



THE PENNINGTON SCHOOL

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PENNINGTON, N.J., December 15--- The Princeton University Social Justice Consortium with The Pennington School culminated on Tuesday night, December 12, with an event entitled “Civility Unbound: Difficult Dialogues towards Social Justice.” The event, held in the University’s McCosh Hall, featured a panel discussion comprising Princeton professor Melissa Deem, students in her Media “Spectacles, Scandalous Citizens and Democratic Possibilities” class, and students in Pennington School’s Advanced Placement English Language class taught by Dr. John Daves.

The Pennington AP class this year is focused on readings related to social justice. The Princeton and Pennington students had been working together prior to the event in small group discussions. Tuesday evening’s topics included the feminism behind the female hero, the implications of circulating violence against black people, and the coverage of recent rape allegations.

According to Daves, by offering questions to the older college speakers and building upon the college students’ responses to their questions, the Pennington group applied their student-centered learning experiences during the hour-long panel conversations. Daves moved throughout the breakout sessions and observed that his students had become more nimble and self-aware in their engagement with sophisticated scholarly research on difficult social justice issues. He added that he was proud of his students’ roles as ambassadors of the School.

Pennington junior Rachel Domb, of Lawrenceville, said her involvement in the project and event had helped shape her idea of life in college. “It made the college experience tangible for me. I used to have a big image of what it would be like, but now it doesn’t seem so scary. I found the [Princeton] students to be mentors.” Other Pennington students echoed her sentiment, and junior Amira Henry, of Ewing, reflected on how important it is to have these conversations. “Social justice is an important conversation. A discussion is a step toward equality. It helps to have a profound understanding of the topic.”

The Pennington students noted that their AP English class had helped prepare them for what can be a difficult conversation. “I was lucky to participate. It was such an intellectual conversation, and refreshing to talk to college students. They are hard conversations to have, but this class prepared me with all the books and articles we have read,” said junior Kyewon Byun of Sunnamci, South Korea. The event was especially important because it applies to everyone, Laura Alaez, of Trenton, added. “This is what we live. This is our reality. It’s a very important conversation to be had.”

The Pennington School is an independent coeducational school for students in grades 6 through 12, in both day and boarding programs. The curriculum is college preparatory, with an emphasis on individual excellence, fostering the development of the whole student through academics, athletics, community service, and the creative and performing arts.

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Caption for photo: Pennington students pose at the Tuesday night event.