

PRESIDENT'S ACTION COMMITTEE ON ANTI-RACISM PRIORITY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANTI- RACISM WORK AT SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

The President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR) is pleased to provide faculty, students, staff, administration, and community members with an opportunity to provide feedback on the first draft of anti-racism priority action recommendations. During our information gathering process, committee members reviewed key learnings from previous equity summits held at Saint Francis Xavier University (StFX), work being done at other Canadian universities, and various document reviews on anti-racism work (see PACAR website for the documents as well as information concerning PACAR's membership, approach and terms of reference). PACAR's work is also respectful of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the power of its Calls to Action to elicit transformation, reflection, and action in Canadian society, and, of particular interest to PACAR, the implications for universities and colleges.

As signatories of the Scarborough Charter (2021), we are committed to redressing anti-Black racism and fostering Black inclusion utilizing the four overarching principles to guide our recommendations and actions: Black Flourishing, Inclusive Excellence, Mutuality and Accountability (see appendix A for glossary of terms).

Implementation approaches will be developed for the confirmed anti-racism priority actions and integrated into the StFX Student Experience and Opportunity Plan, the Academic Plan, the StFX Strategic Plan, and other relevant planning/implementation frameworks.

Our consultation session will also provide an educational opportunity into the pivotal role StFX can play in redressing anti-racism by removing structural barriers to equity, inclusion, and social justice.

“Transformative change will only occur once we are able to move beyond the notion of equity seeking groups to recognizing that equity is deserved, as an incarnation of principles of human dignity, substantive equality, and restorative justice.” - Scarborough Charter (August 2021)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NURTURING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY AT STFX

PACAR proposes five pillars to oversee the implementation of the Anti-Racism Action Plan recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS
A) Establish an Advisory Council to the President to support the implementation of the Anti-Racism Action Plan.
B) Build a financial business plan and seek new resources to support the Anti-Racism Action Plan: short-term and long-term recommendations.
C) Create a position(s) at the senior leadership level to support Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI), and Anti-Racism [Senior Leader EDI+AR]. responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Anti-Racism Action Plan.
D) Develop an Anti-Racism Assessment Process to create accountability for anti-racism work at StFX within all levels of the institution
E) Release a report annually and host annual summit to review, revise and celebrate EDI and the implementation of the Anti-Racism Action Plan.

ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TEACHING, LEARNING AND CURRICULA

Addressing gaps of inclusion, equity and belonging within existing curricula, approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment, curriculum design, research, and classroom culture.

KEY LEARNINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
StFX must create and maintain a focus on supportive teaching and learning practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Regular Senior Leadership Team communications to reinforce this message. B. Support equity work within the Center for Teaching and Learning and coalitions within the Maple League. C. Create clearly identified and ongoing supports for pedagogical integration of equity across all disciplines and sectors at StFX. This includes bringing a trauma informed and intersectional lens to pedagogy. D. When appropriate, invite community expertise when developing and reviewing curriculum.

<p>StFX must use a lens of cultural proficiency and universal design for learning in reviewing assessment practices, learning materials and resources. This helps identify existing limitations and provides opportunities to introduce more inclusive teaching and learning practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Mandatory faculty engagement in professional development opportunities with particular attention to the recently developed StFX modules: Anti-racism Module, Anti-Indigenous Racism Module, Anti-Black Racism Module, and Equity and Hiring Module. B. StFX must use a lens of cultural proficiency and universal design for learning in reviewing assessment practices, learning materials and resources. C. Provide students and faculty clear explanations of what racism is and outline a clear process of justice for students and faculty in the event of racist incident or breaches of the Harassment and Discrimination Policy.
<p>StFX must recognize and address structural barriers at the university which disadvantage Black, Indigenous, international and new Canadian students, and others from historically underrepresented groups particularly those relating to academic support. StFX needs to provide additional support to ensure academic success of all its students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Establish a transition year program to support Black and Indigenous student academic success (both pre-entrance and during first year) which should include formal (e.g., camps and courses) and informal supports (e.g., mentorship) to enhance assistance to students' success. B. Address the need for English language supports for international students, new Canadians and other students whose first language is not English. C. Review current admission, retention, and support initiatives through an anti-racism lens, noting the socio-cultural, economic, and historical inequities in traditional admission practices. Create more inclusive practices, where needed. D. Increase funds available for scholarship and bursary programs and create broader terms to increase pool of eligible Indigenous and Black students. E. Consider allocating awards to support recruitment and retention to specific areas of study, including master's programs.

