



FORDHAM PREP

Jesuit Education is Faith, Scholarship & Service

**Joint Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by the Fordham Prep
Administration and Authors of Instagram Account @wakeupfordhamprep and petition posted
on change.org**

The deaths of George Floyd in Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia and Tony McDade, a black transgender man killed by police officers in Florida sparked widespread, visceral outrage against racial injustice in America. The Amy Cooper incident in Central Park highlighted the pervasive nature of institutionalized racism and the constant danger present to people of color in this country.

These incidents serve as the backdrop by which we reflect on the impact of institutional racism in the Fordham Prep community. We cannot allow our mission to form students to become faith-filled and loving Men for Others, committed to justice and the greater glory of God to fall victim to our societal struggles with racism, economic inequality, environmental degradation, and most of the flashpoints that drive us to our protective corners. Our rich Jesuit tradition and dedication to the [Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus](#) supplies a pathway for clear and decisive action.

On July 9, 2020, Fordham Prep released a [New Action Plan on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#) generated by the President, approved by the Board of Trustees and reviewed by the school leadership team and professional consultants to outline Fordham Prep's commitment to addressing racism and discrimination in the school community. The DEI statement became a focal point for discussion among the constituents in the school community and garnered intense interest in the invitation to support these goals. A group of concerned students, organized to address the Fordham Prep DEI action plan and created a [student petition](#) to address their concerns with the released DEI action plan. This group was spearheaded by Connor Tinson '20, Rephael Griffith '20, and Giordanis Guerrero '20. After posting the petition, Fr. Devron reached out to the group to organize a meeting to address their concerns.

On July 30, 2020 Fr. Devron, Dr. Petriello, Mr. Carney, Mr. Pedro, and Dr. Smith met with the group of concerned students to discuss the alignment of the Fordham Prep DEI action plan and the student petition. The students expressed their motivations for being present at the meeting and shared their concerns with the DEI action plan presented by the school. Even with our best efforts, we recognize that this list of actions and commitments is incomplete and a work in progress. Therefore, the administration was open and willing to listen to the students' point of view. The students expressed the need to better understand how the plan will be implemented. The school leadership welcomed the input of the students to help improve our DEI efforts. After two hours of intense passion filled dialogue by students and meaningful listening on the part of the administration, both groups were able to find common ground in the DEI plan moving forward.

Here are the areas of continuity between the Fordham Prep DEI plan and the student petition:

1. **Updating Freshman Orientation:** To incorporate upper class students in teaching and guiding first-year students in the core principles of Jesuit education and communicate there is no room for racism, homophobia, classism, sexism, and religious belief discrimination
2. **Curriculum Review:** A review of all departments' academic curriculums to foster an approach that intentionally includes the narrative and voices of diverse communities to promote a well-balanced education. In addition, explore developing new courses or ensure that existing courses raise awareness of the issues of institutionalized racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious discriminatory practices.
3. **Faculty/Staff Training:** To better equip Faculty and Staff with the tools to address discriminatory actions in the community.
4. **Review of Student Harassment Policy and Procedures:** To make the process more than a punitive infraction. To supply opportunities for growth, counseling and education to students who commit these infractions helping them understand the intense harm they cause to the entire community.
5. **Student Climate Data Survey:** As stated in the DEI Action Plan, to share the results with the school community and to use the data to benchmark our DEI initiatives.
6. **Leadership Training:** To facilitate the training of student government members, retreat leaders, sports captains, and club leaders in the correlation of our mission of being "Men for Others" with being an anti-racist and confronting discriminatory attitudes against gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and socioeconomic status.

There will be updates and revisions to the DEI action plan during the 2020-2021 School Year. The director of DEI, in collaboration with the Office of Mission Integration and Planning, will develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the continued and expanded implementation of these commitments and to monitor the impact with our students and the broader community. This conversation is just one of many as we engage as a community to deal with the many difficult, but necessary issues under the purview of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The effort to help our school realize its mission is the responsibility of every board member, administrator, faculty and staff member, student, parent, and alumnus. Only by working together to reflect the "Greater Glory of God" can we create a more just and inclusive community.