Denison Forward

OUR COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ANTIRACISM (IDEA)

JANUARY 2022
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“We need every member of our community to see themselves as belonging at Denison, and we need every member to act from personal and institutional values of being welcoming and inclusive and being part of an academic community where issues are questioned, discussed, and respectfully debated as part of the process of intellectual inquiry. To do this work, we should not leave our identities behind but instead hold our greatest differences, not in isolation, but in relationship with one another.”

ADAM WEINBERG
President, Denison University
A Note from President Weinberg

At its core, the idea is simple.

**Society changes when we think and act differently.**

I shared those words with the Denison community in January 2020 as the university embarked on a journey of candid and critical self-reflection. With racial tensions boiling over across the country, it was time for us to take a deeper look into the role we can and should play in correcting our country’s long and painful history of structural racism.

It was essential to begin at home — to recognize our achievements in diversity, equity, and inclusion and call out and address the places where we have fallen short. A college campus should be a supportive space to confront our past, delve into the structures that shape contemporary society, and find ways to work together to create a better future. Institutions like Denison, steeped in the values of fairness and equality, carry the responsibility and privilege of spreading positive change throughout society.

Denison Forward is our commitment to changing the way we think and act — and to spark, nurture, and demand that change in society as well.

We know that shifts in societal behavior, even our own, do not come easily. Progress rarely happens overnight. Denison Forward is a thoughtful, inclusive, and data-driven approach to understanding the road behind us and carving a better path ahead. Among other recommendations, our action plan calls for increasing recruitment and retention of a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff; including antiracism as a part of professional development efforts; and making sure our students, particularly those who may face obstacles due to structural racism, have the resources and opportunities to launch into their chosen career paths.

This plan is just the beginning. I am grateful for the hard work so many have put into developing Denison Forward, and I encourage our entire community to take part in this evolving plan to change — to improve — how we think and act. Together, we can shape a world based on human dignity and respect.

As Denisonians, we must strive to be part of the solution.

_Aden A. Weinberg_
Diversity, equity, and inclusion enrich the educational experiences here on The Hill. We learn and grow from those whose beliefs and perspectives are different from our own.”

NICOLE AUSMER
Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life
The mission of Denison University is “to inspire and educate students to become autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents and active citizens of a democratic society and to provide all students the tools to live successful and fulfilling personal and professional lives. We envision our students’ lives as based upon rational choice, a firm belief in human dignity and compassion unlimited by cultural, racial, sexual, religious or economic barriers, and directed toward an engagement with the central issues of our time.”

We remain committed to the transformative power of a challenging and relational liberal arts education and all of the many benefits that it has for our community. A Denison education exposes students to innovative ideas, as well as different ways of understanding the world. Creating a diverse living, learning, and working environment enables students, faculty, and staff to experience the different life experiences and evolving identities within our community, increasing our understanding and empathy. At Denison, we all treat one another with dignity and respect. Each member of our community adds value and possesses a full range of rights and responsibilities.

In 2006, the Denison Faculty provided clarity around the value of diversity to a Denison education:

“Denison University’s commitment to foster a diverse community is central to our mission as a liberal arts college to educate critical thinkers, discerning moral agents and active citizens of a democratic, global society ... While we are committed to multiple forms of diversity, we also recognize that the dynamics of race play a central role in shaping individual and collective experience in the United States. It is important to the realization of our educational goals not only that students have opportunities to speak about racial, ethnic, and other differences, but that they also get a chance to speak across these differences. This can only happen if there is diversity in the classroom and, more generally, in the college. Diversity in all facets of the university has educational value for all students and benefits all members of the campus community. Diversity plays a particularly important role at Denison.”

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ANTIRACISM (IDEA) AND THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Denison currently is developing a comprehensive university strategic planning process building on the previous 2015 Strategic Plan. The Denison Forward plan will become part of that overarching plan, and IDEA focus areas and principles will infuse that planning.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Denison University holds a distinct space in the American higher education landscape. Denison was one of the earlier colleges established in the Northwest Territory, a region of the country with its own long and complex history as it relates to race and ethnicity. The college achieved great success during its early years, as the United States was undergoing fast growth as a nation. During this time, many Denisonians were heavily involved in the antislavery movement and supported women’s education. By the Civil War, men and women (although white) were being integrated into the classroom. In 1970, Denison was one of the first colleges in the country to establish both a Black Student Union and a Black Studies Program and the student body slowly began to reflect some diversity.
CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Despite advances in recent years, Denison historically has been a predominantly white institution. In 2001, in response to perennially low numbers of students, faculty, and staff of color, Denison committed to becoming a more diverse college. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and others united in efforts to make Denison more diverse.

