

RACIAL JUSTICE AT THE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

BACK TO SCHOOL ACTIONS:

- Material missed during walk-out will not be added to daily homework load
 - Discuss canceling missed major assessments for this week on a class-by-class basis
- Assignments/tests will be posted on Google calendar one week ahead of time: post on Sunday (make it homework that goes through next Monday)
- Each class will create a plan regarding the future of grading and homework load
 - The first class back must be dedicated to creating this plan
 - Discuss original plan that teachers had for curriculum and then create the schedule of assignments that goes through October 29th (in person learning)
 - Accountability: Talk to a teacher you feel comfortable with
 - All faculty agree that a student cannot receive a final grade lower than their midterm grade, if that student completes all assignments and participates in each class.
 - Assignments or assessments lost to the missed week will be made available to any student who wants these opportunities
 - Establish regular, scheduled office hours, post them Sunday with the assignments
 - Set schoolwide limit/parameters on major work students will be expected to do virtually in Phase 5
- All advisors must meet with advisory groups once a week (during Wed. Common Time if the advisory doesn't share another free); one-on-one conversations may be scheduled separately. Advisees can decide to opt-in to one-on-one advisor meetings.
- Dedicate time to talking about the transition home (Phase 5 details)
 - Wednesday, October 14th (during school meeting)
- Dorm check-in is semi-optional: students will make sure they are present then have the choice to return to their rooms for the remainder of check-in.
- Students have the ability to switch advisors if they feel uncomfortable with their current advisor
 - Final conversation and final advisor letter (collaboration between all faculty on letter and input from students on it)
- Students will decide whether they opt-out of a work period. They will coordinate with Sam Kelman via email by 7:45 AM (you can also email the night before) for opting out of the work period.
- Advisory and Faculty-Student Relations
 - All faculty--advisors, classroom teachers, dorm parents, work period leaders, et al--need verbal student consent to share information with other faculty (including spouses/partners), and must specify what information they want to share and with whom, giving the student choice in how that information is shared (how much detail, how much anonymity, etc)

ADMISSIONS & OUTREACH:

Revise application for F'21-S'22 applicants by a student focus group with Emily during work periods.

Reference the student admissions outreach plan for the parameters on that revision

- Remove all questions about alumni relatives to stop prioritizing sibling and legacy applicants.
- Commit to more public schools to recruit for F'21-S'22`
 - Develop a specific list of public schools to extend recruitment to by the end of the in-person semester (F20). Solicit students help to develop this list during remaining work periods.
 - List of public schools must be geographically diverse
- Need-Based Scholarships (F'21-S'22)

- Offer need-based scholarship students the choice to recuperate lost wages that support family expenses. Offer PSAT and other standardized test tutoring to need-based scholarship students prior to their arrival.
- Continue to revise and research on the formula to support students who don't qualify for need-based scholarships but still can't afford to pay for the tuition.
- Investigate the income cutoff
- Revise the website. Post these need-based scholarship opportunities clearly on the website before the end of the semester.

COLLEGE COUNSELING:

- College Counselor (S'21)
 - Students must meet with College Counselor within the first two months of the semester who can inform students on:
 - Scholarships available for different kinds of post-secondary education (e.g., trade school, entering the workforce, etc.)
 - Provide students with standardized testing booklets for practice and tips for testing.
 - Offer students the opportunity to Virtual College Visits by giving them this document prior to the College Counselor's arrival.
 - *Introductory meetings must not assume that all students have the same access to information about colleges/the college application process or assume that all students plan to attend a prestigious college or university*
- Alumni Network
 - Invite alums with connections to colleges and universities to speak with students about those schools (HBCUs, Ivy League schools, Liberal Arts colleges) before the end of the semester. (F'20)
- Standardized Testing
 - Students must be given work periods off to prepare for standardized tests if they find it necessary and must be alerted to that possibility. (S'21)
 - Offer the PACT and the PSAT, and make the differences between those two clear. Also, you can opt-out of taking those tests (F'21).
 - Offer support with other standardized tests like the Regents

MENTAL HEALTH:

- Student Mental Health
 - Hire a mental health professional to serve Spring 2021 students. Even if this is not the same position that is hired for F'21, there must be a plan for supporting student mental health next semester. It cannot fall on existing faculty. The emotional support that the graduate resident provides is not a substitute for this position. (S'21)
 - Hire a mental health professional by Fall 2021.
 - Write job description and begin recruitment - include student hiring panel in that. (F'20)
The job description includes:
 - Experience with students experiencing withdrawal. Have an actual process and support system for these students
 - Experience with students with eating disorders (or with a history of EDs)
 - Experience with student microaggressions regarding race, gender, and sex
 - Experience with conflict resolution
- Advisor System (Spring 2021)
 - Expand the advisor pool: poll faculty to see who is willing to be an advisor before the next round of contract negotiations are made. All faculty who want to take on advisory roles will be considered eligible. Individual faculty will determine how many advisees

they feel capable of handling, between 2-3. The thinking behind this is to expand the available labor pool so as to potentially allow advisors more dedicated relationships with their advisees.