	F. Provide guided opportunities for students to understand the scholarship and bursary opportunities for which they may qualify.
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission envisions success in education as an act of reconciliation.	A. Create an Indigenous Multi-disciplinary Center of Excellence which is centered on Indigenous ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating to one another.
Inclusive excellence embodies the recognition that not only is postsecondary education enriched by equity, diversity, and inclusion; equitable inclusion is critical to excellence.	A. Establish a Black Excellence Program for students and faculty. The program should be comprehensive, putting into place equitable practices for recruitment, hiring, mentorship, ways to acknowledge and involve Black community and alumni. B. Support access and outreach for international students

WORKING AND ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENT

- Access and success for students, faculty, and staff
- Addressing systemic challenges and barriers
- Inclusive decision making

KEY LEARNINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
First voice and representation from historically excluded/equity deserving groups on decision making and management bodies is needed to ensure decisions and priorities embody anti-racism, equity, and inclusion.	A. Review all committees and revise terms of reference, to give historically excluded groups meaningful voice at decision-making tables. Particular attention paid to major stakeholders and decision-makers including: StFX Board of Governors, Senate, Committees on Nominations, faculty, staff and student union leadership committees, and Senior Leadership Council. B. We recommend that the decision-making bodies/committees report back to the Senior Leader EDI+AR on the steps undertaken to fulfill this recommendation.
Ensure a thorough orientation for new faculty and staff to ensure clear expectations at the beginning of employment., It is critical to introduce StFX	A. Ensure faculty and staff onboarding processes are grounded in the principles of anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

values and policies, along with strategies to create equitable teaching and learning environments.

Student feedback indicates that many professors are not sensitive to students with challenges (e.g., Indigenous students, Black students, international students, students with mental health challenges). Many students commented that instructors have not corrected or addressed discriminatory remarks made in classes (i.e., questions that reinforce stereotypes about Indigenous communities or offensive and inappropriate language used in the classroom).

The burden to create and lead anti-racist training should not be placed on units or faculty members but should be a university wide endeavor

Hiring and search committees play an important role in diversifying the workplace at StFX and require an understanding of unconscious bias and awareness of how to optimize the search strategy to maximize diversity representation.

In cases where racism occurs, the power differential between faculty/staff and students too often privileges and protects faculty/staff, rather

B. Ensure onboarding process captures StFX values and policies (Harassment & Discrimination, Sexual Violence, Violence in the Workplace), along with strategies to create equitable teaching and learning environments.

C. Enhance faculty orientation and professional development to improve pedagogy and diversity awareness.

A. Provide adequate, on-going resources to the Senior Leader EDI+AR Office to continue to develop and provide mandatory anti-racism and equity training for all student leadership, faculty, staff, and administration.

B. Require the Equity Committee to include annual plan for education and prevention and steps to foster an equitable and welcoming environment at StFX.

C. Many people on campus working on racism issue in silos. The Senior Leader EDI+AR should create an EDI Anti-Racism Assessment Tool that will gather information about what each of the various groups and units (departments, programs) on campus are doing to foster equitable and welcoming environment.

D. Support integration and partnership between the equity and inclusion work of Coady and the other areas of StFX

A. Mandatory EDI training for Human Resources and all staff and committees involved with recruitment and selection, training, discipline and terminations EDI training includes unconscious bias workshops, ally training, inclusive communications and workplaces, reconciliation, cultural safety, and accessibility and accommodations, and champions for change.

A. Work with faculty, staff, and student unions, Chairs and Coordinators, and the Senior Leader EDI+AR to develop and promote a clear process for dealing

than students. Students report too much “red tape” in the reporting processes.

- with identified overtly racist actions which achieve true justice for students. Create mechanism to seek input from community in the decision-making process.
- B. Create a Human Rights Education and Response Advocate (HRERA) position in the institution to advocate for students experiencing racism and support them in navigating reporting channels.
 - C. Work with community members to develop informal resolution practices for individuals who do not wish to undergo formal reporting processes, which are inclusive of the cultures of historically excluded communities.
 - D. Increase student training and awareness of Harassment and Discrimination Policy so students are aware of how to report incidents.

Continue work to support the Mi'kmaw community and strengthen supports for people of African descent at StFX through aligned committee work.

- A. Building on the work of the Joint Advisory Circle, support the ongoing work with the Mi'kmaw community:
 - Identify JAC to the university and the community
 - Undertake storying StFX's relationship to this territory
 - Review leadership and membership of JAC - Indigenous knowledge keeper on campus
- B. Promote diversity hiring.
- C. Review current equity committees and structures for alignment to the work and each other.

Meaningful change is the responsibility and obligation of all Xavierians. This includes facilitating supportive environments, promoting equitable practices, reviewing policies, and actively, intellectually, and appropriately fostering inclusion for Indigenous, Black and other equity seeking groups (e.g., international and new Canadian) students, staff, and faculty.