Student Diversity
This chart documents the positive impacts of our work. Although we have made improvements, we recognize that we still have a long way to go.

Student Retention & Graduation Rates
Our average first-year retention rate and four- and six-year graduation rates are very similar between domestic students of color and domestic majority students. From 2017-2020, domestic students of color returned for their second year at Denison 90% of the time, which is identical to the university average. The graduation rate for domestic students of color is 78% within four years, and 82% graduated within six years.

Tenure and Tenure-Track Faculty
Demographics & Retention Rates
In 2008, the university began affirming its commitment to faculty diversity and inclusion increasing its number of diverse tenure-track faculty. During the past 10 years, 40% of our tenure-track faculty hires have increased diversity on campus.

The retention rate of tenure-track faculty hired since 2007-2008 is 71% for both white and faculty of color. Both third-year review and tenure rates are also similar with 87% of white faculty passing their third-year and tenure reviews, while 84% of faculty of color passed both reviews.

Staff Demographics
The university is committed to increasing the hiring and retention rates of staff members from underrepresented groups. We recognize this as an area of opportunity to improve through hiring, development, and retention initiatives. Over the past five years, the university has made incremental progress in the hiring of a diverse staff. A focus on retaining diverse staff talent and ensuring their successful onboarding will be essential in meeting the Denison Forward goals. Human Resources will partner with departments and develop strategies to enhance staff engagement and professional development, and to develop a more inclusive workplace.

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1 Underrepresented groups are individuals who racially identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, Pacific Islander, and Native American.
CREATING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

It is important to recognize that, while we have increased diversity on campus, not all members of our community have always felt welcomed or have a sense of belonging. In particular, students, faculty and staff of color have too often felt marginalized and have had racially charged experiences. At times, these frustrations have led to campus demonstrations. Often the biggest issue is not the explosive moments but the day-to-day interactions and implicit biases that leave students, faculty, and staff feeling disrespected and make it needlessly and unfairly hard for them to find success at Denison.

In recent surveys of students, we observe students of color feeling less connected to the community. In a 2018 senior survey, Black and Hispanic seniors were less satisfied with the sense of community on campus than white students (Black: 53%, Hispanic: 63%, White: 74%). We found a similar pattern among first-year students — again students of color feel less satisfied with the sense of community. In addition, Asian, Black and Hispanic students were more likely to indicate having felt discriminated against at Denison than white students (Asian: 57%, Black: 53%, Hispanic: 33%, White: 21%).

In our National Survey of Student Engagement (February 2020), we found that Black and Latinx students were less likely to feel valued by Denison or to feel part of the community — both as first-years and as seniors. For example, 50% of Black seniors and 56% of Latinx seniors felt valued by Denison, while 76% of white seniors felt valued. Similarly, we found that 60% of Black and 53% of Latinx first-years felt like part of the Denison community, while 86% of white first-years reported feeling like part of the community.

Additionally, in the 2019 Great Colleges Survey, we saw a 3% decline in how faculty and staff view the institution’s emphasis on having diverse faculty, administration and staff. Furthermore, we observed that different identities observed this difference. Overall, 80% of Denison employees agree that the institution places sufficient emphasis on having diverse faculty, administration, and staff, but only 55% of Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native respondents agree. In addition, 70% of Denison employees agree that Denison acts effectively to retain a diverse faculty, compared to 30% of Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native respondents. Lastly, 64% agree that the college acts effectively to retain a diverse staff, compared to 31% of Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native respondents.

The college has responded to these concerns with both successes and failures. President Weinberg summarized this in a June 2020 letter to the campus when he wrote:

“Society changes when we think and act differently. I believe our nation’s college campuses are crucial to this process. We have to do more to step into this space. Our campuses need to be places where we are confronting our past, learning about the structures that shape contemporary society, and finding ways to work together to create a better future.”

