



DEI Action Highlights 2017–2019

Separate from the identity, diversity, equity, and inclusion lessons and themes that are woven in to Lab’s curriculum and pedagogy, this provides highlights—not meant to be a complete accounting—of historical activities designed to help Lab make continual improvements towards its mission of “honoring diversity.”

As part of the University of Chicago, Lab aims to enable all people, regardless of identity, background, or institutional position, to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in school life, and contribute to our vibrant community.

2017–2018

- Made strategic changes to hiring processes to ensure a diverse, national pool of candidates for open positions. One third of new faculty and senior administrative positions were filled by people of color.
 - Involved head of school earlier in process with an emphasis on ensuring that finalist pools are diverse on a range of dimensions
 - Updated Lab's hiring guidelines with specific questions related to issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - Sent faculty and administrators to a broader range of targeted hiring fairs including the Diversity Forum in Philadelphia and sponsored by Carney Sandoe
- Made strategic shifts in admission activities and outreach to ensure access to and knowledge about Lab to a diverse applicant pool.
 - Nearly 42% of school fairs attended were at predominantly African-American or Hispanic
 - Added new advertising outlets like Vocalo, WVON, WRLL, HOY!, the Chicago Defender
 - Continued partnerships with Daniel Murphy Scholarship Foundation, Malone Family Foundation Scholars Program, Jack Kent Cooke, High Jump, HFS Scholars, YES, and MetroSquash
 - Reviewed admission application to minimize SES, class or race bias
 - Implemented new exit interview process to gather information on why families leave Lab
 - Increased targeted outreach to schools via one-on-one discussions with their school counselors

- Strengthened a diverse applicant pipeline/build community trust and understanding by welcoming families who were already part of UChicago community programs
- Worked with existing parent and parent affinity groups to identify opportunities
- Developed and fielded among MS and HS students, Lab's first-ever Student Health and Wellness Survey, including questions related to belonging.
- DAC, in partnership with the office of the Vice-Provost for Academic Leadership, Advancement, and Diversity as well as Ci3 Design Thinking Lab, a University human-centered design team, held a day-long retreat focused on identifying the most pressing diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns and issues in the Lab community. Ci3 led the group in a brief review of Lab's NAIS-AIM data and presented us with new qualitative data gleaned from a set of recent interviews with U-High students and worked to inform the DAC's planning.
- Engaged diversity expert Robert Greene to work across Lab throughout the school year including holding multiple sessions for faculty, leading a panel discussion for parents, and anchoring the April professional development day.
- Developed and posted throughout Lab a summary set of building block behaviors that support DEI in our community. These included *listen to understand versus listen to respond* and *manage intent and impact*.
- Engaged the Black Family Forum and DAC to support Lab by sharing admission/hiring data and information with the goal of increasing community knowledge around diversity in all of its forms.
- Added five High School students to the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC), an existing cross-schools, cross constituency group including faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and board members.
- Created the new extra service position of DEI liaison—eight faculty and staff members charged with working with the DAC, within each of the schools, and across the schools to develop a framework for diversity at Lab, to support DEI programs, and in this first year, to conceive of and support the search for a permanent diversity professional.
- Proposed and received University approval to hire Lab's first director-level diversity practitioner. To enhance the effectiveness of this role, it has a dual-reporting relationship to both the head of the Laboratory Schools and the UChicago vice provost for academic leadership, advancement, and diversity.
- Organized and ran faculty/staff book discussion groups using *Waking up White* by Debby Irving.

- The DAC held a day-long retreat focused on identifying the most pressing diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns and issues in the Lab community. While the DAC had existed for a number of years, the influx of the schools' eight DEI liaisons brought new perspectives.
- Diversity work in the Middle School worked to increase curricular awareness of learning differences and inclusivity.
- MS established new student affinity groups for Boys of Color and Girls of Color.
- MS Diversity Days increased from one to three days, including two days of workshops involving leaders from all areas of the school and three assemblies celebrating diversity and showcasing student work.
- HS faculty groups convened around race and diversity.

2018–19

- Lab's first-ever director of diversity, equity, and inclusion is hired and starts at Lab.
- Began anti-bias training for all people involved in hiring processes.
- Hired the most diverse cohort of new faculty/staff in recent history.
- Added language in student/family handbooks about hateful expression.
- Engaged Alumni Board by connecting them to Lab's new DEI director.
- New DEI director wrote and shared periodic DEI newsletters and resources with all Lab employees.
- The DAC, focused on refining its purpose, completed a draft three-year action plan related to diversity, equity, and inclusion work at Lab.
- Held specific DEI-focussed student assemblies in LS, MS, and HS.
- Set up a more formal process to identify Lab employees with interest and connect those employees to DEI training and opportunities through online forms including affinity groups sponsored by Lab, the University, and outside organizations (i.e.) People of Color in Independent Schools-Chicago is active.
- Engaged employees interested in creating or participating in an affinity group for faculty and staff based on particular aspects of identity.

- Sent 10 people to the ISACS Diversity Summit and 30 Lab faculty, staff, and students—twice as many as ever before—attended the NAIS People of Color Conference.
- Created new student leadership opportunity: U-High student DEI Peer Facilitators. Weekend trainings and in-school meetings focused on DEI concepts and facilitation skills and the group created and led a workshop for a ninth grade assembly in the spring.
- Relunched SEED groups in the fall. SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) is a national program that creates opportunities for sustained conversations about race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, culture, and more for school communities. Lab already had a number of employees who were SEED trained or getting SEED trained over the summer.
- Students hosted their first BRAVE (Becoming Racially Aware and Valuing Ethnicity) Conference. The BRAVE Conference brought together approximately 40 High School, 30 Middle School, and 70 Lower School students to explore the concepts of race, racial identity, racism, and privilege in meaningful and developmentally-appropriate ways.
- For the PA DEI committee, Lab conducted its second data presentation about our students/families and employees that explored a few different identity markers. In particular, we shared information about racial demographics, gender breakdowns of classes, percentages of affiliated and unaffiliated families, and other information.
- Lab joined the UChicago Common Book Initiative. Part of the UC's diversity and inclusion work, a shared experience reading the same book, *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui, and conversations helped to build understanding around diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Various faculty across the schools participated in summer professional development activities related to DEI including multicultural literature, Compassionate Warrior Bootcamp for White Allies, "Tough Talks," and a cross-school DEI book group
- Began Fourth Wednesday Workshops with faculty. For example, MS faculty focused on white dominant culture, how that shows up at Lab, and how to dismantle it.