- A. Create clearly identified and ongoing supports for pedagogical integration of equity across all disciplines and sectors at StFX.
- B. Build respectful relationships with community members and invite and seek community expertise when appropriate and on an ongoing basis when developing and reviewing the curriculum.
- C. Review all policies using an equity lens

Race-based data collection is necessary to measure change over time and hold ourselves accountable to our commitment toward challenging anti-racism at StFX.

- A. Explore the status on race-based data collection and identify thoughtful approaches to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

<p>Increase the representation of historically underrepresented peoples at all levels of faculty and staff at StFX.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. In consultation with historically underrepresented faculty and staff on campus, establish a mechanism to continually examine and assess ongoing structural barriers and cultural practices that constrain equitable representation. B. Develop an employment equity policy. C. Develop a plan for professional preparation, recognition, career progress and success, mentorship opportunities, and leadership development for historically under represented faculty and staff.
<p>Unions on campus are often not separate entities, and many are affiliated with provincial and national organizations, whose mandates include working for equity, diversity, and inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Bring together an alliance of local, provincial, and national union executives to engage in discussion on what roles the unions have played and can play in addressing and implementing anti-racism work.

LIVING AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT – SUPPORT NETWORKS AND WELL-BEING

KEY LEARNINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Address deficits in Black representation in leadership, gaps in inclusion, and validation of Black perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Establish on Center on Integrative Anti-Black Racism, with a manager position, student advisors, a mental wellness position and race-based data research position.
<p>University communications surrounding critical incidents often reinforce and contribute to a climate and culture of mistrust. Assessing the intentional and unintentional ways in which University communications at all levels contribute to the climate and culture at StFX is essential to anti-racism community building.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. With input and expertise from those who have been on the receiving end of racism on campus, develop an anti-racism student campaign to educate the wider campus about racist behavior and how to appropriately address it. B. With input and expertise from those who have been on the receiving end of racism on campus, develop a protocol for publicly responding to incidents of racism. Ensure that campus-wide training on the protocol is provided.
<p>There is a lack of visible diversity at StFX which creates a lack of insight and sensitivity to issues of diversity and inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Develop student recruitment strategies specific to individual communities. B. Hire Recruiters who reflect the diversity that we want to achieve and that we have on campus. This should include recruitment personnel who bring

	<p>lived experience of diverse communities (e.g., local Indigenous communities).</p> <p>C. Co-design a recruitment strategy alongside Indigenous, Black, and historically underrepresented community members. This strategy should be radical departure from current StFX recruitment policies and include community members who are remunerated for their service and expertise in reaching underrepresented groups.</p> <p>D. Ensure faculty/staff recruitment and assessment processes to reflect principles of equity and inclusion.</p> <p>E. Develop an improved communication plan to promote University activities and functions that celebrate cultural events to demonstrate StFX's commitment to anti-racism and inclusion. This would be a visible and public way of demonstrating StFX's commitment to anti-racism and inclusion.</p>
<p>Access to culturally relevant supports is integral to student success and well-being.</p>	<p>A. Ensure that existing services (academic, mental, etc.) to historically underrepresented students are appropriately and adequately resourced and address specific gaps that exist.</p> <p>B. Provide more access to mental health counselling as current resources are not adequate to meet the need of Indigenous, Black, international, and new Canadians on campus. Ensure these communities have access to culturally sensitive counsellors.</p>
<p><i>Student Feedback Sessions</i> (2016) noted that if the Students' Union is for all students, then it has a responsibility to provide programs for all students, particularly those in the student body who are likely to experience racism on campus.</p>	<p>A. Mandatory anti- racism training should be provided for those involved leadership positions and for those who are employed by the Students' Union. This training would include: The StFX developed Modules on Anti-Black racism, Anti-Indigenous racism, Anti-racism, and Equity and Hiring procedures.</p>

