

Annual Report and Final Recommendations, AY 2020-2021

Student Committee on the New School focused on Climate and Sustainability

The report is a synthesis of student committee recommendations for the New School, based on Winter and Spring quarter engagement efforts, including the Community Focus Groups, the Deliberative Polling event, and various meetings with community centers and community organizations.

Summary of Committee Work

In Fall Quarter, Rachel and Ayoade held individual 1-hr long **discussions with six sustainability and environmental justice student organizations** on campus to get a broad sense of these groups' priorities for the new school focused on sustainability and climate (New School) on key topics such as curricular structure, student experience, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. The discussions also helped guide future student engagement efforts. The key asks and takeaways of these discussions were compiled in the [Phase 1 Report](#).

In Winter Quarter, Ayoade and Rachel formed a 9-member committee of students from various schools across campus through an ASSU open-application, with the support of the Blueprint Advisory Committee. Members of the student committee put together two **Community Focus Groups** to gather input from BIPOC students and students of other marginalized groups on critical areas and create space for participants to be able to interface directly with school planning leadership. 22 students attended, and the results were compiled in the [Focus Groups Report](#). The student committee also wrote an [Op-ed in The Daily](#) outlining the priorities and values driving their work, including inclusivity, accountability, and transparency.

In Spring Quarter, the student committee organized a **Deliberative Polling event for the New School** with the support of the Center for Deliberative Democracy (CDC). 184 students discussed key proposals related to the New School, from education programs to DEI initiatives. The results are compiled in the CDC Report (final report yet to be released). The student committee also held 1-hr long discussions with staff, students and faculty involved in community partnerships and/or sustainability focused on centering justice through engagement of frontline and Environmental Justice communities.

Based on these engagement initiatives, which surveyed the opinions and input of a wide array of students, the Student Committee proposes the following recommendations for the New School.

Key Recommendations (Executive Summary)

Academic & Curricular Structure

- Create a **Department for Environmental Justice** with long-term institutional support for research, education, and capacity-building, in addition to the current proposal of EJ as a cross-cutting theme.
- Integrate **environmental justice, Black studies, Indigeous knowledge, and community relationships** into courses and curricula.
- Integrate **international and global perspectives** in considering challenges, solutions, partnerships, and approaches in sustainability, climate science, and associated research areas.
- Interact, collaborate, and form partnerships with **existing departments** on campus.
- Devote greater resources to educational programs on **climate science, energy, cities and public policy**, with a particular emphasis on the latter two, which are areas that many students believe are currently lacking at Stanford.

Structures for student feedback and partnership

- Form an **enduring structure for student engagement** (such as a student committee) during its operation to ensure the school is continually in tune with the needs of students.
- Form long-term partnerships with **community centers** on campus

Student experiences outside the classroom

- Integrate **service-learning opportunities** in keystone experiences, with ethical practices for service in place.
- Implement a **diversity of external activities** that will enrich classroom learning, such as those outlined in keystone experiences, but with consideration of students actual experiences with their academic programs.
- Assist students in seeking **career, research, and internship** opportunities.
- Provide ample mechanisms for **mentorship and relationship building**, both with student peers and faculty.
- Enhance access to and encourage participation in **off-campus opportunities and outdoor experiences**.

Diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI)

- Proactively recruit and hire a **racially and socioeconomically diverse and inclusive faculty, with specializations in issues particular to marginalized groups**. One way to accomplish this is to expand on traditional considerations in faculty hiring to include community involvement.
- **Involve students** in faculty hiring and consider their input in hiring decisions.
- Not only hire, but **actively support** faculty from minority backgrounds.
- Cultivate an **inclusive, equitable culture** within the New School by (1) providing resources that actively support faculty and staff from minority backgrounds and (2) ensuring all faculty, staff, and students are engaging with issues of diversity, not just those from minority backgrounds.
- Secure and protect **funding** for coterminal and graduate students.
- Ensure **accessibility and DEI principles** in teaching, coursework, fieldwork, and associated activities.
- Consider and implement **best practices in DEI** proposed and implemented by other organizations.

- In creating guiding **frameworks** for the New School, (1) Recognize the disparate impact of climate change on marginalized communities and the importance of their efforts in solving sustainability and climate challenges and (2) shift from colonial science model to investment in local research communities.

Relationship with external communities

- Commit to **working with local communities** to prevent and/or mitigate negative impacts of the New School on surrounding communities.
- Center local community perspectives in the work in the **sustainability accelerator** as well as research agendas, curricular structures, and physical constructions.
- Demonstrate commitment to local nonprofits and activist organizations through **transparency and accessibility** before engaging in formal partnerships.
- Raise **funds** for Bay Area climate resilience and local climate-vulnerable communities.

Key Recommendations (Detailed)

Academic & Curricular Structure

One of the central responsibilities of the New School is to create educational programs for students. This includes, but is not limited to curriculum, courses, and degree offerings. We recommend the following five proposals be undertaken to build a robust, transformative academic & curricular structure in the New School.

- 1. Create a Department for Environmental Justice (EJ) with long-term institutional support for research, education, and capacity-building, in addition to the current proposal of EJ as a cross-cutting theme.**

There was overwhelming student support for this at the student Deliberative Polling event, with 85.2% of participants favoring this proposal post deliberation. Support for an EJ department was also evident in the responses to the question of whether “Establishing a department on EJ could isolate EJ scholarship from university-wide action,” which only 22.0% of participants agreed with post-deliberation. Students were supportive of an EJ department for several reasons– to quote from the draft Deliberative Polling report:

One participant liked the idea of having a “hub of knowledge” on environmental justice where anyone could go to learn about the subject....others noted that centralizing environmental justice efforts would facilitate and thus incentivize more work to be done on the subject across Stanford. Furthermore, some participants believed that an entire department would have the influence and resources to unite Stanford and the surrounding community around environmental justice, giving Stanford’s environmental justice efforts a greater ability to work with and benefit the larger community.

Creating an institutional home and department for EJ was also one of the central takeaways of the Community Focus Groups report, with specific reference to the asks from the EJ Working Group, outlined in an [op-ed](#) in The Daily.

