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VF Corporation's Timberland®, Vans® And The North Face® Brands Announce 'DiverCity x DESIGN' In Partnership With PENSOLE Academy™

Year-long design and education apprenticeship program aims to cultivate and advance BIPOC talent within the footwear industry; Open enrollment begins March 9

DENVER, March 9, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- VF Corporation (NYSE: VFC), a global leader in branded lifestyle apparel, footwear and accessories, today announced that as part of its ongoing commitment to racial equity, its *Timberland*®, *Vans*® and *The North Face*® brands have launched an integrated partnership with PENSOLE Academy™ called DiverCity x DESIGN.

This new corporate apprenticeship program will provide unique access to professional design experience and empower Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) students as they learn, create, and build a career in the footwear industry. The mission of the partnership will be to invest in the industry's future and create a program that ensures diversity of thinking and experience. Open enrollment for the program begins today and will run through March 30, 2021. Interested students are encouraged to apply at <https://pensole.com/master-class/dxd/>.

The immersive curriculum was developed in partnership with [PENSOLE](#)™, a Portland-based footwear design academy, which provides students with the knowledge and experiences required to become well-rounded professional footwear designers. DiverCity x DESIGN will equip students with footwear design principles, product creation process, hands-on experience, professional development training and brand engagement. The top performing students will be granted career mentorship with cultural experiences at each of the brand's headquarter cities.

DiverCity x DESIGN:

- Phase 1: The competitive program will begin with 27 students attending a three-week online pre-program that challenges their personal and professional skills.
- Phase 2: 18 of those students will be selected by the brands to enter the eight-week PENSOLE™ Masterclass. Here, students will be divided into three teams to present one capstone project that will develop their footwear and retail industry knowledge.
- Phase 3: Top 5 performing students will earn the opportunity to participate in a year-

long rotational apprenticeship across each of the brands' HQs – *Timberland*® in Stratham, NH; *Vans*® in Costa Mesa, CA; and *The North Face*® in Denver, CO – to gain intimate, hands-on knowledge of different cultures and ways of working.

"I have been a consumer of Vans, Timberland and The North Face brands for decades, and it is humbling to see our relationship grow into us working together on such a meaningful program," PENSOLE founder D'Wayne Edwards said. "DiverCity x DESIGN is an amazing opportunity to reach consumers where they are and provide them a pathway into our industry unlike what they have been afforded before. Thank you to VF for being a leader in our industry and trusting PENSOLE with such an important program that will help shape the future of your company and the lives of your consumers."

The *Timberland*® Brand

In addition to DiverCity x DESIGN, this spring the *Timberland*® brand will launch a youth program in partnership with CONSTNT: DVLPMNT and PENSOLE Academy. The "Creative Discovery Tools" youth program will introduce middle-schoolers to careers within the footwear industry through a four-week online footwear and color design program. The goal is to scale the program over the next five years to span middle school, high school, and post K-12 opportunities that focus on developing industry-ready designers.

"Our partnership with the PENSOLE Academy is part of the work to build a more inclusive and equitable future," explained Chris McGrath, Vice President of Global Footwear Design, *Timberland*®. "Through the program, aspiring BIPOC designers will gain insight and experience that will prepare them to launch into a lifelong career. DiverCity x DESIGN, coupled with our youth program, creates the platform to nurture talent at a young age, and opens doors for BIPOC student to realize a dream job in a field, and with a brand, that may have felt unattainable."

The *Vans*® Brand

"As a brand engrained in youth culture and centered around enabling creative expression, we are excited to partner again this year with D'Wayne and the PENSOLE team. This partnership is not only a great opportunity for us to work closely with creative students and provide them insight into what it's like to work at Vans but we are especially proud to support PENSOLE's important mission of growing the representation of Black creatives in the footwear industry." Mark Haskins, Vice President of Global Footwear Product Design, *Vans*®.

The *The North Face*® Brand

"The North Face has always been about encouraging exploration everywhere, from the highest mountains to the city streets," said Jean-Marc Djian, Global Vice President of Footwear for *The North Face*®. "As we continue to invest in and expand our footwear innovations, we are excited to work with PENSOLE to create new opportunities for up-and-coming designers, and ensure the creativity, expertise and expression of the designers we work with is as diverse as the communities who use our footwear to explore."

