

## 2022 Report to the College: Year Two of Meredith College's Anti-Racism Initiative

As an institution committed to enhancing the strength of every member of our community, Meredith College firmly avows that honesty and integrity are essential elements of strength. Owning our history—the good and the bad—reminds us that in our complexity as human beings, we are all fallible, but in our efforts to be stronger, we can also be better. As an institution, the College shares that strength, fallibility, and commitment to being better.

Similar to the histories of other institutions in North Carolina and throughout America, the history of Meredith College also includes highly disturbing evidence of racism, white supremacy, advocacy for Jim Crow laws and other forms of discrimination and inequitable treatment. Stories and writings by Meredith's earliest affiliates (trustees, employees, donors, students, and advocates) revealed in recent research as part of our faculty and students' participation in the University of Virginia's consortium of [Universities Studying Slavery](#) provides evidence of the depth of the atrocious beliefs and practices embedded in the history of our college, state, and nation.

The Meredith College community will continue to assess its progress, as it works to acknowledge its history and continues to educate and inspire all to live with integrity. Meredith recognizes that we have a shared responsibility to continuous growth in order to best support all community members.

In addition to the long-standing participation of many to advance diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and their concomitant manifestations, the College announced in 2020 a firm resolve to embrace anti-racism as a foundational element of belonging at the College. The following highlights document the journey so far and represent the second year of a reporting commitment that will be embedded in subsequent iterations of our strategic plan, which holds us accountable for progress, beginning 2022-2023 and moving forward:

### The Administration

- launched and funded the [anti-racism initiative](#), designed to explore policies and practices at the College that may impact diversity, equity, and inclusion of all
- funded a nationally normed campus-climate survey to collect data on students' and employees' experiences and perceptions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion
- dedicated and [hired a new position](#) reporting directly to the President who coordinates programming, training, policy review, and other aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the College
- articulated the commitment for the next iteration of the strategic plan's six pillars and all units to include at least one DEI goal
- published [op-ed in The Hill](#), the most-read publication among legislators and staff in Washington, DC, on the value of doubling the Pell Grant to extend financial assistance to the neediest students, many of whom are underserved minorities
- included DEI as a category of giving for the annual Day of Giving campaign
- met with and advocated for students impacted by DACA legislation
- met with individual students and with the Black Alumnae Collective on steps forward with the anti-racism initiative
- sponsored and participated in the Race Equity and Inclusion two-day training on diversity

- funded and supported faculty research through the University of Virginia's Universities Studying Slavery consortium
- initiated the translation into Spanish of recruiting/admissions [documents](#), work completed by students and faculty in World Languages and Cultures
- recommitted to contract with vendors to be more inclusive of women- and minority-owned or led providers of goods and services

### **The Board of Trustees**

- reviewed and currently revising the values of the College to more pointedly address diversity, equity, and inclusion
- expanded diversity in its membership
- hired a consulting firm to help develop a rubric for weighing historical names of buildings
- appointed an *ad hoc* committee, comprised of trustees, alumnae, faculty, staff, and donors, to explore the foundational premises and processes for considerations of building names
- adopted initiative to review building names
- approved the removal of "Joyner Hall" to become, at least temporarily, "Lux Hall"
- engaging in reviews of endowment management and investments

### **Employees**

- adopted a [diversity statement](#) suitable for inclusion on syllabi and various other uses to ground our efforts
- supported and engaged in curricular review to expand inclusion
- developed a research-based exploration of "belonging" at the College
- led student discussions of the summer reading selection, *Tell Me Who You Are: Sharing Our Stories of Race, Culture, & Identity*
- offered special assistance to families filling out the FAFSA (financial aid) questionnaire to ensure its complexities does not discourage first-generation/underserved minority students from applying to Meredith
- conducted and published research on Meredith's history
- presented "Belonging" report to the Board of Trustees
- reviewed recruiting and admissions website/publications for accuracy and diversity
- reviewed recruiting, hiring, evaluation, and retention policies and practices for employees
- received [grant to promote and support STEM among BIPOC women](#)
- developed and led [workshops](#) to prepare BIPOC women to run for political office
- crafted statement for inclusion and anti-racism with online yearbook editions
- Initiated review of campus traditions
- reviewed the honor code and judicial procedures to ensure equitable treatment
- participated in multiple training opportunities, focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion
- review and make more explicit our longstanding practice of offering an interfaith Baccalaureate service (underway)

### **Our Students**

- served on DEI search committee
- attended DEI candidates' presentations and offered feedback on each candidate
- established a new DEI position for the executive committee of Student Government Association

- participated in campus climate survey and subsequent focus groups
- attended and participated in follow-up on “Belonging” exploration
- participated in review of traditions at the College
- helped translate admissions materials and lead tours of campus in Spanish for potential students and their families
- wrote articles for *The Herald*, the campus newspaper, about the anti-racism initiative

Finally, in addition to the work going on within the College, we are also grateful for the support of so many outside the College. For instance, through our annual Day of Giving, donors provided over \$18,000 to support our DEI initiatives. Further, the Jessie Ball duPont Foundation awarded \$150,000 for two years to support DEI work—funds that will be used to support the DEI Coordinator’s position and programming throughout the campus, as well as to replace the signage for the newly renamed Lux Hall.

With very minor exceptions, the internal and external community has responded positively to our efforts to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We are grateful for that support and look forward to building on our strengths to advance our commitment to anti-racism.