There are several compelling reasons why the New School should create a Department for EJ. To reiterate a few, EJ builds upon studies of sustainability and climate by recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental and human systems while exposing systemic inequities and historical injustices against historically disadvantaged communities, typically low-income communities and communities of color. In other words, we cannot ensure a truly sustainable future without the study of EJ or a formal system to support it. In addition, establishing an EJ department would help Stanford keep up the academic rigor of other peer institutions– such as UC Berkeley, Yale, Duke, Brown, and University of Michigan– that have already implemented rigorous EJ departments, institutes, programs, majors and minors. In comparison, Stanford offers only a few courses on environmental justice.

- 2. Integrate environmental justice, Black studies, Indigenous knowledge, and community relationships into courses and curricula.**

One of the chief takeaways from the Community Focus Groups was the desire from BIPOC students for curricula that emphasizes intersections between sustainability and Black Studies and curriculum offerings on Indigenous knowledge and land relationships.

In addition, several small-groups at the Deliberative Polling event raised this recommendation, noting that these are understudied areas when it comes to sustainability and climate issues that could offer transformative frameworks and knowledge.

- “The New School should implement case studies on environmental injustices and use those to better inform technological innovations.”
- “[Foreground] Indigenous scholars/generational knowledge/land stewardship in faculty hiring and curriculum.”
- “Expand environmental justice into a department to include gender studies, the history of EJ, TEK, queer ecology, etc. [Have] more courses involving indigenous frameworks.”

The New School can turn to examples of such courses offered today that have exemplified what it looks like to integrate environmental justice and ethics into curricula. These include EARTHSYS 212 (Human Society and Environmental Change), EARTHSYS103 (Understanding Energy), ANTHRO 123C (“Third World Problems?” Environmental Anthropology and the Intersectionality of Justice”), and EARTHSYS 194 (Introduction to Environmental Justice: Race, Class, Gender and Place).

3. Integrate international and global perspectives in considering challenges, solutions, partnerships, and approaches in sustainability, climate science, and associated research areas.

Climate change and sustainability are transboundary topics. Doing more to acknowledge the global extent of these issues and their cross-cutting topics (health, equity, education, society, politics, etc.) will help students form a nuanced and holistic perspective on the complexities of such issues.

This recommendation is supported by the Community Focus Groups report, where one of the key takeaways was that “The New School...should make an effort to steer away from American-centric perspectives on sustainability and incorporate international perspectives.” In addition, several Deliberative Polling small-groups shared the sentiment that “[international perspectives] should be incorporated into the New School.” One suggestion is to “invite international experts in sustainability to offer insights - through seminars, courses, and research - on the progress being made in their part of the world. This can offer an alternative perspective on some of the common global challenges we face.”

4. Interact, collaborate, and form partnerships with existing departments on campus.

The New School has a powerful opportunity to leverage the resources of all schools to address modern sustainability and climate and climate challenges. During the Deliberative Polling event, many small-groups highlighted the importance of collaboration with other departments on campus at many levels, including offering cross-listed courses, joint degrees, and interdisciplinary research opportunities.¹

¹ See appendix for additional quotes

- “I think one thing that's really key with this new school is that it has to integrate well with the other systems that are already engaging in this type of [work].”
- “A significant purpose of the New School should be to provide reasons for faculty and students across departments and programs to interact who otherwise likely would not.”

There are varying degrees of collaboration that students would prefer. For one, Deliberative Polling participants were generally supportive of undergraduate sustainability course requirements, but were much less supportive of graduate requirements.² Students suggested that a sustainability requirement for undergraduates could fit nicely into the existing WAYS of Thinking framework, but cautioned that “people would complain about [the additional requirements],” and suggested that sustainability courses be incentivized rather than required. However, others noted that “regardless, everyone’s going to complain about their gen-ed requirements,” and sustainability is “an important enough issue to require people to take one class on it.”

5. Devote greater resources to educational programs on climate science, energy, cities and public policy, with a particular emphasis on the latter two, areas that many students believe are currently lacking at Stanford.

Student and faculty opinion aligned fairly well for the most-supported education programs that the New School should devote a critical mass of resources to. In particular, **climate science** and **energy** were the top two areas with most student and faculty support (see Figure 1). Interestingly, the two areas with the least student support, the **natural world** and **earth & planetary sciences**, were two areas with high faculty support.

The next two areas with the highest student support were **public policy** and **cities**. An understanding of the role of public policy in sustainability and climate issues is paramount to holistically addressing these challenges, because the potential of advances in clean technologies cannot be fully realized without the widespread implementation and support through policy. And cities, which are responsible for 70% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, will be the major battleground for tackling climate change.

Several students highlighted these areas as currently lacking in sufficient resources during the small-group discussions. Students noted that there are some formal structures for public policy and cities: Earth Systems offers a concentration in environmental economics and public policy; Environmental Systems Engineering offers an urban track; and there exists an Urban Studies department. But these structures don’t provide the necessary rigor or support to equip students to tackle major sustainability and climate challenges in these critical areas. Thus, it’d be to the benefit of the New School to devote a critical mass of resources to public policy and cities.

	T2 (student)	T2 (faculty)
Climate Science	8.5	9.5

² Post-deliberation, 73.6% of participants favored the proposal that “The New School should expand sustainability education across campus by working with existing schools to create a sustainability and climate requirement across existing **undergraduate** degree programs in all Stanford schools.” By contrast, only 42.0% of participants favored the proposal that “The New School should expand sustainability education across campus by working with existing schools to create a sustainability and climate requirement across existing **graduate** degree programs in all Stanford schools” post-deliberation.

Energy	8.3	9.2
Public Policy	8.3	8.3
Cities	8.0	7.6
Human Sustenance	7.9	8.1
Ethics	7.8	7.5
Human Health	7.6	7.1
Social Science	7.3	7.7
Natural World	6.9	8.4
Earth and Planetary Sciences	6.5	8.3

Figure 1. How STRONGLY would you oppose or favor having the New School devote a critical mass of resources on each of the following research topics?

