair of the PACLSHR to address and engage my executive leadership team, specifically in relation to responsible food procurement and examination of our vendor code of conduct. That session has been postponed for the time being due to the pandemic crisis. I will also continue to support the PACLSHR's activities such as engaging external stakeholders and monitoring trends regarding responsible food procurement in order to share experiences and best practices to learn how we might address this issue moving forward.

To make progress on this difficult issue will be a long journey that requires a thoughtful and collaborative approach, and I look forward to further progress in the years ahead. Thank you, again, for raising this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, MD, PhD
President