Ashbury Pluralism Recommendations
October 2021

Ashbury's commitment to fostering inclusivity and embracing pluralism is embodied in the Pluralism Recommendations set out in this document.

In the summer of 2020, Ashbury's pluralism project was started to ensure the inclusive, safe and respectful environment that we seek for all in our community. This has been a collective effort involving over 80 students, staff, alumni, parents and board members working on five design teams focused on various aspects of school life. The design teams were organised into the following groups: People, Programs, Education, Spaces and Culture and each team provided research and suggestions that relate to their focus area.

The project has produced a series of recommendations for near- and long-term suggestions that could be implemented to better encourage a welcoming and inclusive environment at the school. Many of the action items recommended by the Pluralism project are already in motion as we begin to engage meaningfully with pluralism in this academic year. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers who contributed to this document.

1. <u>PEOPLE</u>

Long-range goal:

To further the diverse make-up of our board, faculty, administration, student body and volunteer groups including the international, national, and local communities we serve.

Mid-term (2-3 year) tactics:

» Further increase and communicate financial assistance/scholarships for Indigenous, marginalized and so-cio-economically disadvantaged students and ensure adequate support once enrolled.

» Introduce sustainable mentorship and programming that builds relationships amongst faculty, students, and alumni to encourage inclusion, engagement and retention.

» Develop and begin to implement standards and policies that ensure school vendors and partners reflect the diversity of the community and have proactive diversity practices.

Near-Term (12-18 month) recommendations:

» Develop a profile, as appropriate, of our current community to establish a true diversity baseline to build a plan to achieve our goals.

» Assign a representative team to research and review the Human Resource hiring policies and Admissions processes to ensure that we are meeting our pluralism goals.   All policies – school hiring, communication, and admission – will lead towards the long-range goals.

2. <u>EDUCATION</u>

Long-range goal

Over their time at Ashbury, students will be exposed to courses, curricula, projects, and resources that represent a broad diversity of perspectives across all subject areas and grade levels. This exposure recognizes that Canadians have a special duty to learn from, and engage Indigenous and pluralistic perspectives.

Mid-term (2-3 year) tactics:

- » Ensure that course offerings and programs have input from pluralism team and gives consideration to materials and contexts that are inclusive of different voices and perspectives and voices.

- » Assign a small team to develop an ongoing program in professional development for our faculty and parents that focuses on educating towards our long-range goal of inclusion. (eg, anti-racism, cross-cultural competency, coaching communications)

- » Establish a baseline expectation for diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness among volunteers, board, staff, faculty. Ensure expectations are clear.

- » Assign a team of Ashbury community members to organize and oversee how pluralism fits into the portrait of an Ashbury graduate.

Near-Term (12-18 month) recommendations:

- » Engage faculty and staff in an exploration of their current learning scaffold.

- » Identify courses, curricula, projects, and resources that contribute towards the long-term learning experiences goal; and identify specific opportunities and outcomes that are aligned with the goal of inclusive curricula and academic programs.

3. <u>PROGRAMS</u>

Long-range goal

To advance our mission to include further experiences that apply a pluralism lens to existing programs and enable students to become pluralistic global citizens.

Mid-term (2-3 year) tactics:

- » Develop experiential programs that are grounded in Indigenous and diverse ways of knowing the world, developing leadership and respecting the land. Leverage programs like Round Square as appropriate.

Near-Term (12-18 month) recommendations:

- » Engage a small team that includes students and alumni to insert elements of pluralism into co-curricular and character programs and update co-curriculars with the objectives.

- » Engage in ongoing cross cultural training for Boarding staff to ensure awareness of the cultural norms that residential students may adhere to.

4. <u>SPACES</u>

Long-range goal

The physical campus will be safe, welcoming, and accessible to all members of our community. There will be symbols and landmarks that reflect a commitment to Pluralism on campus and in the buildings.

Mid-term (2–3 year) tactics:

» Indoor and outdoor community spaces will have visible connections to diverse cultures and perspectives that amplify our long-range learning goals around pluralism, including acknowledgement of Indigenous history and diverse perspectives.