In the Deliberative Polling event, students also offered recommendations of additional educational programs and topics that the New School should focus on, such as **environmental communication and environmental management**.³

Structures for student feedback and partnership

- 1. The New School should form an enduring structure for student engagement (such as a student committee) during its operation to ensure the school is continually in tune with the needs of students.**

There was overwhelming student support for this at the student Deliberative Polling event, with 92.3% of participants favoring this proposal post-deliberation. However, 69.6% of participants agreed “student committees give the illusion of accountability and decision-making power where it doesn’t exist.” There were several reasons for this– to quote from the draft Deliberative Polling report:

In the deliberations, participants expressed concern that even though a student committee could give recommendations, *there would be no guarantee that its views would be incorporated into decision-making processes*. While participants were supportive of a body through which students could voice their feedback, some participants’ prior experience with similar bodies has led them to believe that *student committees may merely be a method of placating students without taking their concerns into account*. Furthermore, participants questioned whether student committees would provide adequate representation of the student body. Overall, however, many participants believed that having a student committee would be better than having no voice at all from the student body.

Thus, for this structure to be successful, it’s important that the student governance structure be created with intention and transparency, and with consultation and collaboration with various students. To this end, we recommend a dual structure: a **core student advisory board** that would be the enduring structure for student engagement and meet with members of the New School faculty and staff, and an **open coalition of students** such as those representing environmental justice and sustainability student groups, academic departments/programs, community center student staff, the ASSU EJ

³ See appendix for additional quotes

and Sustainability directors, and any others who are interested. The core student advisory board would meet with the open coalition biweekly or monthly, and facilitate contact and collaboration between the New School faculty and staff and the student body.

The Core Advisory Board could be designed as follows:

- Approximately 10 members
- Convenes weekly and in sub groups as needed
- Selected by application; applications open in the fall and quarterly as needed
- Full quarter commitment required; longer preferred
- Interfaces directly with school leadership on a regular basis
- Compensated (hourly job or quarterly stipend)

The Open Student Coalition could be designed as follows:

- Convenes biweekly or monthly; managed by Core Advisory Board
- Functions as a mode of regular information sharing and opportunity for feedback with broader group of interested students
- Potential for subgroups/working groups dealing with specific areas of new school design and implementation (ex. Academic, Community Partnership, DEI working groups) managed by core board members and meeting more regularly
- Volunteer; commitment flexible

2. **Facilitating Transparency and Accountability** continues to be an urgent priority among students participating in **all** of the feedback events of this winter and spring. To date, the role of student reporters and other outlets external to the Sustainability Initiative has been substantial in spreading information on the new school, but we believe that more information should be coming directly from new school leadership. Some steps we recommend to address this are:

 - An open-access **email list for new school updates** (managed by Student Core Advisory Board)
 - New school leadership should **post planning updates posted on a regular basis** (i.e. monthly, quarterly) to the sustainability initiative website, and these updates should be publicized via the open email list. All planning updates should be accompanied by an opportunity to provide feedback via comment and questions submission on the sustainability initiative website, and an updated FAQs page as needed responding to questions from the previous update.
 - Regular **open gatherings for sharing updates and receiving feedback** (quarterly), with dates publicized well in advance
4. **Long term partnerships with community centers** have come up repeatedly in the Community Focus Groups and among past student priorities as an important step to break down the separation students often experience between their communities and their academics, particularly in environmental studies. To this end, we recommend the following principles drive the work of community center engagement.

 - **Communication:** To facilitate consistent contact between the new school and community centers, we recommend having **student liaisons** between community

centers and new school with positions built into the student advisory board or the broader student coalition. To facilitate enduring staff relationships, we support revisiting the idea to **hold a community center and new school staff gathering during the summer.**

- **Academic Partnerships:** Leaders of the NACC pointed to the already existing [First Nations Fellowship](#) program as an example of a program that's working and that should be expanded and built upon by the new school for other communities (other examples, non-exhaustive, include: the [Indigenous Communities Fellowship](#), [Black Diaspora Fellowship](#), and [Chicanx/Latinx Communities Fellowship](#) through the Haas Center). This program and others to come should **place emphasis on attracting and supporting (through access to research resources, professional development, and mentorship) students and junior scholars** from Black and Indigenous backgrounds (domestically and internationally) and whose work focuses on the unique relationships to the environment of those communities. Such programs can also serve to develop an intentional pipeline for students who go into the program to go to graduate programs and return to the new school as staff or faculty. We also recommend **embedding community-based research frameworks into student service requirements.**

Further conversations with other community centers are to be re-initiated over the summer.

Student experiences outside the classroom

The New School can further enrich sustainability and climate education by providing meaningful opportunities for learning outside the classroom. The Blueprint Advisory Committee has already proposed the keystone experiences model to encapsulate and formalize some of these external experiences. We have identified four primary ways for the New School to build upon this framework and further enrich the experiences of those affiliated with it.

1. **Integrate service-learning opportunities with community organization in keystone experiences, with ethical practices for service in place.**

During the Deliberative Polling event, *nearly every group* independently recommended that the service-learning opportunities with community organizations be a key part of the keystone experiences and highlighted the benefits of doing so, including strengthening the relationship with community organizations and deepening student learning experiences.⁴

- “Getting involved with community organizations [and] community-based groups— not just sitting in the lab on campus all the time but actually learning by doing and making connections with the community and helping out with those initiatives— should be a good requirement to have.”
- “Providing meaningful opportunities for students to do community-engaged work is so important, because the structure of both undergrad and grad work is so condensed

⁴ See appendix for additional quotes

that you can't meaningfully start to do complete engagement over the course of four or five years. So having a longer term structure for doing that is so important.”

However, students raised the importance of doing this type of work sustainably and respectfully. They noted it's important for the New School to abide by ethical principles in service-opportunities and “[ensure] meaningful, long-term collaboration with existing community organizers (rather than short-term ‘voluntourism’).” And in an attitude of “humbleness... [it's important it's actually the] community partner that is driving the work that's being done. So often [student's think], ‘I had this experience when I was an undergrad at Stanford [and] I have this cool new skill set from this class. And I want to find a place to apply this skill set meaningfully’... But really, the process should be working in reverse, where our community partner says, ‘I could use some CCS support’ and Stanford says, ‘Oh we have students for that.’”