DiverCity x DESIGN Overview:

- Criteria:

- Applicants must be BIPOC, 18 years of age and actively enrolled in school.
- Career Education: Footwear Design
- 2021 Program Dates:
 - March 9 - March 30: Open Enrollment
 - April 19 - May 7: 27 students accepted for a three-week online (pre) program. Laptops to be provided.
 - May 10 - July 10: VF brands will select the top 18 students from the pre-program to continue to the eight-week online PENSOLE Masterclass.
- At the close of the program, students will prepare a final presentation based on which five students will earn a one-year paid development program experience at the three VF brands.
- After the completion of the one-year development program, VF, its brands, and the students will discuss opportunities for continued career growth.
- Additional program details and the application can be accessed [here](#).

The partnership with PENSOLE™ is the first of many new programs and actions implemented by VF and its brands to advance racial equity within the company and beyond. See more at vfc.com

About VF Corporation

Founded in 1899, VF Corporation is one of the world's largest apparel, footwear and accessories companies connecting people to the lifestyles, activities and experiences they cherish most through a family of iconic outdoor, active and workwear brands including *Vans*®, *The North Face*®, *Timberland*® and *Dickies*®. Our purpose is to power movements of sustainable and active lifestyles for the betterment of people and our planet. We connect this purpose with a relentless drive to succeed to create value for all stakeholders and use our company as a force for good. For more information, please visit vfc.com.

About PENSOLE Academy™

PENSOLE was founded in 2010 to give talented young design students—regardless of socioeconomic background—an opportunity to learn from the industry's best, without financial barriers, and to provide the industry with a farm system for the next generation of footwear designers.

PENSOLE's "learn by doing" curriculum in our Footwear Studio, MLab (Color and Materials Laboratory) and FAAS (Functional Apparel & Accessories Studio) teaches students the entire footwear/materials/functional apparel design process: inspiration, concept-development, design process, problem solving, materials, business, networking, marketing, and branding. PENSOLE features the most sought-after faculty in footwear, comprising both young professional designers and established footwear design leaders from the top brands, with more than 100 years combined experience to help its students with professional development. Since the first PENSOLE class in 2010, nearly 500 Academy graduates have been placed professionally, full-time or as interns, for companies worldwide, including Anta, Columbia Sportswear, The North Face, Timberland, Converse, New Balance, Brooks, Cole Haan, Under Armour, Keen, Stride Rite, adidas, JORDAN, Kenneth Cole, ECCO, Mizuno, Reebok, and Nike.

About Timberland®

[Timberland](#) is a global outdoor lifestyle brand based in Stratham, New Hampshire, with international headquarters in Switzerland and Hong Kong. Best known for its original yellow boot introduced in 1973 to take on the harsh elements of New England, Timberland today offers a full range of footwear, apparel and accessories for people who value purposeful style and share the brand's passion for enjoying – and protecting – Nature.

At the heart of the Timberland® brand is the core belief that a greener future is a better future. This comes to life through a decades-long commitment to make products responsibly, protect the outdoors, and strengthen communities around the world. The brand has committed to plant 50 million trees worldwide by 2025, and has a bold vision for its products to have a net positive impact on Nature by 2030, giving back more than they take. To share in Timberland's mission to step outside, work together and make it better, visit a Timberland® store, [timberland.com](https://www.timberland.com) or follow @timberland. Timberland is a VF Corporation brand.

About The North Face®

The North Face, a division of VF Outdoor, LLC, was founded in 1966 with the goal of preparing outdoor athletes for the rigors of their next adventure. Today we are the world's leading outdoor brand, creating athlete-tested, expedition-proven products that help people explore and test the limits of human potential. We protect our outdoor playgrounds and minimize our impact on the planet through programs that encourage sustainability. The North Face products are available at premium and specialty retail sporting goods stores globally and is headquartered in Denver, Colorado. For more information, please visit www.thenorthface.com.

About Vans®

Vans®, a VF Corporation (NYSE: VFC) brand, is the original action sports footwear, apparel and accessories brand. *Vans®* authentic collections are sold in 97 countries through a network of subsidiaries, distributors, and international offices. *Vans®* has over 2,000 retail locations globally including owned, concession and partnership doors. The *Vans®* brand promotes creative self-expression in youth culture across action sports, art, music and street culture and delivers progressive platforms such as the *Vans Checkerboard Day*, *Vans Park Series*, *Vans Triple Crown of Surfing®*, *Vans Custom Culture*, and *Vans'* cultural hub and international music venue, *House of Vans*. For more information, please visit www.vans.com.

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