- Written expectations about privacy & transparency: students know what these are and advisors abide by them.
 - Before any information is shared with an advisee's parents the student must be notified.
 - Advisors need verbal student consent from advisee before sharing information with other faculty
 - A scheduled time each week (same for everybody) when all advisors meet with advisory group; advisors or advisees may also schedule one-on-one meetings **(S'21)**
- These expectations will be created with input from a student committee **(F'20)**
- Advisors cannot be the teacher of an advisee. If this is not possible, get explicit student permission. Also make the process of switching advisors clear. **(S'21)**
- Other **(S'21)**
 - Check-in Norms and Dorm Culture:
 - Students are allowed to leave check-in and return to their room if they feel it necessary
 - Students can talk to dorm parents about the ways they want check-in to work
 - Discuss other inconsistencies from F20 to incorporate into revised and stated norms for S'21

SCHEDULING

- *Create a new schedule. Goal: Finished by January 15, 2021*
- We recognize that making the Mountain School a more inclusive learning environment depends on revising the way student time is apportioned day to day.
- Guiding Principles: More open time during the week to allow for recuperation, extra help during office hours, opt-in student led initiatives, or opt-in faculty led initiatives. The need for more sleep. Recognize differences in needs regarding when students can do homework.
- Moving the work forward:
 - F'20 in-semester work period working group with students and faculty. We will capture student feedback (F'20 as well as other past semesters) about what our guiding principles should be and their ideas for what kind of adjustments will help us get there.
 - Schedule a series of faculty conversations in November 2020 to discuss and debate what is essential to our missions re: time dedicate to work/chores, academic classes, homework, co-curriculum, social life, rest and recuperation, "free time" (and how it is defined in relation to structured activity).
 - Faculty committee will work in December and January to meet January 15 deadline.

CURRICULUM:

- AAAS/IS/LxS Course:
 - Add "Religion and Culture of Hip-Hop" to S'21 course offerings as a credited class
 - Add credited courses (how many?) to F'21 schedule
 - Must be led by a BIPOC teacher **[F'21 HIRE]**
 - Add a AAAS section of Honors English (African American Literature) (taught by Karim) S'21
 - Send questionnaire to S'21 students with these new course offerings (ASAP)

- Mandatory trigger warnings for difficult class topics, Friday-night sessions, and difficult humbles (F'20)
- Students will reconsider, during an assigned work-period, Friday-night activities that ask students to share too much too early. This will be completed before the in-person semester is over (Fall 20).
- Conduct a review analysis of the school's curriculum--academic and non-academic--with attention to where it reproduces the logic of white supremacy and privileges and caters to the various needs, customs, and desires of wealthy white students. Expect a report (By end of S'21)
 - Academic curriculum
 - Co-curricular programs (chores, work program, farm, woods, kitchen, farm seminar, outdoor program, science hikes, friday sessions, weekend programs, solo, dorm life, etc.).
 - We need to ask ourselves: "what values do we want to transmit to the students?" and "what do those values reveal about the assumptions we're making about who we think we are teaching? Who needs to learn these values and who already knows them?" Each aspect of our curriculum needs to be examined in this light
 - Approaching Public/Private/Charter Inequities - Offer more diversity in courses/levels of courses
 - Honors History alternative to AP History (F'21)
 - Have different levels of physics and math
 - Why is chemistry offered only in the Spring semester?
 - Reexamine the necessity of AP course offerings to see if curricular space can be made for new credit course offerings (S'21)
 - Make sure that AP classes are actually prepping students for the AP test
 - Allow students to take 4 (instead of 5 classes) (S'21)
 - Make this option clear & available to incoming S'21 students (ASAP)
- Improve communication and support for public school students before arrival and after return to home school (e.g. helping students with enrollment)

ORIENTATION: (To be implemented S'21)

- Discuss this in working group
- Begin every semester with a multi-day orientation. In addition to introducing students to the core programs of the school (e.g., chores, work program) and to the campus (e.g., inner loop walk), the orientation schedule will include the following:
 - Mission/Values of the school, Dorm Relationships, Norms and Inclusion, Presentations & Discussions on Sensitive Topics (e.g: Microaggressions), intro to Affinity Spaces
 - History of Mountain School, intro to core curriculum and social justice, student activism/clubs
 - Mental health professional introduction, intro to disciplinary system (Mock Summit) & the handbook, and Sex-Ed

DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM:

- Summit (S'21)
 - The goal of the summit is to center restorative practices (building relationships, maintaining community, repairing harm)
 - Train all faculty in how TMS approaches certain situations and publicize this information to students in first week of semester
 - Action steps for students & faculty interested in being on summit:
 - Something to read and commit to (self-education of implicit bias, safer space agreements, commitment to depth of content)

- Students who make the commitment and sign would meet and discuss process and goals of summit (mini-training)
 - Then when a summit issue arises, there will be a process in place to nominate a diverse group of students on summit that have been trained for that specific situation. The situation would determine the number of students nominated, but we're considering 3 students and 3 faculty members on summit as the default
 - Students then have the opportunity to recuse themselves → faculty will have nominated alternates
 - Mock summit during orientation to provide clarity on what happens
- Revise student & faculty handbook (especially harassment section) (S'21)
 - No passive voice
 - No victim blaming
- Student surveys of teachers and their classes → use the data to help with constructive accountability for each teacher (S'21)
 - Make time in the schedule for evaluations (every 4 weeks)
 - An anonymous evaluation of each advisor that goes to the guidance counselor
- Student-teacher/ teacher-teacher interaction database (like a google form) administered by someone who doesn't teach a class (like an administrative faculty member) (S'21)
 - Develop a process for addressing issues

LEARNING DISABILITIES (S'21):

Student Support

- Starting in S'21, send an optional form to every admitted student: "What would you like us to know about how you learn? What kinds of support will you need while you're here?" A similar form goes to a trusted teacher or counselor at the home school.
- Starting in F'21, guidance counselor calls students and home schools to follow up. Until that time this responsibility falls to the head advisor.
- Starting in F'21, the guidance counselor meets with every student with learning differences or physical disabilities during the orientation period to make a clear plan and communicate that plan to teachers. Until that time this responsibility falls to the advisor.
- Starting in S'21, each teacher schedules a meeting with each student with accommodations to make a clear plan for each class.
- One month into the semester, teachers schedule a follow-up meeting with each student to discuss how the plan is working. (S'21) Starting in F'21, the guidance counselor meets with each student at a designated time in the semester to review the plan and offer support.
- Starting in S'21, need-based scholarships include funding for educational testing for students who request it, and for students on scholarship it would be made clear to them that that is an option
- Before the end of F'20, students and teachers write a clear process for requesting course changes. A small group meets weekly to design this process.
- By December, the Mountain School website will include a section on learning differences and what students can expect while they're here.

TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR FACULTY:

- A mental health counselor will be brought in to speak to faculty on trauma, depression, anxiety, other mental health challenges before (S'21)
- An anti-racism workshop with an outside presenter (BIPOC) (S'21)
 - These workshops will happen at the beginning of each semester
- By the end of 2021 every hired faculty will attend the Diversity Directions Conference

- Add other training/education items from other categories to this section to help implementation and eliminate repetitions.

HIRING AND LEADERSHIP:

- Hiring:
 - Include alumni from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in hiring process (S'21)
 - Include faculty from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in hiring process (S'21)
 - All new hires must demonstrate experience and commitment to educating about systemic inequality (not just a willingness or interest, but a demonstrated ability to do so) (effective immediately)
 - Review and revise hiring protocol (S'21)
- Diversity in Leadership:
 - There will be at least one faculty of color on every hiring committee (effective immediately)
 - Formalize the Alumni of Color Network with Kareen as the Director of the Alumni of Color Network. "The Director of the Alumni of Color Network" will be added to her title on the website, and must be paid a salary, equivalent at minimum to the mean average of other director positions at the school (changes effective during the next round of contract negotiations).
 - Kareen will have full authority to direct the committee in terms of timing, implementation, and narrative, including co-management of the Alumni Committee (effective immediately).
- Research, design, and implement a revised recruitment plan for all new hires (S'21 or before any job is going to be posted)
 - Expand recruitment
 - Write job descriptions/postings that appeal to more a diverse pool of applicants than we have been drawing
- Recognize and compensate faculty of color and LGBTQ+ faculty whose emotional labor is increased while the Mountain School attempts to become a more inclusive school. Write a proposal regarding how redistribution of labor or other resources can address this. (S'21)

GRADUATE RESIDENT PROGRAM -

- Before recruiting another grad resident we will make the role of the position more clear and see how it fits into the structure of the school after making other changes (like hiring a mental health professional)
- We will also consult former grad residents to hear about their experiences

ALL GENDER DORMS (Goal Date: S'21)

- Use the term "all gender dorm" on the Mountain School website and in application materials. Goal is for every student to feel safe, so we will work on the language we use to describe the dorms
- By the end of November, add a document to the website to inform parents by outlining the Mountain School's obligations to LGBTQ+ students. All parents understand that all-gender dorms are a part of the Mountain School. We can't prevent individual parents from opting out, but students do not need a parental signature for housing requests.
- A student group meets weekly during a work period to help draft this document and to research models at other schools.
- By the end of December, Alden communicates with Milton Academy about our plans for the spring and beyond.

- By the end of December, send a questionnaire to Spring '21 students: “Would you prefer to live in an all-gender dorm?” “Would you be willing to live in an all-gender dorm?”
- Before the beginning of the spring semester, devote a faculty development meeting to Zoom call with Aarav Sundaresh (S'00) a trans educator who has experience working with schools on this issue.

IMPLEMENTATION: To implement the actions we have agreed upon requires... (F'20)

- Prioritize the list of actions
- Then look at resource allocation - follow up on financial presentation
 - What can be moved around
 - What we don't yet have to make it happen
 - Capital campaign?
- Look at time and labor allocation to implement this plan
- Timeline for implementation plan
- Communicate our plan to our community and public

ACCOUNTABILITY (how to ensure this action plan is implemented and followed through in the spirit it was conceived):

- COMMUNICATIONS
 - Students can use Mountain School communications tools to broadcast their narrative of what has happened in this action (email, Instagram, website, alumni newsletter)
 - When the faculty/admin send out messages representing what happened, they will let the students know ahead of time ahead of time.
- STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY:
 - By the end of the first month of Spring '21 semester, a zoom call is to be held in the library where all interested students of F'20 will present and explain to the entire student body what happened, in their own words. [**saturday night activity? Friday night activity?**]
 - Bi-Annual progress report from faculty to students Next report due 4/15/21.
- FACULTY ACCOUNTABILITY:
 - Faculty development on financial resources by the end of S'21: balance sheets and budgets from the last five years (if possible) to be distributed prior to faculty arrival for the development.
 - Presentation by Alden Smith: map of current resource allocation (*breakdown of how time (schedule), labor, money, and infrastructure are distributed by department and program, etc.*)
 - F'20 in-semester work
 - Form faculty committees to begin the research, design, and implementation of the action items in this plan that have F'20 and S'21 deadlines.
 - Designate sessions for faculty to begin understanding one another's values and beliefs about school mission, to be held between October 30-December 4th.
- ACTION PLAN ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES (Effective Immediately)
The Accountability Structure for this plan does not supersede the current governance model of The Mountain School.
Action Plan Accountability Committee: Develop a committee that includes current faculty (selected by F20 students), alumni of color (recruited by the elected faculty committee members in consultation with the advisory board), and experts in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (recruited by the elected faculty committee members in consultation with the advisory board) to review this plan, offer expertise and reflection, and hold the Mountain School accountable to this plan.

What needs to be transparent:

- Decisions to allocate resources (e.g. addition or withdrawal from the endowment, an increase or decrease in operational costs, spending on new hires, infrastructure developments, outside consultants, etc.)
 - Requires access to school budget, balance sheet, capital campaigns, and any other financial documents or information, including itemized breakdowns -- *with the exception of faculty salaries* -- of current or previous years, to ensure complete transparency.
- Implementation plans: The design of new programs, the language of job postings, the people and institutions who are solicited for faculty training, etc.
 - Requires ability to review these plans before they are put into action.
- Is the allocation of resources or implementation strategies deprioritizing this action plan?
 - Requires anti-racism and inclusive perspective (based on demonstrated ability and experience) to make that assessment.

Supporting Groups and Committees:

- Faculty: Members, selected by students who have put forward this action plan, will carry through the anti-racist and inclusive perspective; asks for transparency re: allocation/reallocation of resources (money, time, labor); tracks implementation strategies; will report to alumni of color network, alumni committee, advisory board, external experts, F20, and future semesters who engage in this work.
- Alumni of Color Network: Track/review what we are doing and provide support.
- Alumni Committee: Track/review what we are doing and provide support.
- Advisory Board: Track/review what we are doing and provide support.
- External Experts: Track/review what we are doing and provide support.
- Future Semesters: Every semester, we will present the action plan to students and meet as a school to discuss, account, and refocus energies, and add. This will also include transition zoom meetings between semesters.