The New School should deliberately consider these principles in forming partnerships with community organizations and creating these opportunities. The New School can work with existing centers on campus such as the Haas Center for Public Service, which operates with [Principles of Ethical and Effective Service](#), to devise these ethical service opportunities—and resources Cardinal Courses and Cardinal Quarter can either be used as models for creating these resources in the New School, or an area of collaboration and partnership.

2. Implement a diversity of external activities that will enrich classroom learning, such as those outlined in keystone experiences, but with consideration of students actual experiences with their academic programs.

Several small-groups supported the general framework and intention behind the keystone experiences. In particular, there was intrigue with a **pre-graduate sustainability bootcamp**,⁵ which could be “a really cool way to get everybody on the same page and foundation” and help people meet each other before beginning their program. It was also noted that “Duke offers something similar...for people who are lacking in certain areas of study [and] they have certain refresher courses so that you're prepared for the course work going in and you don't feel so behind.”

However, students raised several concerns about how keystone experiences would be implemented.⁶ First, students wondered how they would interact with the student's academic requirements and avoid posing significant burdens, particularly graduate students. Some saw the “undergrad things as opportunities and the grad student thinks like responsibilities and things you have to do.” Some noted that, while a lot of the keystone experiences seem like great ideas, they must be structured “in such a way that they promote healthy work life balance for students and prevent burn out. For example, realistic numbers of hours of work per credit.”

Second, students wondered if keystone experiences would be a formal requirement, given that many students don't declare until their second year. If they are required, several questions arise: Would students have to retroactively make-up missed keystone experiences? How would that perhaps work against the New School's goal of accessibility?

Thus, while there was general support for keystone experiences, particularly for the undergraduate design, there are some considerations that the New School must take into account in its implementation.

⁵ See appendix for additional quotes

⁶ See appendix for additional quotes

3. Assist students in seeking career, research, and internship opportunities.

The school should prioritize finding ways for the student body to apply their academic skills outside the classroom for the benefit of themselves and the community through external opportunities such as jobs, research positions, and internships. By emphasizing the need to enhance the students' access to these opportunities, the classroom environment is similarly enriched by an abundance of real-world experiences for students and faculty to draw from in discussion settings. A specific priority in making these opportunities available to people from marginalized communities should be embraced to make the new school a vehicle for improving accessibility and equity.

Several small-groups at the Deliberative Polling event highlighted the need for more financial and structural support for **undergraduate research**. "Having research opportunities earlier [and compensated] and making it more generally available to Stanford undergraduates, as opposed to some extra thing that you have to apply for on top of all of your other work, [is a good thing]." In addition, this is particularly important "especially for students coming from...high schools or other areas that don't have these types of programs to develop these skills."

In addition, an **organized center that provides internship and career opportunities** and manages a school wide email list, job board, etc. will be a helpful way to help further students' professional development. Several students at the Deliberative Polling event mentioned that internship opportunities in sustainability and climate are currently scattered across different organizations and departments across campus, making it difficult for them to access and utilize them. And one of the key takeaways from the community focus group was that "Funding should be allocated for opportunities that nurture student sustainability experiences and internships." The New School can help bridge these gaps by serving as a central resource for internship and career opportunities on campus.

Finally, **academic support networks** can help onboard students with various academic backgrounds and assist them in achieving academically and career-wise. **Peer-to-peer tutoring programs** such as the [ACE program](#) are helpful for bridging the gaps in knowledge and expectations, and can even serve as environments that leverage the commonalities of prior academic experience and challenge between students of similar backgrounds. For example, successful ACE programs have often been taught by former students who represent the students they teach (FLI, BIPOC, ESOL, etc.) and can understand the challenges that students may have to overcome to do well academically in their introductory classes.

4. Provide ample mechanisms for mentorship and relationship building, both with student peers and faculty.

The New School should be a practical space for people to propagate relationships with peers and mentors. The New School can do this through:

- Intentionally designed physical spaces, such as the Earth Systems lounge, that allows students, staff, and faculty to socialize, host programming, receive advising, and study.
- Mentorship and peer-connection programs. Mentorship can and should take the form of student-to-student relationships in which students perform the roles of peer advisors for their department, yearlong one-on-one mentors, and community sessions on a broad level. Additionally, faculty relationships should be encouraged in

the New School through similar programs that go beyond the typical major advising engagement.

Mentorship and peer-to-peer programs are particularly helpful for students from minority backgrounds and students interested in getting involved in sustainability and climate but don't have much prior exposure. This was highlighted at both the Community Focus Groups and the Deliberative Polling event.

- “Forming connections between undergraduate and graduate students and communities embedded in sustainability and others who might want to get involved is a helpful way to build a bridge between those who are deeply embedded in these topics and those who are starting to get their feet wet on these issues” –

Community Focus Group Report

- “I feel like for me [the EDGE program⁷ has] been really beneficial, particularly having the student mentor that I got paired with. I just had a really great mentor who just helped me a lot with like navigating grad school, life and research and things like that and outside of like professional research stuff to just on a personal level” –

Deliberative Polling Event

5. Enhance access to and encourage participation in off-campus opportunities and outdoor experiences.

The New School should collaborate with existing infrastructure to promote access to off-campus and outdoor opportunities at Stanford so that students are both aware of them and feel comfortable accessing them. To accomplish this, the New School can work alongside the Outdoor Center to eliminate financial barriers, especially for FLI and BIPOC, and teach courses and hold programs that are culturally sensitive to those from marginalized backgrounds. Additionally, the New School can collaborate with outdoor classes, SPOT, and other vehicles for outdoor education outside of the classroom. Lastly, the New School can emphasize the importance of field trips for the enrichment of knowledge gained in classroom settings.

The importance of these off-campus and outdoor opportunities were supported by several small-groups at the Deliberative Polling session: “When I was first reading the keystone experiences thing, what came to mind was like, it's like Middle School, class field, trips type stuff. But then I realize those are actually really memorable...[and] I feel like it's actually really useful. I enjoy what they're putting out there, at least for the framework of it.”

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

Sustainability doesn't just apply to the earth– it's also a right of the people and communities that inhabit the earth's ecosystems. To achieve the ideal future state where human societies and natural systems thrive in concert, it is important the New School values marginalized groups, builds equity into its foundation, and recognizes the role of systemic racism in environmental injustices.

