



DCFR

Diversity & Inclusion

Findings & Recommendations

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Executive Summary

The survey included predefined answer choices and open text fields to allow for more nuanced responses. These open-ended responses combined with feedback from the Town Hall provided the most insight on DCFR members' and friends' experiences. **Most responses can be categorized into 3 main themes:**

- **Impression**

A good portion of responses dealt with the impression visitors, newcomers, and even existing members get at our runs, events, and at races. Common and repeated themes included: *cliques, social media biased towards select group, and feelings of exclusion.*

- **Experience**

Approximately 20% of survey respondents shared they experienced some type of racism or discrimination. What was not expected were the types of discrimination. Respondents shared they mostly experienced microaggressions--some related to race--but also included: size/weight, age, gender/gender identity, disability, and physical appearance.

- **Connection**

Responses also reflected the lack of or a need for connection. Connection with other members, to the club, between runners and walkers, and to the community were all mentioned. We learned that if our impression and the member's experience are poor, the result is often termination of connection (e.g. attendance or membership).

Immediate Recommendations

Engage other FR groups

Ask about their experience with race, racism, diversity and inclusion.

Exit Interviews

Review former member questionnaires

Race Photos

Organize official race photos to be taken before the race

Social Media Moderation

Moderator teams to encourage increased variety & more visible diversity in posts

Leverage FB

A second Facebook group to facilitate more conversation

Long-Term Recommendations

ENGAGE International Front Runners

Connect & communicate with other Front Runner groups, International Front Runners, and recommend language around race

Recruitment

Consider forming a team focusing on recruitment and creating a wider marketing program.



Retention

Develop a welcoming program to retain newcomers beyond their first-time run, walk, or social event.

Reform

Attention to inclusion--even more broadly within our organization--is necessary to create a more welcoming culture for all members.



01

Present to Next Board

Working Group to present findings to next Board and make recommendations.

02

Board Decisions

Future Board decisions needed on: transparency (sharing this document w/ membership) and whether to accept and take action on all or some of these recommendations.

Appendix

Supporting &
Supplemental Information

The following suggestions were also shared in survey responses and the Town Hall. We have organized them into categories for ease of review.

- **Run leads** make an important first impression.
 - Must come across as welcoming and friendly
 - Need to exercise non-judgment in announcements and conversation
 - Need to minimize the inside jokes
 - Need to communicate a clear plan for post-run activities
 - Should act as an advocate, ally, or friend to new people
 - Should have attendees give names when less than 30 participants

■ ***Check in with Members-***

- Consider hosting online, and in-person when appropriate, led/facilitated discussions that delve into and explore:
 - White privilege- how do we get white people to see this?
 - Color blindness and we are all “one race”- how do we debunk this idea? This approach is problematic because it discounts the experiences of Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American experiences.
 - Differentiating racism from just another political issue.
 - Race, racism, and antiracism.
- Consider conducting annual or semi-annual surveys to membership AND broader DCFR audience/community.
- Ask members to reach out to other organizations that they are affiliated with and use some of those networks to build community.

- ***Social Activities/Social Media-***

- Expand social events beyond happy hours
- Locate happy hours around the DC area with an eye to diversity and inclusion
- Try to meet three new people a week
- Group photographs- stop putting people without DCFR apparel in the back rows and encourage our BIPOC and women members to come to the front
- Celebrate women and increase their visibility
- Provide opportunities for walkers and runners to engage together

APPENDIX

- **Meet the needs of runners and walkers-** 20% of survey respondents felt like their needs are not being met as runners or walkers. Here are some considerations:
 - Community Mentorship Program - coach/mentor new runners
 - Joint runs with other running clubs (e.g., District Running Collective)
 - Structured pace groups/run groups so members are not feeling “left behind” or lost (especially on complicated routes) during fun runs or walks.
 - Track programs
 - Beginner 5K Program
 - Tempo runs and speed workouts
 - Running tips, self care tips, cross-training events
- **Celebrating members each month-** a team/committee should work to highlight a member each week. **Members are walkers and runners and should consider BIPOC when possible.** Consider the following:
 - Celebration of long time member one week
 - Celebration of woman member another week
 - Celebration of transgender member following week
 - Celebration of new member final week