This report is meant to be a comprehensive, multi-year, campus-wide plan for action and change.
It is essential to our mission that we are an academic community rooted and grounded in inclusion, diversity, equity, and antiracism work.”

ALEX MILLER
Vice President of Student Life, Denison Forward Committee Member
In the summer of 2020, the Denison Forward initiative was chartered by President Weinberg. Denison Forward built on an effort that began in January 2020 via a letter sent to the Denison community. The letter called for a comprehensive focus on:

- **Inclusion** – developing a campus community of belonging in which everyone feels listened to, valued, and respected.
- **Diversity** – recruiting and retaining Denison students, faculty, and staff who represent a wide range of backgrounds, views, and perspectives.
- **Equity** – creating opportunities for historically underserved populations to have equal access to and participation in educational programs that are capable of closing the gaps in student success and completion.
- **Antiracism** – calling on the majority/dominant groups to proactively work against racism.

During the winter of 2020, a process was launched to accomplish this work. That process was just starting to gain momentum when COVID-19 closed the campus in March 2020. When the acts of racial injustice and international protests emerged over the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, we added a fourth category to our work – antiracism.

**DENISON FORWARD COMMITTEE**

The Denison Forward Committee was invaluable in the development of this plan. Through their hard work and efforts in campus-wide engagement, we were able to create planning that reflects the insights, challenges, and values of our full community. The committee was asked to be self-reflective and self-critical and to focus on crucial diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work to support students, faculty, and staff who have historically been underrepresented on our campus while adding an antiracism (A) agenda focused on majority groups to this work. We have transposed the DEIA acronym into IDEA to reflect positive forward thought and action.

From this vantage point, the Denison Forward task force assessed the institution from three subcommittee core areas: its people, practices, and possibilities.

The People Subcommittee was charged to research ways to invest in our people (students, faculty, and staff) through training, development, improved skill sets, and capacity-building.

The Practices Subcommittee was charged with reviewing the following: a) assessment of, reporting of, and responding to incidents of racism and other forms of bias; b) a university-wide learning framework for inclusion, diversity, equity, and antiracism; and c) university-wide policies, pedagogy, processes, and procedures through an equity-minded lens.

The Possibilities Subcommittee was charged with focusing on racial justice efforts that can come to fruition on and off campus, including equipping students of color, first-generation students, and historically marginalized groups with the tools they need to achieve economic and social mobility, and providing majority students with cultural competencies required to succeed professionally.

The subcommittees were asked to identify actions and initiatives to foster an environment where each member of the Denison community can thrive and feel that they have space for their identities, experiences, and perspectives.

We have both an opportunity and an obligation to address inequities on our campus. This work requires us to develop an awareness of existing inequalities and maintain targeted efforts to ensure all students, faculty, and staff have the tools they need to feel connected and valued, and to be successful. It also means we need to be a community where every member sees the IDEA focus as their responsibility and is committed to pushing back against racism and racial bias.
DISCOVERY & DATA GATHERING

Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, the subcommittees collected data through open fora, empirical national and institutional surveys, listening tours, constituency group meetings, and one-on-one conversations. The Denison Forward subcommittees submitted reports to President Weinberg in June 2021.

The subcommittees found that Denison has made substantial improvements in some areas. At the same time, we acknowledge that we continue to struggle with others.

Among the areas of progress:

- Denison has become more racially diverse – 46% of our tenure-track faculty hires and 38% of students enrolled during the last 10 years have increased diversity on our campus.
- Retention and graduation rates for students are similar across racial and ethnic groups, as are tenure rates for faculty.
- The college has increased financial support for students. Need-based aid doubled from $30 million to $60 million a year and Denison became one of the few colleges in the country to meet the full demonstrated financial aid need of every student.

We have dedicated more resources to financial stressors with Red Thread Grants and more funds to support books, daily needs, internships, study abroad, and other areas identified by students as financial stressors.

Although much headway has been made, the subcommittees heard a myriad of stories from students, faculty, and staff of color about negative experiences at Denison that left them feeling undervalued and misrepresented, and created a sense of marginalization.

During the summer of 2021, President Weinberg and senior staff reviewed the reports and recommendations submitted by the task force. EAB, a higher education research firm, was also engaged to benchmark recommendations against similar work being done on other college campuses. During the fall of 2021, the report and recommendations were shared with groups throughout campus and feedback was gathered. The final report will be folded into the college’s new strategic plan to be completed during the spring of 2022.

“Investing, promoting, and engaging in diversity and inclusion help us learn new perspectives, explore different archives of knowledge, understand ‘difference’ and, ultimately, embrace the complexities of our world.”

FRANCISCO JAVIER LÓPEZ-MARTÍN, Associate Professor of Spanish, Acting Associate Provost for Diversity

“

This work will inform Denison’s academic, social, and institutional affairs, realizing racial equity in these dimensions and more across the university in days to come.”

JALEEL POOLE ’22
All students, staff, and faculty should be seen. Structural racism exists and it limits opportunities for groups of people. At Denison, we should serve as a model for breaking down structural racism."

MICHAEL SUPP
Director of Facilities Operations
PRINCIPLES
While many principles are embedded throughout our planning, five principles frame the action plan:

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – our work is focused on ensuring that every member of our community feels listened to, valued, and respected and has the opportunities to succeed at Denison.

- **Antiracism** – our work requires members of our community to be committed to doing their part to ensure that racism has no place on our campus.

- **Shared Responsibility** – our work will be guided by a shared equity leadership approach. We will scale our work by organizing teams across campus who take collective responsibility in developing and moving our IDEA agenda forward.

- **A Commitment** – our work will be ongoing. We must be committed for the long haul, driven by a continual process of learning, taking actions, assessing, refining our work and staying committed over time.

- **Accountability** – we will instill a sense of accountability for progress at every level of the college.

OVERSIGHT & IMPLEMENTATION

**Oversight**
To do this work, we are establishing a cross-functional Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Antiracism (IDEA) Team. The Team is not charged with doing the work, but rather making sure that every unit across the college is doing their part to ensure that the entire college is moving forward. This team will consist of administrators who hold the following positions:

- **Acting Assoc. Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** Francisco Lopez-Martin
- **Assoc. Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Student Life** Nicole M. Ausmer
- **Assoc. Vice President for Human Resources** Pamela Prescod-Caesar
- **Director of Facilities Operations** Michael Supp
- **Vice President for University Communications and Branding** Libby Eckhardt
- **Assoc. Director of Athletics** Sara Lee

The IDEA Team also asked Arielle Johnson, Senior Associate Director of Gifts & Records Administration, to serve. The team plans to work with FOCIF and Black Caucus to identify a faculty member, and Student Life to recruit a student representative.

In addition to the recommendations reported below, the IDEA team will review Denison’s Diversity Statement. This process was started by the University Council in 2019 and the statement was passed by faculty vote in May 2019. The Diversity Statement Task Force, composed of faculty, staff, and a student representative, was convened in the Fall 2019 semester. This task force did a good deal of work before it was placed on hold in mid-Spring 2020, due to COVID-19.

**Reporting**
The IDEA team is also charged by the President with continually assessing progress and reporting back to the community. As part of this work, the group will undertake a university-wide review of policies, processes, and procedures through an equity-minded lens. The group will meet quarterly with the President and once a year with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees to ensure ongoing discussion of IDEA values and initiatives at the highest levels of the college. The team will also have access to EAB, which can help benchmark Denison’s plans and progress against other colleges and universities.
STRATEGIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following strategies and recommendations are designed to address direct feedback from the Denison community and to identify and measure tangible actions and progress.

1. Increase recruitment and retention of a diverse community of students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni volunteers

Diversity Recruiting Strategy for Administrative and Support Staff
We have made good progress in recruiting a diverse community of students and faculty. These efforts need to continue. At the same time, we need to make more progress with staff hiring. Human Resources will examine our process for recruiting and create a new Diversity Recruiting Strategy for Administrative and Support Staff.

Onboarding and Mentorship Program
We also need to pay attention to retention. Our retention rates for students and faculty are consistent across racial and ethnic categories, but we need to continue this work while doing more to support staff. As part of this work, HR will develop a year-long onboarding and mentorship program to ensure that we retain diverse staff members.

Leadership Diversity
We need to continue to make sure we add diversity to the leadership of the college. The Chair of the Board and President will work with the IDEA Team to ensure we are appropriately diversifying both the board and senior leadership.

Alumni Council: Expand Affinity Groups
The Alumni Council is an influential member of the Denison community. The Office of Alumni & Family Engagement will partner with the Alumni Council to create affinity alumni groups similar to the Black Alumni Association and Denison Pride for groups that have historically been marginalized on campus. In addition, they will create new ways to utilize the time and talents of these groups to effectively advance the Denison Forward agenda.

2. Infuse professional development with opportunities to increase the intercultural knowledge and antiracism competence of Denison staff

Human Resources will work with a consultant to develop a comprehensive approach for ongoing IDEA training for staff. This will build on workshops we piloted during spring 2021. It will include:

New Staff Orientation
Add a component to new staff orientation on what it means to work in and benefit from a diverse environment.

Ongoing IDEA-specific Workshops
During the 2020-2021 academic year, we piloted two different workshops designed to create a baseline understanding of inclusion, diversity, equity, and antiracism. We then provided a framework for applying action to antiracism efforts from the perspective of the employee. The next steps include finalizing these workshops and making them available to all staff on a continuing basis. As staff goes through these workshops, we will add more advanced versions. The goal will be to provide continual workshops that help all staff advance on their IDEA journey.

Embed IDEA Training in Existing Programs
Add IDEA components to existing and ongoing staff training programs. Examples include the Lunch & Learn series that is designed to provide relevant information, tools, and resources on important topics that affect Denison employees as professionals and individuals, and the “Tip of the Week” section of the employee newsletter (Denison In the Know). Work-related IDEA information and action steps can be added to these existing programs and more.

Include IDEA Principles and Priorities in Employee Evaluations
Administrators and staff will report annually on IDEA activity as part of annual evaluations.
IDEA Training for Student Employees

Many staff serve as supervisors of student employees and/or interact with student employees. The new Office of Student Employment will add training for student supervisors that includes a strong IDEA component with a focus on recruitment, equity, and mentorship.

To help with this work, HR will work closely with the Engagement and Communications Committee (ECC) to ensure the work is engaging staff and helping staff to advance on their IDEA journey. HR will have access to resources and external consultants with expertise in this work.

3. Embrace inclusive pedagogy as core to our academic enterprise

Academics are the core enterprise of Denison University. As such, we need to continually assess and enhance professional development opportunities for our faculty while ensuring the curriculum and pedagogies support a diverse community of learners. This work is multifaceted and ongoing. We will be guided by the principle of inclusive pedagogies — an approach to classroom learning that is student-centered and proactively focuses on ensuring students from all backgrounds are invited to and engaged in the learning environment.

Onboarding New Faculty

The Provost's Office will add training on inclusive pedagogies into new faculty orientation, ensuring new faculty have an opportunity to acculturate Denison's definition of inclusive pedagogies, its foundational relationship to the college, and where faculty can find resources and opportunities. The Provost's Office is examining an approach to make new faculty orientation more group-based and extend it across the first year. Assuming this happens, we will embed ongoing training around inclusive pedagogies into this revamped program.

Ongoing Professional Development of Faculty

The Provost's Office will work with the Center for Learning and Teaching to offer ongoing workshops on effective and inclusive pedagogies. The Center will pilot a program where small groups of faculty are selected and charged with discussing inclusive pedagogies across disciplines.

Academic Department Assessments and Planning

To date, every academic department has been thinking about issues of diversity, equity, access and inequality, with the purpose of better supporting student belonging and academic success. Some departments are farther along on this journey than others. The Center for Learning and Teaching and the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will work with each department to support continual advancement. To do this work, data will be collected from students on their classroom/learning experiences. Departments will be asked to develop plans for continual progress.

Department Chair Training and Support

Department chairs are often the keepers of departmental culture, enforcers of departmental norms, and heralds of departmental vision. In its present state, formal departmental chair training is logistical in nature. The Dean of the Faculty will work with existing chairs to add an IDEA component to new Chair training. The Dean of the Faculty will also work with department chairs to ensure support for department-based IDEA efforts with new funding.

Defining and Measuring Teaching Effectiveness

A number of questions have been raised about how we define and measure teaching effectiveness. The Center for Learning and Teaching and Faculty of Color and International Faculty (FOCIF) hosted Dr. Philip Stark of UC-Berkeley for a discussion on teaching evaluations in April 2021. Faculty have expressed interest in revising our current course evaluation instrument and support a broader conversation about teaching effectiveness in Spring 2022.

General Education Power and Justice (P) Requirement Review

The P requirement was last reviewed in 2015 by the General Education Competency Committee (GECC) and their recommended changes were approved by faculty vote in 2016. The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) will be charged with starting a process to review the P requirement to ensure it is meeting the pedagogical goals consistent with the Denison Forward, the updated Diversity Mission Statement, and the overall University Mission Statement.
4. **Leverage our residential community to provide students with the opportunity to learn how to live and engage within a cross-cultural cohort**

Denison students live on campus for four years and have unique opportunities to engage in and learn from cross-cultural interactions. Too often, however, students fall into segregated patterns of group formation and fail to build bridges to socialize and learn from others. Denison will remedy this by articulating the value of living and working across differences and by advancing a program focused on teaching students the competencies for interactions. This will include creating structure around teaching the skills of engagement in hard conversations, learning through listening, developing empathy and doing antiracism work. To enact this, the Division of Student Life will focus on four areas:

**First-year Residential Halls**
The college is currently undertaking efforts to rebuild the First-Year Program. This creates opportunities to incorporate IDEA components into August Orientation and the First-Year Residential Community program that stretches across the first year and may include a new sophomore-year program. The goal of this work will be to help students understand the opportunities and obligations we have to each other on campus and to develop the skills for living in a diverse community.

**Cross-cultural Conversations**
The Student Life Division will undertake a process to create new ongoing conversations around civic matters as they relate to diverse identities and perspectives. This will be done in ways that engage a broader array of students in peer-to-peer dialogues. It will also engage community partners, alumni, outside facilitators, and educators to teach students how to build relationships and have difficult conversations.

**Engage Student Groups in Antiracism Work**
The Alford Community Leadership & Involvement Center (CLIC) will work to ensure student organizations are engaged in IDEA work. As part of this work, CLIC will focus on groups that have not been historically diverse and/or connected to IDEA work on campus help them to develop the skills, commitment and plans to do antiracism work.

**Support Athletics in Antiracism Work**
The Division of Student Life will work with the Department of Athletics to build on work being done by the leadership of the division, coaches and the Diversity and Inclusion Athletic Advisory Group (DIG), to engage varsity athletes in antiracism work. As a corollary of this work, more support will be given to varsity athletics coaches to focus on recruiting teams that are more diverse and more representative of our student body as a whole.

**Support for C3 Organizations**
The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs will be renamed the Center for Belonging and Inclusion and will have an enhanced mission and resources that will focus on providing education and support to all students, and particularly our Cross-cultural Community (C3) organizations. The reinvigorated Center will be charged with creating new community-wide traditions and collegiate practices rooted in an inclusive programmatic framework that supports our overall vision to intentionally thrive as a premier inclusive, equitable community and supports the intersectional identities of all of our students.

To enhance the quality and quantity of cross-cultural conversations, the work above will benefit from community partners, alumni, outside facilitators and educators to teach students how to build relationships and have difficult conversations. To do this work, the Division of Student Life will work closely with the Black Alumni Association and other alumni of color, as well as specific local and national organizations that are working on IDEA.
5. Strive to ensure that all of our students have access to and opportunities to explore different career paths and to launch into their chosen careers

Our purpose is to provide our students with a life-shaping liberal arts education, and our goal is to launch students quickly and successfully into lives and careers. Students of color can often face obstacles in the career exploration, preparation and launch process. To make progress we need to build a culture in which the academic journey engages with career exploration at regular intervals. We also need to make sure students have the resources and opportunities to explore different career paths and acquire the skills, networks and experiences to launch into their chosen career paths.

**Equitable Access to Career Paths**

The Knowlton Center for Career Exploration will continue to lead this work. They will continue to have staff focused on first-generation and students of color. They will also continue to increase funds so all students can participate in programs and internships. More emphasis will be put on engaging alumni of color and local groups in the Columbus region who can be mentors for students. Another area of emphasis will be engaging with key academic departments to work on ways coursework can relate to skill-building, competencies, and developing fluency in the nuts and bolts of career-related documents. These are essential steps in an iterative process in which students can evaluate and evolve the relationship between their education and their post-graduation trajectory.

6. Connect Denison’s financial decisions to our IDEA values

The university will approach sourcing with more intentionality regarding identifying and purchasing from diverse vendors. This approach will create financial pipelines between Denison and vendors that will uplift diverse vendors but will also foster conversation about IDEA values between Denison and existing vendors who wish to continue relationships.

**Purchasing**

The Purchasing Office will develop RFP vendor criteria that include IDEA considerations of equity. They also will develop a diverse vendor list to open new pathways for sourcing, for example from minority and women-owned businesses.

I care deeply about the stories of students of color. I am passionate about bringing these conversations to light and finding ways to create actionable steps forward.”

RAY WALKER ’22
Denison Forward Committee Member

To me personally, social justice has always been a core value. Whether it was gender equity, LGBTQIA, or antiracism, to live is to embrace difference.”

NAN CARNEY-DEBORD ’80
Associate Vice President, Director of Athletics & Recreation, Professor of Health, Exercise & Sport Studies
When an institution values, respects, welcomes, and includes me, it allows me to be my best self. It feels good to contribute when I feel a part of or connected to that community.”

PAMELA PRESCOD CAESAR
Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Chief Human Resource Officer
1. **Action Plan Progress**

We need to measure progress against the six strategies to hold ourselves accountable for what we are committing to doing. The IDEA Team will create a tracking approach to define our action plan, timelines, and accountability metrics to ensure this happens. Updates will be posted on the Denison website at the end of every semester.

2. **Climate Indicators**

We also need to make sure these strategies are making a difference towards the two outcomes we hope to achieve — ensuring that every member of our community feels listened to, valued and respected and has the opportunities to succeed at Denison; and, members of our community are committed to doing their part to ensure that racism has no place on our campus.

To do this, we will develop data standards for measuring longitudinal progress by implementing a Campus Climate Survey for students, faculty, and staff in Spring 2022 and every three years thereafter. HR will partner with the Personnel Committee to make sure results are shared with the campus community within three months of each survey.

**Key Climate Indicators**
- Student, faculty, and staff 12-month satisfaction with the overall campus climate and environment
- Student, faculty, and staff assessment of aspects of the general climate and IDEA climate of overall campus or unit
- Student, faculty, and staff assessment of institutional commitment to IDEA
- Student, faculty, and staff feelings of bias in the prior 12 months

3. **Demographic Diversity**

**IDEA Reporting**

Reporting occurs on multiple levels throughout the university infrastructure:
- Administrators, faculty, and staff report on IDEA activity as part of their regular job evaluations
- IDEA plans and annual progress updates will be made public for all units
- IDEA commitment and proficiency have been incorporated into hiring practices (search committees, advertising, applications, and questions)

**REPORTING SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
<th>June – August 2022</th>
<th>June – August 2024</th>
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<td>Assess and report on progress, refine the plan for 2022–2023</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
METRICS
We will track metrics that represent important factors in assessing progress towards our strategies and goals. We will track our progress on plan-related action steps such as implementation and participation in programs, utilization of services, increased awareness, and other leading measures of progress. Longer-term measurements will include trends in the demographic composition of our campus over time, and will consider shifts in climate and key indicators of equity across all populations.

While additional metrics will emerge over time, at minimum, we will refine and track the categories listed on the following page and use them as a basis for reporting on our plan progress and program effectiveness.

CONCLUSION
This plan will continue to evolve. This will be a living document that will change as we continue our IDEA journey as a college. The work we are doing is important and pressing. Therefore, many key pieces of the Action Plan are already underway.

I only have to look in the mirror and reflect on my own time at Denison and in life to know the importance of this commitment toward change.”

JAMES L. ANDERSON ’85
Trustee, Denison University

The experience of giving my time to a project like Denison Forward has helped me get a deep appreciation for the way that all constituents love the college in a myriad of ways.”

MAY MEI
Associate Professor of Mathematics, Denison Forward Committee Member