In addition, a goal of any school, not just one dedicated to sustainability and climate, is to provide safe spaces for students, in particular minority students and Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) who suffer harm from systemic racism. Diversity, equity, and inclusion

⁷ The [EDGE program](#) is the Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education Doctoral Fellowship Program at Stanford. EDGE support the recruitment and academic success of outstanding doctoral students who have the potential to enhance diversity- broadly defined- of their academic disciplines and fields.

of the New School's community, teaching, and research can facilitate that safe space and promote a unified sense of community.

The student committee recommends the following seven proposals be implemented in the New School to forward the goals of DEI.

1. Proactively recruit and hire a racially and socioeconomically diverse and inclusive faculty.

Hiring processes should be conducted with an emphasis on recruiting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as well as diverse candidates along gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and nationality lines. For international faculty, there should also be an emphasis on providing visa sponsorships and clear pathways/support for the visa application process.

The importance of diversity in faculty hiring was brought up *in nearly every* small-group during the Deliberative Polling event.⁸ Students highlighted the value for minority students to see faculty or other students of similar backgrounds, because “it can be kind of insidious ... to look up and see the place where you want to go doesn't look at all like you.” Students also mentioned how diversity in faculty hiring can enhance teaching, since “[sustainability and climate is] a social problem that needs a lot of different perspectives in order to reach a solution.”

This was also a key takeaway from the Community Focus Groups report: “Faculty diversity is an ongoing and recurring topic of concern for students. The focus group conversations highlighted and re-emphasized the role of faculty diversity not only in a welcoming school culture, but also in the breadth and quality of sustainability education and research being offered. BIPOC faculty and international scholars, as well as community engaged work and research, are a crucial component of the development of a new school that centers on environmental justice.”

One way to help accomplish this is to incorporate non-traditional criteria in faculty hiring, such as community engagement. According to several small-groups during the Deliberative Polling event, this criteria can include “DEI and outreach contributions” and “community involvement [and] engagement, especially if they're trying to make [the New School] really rooted in community and engagement with communities.”

Another way to help accomplish this is to establish a recruitment and outreach pipeline for faculty in underrepresented communities for various position levels. This ensures that New School is actively engaging with and seeking talent in these communities, whose members offer valuable insight into key aspects of sustainability and climate issues.

- “I think that there should be more initiative to go out and seek more diverse thoughts and people. Having [an] active outreach pipeline, [where] Stanford goes into...communities or undergraduate schools [by] some sort of recruiting system.”
- “Bringing in people at different levels would be a good way to sort of, make sure that....power and balance doesn't... just move from...the student level to the assistant professor level.”

2. Involve students in faculty hiring and consider their input in hiring decisions.

⁸ See appendix for more quotes

Students can provide valuable insight into the success of prospective hires, since students themselves will be the recipients of faculty teaching and source of help with the faculty's research. In addition, it's important for students to take an active role in shaping the culture of the New School, not only in spearheading initiatives and projects but also in what is taught and where resources are devoted— including those that support new faculty.

Many small-groups recommended this during the Deliberative Polling event, noting that there are several departments at Stanford that already involve students in the faculty hiring process. “My department does have every faculty candidate give a talk to the entire department. One open talk and then one close talk, just to the Faculty of the department. But it gives the entire student body kind of a view into who the candidates are. And there is a student panel that has an interview with them and has at least some opportunity to give feedback to our faculty of.” Involving students in faculty hiring is also valuable for advancing principles of DEI, “since faculty are such a key way to...help marginalized students feel included and advocate for our needs.”

3. Cultivate an inclusive, equitable culture within the New School by (1) providing resources that actively support faculty and staff from minority backgrounds and (2) ensuring faculty, staff, and students are engaging with issues of diversity, not just those from minority backgrounds.

In addition to actively recruiting faculty and students from minority backgrounds, it's important that the New School also provides resources that support them once they're hired. Not only is this critical to retaining talent and fostering an academic environment where their valuable contributions can flourish, but it's also imperative to cultivating an inclusive, equitable culture within the New School. Several small-groups noted the importance of this at the deliberative polling event.

- “Something [worth] considering is not just hiring but...[also] the process for tenure tracks... at least in my experience...[when] even one diverse faculty is brought into the fold, they're not always fully supported in terms of actually actualizing research that is connected to these issues of DEI. And there isn't always the institutional support that they need.”
- “[Empower] existing lecturers that belong to underrepresented communities.”
- “It seems like they're focusing a lot on just the hiring process itself, but what about taking care of the faculty after they're here? What about giving them tenure and...equal opportunities when they're already being hired?”

In addition, it's important for the burden of DEI to not fall just on faculty or staff from minority backgrounds, but that all faculty take an active role in fostering an inclusive, equitable environment. Deliberative polling small-groups noted that “If there were a big section of the faculty that didn't engage with race [issues], it [would] not be that there's diversity, but [rather] the diverse faculty get siloed into or marginalized into a corner of this new school.” And traditionally, students noted that “sometimes a lot of the [DEI] work goes on just a couple of people” and “[by having POC do a lot of the outreach], we're also requiring more work of them and not figuring out how that should be evenly distributed elsewhere, which is unjust and not ideal.”

Students suggested several ways to counteract this, and create a truly inclusive, equitable culture. First, DEI could be incorporated into the student curriculum— “[so maybe] you have students do some sort of [work or] outreach or research into DEI.” And at an institutional level, the New School can “structurally recognize [DEI] work and incentivize

this work in exciting ways” so that these principles are infused into the foundation and culture of the New School.

4. Secure and protect funding for coterminal and graduate students.

Students during the Community Focus Groups and Deliberative Polling event indicated that the lack of institutional financial aid for advanced degree programs, including coterminal master's programs, was a big barrier to entry for FLI, BIPOC, and other financially-challenged students seeking to embark on graduate studies at Stanford. Some graduate students recounted their own experience, that “if the fellowship didn't come through like last week... I definitely wouldn't be here as a PhD student.” Another student shared that funding is a “big stressor on my personal PhD life because... I have to be constantly looking for funding.”