- ***Consider activities or events to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the club.***
 - Host a virtual or in-person celebration for August or September 2021
 - Partner long term members with newer members for get-to-know you games and ice breakers- participants would sign up for this activity

- ***Road race considerations:***
 - Photo posting perceived as exclusive- especially after races
 - Exclusion based on pace that makes slower runners feel like second class members
 - Consider one group photo of club members before the race and post meet-up location in advance.
 - Switch the race results in eNews listing; not just listing fastest to slowest; perhaps alphabetical order by last name.

■ ***Club leadership:***

- Although board meetings are serious matters because officers have a fiduciary role to the club, they are sometimes described as intense. Create a more welcoming space for members and new board members.
- More steps need to be taken to ensure diversity of the DCFR leadership board
- Leadership should not be limited to a group of friends

■ ***Research less expensive apparel options*** for members who are income restricted.

Perhaps offer one free tech shirt per new member upon signing up. To offset the cost, we can research a sponsor for the shirt and have their logo on the sleeve (i.e. Nellie's). Leslie Jordan is an apparel manufacturer that can provide lower cost shirts in bulk. We have used this retailer before.

- ***People are looking for a special set of friends for affirmation and identity-*** folks want to feel welcome, but they also want to be able to identify with the experiences of other individuals. The club should work tirelessly to ensure that any potential member can identify with someone or some subgroup within the DCFR. Consider the following:
 - Outreach to diverse LGBTQ organizations and events
 - Make genuine partnerships with organizations helping BIPOC LGBTQ people
 - Celebrate individuals other than young, attractive, white cisgender gay males
 - Amplify the voices and experiences of BIPOC LGBTQ folks

Summary of Survey Responses

Following each question from the survey is a summary of all responses. The focus of the summary is on the common themes and overall thoughts of respondents. This is where we can gain insight. Please keep in mind that the number of responses is a small sample of the larger population of DCFR members, former members, and visitors. This means that the response statistics are not significant enough to declare the information below proven or undeniable truths. However we are sharing what was expressed for transparency and ask that these be reviewed for common threads and themes. It is important to review this information as what it is: *data*. This data is from the perspective of a sampling of our members, visitors and friends.

APPENDIX

QUESTION 1 - Overall, please rate the level of welcome you feel at DC Front Runners events or group runs?

Trends for feelings of welcomeness within the group track with the fact that current members make up the largest survey respondent group. However, there were common themes and repeated sentiments that appeared among all respondents. The predominant theme alluded to cliques or established groups of friends and a reluctance to interact with both newcomers and existing members, leading to feelings of being excluded. Also mentioned were feeling welcome at the first run and then no/little interaction for subsequent runs. Other repeated themes included ageism, fat-shaming, with a few mentioning that it takes some time to break-in to the group.

Answer Choices	
Extremely	22.99%
Very	39.08%
Somewhat	17.24%
Not so much	18.39%
Not at all	3.45%

APPENDIX

QUESTION 2 - Do you feel included by people attending DC Front Runners events/runs?

Cliques within the club is the biggest concern expressed in open-ended responses. There is continued mention of some members and visitors running alone, feeling alone, and no one interacting with them. A new theme was DCFR social media showing the same group of individuals and how some viewed this as either exclusionary, an extension of personal social media profiles, or a reinforcement of cliques. Age and size were mentioned again and the stigma and attitudes around both.

Every time	26.19%
Most of the time	47.62%
A few times	13.10%
Rarely	11.90%
Not at all	4.76%

APPENDIX

QUESTION 3 - Describe your first run/walk with the DC Front Runners. What was your first impression at the end of your first day?

Because this was an open-ended question, the working group created a visual world cloud to visualize the responses provided. Respondents shared their stories of their first run, walk or event with DCFR. Note that welcoming was mentioned the most. Although almost all respondents felt welcome, they also included additional comments in their responses. A common theme was that it takes some time to break in and find your niche -- your small group of DCFR friends. Terms such as Ignored, great, cliques, positive, friendly, unwelcome, fun, great also are repeated often. What we noticed in responses is many felt it important to welcome newcomers and this responsibility was more than just for one person or the Board to bear.



