

THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY TO A DENISON EDUCATION

Denison is committed to the idea that our community should include people from a wide variety of religious, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic backgrounds in order to realize the goals of a liberal arts education. Denison University's commitment to foster a diverse community is central to our mission as a liberal arts college to educate critical thinkers, discerning moral agents and active citizens of a democratic, global society. Through our pedagogies we set out to realize the transformative power of education. Engagement with, and challenge from, multiple, differing perspectives are incubators of critical thinking and social responsibility. Students must learn to question the truth of all assertions, no matter how apparently obvious or widely held. The lesson that even one's own most cherished beliefs cannot be immune to questioning is crucial. A classroom marked by homogeneity of experience is one where such a lesson cannot be easily grasped. While we are committed to multiple forms of diversity, we also recognize that the dynamics of race play a central role in shaping individual and collective experience in the United States. It is important to the realization of our educational goals not only that students have opportunities to speak about racial, ethnic, and other differences, but that they also get a chance to speak across these differences. This can only happen if there is diversity in the classroom and, more generally, in the college. Diversity in all facets of the university has educational value for all students and benefits all members of the campus community. Diversity plays a particularly important role at Denison. In this college, where classes are small and highly participatory, where a fully residential campus places students constantly together in living as well as learning, and where a multiplicity of campus-based opportunities in student organizational life, athletics and recreation, and social service allow students to share personal growth experiences, diversity of background and experience is shared first-hand.

(Adopted by the Faculty Oct. 5, 2006.)