This barrier to entry can be overcome by allocating more financial resources to help support FLI and BIPOC students in coterminal and graduate programs in the New School, as is currently done with undergraduate degree programs. The New School should also more frequently provide “upfront funded offers for those seeking a position that's supposed to be funded.” Additionally, funding can be allocated to create and fund more TA-ships and RA-ships that are reserved for FLI students in the same way that certain jobs on campus are reserved only for undergraduate students that receive financial aid. Finally, a bank of resources for outside funding can also be created and managed by the FLI office or the IDEAL office as a resource that graduate students can look to for additional opportunities to finance their living and educational costs.

Creating mechanisms for FLI and BIPOC students to finance their coterminal degrees in the New School can go a long way in bringing down the barriers that FLI and BIPOC students face in pursuing graduate studies. We have already made great strides in funding PhD degrees at Stanford by enabling all doctoral students in good academic standing to receive 12 months of funding for up to five years.

5. Ensure accessibility and DEI principles in teaching, coursework, fieldwork, and other activities.

Students during the Community Focus Groups and Deliberative Polling event indicated that lack of funding for certain types of classroom activities and required coursework for certain majors can preclude them from pursuing those courses and degree programs. In addition, inequitable teaching and classroom practices can also prevent students from meaningfully engaging with coursework.

Thus, DEI principles should be applied to classroom setting as well, including “accommodating for all the different learning styles [students] have” and “ensur[ing] accessibility and affordability of housing and other student resources (e.g. required course materials).” In addition, convention norms around fieldwork— which “assumes a whole lot of the able-bodied capabilities and can often be very exclusionary to people without that ability” should be reevaluated to emphasize “there's a lot of roles that other people can play and should play in [other aspects of field work, like] design.”

6. Consider and implement best practices in DEI proposed and implemented by other organizations.

There are several advantages to doing this, as outlined by small-groups in the Deliberative Polling event. First, the New School can ensure that the “valuable voice” of the many organizations already doing this work aren’t “missing from these big conversations and decisions.” In addition, “rather than reinventing the wheel” the New School can “leverage the [knowledge of the] diversity committees that already exists, [since] there are so many, especially after this summer.” However, the New School should still formalize its own DEI structure within the School in order to ensure the best-practices can be implemented and continuously improved.

There already exist many student organizations and structures on campus that the New School can draw upon to implement best practices in DEI. The [Earth Systems Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion report](#) has been pointed to by community centers as a guideline for DEI processes, as it leverages existing institutional knowledge, community engagement, and student input that has already been contributed.

- 7. In creating guiding frameworks for the New School, (1) recognize the disparate impact of climate change on marginalized communities and the importance of their efforts in solving sustainability and climate challenges and (2) shift from colonial science model to investment in local research communities.**

These are two key grounding principles that were raised during the Community Focus Groups and Deliberative Polling event. First, the New School must recognize that marginalized communities bear the brunt of the climate change and environmental impacts, and the New School should be sure to address this when thinking about what the school wants to accomplish. Second, the New School should reevaluate the “colonial science” model that has traditionally guided academia, in which researchers from developed countries like the United States visit developing countries to conduct research without investing in existing local researchers or research infrastructure. This problematic framework can lead to extractive relationships that are harmful to the visited country, while also failing to holistically address research questions by not recognizing the true value of their knowledge. Thus, the New School and faculty should recognize this problematic framework and commit to both working with and investing in local research efforts in the regions they work in.

Relationship with external communities

External engagement has repeatedly emerged as a key principle of the New School: in an update to the Faculty Senate, the Blueprint Advisory Committee reported on a planned “Sustainability Accelerator” focused on “translat[ing] policy and technology solutions”, with supporting “convening space, equipment and expert staff... [and] specialized training and funding for projects ready for external partners.”

When deciding how these external partners function with the school as well as what external engagement means to the new school, we recommend engagement with and accountability to the immediate communities, especially URM communities from places not traditionally benefited by Stanford, play a substantive role.

We propose four ways the New School can practice this commitment to its communities within as well as beyond the sustainability accelerator.

1. Commit to working with local communities to prevent or mitigate negative impacts of the New School on surrounding communities.

The New School will not exist in a vacuum of only students, faculty, and researchers. It will likely imply new physical structures, the reinvention of existing infrastructure, new people, differential housing demand, changed transportation, as well as a new economic force in the region; as such, it will affect the communities surrounding Stanford as well. These communities, particularly in areas like Redwood City, East Palo Alto, and San Mateo, have already faced substantial negative impacts from Stanford's development. These include rising house prices, extended commute times, and more. Many of these same communities also face immediate and pressing issues of sustainability and environmental justice, like sea level rise, chemical pollution, and industrial emissions.

Thus, we recommend the New School commit itself publicly and internally to working meaningfully with local communities. Sustainability that recognizes any kind of equitable development must include and empower the people who are there already. This idea was reflected by many groups in the Deliberative Polling event.

- “Ensuring community-based organizations and local communities drive the New School's community engagement is critical, as is appropriate compensation and transfer of political and material resources.”
- “[Ensure] meaningful, long-term collaboration with existing community organizers (rather than short-term "voluntourism").”
- “Seek out partnerships with existing sustainability community initiatives.”

Classes like the Future Bay Initiative at Stanford already recognize this on a smaller scale and present scalable models for how the school could honor this commitment. Bringing those initiatives and structures to the institutional level could have enormous impact, not just on local communities but also in demonstrating how just, sustainable futures can look. Engagement and accountability to local communities is critical to ensuring the new school lives up to its promised principles of environmental justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Demonstrate commitment to local nonprofits and activist organizations through transparency and accessibility before engaging in formal partnerships.

Before reaching out to local organizations, the school should demonstrate a leadership-level commitment to these partnerships. There are several reasons for this: first, too often the burden of engagement falls on under-resourced community partners; given the resources available to the new school, in order for a sustainable long-term relationship, partnerships must build on institutional dedication to those organizations; second, long-term commitment from leadership level to communities helps ensure that these relationships are

deliberately cultivated, rather than resulting in cycles of engagement that are harmful or extractive.