APPENDIX

QUESTION 4 - Have you experienced or witnessed racism or discrimination of any form at DC Front Runners?

Although 20% of a small representation of our membership and visitors experienced discrimination or racism, we note that the majority of respondents were not BIPOC. The majority of the comments of those who reported they experienced racism or discrimination either stated they experienced microaggressions or size discrimination. Comments on discrimination touched upon other topics, but were either only mentioned once or a couple of times. The comments included: gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, political affiliation, racial stereotypes and physical appearance.



Yes	20.73%
No	79.27%

QUESTION 5 - Do you have any suggestions that would help us encourage a more diverse membership (gender identity, ethnicity, race)?

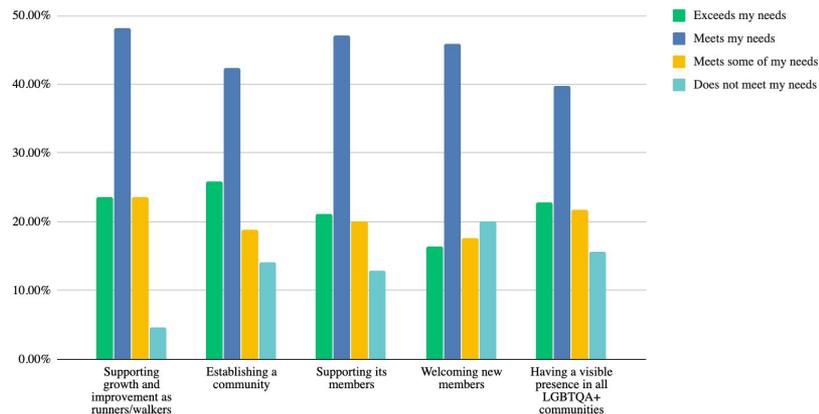
The majority of respondents shared suggestions that could not be combined easily into common themes. Therefore, we organized suggestions into categories. Most suggestions encouraged partnerships and communication with other groups: LGBTQ, running groups, FR organizations, etc. Also suggested was increasing diversity in the DCFR leadership and the group's outward visibility to our community. The Working Group feels this is a topic that needs to be explored more in depth through the solicitation of additional feedback for clarification if the next Board decides to take action on our recommendations.

APPENDIX

QUESTION 6 - Do you feel DC Front Runners meets your needs as a runner/walker? Please rate how you feel DC Front Runners is doing in the following areas.

Repeated themes in open ended responses included: increasing visibility across all LGBTQ organizations and the community in general, providing additional running improvement efforts, and developing a beginner 5K program for those new to running. Also mentioned were the need to be more welcoming to visitors, treating our members with dignity and respect, and comments expressing ways in which DCFR currently meets member needs.

Do you feel DC Front Runners meets your needs as a runner/walker? Please rate how you feel DC Front Runners is doing in the following areas.

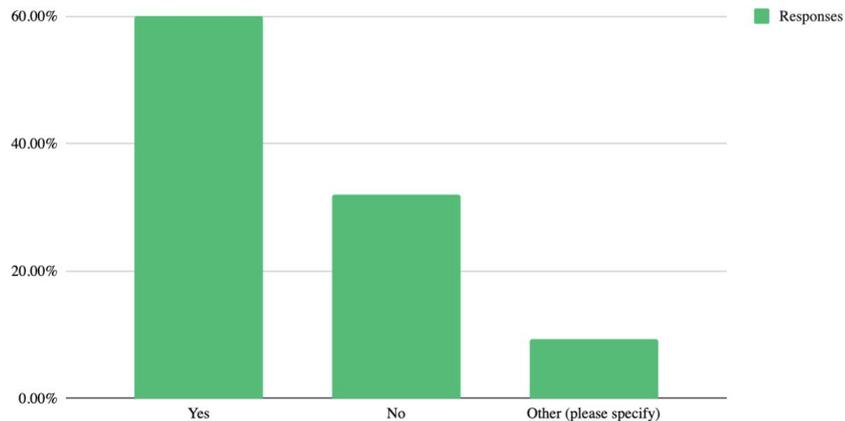


APPENDIX

QUESTION 7 - Do you feel additional activities would help foster a closer feeling of community in DC Front Runners? If so, what types of activities would you attend?

