

The Pursuit of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Deep Springs College

Deep Springs' mission of preparing students for a life of service to humanity requires fostering curiosity about, and respect for, the full complexity of the human experience. In our commitment to each of the college's three pillars—academics, labor, and self-governance—we pledge ourselves to protecting the safety, dignity, and welfare of its individual members and the College community as a whole. We expect to be tested—physically, intellectually, socially, and politically. While rising to meet such challenges, we demand of ourselves and others a constant attention to questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We pursue our mission with an acknowledgment that we work and learn on land once inhabited by the Paiute people, and that we have work to do in overcoming the legacy of exclusion that has shaped society more broadly and the first one hundred years of the College's existence more specifically.

Freedom of expression and vigorous democratic deliberation are core values of the college. Any understanding of people and ideas begins with validating the diversity of both. Our debates will be inclusive and take place in a setting of civility, honor, and reflection.

The rigorous Deep Springs curriculum must reflect an abiding concern for marginalized voices and questions of power. We seek to explore the problems and promise of Western thought through critical analysis and simultaneous engagement with perspectives from beyond the Western canon. Diversity must be regarded as a component, not an impediment, to the type of academic excellence for which the College is known.

Overcoming a history of exclusion and inequality depends upon recruiting, welcoming, and maintaining students, faculty, staff, and trustees of diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences. We are required to reach beyond the idea that doing right by one another is enough. We must take actions that may feel uncomfortable or even discordant in order to increase the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the people of Deep Springs.

We recognize that building a just society—on campus and off—is a perpetual struggle, one often born of conflict, confusion, and complexity. The students, faculty, staff, and trustees of Deep Springs willingly commit to that ongoing endeavor with a vigorous and capacious vision of what it can mean in the Valley and in lives of service to humanity.

The evolution of human consciousness offers no single end when it comes to questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We intend this to be a living document and a commitment to action, one driven by the evolving practices, questions, and thinking of the Deep Springs community over time. We expect no endpoint. By framing this as a challenge rather than a declaration, we hope to foster an ongoing culture of examination for ourselves, our community, and our institution.

With these ideas in mind, we will pursue our shared commitment to diversity with the recognition that this may take different and unforeseeable forms over time. As with all great problems at Deep Springs, we are committed to living the question.