Part of this dedication is making the structures of the new school transparent to community organizations and members. Potential structures include town halls where partners can list concerns, results, and needs, as well as regular updates and messaging to community partners, even about developments that may not directly implicate them—such as new constructions, planned programs, departmental changes, etc.

The New School can also benefit from the recognition of community structures already in place for supporting equitable development and sustainability. Models like Stanford Impact Labs present ways such structures can be established, empowering faculty, students, and researchers to collaborate effectively with existing organizations. “Sustainability Accelerator” spaces, in addition to the possible accessibility measures outlined above, should be made available to local nonprofits and should also actively seek to learn from them in terms of how sustainability can be practiced in the Bay Area.

3. Integrate and invest local community perspectives in externally-oriented spaces.

The proposed “Accelerator” space to facilitate external engagement has incredible potential for working with local communities to address the sustainability challenges they face that all, to some degree, model broader sustainability challenges around the world. Thus, it would be to the New School’s benefit to remediate the historic exclusion of local communities, especially communities from URMs, from “accelerator” and similar start-up environments.

The “Accelerator” space—as well as any other spaces for external engagement, like research laboratories, classes, and administrative initiatives—should be built with local communities integrated into its function. This integration should span the administrative level to the day-to-day function of the “Accelerator.” We recommend structures be put into place to rethink how innovation benefits local communities. Existing literature notes that civic technology interventions are most often biased towards corporate-focused, top-down approaches ([Schulz and Siriwardane 11](#)). The New School can upend these norms and help transform the conventionally exclusive paradigms of start-up culture by providing institutionalized room for input and engagement, such as through:

- Accessible workshops for interested community members communicating research findings, strategies for sustainability, and other relevant resources
- Grants dedicated to local community work accessible to both non-Stanford community members as well as Stanford faculty, students, and staff
- Education and research opportunities integrating work in surrounding areas
- Inviting community members and organizations to advisory boards and to feedback mechanisms

4. Commit financially to Bay Area climate resilience, local climate-vulnerable communities, and reparations for groups impacted by past institutional actions.

We recommend the New School commit itself financially to the future of Bay Area sustainability. Many regions of the Bay are facing immediate issues with sea level rise and climate resilience. In order to demonstrate the long-term commitment of the New School this area, we recommend the school set up a regular donation structure to support organizations working on Bay Area climate resilience. Examples include places like:

- Climate Resilient Communities (CRC), which already works with the Future Bay Initiative. CRC works with community partners in East Palo Alto, Redwood City, and Northfair Oaks to increase home resilience to climate change impacts with home upgrades and other support.
- El Concilio, located in San Mateo County, which works on implementing climate resilience repairs to low-income housing.

Direct support for established organizations such as these will demonstrate the New School recognizes it enters a space where sustainability has been part of the conversation for a long time. It will show we are ready and willing to act as partners in the project of building a better future.

This financial commitment was also independently recommended by several Deliberative Polling small-groups.

- “Fund programs in the Bay Area for mitigating environmental impacts on marginalized communities. [This] could get students...working in the area but could also increase the school's visibilities within those areas, which might have a kind of a positive feedback loop with recruitment.”
- “[We recommend] financially compensated relationships with community partners (and making sure that any student engagement actually benefits the organization as much as possible).”

In addition, we recommend the New School seriously consider financial forms of reparations and justice, particularly the Shuumi Land Tax, for communities historically oppressed by Stanford's actions. This was widely supported by students at the Deliberative Polling event, with 76.8% of students in favor of this proposal post-deliberation. This proposal in particular had support increase dramatically above participants; the percentage of participants with no opinion dropped from 20.1 to 3.8% across the event, with the majority of participants with no opinion eventually favoring the proposal after deliberations.

Appendix

Reference Links

- [Focus Groups Results Summary](#)
- [Deliberative Polling proposals/brief material](#)
- [Phase 1 Report](#)
- [Student Committee Op-Ed](#)
- [EJWG Op-Ed](#)

1. Additional educational programs and topics the New School should provide (based on Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- Human behavior and psychology
- Oceans
- Humanities
- Architecture, Landscape architecture, urban planning and urban design
- Environmental management, sustainable business
- Waste and water management
- Science communication
- Community organizing and coalition-building
- Human health, disease ecology

2. Interaction with existing departments and importance of interdisciplinary approaches (Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- “I think it might be interesting for like each major to even offer their own concentration and sustainably. Like, find ways to incorporate sustainability with like a lot of Majors that might seem like kind of excluded from the topic and that might, I don't know, broaden the scope of the school a little bit and introduce new topics.”
- “Existing discipline-based departments should remain as is and interdisciplinary focus areas should be facilitated through cross-cutting centers allowing participation from faculty in multiple departments.”
- “Have classes that are supported through the new school [for students who aren't] doing a degree program with the new school...[since they may] still want to be able to take like courses in environmental justice and stuff. So I think those should be like really publicized for students within and outside of the new school.”
- “The New School should provide project ideas and guidance for sustainability-focused capstone projects of other schools.”
- “I think [having classes open to everyone] is important and like the practicums too, I think, would be great, especially because, like interdisciplinary work, is important for everyone's learning.”
- Schools could allow courses in the New School to count towards major requirements (i.e. cross-listed courses) (Not a quote, but a consolidated common sentiment in a group)
- “Set up a curriculum that develops an integrative mindset as a solution to the complicated environmental and social problems, similar to how some of the energy efficiency problems have been solved on campus and worldwide.”
- “Whole systems thinking and/or integrative design included as part of educational programs in the New School.”
- “Provide courses/instruction for interdisciplinary fields that are not covered well by other departments, eg., synthesis and characterization of plant-based foods, and disaster preparedness in light of evolving environmental circumstances due to climate change.”

- ““I think one of the cool things with the idea of the new school is a chance to consider the interplay between the physical and life sciences and then the social sciences, [and] how these like processes [and] mechanisms actually interact with humans and our policies and our setups. And how do we make certain that people have equitable access to resources, when they are hard to renew or impossible to read.”

