

Strategic Plan for Inclusion

VISION

In 2021, Deerfield Academy is a community that values and affirms the distinct identities and differences of each person. Diverse perspectives fuel creative and innovative thinking, build empathy and consideration, and provide varied skills and experiences from which the entire community benefits. As a community, we consider cultural competency essential to the pursuit of excellence and success, both on campus and beyond.

STRATEGIES

PRIORITIZE STUDENT SUPPORT

Student support through skills development is the primary focus of inclusion efforts.

USE EXISTING STRUCTURES

Integrate inclusion efforts into existing reporting structures, committees, and programs.

SEEK ALIGNMENT

Prioritize change primarily through adjustment and alignment, rather than through the addition of programs, personnel, or other resources. Use proactive project and relationship management to align and coordinate different groups around inclusion priorities.

REINFORCE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH PROCESS AND POLICY

Although new levels of cultural competency can be driven through training, use institutional structures and policies to support and sustain that investment.

INCLUSION SUPPORTS DIVERSITY

Prioritize the development of a culturally competent environment so that any investments in diversity recruiting and retention see a better return.

CONSIDER KEY MARKERS OF IDENTITY (KMI)

Our ultimate goal is to be inclusive of all people, but practicality requires that we focus our work on the Key Markers of Identity, which are age, socio-economic status, gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and ability.

PHASE I GOALS

Develop Cultural Competency Skills, Campus-wide

Provide resources and opportunities for students and employees to develop and practice cultural competency in building and affirming an inclusive school culture.

Improve Inclusion in Formal Academy Programs and Policies for Students

In accordance with our high standards, review all components of our formal program—academic, co-curricular, and residential—in order to better align our structures with a culture of inclusion.

PHASE I TACTICS

ACADEMIC DEAN

Incorporate questions related to inclusion and inclusive practices into departmental review process.

Request that department chairs, in their year-end reports, address ways in which their departments have sought to promote inclusive practices in their department's classrooms.

Ensure that inclusion topics are included on the agendas for the Curriculum Committee and Chair Symposium.

Examine the balance between student requests for diversity in classrooms with student choice in course selections.

ADMISSION OFFICE

Complete review of supplemental aid program to provide equal access to Deerfield's program; reassess annually.

Identify categories of supplemental financial support for students (e.g. academic, co-curricular, dormitory life, social opportunities, travel, etc.) based on priority, impact, and sustainability of support.

Better communicate both tuition support and supplemental aid availability to applicants and students who have demonstrated financial need.

Work with the Deerfield Parents Network (DPN) to ensure the success and inclusivity of the FirstLink program.

Continue to attract and yield a diverse student population.

ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

Bolster collaboration with alumnae, and improve engagement with alumnae and alumni from historically underrepresented groups.

Explore inclusion and diversity opportunities with the DPN and the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association.

Develop ongoing financial support of programs like Rising Scholars, KIPP/STEP, the Experimentory, Global Travel Programs, and Supplemental Financial Aid.

Continue to emphasize the important programmatic function of traditional financial aid in fundraising efforts.

ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Prioritize inclusion in the programming and outfitting of the new athletics complex.

Address implicit and explicit structural inequalities between girls' and boys' athletic programs and teams.

Develop and implement policies for equity in logistical support and outfitting of teams—in transportation, access to facilities, provision of uniforms and equipment, and recognition with awards.

Provide training and support for coaches, athletic staff, and student athletes on how to build and sustain inclusive teams.

Examine the culture surrounding student-driven gear purchases, establishing guidelines and standards that promote inclusive practices and consideration of the entire team; identify opportunities to link varsity and sub-varsity teams.

Evaluate captain nomination and selection process for all athletic teams. Support team captains with leadership training.

Work with Advancement to address inequalities in donor support of teams, with particular attention to gender issues.

Examine student-driven sports traditions, seeking to develop more inclusive structures.

CENTER FOR SERVICE AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Work to embed cultural competency skills development and practice into global travel, service, and student leadership programs.

Prioritize service and travel programs that challenge students to engage thoughtfully with difference.

Continue to work with Advancement to ensure financial accessibility to Deerfield's global travel programs for all students.

Continue environmental sustainability efforts with particular emphasis on respecting and including staff members who make campus systems work.

Continue to develop shared experiences that celebrate Deerfield's global stories: where we are from and the issues that we care about.

Assist the OICL and Dean of Faculty in identifying professional development opportunities for faculty that help integrate global understanding, environmental stewardship, and a dedication to service into the day to day curriculum at Deerfield.

COMMUNICATIONS

Review and improve protocols for sharing information within the employee base.

Examine inclusivity of protocols for sharing information with students, parents, and alumni.

Develop communication strategies to provide ongoing updates with all constituents about inclusion efforts.

Evaluate signage and wayfinding systems to ensure that Deerfield is accessible and welcoming to all.

Establish internal marketing campaigns designed to support and communicate the importance of inclusion and cultural competency skills.

Work with the DPN to support greater inclusivity in communications with Deerfield families—particularly through the Families FYI newsletter.

Ensure that Academy style guidelines, publications, and correspondence model, promote, and support the use of inclusive language and imagery at Deerfield.

Continue to improve processes that ensure better representation of underrepresented groups in all Deerfield publications and communications channels.

