



ROBERT J. ZIMMER

*President*

June 11, 2008

Lauren Berlant  
George M. Pullman Professor  
Department of English Language and Literature  
Center for Gender Studies and the College

Dear Lauren:

Thank you for the letter dated June 6, 2008, signed by you and faculty colleagues. We appreciate the invitation to begin a discussion about the important concerns that you raised about the establishment of the Milton Friedman Institute. We have already begun the process of arranging a meeting for this purpose and look forward to understanding your concerns more fully and to sharing perspectives.

We do want to state clearly in advance of that meeting that we, too, would be very concerned if the intent or effect of the Institute was to propagate a strict ideology or political position. The Institute's purpose is to promote the most rigorous economic research across a wide range of subfields and on a diversity of policy questions, true to the highest ideals of the University. It is in no way an endorsement of political doctrines espoused by Milton Friedman; it is, however, an acknowledgment that he was among the very finest economists and methodologists of the last century.

One of the great strengths of the University is that it has always been a place of active engagement of a variety of intellectual perspectives. We welcome a discussion about how to ensure that the University maintains intellectual and ideological diversity. We are committed to supporting intellectual endeavors across the breadth of the University and we look forward to sharing with you more information about funding for this initiative and for others that we have announced recently. We hope that it will be helpful to situate the specifics of these types of resource allocations into a broader context of planning and support for a spectrum of new initiatives.

We trust that you will share this response with the other signatories of your letter, and we look forward to meeting with you and a number of other concerned colleagues soon to continue this discussion.

Best wishes,

Robert J. Zimmer  
President

Thomas F. Rosenbaum  
Provost