3. Integrate service-learning within keystone experiences (Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- “[I want] to see like Service Learning and service experiences incorporated into the new school.”
- “[Community engagement as part of keystone experiences] is a great idea, but it [is] something like that needs to be thought about very, very carefully. So that doesn't end up backfiring and, and becoming a bad experience for new students coming in where they're suddenly, put in a position where they feel very uncomfortable or they're mistreated and in a position where they're where they're vulnerable.”
- “I think a service would be a really interesting piece that experience [for undergraduates].”
- “Final year keystone experience for undergraduates could take the form of working at / with community organizations already working on sustainability efforts.”
- “Tie keystone experiences in research to local underserved communities.”
- “Incorporate community-engaged sustainability projects into keystone experiences. The New School should host regular community centric sustainability events in order to increase sustainability awareness and increase community engagement.”
- “I know this in the description between the two Keystone's, the undergraduate spend a lot of time interacting with local community groups and the Graduate students don't like there's no interplay, there's no interaction... with some sort of local groups, or like, people who are doing stuff. And I think that actually might be a bit of a fallacy that should be corrected, especially as they keep hammering on about environmental justice as the focus of this school. if they're going to make EJ a focus of the school, [then] grad students should theoretically be engaged in some sort of environmental justice activity framework.”
- “One thing that I would wish for would be more Community engagement from the get-go... [undergrad year one] is a great time to start to learn about maybe the local community here and and what they kind of need and want.”
- “I think that a similar structure [to Cardinal Quarter] ... could be implemented to offer that external education as opposed to having to balance that with work. To the extent that those kinds of programs can be built into a department, it makes it a lot easier for students to do, a lot more of them will do it. So if they are able to find some partnership that they funnel students into and the partner gets some amount of free work done and the students get some amount of experience having worked with this partner, hopefully solving a useful problem, that's probably the only way that's going to happen.”
- “There should be some partnership between Haas, the Haas Center and the school. Like I feel like it's like a perfect little combination. So like I would really be interested in doing like community service opportunities in sustainability.”
- “I was just going to say that I think the plan [for keystone experiences] that they have laid out for undergraduates right now, seems I would enjoy it.... I think I especially appreciate the off campus experience and also working with Community Partners because I feel like that doesn't happen enough in a lot of like programs at Stanford.”

4. Pre-grad sustainability bootcamp (Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- “I really like the idea of like a sustainability bootcamp and, you know, like within the Summer Institute, we already have...intensive classes that teach you how to add the sustainability flavor to your existing research or like if you want to branch out.”
- “It might have been nice to have something [like a bootcamp] before just being like dropped into the world of the PhD [and] you get yet to meet people as well, so that works out pretty well.”
- “I liked the sustainability bootcamp. [It] sounded really fun for graduate students, like I would love to do that. For my department, I felt like there wasn't really any initialization coming in and I think that [the bootcamp] would be a really cool way to get everybody on the same page and foundation, and it might be cool if people from other schools could participate in that...”
- “I think I like the Keystone experience for the, in terms of like a graduate student perspective, the pre grad, programs and the sustainability bootcamp seemed like a good idea.”

5. Considerations with keystone experiences (Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- “But I do think that in the graduate student column, we need to be cognizant of [not] putting too much demands on our time... especially [with regards to the] kind of compensation that we get.”
- “Institute-type programs/research projects/work opportunities that undergraduates can opt into later in their undergrad career (without extended or burdensome commitments).”
- “I think that very few of these should be required. I mean, I'm into some sort of community participation because I feel like it's especially appropriate for a sustainability class curriculum. But I think like, in general, like students learn differently from different kinds of learning experiences and that shouldn't necessarily be something that we normalized across all groups. At the same time. I think like, if these are open-ended, I would love it if most of them were available.”
- How would it fit with study abroad, or people who don't declare immediately? (Not a quote, but a consolidated shared sentiment for a group)

6. Diversity in faculty hiring (Deliberative Polling small-groups)

- “[It's important for] the professors and students to be diverse because I think it's a social problem that needs a lot of different perspectives in order to reach a solution. Of course, there is a technical problem as well, that is how to produce energy more efficiently, but I think that social component is very important for what we are trying to discuss here and diversity is key.”
- I would also flag...socio-economic diversity as a priority, because you can have racial diversity, but not socio-economic diversity, and it really is necessary to have both. And I believe some [would] argue that climate change is a luxury good in the sense that...recognizing it and actively working towards limiting it is something that people have time for and can put energy into.”
- “I think one obvious one is... hiring faculty from diverse backgrounds and specifically like Native and Black and...incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into the curriculum because from what I've seen at Stanford has been very poor or not recognized as this especially when it comes to traditional Burns, which they were just talking about.”
- “The New School must have a professor/faculty diversity that reflects or exceeds the national average. There should be transparency and a focus on DEI in the faculty hiring process.”

- “There's value to, you know, if you are [a] POC student seeing Black students or faculty you know... this is a thing that exists. I think it can be kind of insidious ... to kind of look up and see the place where you want to go doesn't look at all like you.”
- “We think that a diverse and expert faculty community of existing or newly-hired EJ scholars should weigh in on decisions related to curriculum, DEI initiatives, and additional hiring at the New School, as well as the integration of EJ across campus. The hiring of new faculty for the New School early in the timeline is essential to DEI goals.”
- “...Hiring more diverse faculty will then help by POC students in the long term as well as underrepresented students.”
- “Starting with the faculty that are going to be hired...and then hopefully much of supporting students will come naturally if they're trying to encourage by POC students, to get involved, if they actually see faculty members that reflect who they are their communities, their values, their approaches to research.”
- “[I suggest] hires be people who have actual field experience in environmental justice campaigns...people who had actual experience and weren't simply Scholars, then they could potentially not only [increase] the amount of people who identify as a person of color, but have lived a somewhat unprivileged experience and have worked in communities where [there exists] systemic racism.”
- “We're going to like value diversity, but it doesn't actually show in who's being hired or who is being offered tenureship or anything like that.”
- “In terms of DEI, I think like, it's high key like not that hard. You just prioritize hiring BIPOC and other people who are not often represented. I also think like it's cyclical, right? Like if we have a broader staff focus curricular and faculty wise about diverse populaces, it'll attract a diverse set of students which will create a positive feedback loop.”
- “I would like to see more emphasis on class and people from like non-traditional backgrounds. i.e. like, people who don't have phds and couldn't afford that.”