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

- Working with the local Indigenous and Black communities

- Engaging external partners
- Recognizing cultural competencies and traditions

KEY LEARNINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Inclusivity begins with a better understanding of difference and is often achieved through relationships and discussion. Diversity and inclusion in community are interrelated and both must be areas of focus.</p>	<p>A. Require the Equity Committee to include annual plan for education and prevention and steps to foster an equitable and welcoming environment at StFX.</p> <p>B. Many people on campus working on racism issue in silos. The Senior Leader EDI+AR should create an EDI Anti-Racism Assessment Tool that will gather information about what each of the various groups and units (departments, programs) on campus are doing to foster equitable and welcoming environment.</p>
<p>StFX students also face racism in the community, especially by some landlords.</p>	<p>A. Involve the town and county of Antigonish in EDI and anti-racism change initiatives on campus. There should be an on-going and formal partnership with the town and county in combating racism and educating the wider community about EDI and anti-racism work.</p> <p>B. EDI and anti-racism training with the wider community can include, but is not limited to, providing Anti-Racist educational resources to stakeholders such as the Landlords Association, the Business Associations, and the municipalities of the Town and County of Antigonish.</p>
<p>Engage in truth, justice, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>A. The university should draw up a clear response to the TRC's Calls to Action that relate specifically to institutions of higher learning, and any that relate to disciplines taught by the institution. There should be regular monitoring by the Senior Leader EDI+AR of which Calls to Actions are being addressed, those that require action, and these should be reported yearly to all stakeholders.</p>
<p>Create a space for Indigenous practices for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff at ceremonies, gatherings, and in the classroom. Include recognition for other cultural practices, inclusion and celebration of all historically underrepresented communities on campus with a special emphasis on Nova Scotia's 52 historically Black communities.</p>	<p>A. Honoring ceremonies such as smudging, and libation should be welcomed and encouraged at StFX. Currently some policies discourage these important ceremonies. Clear policies need to be developed that respect ceremonial practices and these need to be widely communicated to the campus community.</p>

	<p>B. In the same way that the Mi'kmaw Honor Song has been recently incorporated into graduation ceremonies at StFX, libation ceremonies and those which acknowledge Black Ancestors should be included at graduation ceremonies.</p> <p>C. Create opportunities so that many stakeholders at StFX learn about and experience Indigenous talking circles, a cultural practice that allows for deep listening and speaking among groups. This Indigenous strategy can be an effective tool to allow for authentic discussion and can be used in classrooms, residences, and meetings. It is particularly effective in making spaces for all voices to be heard in a room.</p>
<p>Make more visible the University's relationship to the Land upon which it is situated.</p>	<p>A. Make information on University's relationship to the Land, as well as the historical connection between local racialized communities and the University available and visible to the wider university community. This can include talking about the purpose of Land acknowledgements, modelling using Land acknowledgement at formal gatherings, providing visual representations about the Land on the website and on campus through great signage, informative posters and plaques, murals, and other visual art installations.</p> <p>B. Develop and publish a history of StFX relationship with Indigenous and Black peoples. Make land and history relationships easily accessible to StFX visitors, notably on website or through other public commemorations on campus.</p>

Appendix A:

GLOSSARY

The following definitions and concepts are used to inform this action plan.

ACCOUNTABILITY involves a commitment both to ongoing education - including self-education - and to courageous action built on deeply consultative processes. Accountability includes acknowledging, respecting, and acting responsively in the face of Black life, in its full complexity and intersectionality. Universities and colleges must move beyond mere representation and take responsibility for supporting fulsome, transformative inclusion across university and college structures, policies, and procedures. By signing the Scarborough Charter, universities and colleges commit to a process of continuous improvement through ongoing, sustained implementing of the

Scarborough Charter’s principles-based commitments to action, and to be answerable for concrete outcomes, including to their respective Boards, communities, and other stakeholders.¹

ANTI-BLACK RACISM is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifest in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.²

ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM: is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples within Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada”.³

BLACK FLOURISHING Universities and colleges are central to enabling the just, fulsome realization of human potential and thriving. They play a pivotal role in redressing anti-Black racism by removing structural barriers to equity, inclusion, and social justice, with full recognition of our intersectional identities, while advancing the innovative research, critical thinking and engaged dissemination of knowledge that foster substantive equality, human dignity, and sustainability. ⁴

DECOLONIZATION: once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power.”⁵

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE embodies the recognition that not only is postsecondary education enriched by equity, diversity and inclusion; equitable inclusion is critical to excellence. Excellence encompasses the ability of universities and colleges to educate and to innovate; to be alive to complexity and proactive in the face of crisis; to foster fundamental questioning through rigorous, respectful engagements across difference; and to enable societal transformation.⁶

INDIGENIZATION: A “collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of postsecondary education, this involves

¹ <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter>

² <https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism/glossary>

³ <https://www.oha.com/news/anti-racism-resource-page>

⁴ <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter>

⁵ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies : Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, 1999.

⁶ <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter>

including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous students but all students, teachers, staff members, and community members involved or impacted by Indigenization.”⁷

MUTUALITY Universities and colleges are embedded in communities locally, as well as nationally, regionally and internationally. By recognizing a responsibility to foster mutuality, universities and colleges acknowledge the multiple social relations and modes of societal action upon which universities and colleges depend and for which they are accountable. The positive, interactive relationship with Black communities entailed by mutuality includes the special role universities and colleges can assume in Black community economic development, notably as anchor institutions and local employers.⁸

RECONCILIATION: The restoration of friendly relations between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian Government through concrete actions, continuous education, and decolonization of spaces.

⁷ <https://ufv.ca/teaching-and-learning/inclusive-teaching/indigenization/>

⁸ <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter>