Cedar Crest College Board of Trustees
Ad hoc Committee for Racial Equity
Update: November 20, 2020

Summary of Charge

The Committee has been broadly charged with assessing areas of opportunity to deepen and expand initiatives to address racism and create a culture of inclusion from an institutional perspective. The Committee will advise the College on critical areas not currently being addressed by existing initiatives; make recommendations to inform the Anti-Racist Action Plan for 2021-2022 and beyond; and assist the College with creating an effective communications process. The committee will coordinate with existing efforts on campus to address diversity, equity and inclusion, including those of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), the Diversity and Inclusion Council, faculty committees, and the President’s Cabinet.

Committee Composition

The Board of Trustees and the President created the special Committee for Racial Equity, co-chaired by a trustee and an alumna, and consisting of faculty, staff, trustees, current students and alumnae along with the President and the Chair of the Board. The inclusion of representatives from all of the College’s stakeholders will ensure that the action plan reaches across all aspects of the College community.

Committee Meeting Cadence

The full Committee meets monthly (September 2020 – April 2021). Each meeting includes an update from President Meade and/or Board Chair Gardner on critical topics related to the College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and selected topic(s) for the committee members to discuss.

September 10 Meeting:

The Committee began its journey with a “Getting to Know Each Other” session. Rather than the traditional way committee members introduce themselves at an initial meeting, we wanted something more meaningful and connected to the work we’re doing in our community. Tatiana Diaz (former Director, Diversity and Inclusion) led a social identity exercise, which allowed each of us to share who we are in a more personal way.

October 13 Meeting:

President Meade made a presentation on the College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts from 2015 – 2020 to ensure all committee members have the same foundational knowledge. For the discussion topic, members were asked to discuss the following question “How can the College improve communications related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) with all stakeholders via various channels”? This topic
includes both the effective communication of DEI strategy, actions and progress with the college community and how to align marketing and communications actions with a DEI strategy. The results of this initial conversation and ongoing committee/working group conversations will inform the Committee recommendations to Dr. Erika Davis, Vice-President of Enrollment Management and Marketing.

**November 12 Meeting:**

President Meade provided an update on the hiring process for critical open positions, including the Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion and two Admissions roles. In addition, President Meade advised that the College is currently participating in a Diverse Learning Environments Survey, administered by the Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA. All Students (Sophomore, Junior, Senior), Faculty and Staff are encouraged to participate (anonymously) to share their voice and improve the campus climate. Upon the receipt of survey results, the college will engage an outside consultant to conduct Focus Groups.

Board Chair Gardner provided an update from the Board of Trustees, including the Board’s efforts to expand the diversity of its membership and the plan to offer the College’s four module Diversity training program to the full Board. At the October Board meeting, Committee Co-Chair Broomall provided an update on the College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts from 2015 – 2020, the actions taken during the Summer 2020, and the overall plan for the Special Committee. The Board will hear reports on the work of the Committee at each Board meeting.

For the discussion topic, the committee considered aspects of the College’s structure and culture, norms and values, via the formal organization chart and a chart describing the various parts of the college working towards the creation of an anti-racist culture. Members were asked to share their thoughts on the type of culture that exists at the college today. Committee members will discuss this further in their working group meetings.

Meeting dates have been set for December – April. These 90-minute meetings will allow the full committee to discuss topics/recommendations that intersect with other groups and share ideas/brainstorm.

**Working Group Framework**

Given the size of the committee, we have organized into the following working groups: Student Academic Experience, Student Social Experience, Faculty/Staff Experience, Alumnae/Trustee/Community Experience. Every aspect of the College is open to review/assessment. Members will think from an end-result perspective (i.e. what does success look like?) and make recommendations – both long-term/strategic and short-term/tactical – necessary to support the cultural transformation of the college.

The Committee Co-Chairs held Working Group Kick-Off meetings to review the framework, resources available to help members develop an understanding of the current state, a review the draft recommendation template, and the series of questions to be answered as they examine recommendations. We anticipate that the Working Groups will meet on a (generally) bi-weekly basis through mid-April.

Members of the College Community have an opportunity to participate in the anti-racist work at the college and are invited to submit feedback to the Committee via the ‘Racial Equity Feedback Form’ located on the ‘Anti-Racism Initiatives and Update’ page on the College’s website. All submissions will receive a response.