DEDICATED TO DIALOGUE

Thirteen Colleges Fight Polarization in Innovative New "Reconciliation League"

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A broad spectrum of 13 colleges and universities on four continents have united under the umbrella of a new not-for-profit dedicated to creating future leaders who can address the corrosive polarization plaguing societies globally.

The name of the organization is the Reconciliation League. Web address: **reconciliationleague.org**

The League is uniquely designed to be a resource for higher education institutions in a time when our young people are maturing amid political, social and cultural divisions.

Member institutions are very different, all but guaranteeing a wide range of thinking among student bodies. For one college president, G. Gabrielle Starr of Pomona College, campus protests in 2024 showed a need for imaginative new efforts to promote discourse.

"No one is born with the ability to really engage across differences," President Starr said. "The protests that ripped through our campus, and many others, put some of those differences right in the forefront of our life on campus."

League members are in alphabetical order: African Leadership University, Asian University for Women, Brigham Young University, Fordham University, Lafayette College, London School of Economics, Morgan State University, New York University, Pomona College, San Carlos Apache College, University of Kentucky, University of North Carolina and Yale University.

- The first students will gather for eight-week experiences starting in summer 2027.
- Member institutions will select 90 student leaders – called Reconciliation Fellows – to participate. About 15% of the fellowships will be reserved for students from schools that are not League members, including students selected by the Posse Foundation.
- Fellows will participate cost free. Costs will be covered by the League, a philanthropically supported non-profit.
- Fellows will live together, either on the campus of Lafayette College in Pennsylvania or at Wroxton College, set in a 17th-century manor in Oxfordshire, England.
- An "Anchor Course" has been designed to develop in the Fellows a capacity to discuss opposing points of view with openness and civility.
- Fellows will take additional courses taught by leaders in fields as diverse as international law, religious history and climate change. These courses will provide laboratories to test the skills developed in the Anchor course.
- Students will receive academic credits for their courses.
- Fellows will go "off the grid" for 10 days in team building experiences, rafting the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon or embedded with the Apache Nation in Arizona.

"The Fellows will gain skills of connection – and connections to friends – they could not have imagined before they came to the program," said NYU President Emeritus John Sexton, the architect of the League.

He continued: "Every college or university worth the name strives to foster critical reasoning and an ability to engage in dialogue. But no single university can match the League's capacity to press the boundaries of dialogue. The differences among the students served by the schools – from background and viewpoint to music and diet – guarantee, especially in the focused setting of a carefully designed immersive program over several weeks, that the students will leave equipped to return to their communities as bridge builders."

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