***Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation* chosen as 2019-20 KU Common Book**

Dear Colleagues:

In recent years, the KU Common Book selections have supported the first two objectives of our University mission to lift students and society by educating leaders and building healthy communities. These books have engaged first-year students and our entire university community in a range of challenging topics across different backgrounds, experiences, and identities.

Our new selection extends and expands this intellectual journey. The 2019-2020 KU Common Book is *Tales of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation,* a collection of writings edited by John Freeman. This marks the first time the KU Common Book will be an anthology.

The collection features essays, short stories, poems, and more from 36 prominent writers and thinkers in the United States today. The contributors are a highly decorated set of writers, among them winners of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, the PEN/Faulkner Award, the National Book Award, the Orange Prize for Fiction, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Lambda Literary Award, and many more. Some familiar names appear among the contributors: former KU Common Book authors Edwidge Danticat, Eula Biss, and Timothy Egan.

For our students, the KU Common Book will prepare them to begin discussing the big ideas they will address during their time at KU and throughout their lives. Incoming students will receive a copy at Orientation and returning students can purchase a copy at the KU Bookstore. I encourage all members of the KU community to get involved by reading the book.

If you’re a faculty member, instructor, or GTA interested in using the book, please attend the upcoming information panel for details on the book and its applicability to a wide range of departments and programs on Tuesday, May 7th from 3:30-4:30 PM at the Hall Center. If you would like to request a review copy, please visit firstyear.ku.edu/common-book.

Faculty and staff can also get involved by volunteering to lead a KU Common Book discussion group.Discussion groups will take place on Sunday, August 25th. To volunteer or to recommend others from your program for this opportunity, please contact First-Year Experience at firstyear@ku.edu

The KU Common Book program creates a shared academic experience for first-year students and creates new connections among students, faculty and staff. I congratulate the selection committee for another outstanding choice for our next Common Book.

Sincerely,

DeAngela Burns-Wallace

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies