



March 22, 2022

Dear HMI Community,

As promised, this update serves as an annual update to our community on our DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) work at HMI. Each year, we prioritize improving our school and achieving equitable outcomes for all students, especially those from historically-marginalized identities. Our alumni have shared their interest in this important goal, and we want to share a glimpse into what we are doing and the challenges that remain.

As you are all aware, this journey is complex and unending. It requires HMI to examine even our most closely-held assumptions and listen thoughtfully to those the school can better serve. We share our highlights and challenges from the last year with humility and determination. HMI is committed to this work because profound things happen when nature and minds meet. Our responsibility is to ensure HMI meets this promise for all of our students. Thank you for holding us accountable for this goal. At any time, we are happy to answer any questions you have and to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

With gratitude,

Danny O'Brien
Head of School

Lupe Bobadilla
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Highlights

- As HMI's first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Lupe is continuing and leading conversations around equity and belonging at HMI.
- Lupe has spent the last six months establishing connections throughout the country and finding support from DEI practitioners.
- The Board of Trustees established its own DEI committee and committed to annual trustee education.
- We commissioned a report to explore the experiences of recent alumni of color at HMI and held board and employee level discussions about how we can improve our school based on this feedback.
- We have been revising policies around religious holidays, language, and cultural celebrations
- Fall 2021 was the most ethnically diverse semester ever, with 41% of students of color. The 2022 Summer Term is on track to contain around 50% students of color.



- We revamped the spring semester's "Ski Week" in order to help familiarize new skiers with backcountry terrain and give them more instruction and time on skies in general.
- Students participated last fall in an affinity-based backpacking expedition—it was a powerful and healing space.
- Our faculty are continuing to provide accommodations for students from different learning backgrounds.
- We have allocated 1/3 of our professional development budget to DEI training.
- The Alumni Council DEI subcommittee is planning an alumni of color affinity retreat for the 25th reunion.
- We shared information about our race and gender/sexual orientation-based affinity spaces on the HMI website; students from diverse backgrounds have found this valuable, enticing them to HMI.
- All semester students now receive Chromebooks instead of bringing their own technology in order to decrease technological inequities and reduce student reliance on technology overall.
- The adult community is excited to engage and enact DEI strategies to accommodate students' needs.
- Our Inclusive Outdoor series, which highlights people from non-traditional backgrounds who engage with the natural world, continues to attract amazing speakers and demonstrates to our students that the outdoors is for everyone.
- We have developed a comprehensive "DEI Dashboard" to measure our efforts at equity and inclusion in all facets of our program, from admissions and human resources to discipline and grading. The dashboard features over 50 metrics and provides real-time data about where HMI is meeting our equity and inclusion targets—and where we have work to do. We believe this is among the first of its kind for independent schools.
- We launched a semester wide culture and climate survey (which will be administered three times per semester). This compliments what Gap is doing.

Challenges:

- The Director of DEI is a new role; therefore, developing responsibilities is part of the requirement. Different HMI constituents want the position to prioritize different goals, such as in student life, institutional advancement, and hiring/recruitment. We are working to create structures so my time is equitably distributed. We are making progress.
- Though our budget for financial aid is generous compared to many peers, we do not have enough aid to admit all qualified applicants.
- Our adult community is not representative of our student body, especially in terms of racial and cultural diversity: as a result we struggle to make cultural connections with students. While staff/faculty are culturally competent, having employees who look like our students is also necessary.
- Increasing our candidates of color hiring pool and identifying candidates of color as semi-finalists for all open positions remains a challenge.
- We are losing students at the beginning of the semester due to mental health-related issues. Students are experiencing the effects in attending school during the pandemic.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goals:

- Develop policies around language, religious holidays, and cultural celebrations that align with HMI's missions and values.
- Utilize the data from the DEI dashboard to improve our programs, such as:
 - Increase alumni of color philanthropic participation.
 - Revise wilderness curriculum to include systemically marginalized voices and ideas to practice back home.
 - Continue to gather data about our practices and methods to best support our students.
- Collaborate with employees of color to develop strategies in retaining employees of color
- Continue working with the Hiring Task Force to attract candidates of color
- Publish information on our website about the benefits of working at HMI and living in Leadville Develop an employee-led DEI Committee to serve as an advisory body to discuss issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community.
- Maintain a solid and working relationship with DEI practitioners across the country and notice trends at independent schools. Continue to evaluate DEI practices and deem what is acceptable at HMI.
- Establish identity spaces to talk about men's health and wealth disparities at HMI.
- Collaborate with the school counselor to develop strategies to cope with challenges at HMI.
- Work with the Director of Wilderness and Risk Management to establish a training session about belonging at HMI and thriving in the wilderness.
- Revisit the end-of-program survey and collect data on course evaluation in addition to inclusion and belongingness at HMI.