The majority of respondents indicated additional activities would foster a closer feeling of community in DCFR. A majority of the comments included suggestions for options that do not involve alcohol and were separate from the monthly happy hours. Other suggestions included activities dealing with running/walking, other diverse LGBTQ events, events occurring in the Washington DC area, and volunteer opportunities. There were also suggestions for events for newcomers and another call for new member ambassadors.

Do you feel additional activities would help foster a closer feeling of community in DC Front Runners? If so, what types of activities would you attend?



QUESTION 8 - What specific LGBTQ+ events should DC Front Runners host to build and promote diversity?

Most of the responses related to outreach and partnerships with existing LGBTQ community partners and expanding partnerships to diverse LGBTQ organizations. Other suggestions included patronizing bars, restaurants and venues either owned by or patronized by a more diverse crowd. Fostering a community of inclusiveness and community to contrast the existing impression of cliquiness, meet and greets before events, and celebrating moments in LGBTQ history besides Pride (e.g. landmarks or equality within the community, National Trans Day, Celebrate Bisexuality Day, National Coming Out Day, etc.). There were more comments to increase the number of non-alcoholic events and include things like movie nights, hiking, a beginner 5K program, more themed group runs, and being more visible in our local community.

QUESTION 9 - Do you have any recommendations on how DCFR can foster an environment where people who have different backgrounds (beyond even race and ethnicity) know they are welcome and their ideas are valued?

Again, a call for new runner ambassadors was proposed by several respondents. One respondent commented that newcomers and members need to feel part of the group if we want them to come back. There were several comments of thanks or gratitude for the survey allowing the space for feedback and conversation. Other suggestions included reaching out to other alternative organizations to understand what they do to foster feelings of welcome, more broadly socializing and promoting the DCFR missions statement, and empowering members to call out behavior works against a welcoming and inclusive environment for all genders/gender identities, ages, races/ethnicities, abilities, and running/walking levels.

Encouraging and creating an atmosphere where everyone welcomes and engages newcomers, striving for more diversity on the Board and in those leading runs. It was also suggested programs like a “*Learn to Run*” or 5K program could help make running less intimidating for those new to running and visiting DCFR. Words of caution were also received: “what is welcoming to one may not be to others”, perhaps rethinking how we structure runs and how people show up and engage. These comments and a few comments across all questions remind us that we any changes moving forward should be mindful and well thought out.

QUESTION 10 - If you feel comfortable, we invite you to share your experiences or examples of welcome/unwelcome with us.

The responses to this question will be summarized only at a high-level in order to earn the trust of respondents and protect the privacy of those who shared personal details.

Generally, we can share that some respondents shared positive experiences and how a good number of respondents found their niche or close knit group of friends. Others shared experiences where they were blatantly ignored, ridiculed, or did not belong because of physical conditions or level/experience of running. These shared feelings of exclusion or unwelcome mostly did not revolve around race/ethnicity. The exclusion can be summed up as a result of cliquish behavior of not speaking to newcomers or even existing members, and the stories shared depicted exclusion because of gender, age, weight, and other physical characteristics.

These incidences that occurred at DCFR group runs, social events, and the Pride Run are a summary of respondents' observations about our club. While there are many participants who are content and remain members, we need to be aware that there are others who have had poor experiences- and in some cases these experiences led to either letting membership lapse or not joining DCFR at all.

The diversity and inclusion survey, Town Hall, survey and feedback analysis, and these recommendations were created through the efforts of DC Front Runners Working Group members: Marcel Acosta, Lisa Black, Rob Geremia, Socrates Tiglao, and Brandon Williams.

