

# SDLC – The Student Diversity Leadership Conference / POCC – People of Color Conference

Apr 13, 2018

## **November 30 – Dec 2, 2017; Anaheim, California**

In late November, faculty, staff, and students attended an action-packed conference in Anaheim, California. The adults attended the People of Color Conference; its focus was “Voices for Equity and Justice Now and in Every Generation: Lead, Learn, Rededicate, and Deliver.” The students attended SDLC; its focus was “Making our Voices Matter: leading the March to Common Ground.” Both conferences took places concurrently, but students and faculty shared some of the most defining and exhilarating moments of the conference—Kimberle Crenshaw’s important and timely lecture on intersectionality; Ta-nehisi Coates’ candid and enlightening discussion with NAIS Vice President for Equity and Justice, Caroline G. Blackwell, on his past, our present, and the uncertain future; and of course, a session led by our students, who helped us, the faculty, build our vocabulary around gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation through a lesson of their creation (pictured below). Our students also asked us to reflect on what we had learned at POCC and what we would like to bring back to the community. We discussed everything from ideas to plans and hopes; however, as we know, it’s a lot harder to stick to these plans when life at Milton is so busy. A month or so later, we checked in with one of the students who attended SDLC. With the conference still at the forefront of her mind, Natasha Roy ‘19 offers her SDLC highlights and hopes:

### **Q: What was your favorite part of the conference?**

“The highlight of my entire experience was meeting and forming relationships with so many like-minded students who are each so clearly committed to effecting positive change in their communities and in the world at large. As Rodney Glasgow, one of the conference’s primary organizers, put it, the people I met at SDLC might not physically be with me in my future endeavors, but they’re supporting me every step of the way. Our home-groups, affectionately and accurately dubbed “Family groups” formed a profound bond in just two days together. Each and every individual shared deeply personal aspects of his or her own identities, and by the last session together all of us were weeping, unable to accept that

our short time together had come to an end. My peers taught me a lot about various social-justice and equity related issues and made me confident that our world is moving in the right direction, though it may not always seem as such.

Of course, a major highlight was also hearing on of my idols, Ta-Nehisi Coates, speak. A month later, I still can't fully wrap my head around the fact that I've been in the same room as him, listening to his advice and insight. Kimberley Crenshaw, another keynote speaker and the woman who developed the concept of intersectionality, also deeply impacted me."

**A: What do you want to bring back to Milton?**

"I want to start some effective conversation surrounding class, specifically at a boarding/prep school. I also want to discuss the ineffectivity of umbrella terms- the term "Asian," for example- and more conducive ways to discuss identity without overgeneralizing. At SDLC, both in my affinity group and in my diverse family group, we thought about achieving both a unity between POC and an awareness and celebration of all of the different experiences that fall under this group."

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