Create a mechanism for community members to share information about inclusive/exclusive practices they have observed at Deerfield.

COLLEGE ADVISING

Ensure equal access to resources for the college admissions process for all Deerfield students.

Counsel students on financial aid planning process for college, providing support that promotes access to the full array of aid opportunities—including test prep, fee waivers, college visits, etc.—and which seeks to help families in the navigation of the complex form/application completion process.

Proactively communicate to students about multi-cultural and first generation fly-in college visitation programs.

Continue exposing students to the variety of possible college experiences beyond "traditional" choices: historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), single gender schools, alternative colleges, and gap year programs, for example.

DEAN OF FACULTY

Identify methods to integrate inclusion efforts into faculty training and professional development, with particular emphasis on understanding the landscape of inclusive pedagogy.

Incorporate questions regarding inclusion on professional development grant applications.

Incorporate questions related to inclusion and inclusive practices into teacher evaluations, reviews, and feedback.

Encourage faculty participation on a rotational basis in professional development opportunities related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Examine the campus master plan, in order to evaluate and improve the accessibility and safety of physical spaces on campus for all people.

Encourage staff participation in professional development opportunities and conferences related to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Seek to identify a diverse group of candidates for campus leadership, including Senior Staff, Administrative Council, department chairs, and supervisors.

Continue to support the Trustee and Nominating Committee of the Board in their annual review of the process by which board members are selected, ensuring that diversity across Key Markers of Identity is considered.

Work with the Board of Trustees to ensure that inclusion is considered, and that progress towards inclusions goals is regularly reported, in each board committee.

Support and affirm the decision-making structures outlined by the recently-established Framing Conversation and Review process—and review suggested adjustments or additions with inclusion in mind.

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

Continue to monitor and improve the implementation of the recommendations of the "Proposal to Improve Employee Diversity at Deerfield" for non-faculty employees.

Establish annual schedule for management refresher on inclusive hiring practices for managers and supervisors.

Ensure time for ongoing employee training in cultural competency by the Director of Inclusion and Community Life, including during new employee orientation.

Regularly review and communicate employee benefits; ensuring that all employees are aware of the benefits of employment at Deerfield.

Ensure that access to campus facilities, services, and opportunities are not restricted to selected employees, implicitly or explicitly, without consideration.

Sponsor events that build collegiality and respect—and foster community among all employees.

OFFICE OF INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY LIFE (OICL)

Manage and promote this Strategic Plan for Inclusion, monitoring incremental progress against goals and providing periodic reports to the Head of School, Senior Staff, Board of Trustees, and Ad Hoc Committee for Inclusion.

Collaborate with student alliances and clubs to ensure support for students in underrepresented groups—focusing in particular on gender, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

Work with students to develop shared experiences that educate and involve the entire Deerfield community with the priorities of inclusion.

Work with the Opening Days Committee to integrate cultural competency training into student orientation program.

Work with Human Resources, the Dean of Faculty, and the Chief Financial Officer to prioritize inclusion and collaboration across all employees.

Work with the DPN to assist in their inclusion efforts, including those activities scheduled during Family Weekends.

Provide sustained training for student alliance faculty advisors and student alliance leaders.

Establish a cultural competency training program for students, delivered through existing structures.

Increase communication to families and implement programs to develop greater awareness and involvement among Deerfield families in inclusion efforts.

Work closely with Dean of Faculty, Chief Financial Officer, and Human Resources to identify new strategies to increase diversity and inclusion in hiring.

Develop new cultural competency training programs during employee orientation.

Continue to evaluate and improve the efficacy of the Rising Scholars Program and similar programs.

STUDENT LIFE OFFICE

Review, clarify, and communicate student policies, enabling our rules and expectations to be clear, consistent, and known by all.

Evaluate and adjust residential life policies with a focus on addressing gender and healthy relationships.

Evaluate and adjust the process for speaker selection and event planning to support inclusion and diversity.

Continue to examine the balance between student preference and diversity priorities in dormitory assignments.

Assist the DPN in identifying candidates for the DPN Steering Committee, to ensure that diverse perspectives are represented.

Promote diverse perspectives in student leadership and selection, with particular emphasis on those students who support or represent their peers.

Examine opportunities within the Student Activities schedule, potentially aligning the selection of activities and structure of events around inclusion priorities.

Revise the language that describes co-curricular choices, alternatives, specialization, and similar uses of co-curricular time. Include specific guidelines for implementation, resource assignment, and time commitments from students and faculty, considering equity from program to program.

Incorporate cultural competency skills into the advisor handbook and in advising reports.

Evaluate the current dress code's effect on inclusion; recommend adjustments.

Gather periodic student feedback on the inclusivity of student life and campus culture.

Develop and provide ongoing cultural competency training and support for dorm residents that will enable them to be more proactive and more responsive to evolving needs of all community members.

Communicate and accommodate, when possible, religious and faith practices. Promote awareness of needs, preferences, opportunities, and accommodations.

PHASE II GOALS

Address Inclusion in Student Life and Culture

Expand cultural competency beyond the formal programs of the academy, so that it can positively impact all aspects of student life and campus culture.

Address Inclusion in Employee Culture

Examine structures that may divide the employee-base of Deerfield, with particular attention on mutual respect, clear roles, inclusive communications, access to opportunity, and informal, non-financial, benefits of employe