» Develop a long-range plan for physical accessibility and spaces, including restrooms, accomodations and changing places for community members of all gender identifications.

» Designate a room for multi-faith traditions that can be used as a reflective ceremony space.

» Establish a policy for new building construction that includes a consultation stage with multiple voices to ensure proactive implementation of inclusive design practices.

Near-Term (12-18 month) recommendations:

» Conduct a facilities review, to identify opportunities and obstacles to meet the long-range goal of accessibility, signage and mobility.

» Engage a small team to review art, architecture, heritage and landscaping to make recommendations that will lead to an intentionally welcoming and inclusive environment.

5. <u>CULTURE</u>

Long-range goal

The school culture will be welcoming, inclusive and growth minded. We strive for a community in which all members feel they belong, have a voice and are reflected in the institution.

Mid-term (2–3 year) tactics:

» Determine resources required to support diversity and inclusion practices and policies including external support, and a focused responsibility to assist the school with advancing Pluralism.

» Formalise our commitment to Pluralism by updating the code of conduct, referencing Pluralism in student, staff and faculty handbooks, training manuals, discipline, language protocols, indigenous protocols, recruitment and onboarding policies and baseline DEI principles.

» Survey and review our community to evaluate comfort with pluralism principles and concepts to measure effectiveness of training.

Near-Term (12-18 month) recommendations:

» Establish a Pluralism Council (comprised of faculty, administration, alumni and students) to research and inform best practices and advise in matters that relate to Pluralism.

» Create and leverage partnerships with organisations that are leaders in pluralism to educate the school community about cross-cultural issues and to expand our cultural awareness. Ensure proper protocols and

appropriate compensation of elders and advisors who share knowledge.

» Communicate and celebrate the school's commitment to Pluralism in marketing and communications materials

» Celebrate and honour the religions, identities, foods and ceremonies that exist in our community with a focus on ensuring a welcoming culture. Align opportunities with school calendar to ensure important celebrations are honoured.

» Create spaces and ongoing opportunities for dialogue related to complex local, national and global events and issues (micro and macro level). Establish protocols for reacting to world events where possible.

Volunteers

Adam Mulugeta
Alexandra Johnson
Amanda Shore
Amparo Oviedo
Andrea Kelly
Andrew Farinha
Andy Young
Anika Hall
Anjelien Slater
Anna-Karina Tabuñar
Ariam Biniam
Aurelie Gaussorgues
Barbara Saville
Beatrice Moen
Beverly Plitnikas
Brian Storosko
Celine Fu
Chapman Uko
Chelsea Larock
Claudia Lahaie
Daanish Khan
David Kaye
Devan Sharma
Eliza Bianchi
Ellie Eriksson
Eme Onuoha
Emily Bruce
Emily Coffen
Esther Wegoye
Eva He
Faith Mbakadi
Faltas Compaore
Gen Chanteloup
Godfrey Mabaleka
Greg Taylor
Hannah Laquerre
Hyebin Jung
Illesha St. Helene-Uko
Irina Konovalova
Isy Stevens
Janet Goodall

Jenna Frogett
Jennifer Goodwin
Jon Landon
Julie Fine
Kaniz Williams
Kate Lane
Kevin Pidgeon
Lee Nevitte
Libby Boulianne
Lisa Lewicki
Lyne Desfosses
Matilda Skovgaard
Matthais Mark George
May Lu
Menisha Sharma
Misko McGregor
MJ Quarashi
Mubashir Syed
Natalie Runoff
Nathan Lackey
Nigel MacLeod
Noelle Aldous
Noémie Pound
Ozi Molokwu
Richard Emmerson
Rizhe Jia
Rosette Ntagungira
Ross Holman
Santiago Gomez Angulo
Sascha Jammes
Savannah Tinker
Scott Procter
Stephanie Young
Susan Nally
Tana Dawn Smith
Taylor Ages
Terry Blake
Tim Lockett-Smith
Todd Lamont

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