



Dominican Academy Takes Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Seriously

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Dominican Academy, an all-girls Catholic school located in the heart of the Upper East Side, is like a family, according to school President Dr. Alexandria Egler, who has been in her position since July 2022. Egler said the school is small and fluctuates between 240-250 students due to the size of their campus and a desire to maintain a small class size.

“I think that’s an advantage because there’s individualized attention. If you’re looking for a school to get lost in the crowd, this is not the school,” Egler said. “Faculty and staff here at D.A., when those 240 students walk into our door every day, they become our daughters. That’s the kind of atmosphere we have here.”

Dominican Academy, which first opened in 1897, is the third highest-ranked Catholic girls’ high school in New York State, with a student ratio of 9:1. For languages, they offer Mandarin, Latin, Spanish and French, and the school is rigorously academic, with 100% of students going on to attend 4-year colleges and universities. The 2023 graduating class garnered close to \$19 million in merit-based scholarships and grants for their future collegiate endeavors.

“What I’ve heard from college professors, college administrators, is that when a D.A. girl walks into their university or school, they are not worried,” Egler said. “That student is confident, that student does not hesitate to ask questions, that student does not hesitate to ask for help.”

Lauren Checo, who recently

started Director of Admissions in May 2023, said D.A. was proud to offer more than 35 different clubs and seven Varsity sports, including swimming, which can be unusual for a New York school. According to Checo, the D.A. is a place where students are able to figure out who they want to be in the future, in a setting that both challenges and welcomes them.

“That’s something we can offer here, for any girl that qualifies to be here, is that they have this home that they can go to and really be themselves because, at the end of the day, that’s what all students are doing is really being themselves and figuring out who they are as they’re growing up,” Checo said.

Egler said she has been pleased to see the changes in the time since she became President in 2022 and when her daughter

graduated from Dominican Academy in 2010. According to Egler, the school has become a lot more diverse in both the student body and the faculty. Egler said that D.A. is not interested in pushing diversity because it is trending in academic settings, but because it enriches a student’s quality of life.

“When I walked in the door, we started focusing even more deeply on diversity, equity, inclusion, and we’ve also added the word belonging to that,” Egler said. “I think [being surrounded by different types of people] is how a person grows in the world, and gains a deeper sense of not just themselves, but everybody else in the world...We are, as Catholics, welcoming and open to diversity. We believe that there is room for everybody under the tent, and nobody should be excluded from that tent.”