



# Striving for Anti-Racism and Equity

President’s Action Committee  
on Anti-Racism (PACAR)  
Action Plan



**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER**  
UNIVERSITY

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.  
Please contact us by email at [PACAR@stfx.ca](mailto:PACAR@stfx.ca)

StFX University values equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA).

As an educational institution, we work proactively to embed practices related to equity, anti-racism, and accessibility in all aspects of our university culture, curriculum, and experience. The woven fabric incorporated throughout our integrated planning framework is a representation of the collective commitment to engage in the work that must be done to achieve our vision: to build our University the Way It is Meant to Be.





## Land Acknowledgement

St. Francis Xavier University stands on the lands of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded home of the Mi'kmaw. We express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the generations of Mi'kmaw who, since time immemorial, have loved and stewarded these lands and the beings who call them home.

Colonization is not just history; it exists in the present tense. While we strive to decolonize ourselves and our institution, we know there is still much for us to learn. We are committed to doing the hard work of self-reflection and to repairing relationships with the Mi'kmaw on whose lands we reside, including embracing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and embodying their spirit in our day-to-day lives.

The spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action are reflected in the work of the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism and embodied in this report.

Ms-t wiaqpulti'kl ankukamkewe'l | We are all treaty people





## Message from the President

StFX University values equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). This is outlined in the *University Strategic Plan: Building Our University the Way it is Meant to Be*, and our work is continuing. Racism has no place in our community. We must work together to dismantle the roots of oppression that remain entrenched in everyday systems. It is my hope that at StFX, we can work to model a different kind of community – one where we embrace differences and work to support each other while embracing all aspects of EDIA.

Recent anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism in communities across North America, including our University community, has focused our attention on the deeply rooted racism locally, nationally, and internationally. StFX recognizes the importance of taking a systems approach that is accountable and grounded in meaningful action; the work we do to address inequities must be informed by those most impacted. To affect progress and make real change, anti-racism must be ongoing and integrated into everything that we do.

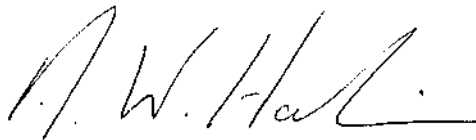
As the President of StFX, I affirm our institutional commitment to anti-racism and call for the acceleration and intensification of efforts to build a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible campus. I do so in the hope and conviction that StFX can learn from our past and present and participate fully in the building of a better and more just society. We are guided by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action* and the *Scarborough Charter* and embody their spirit in our plans to move our University forward. With the recommendations outlined by the Presidents' Action Committee on Anti-Racism



(PACAR), we have also established tangible steps to align our efforts, deepen our understanding, and take meaningful action to achieve our goals. The success of this work relies on every one of us in this community.

PACAR has developed 43 recommendations to address racism and promote inclusive excellence at StFX. Moving forward, we must all continue to engage in this work, which may at times be challenging and uncomfortable, but also powerful and rewarding.

I thank the members of PACAR for their courage, energy, compassion, and dedication to producing this report. I invite the entire StFX community to join in the important work of fighting against racism and advancing equity. I am optimistic that these efforts will make a significant difference to the StFX community and its future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. W. Hakin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A" and "W".

**Dr. Andrew Hakin**  
President and Vice-Chancellor



## Message from PACAR

As members of the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR), we have worked hard to listen and learn about the lived experiences of racism on campus as told to us through the stories of our fellow students, staff, and faculty colleagues. For the past year, we have heard from hundreds of community members about the impacts of racism on their wellbeing and sense of belonging. Our recommendations attempt to honour their stories, amplify their voices, and join their call for action.

The stories we heard and the data we gathered have affirmed for us that there is systemic racism embedded within our institutional histories, traditions, structures, practices, and policies. We acknowledge that to dismantle the deeply engrained structures of power and privilege that allow anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism to remain pervasive, we require a strong, accountable, and action-oriented way forward. In that spirit, we submit these recommendations on behalf of all StFX students, faculty, and staff who shared their stories – with the emphasis that it be accepted as the next step in an ongoing journey that must continue.

These actions will not be taken in isolation. They will complement our implementation of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action* and *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, in achieving justice for Indigenous Peoples within the StFX community. They will also complement our ongoing efforts to address the concerns of other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups on campus, including members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities,

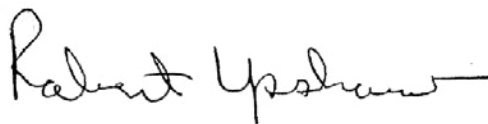


international and first-generation communities, persons with disabilities and individuals who experience barriers to accessibility, and those at the intersections of these identities who have their own unique histories and experience additional barriers.

While we are proud of the work we have accomplished, we are humbled when we consider how much remains to be done across the University. We are determined to sustain the hope that has been ignited through this process and have already begun to implement the changes that PACAR has recommended. We encourage all members of the StFX community to read the recommendations, reflect, and take action.

Good intentions are intangible; making a proven difference is not. The overall effort of transformation is reliant on action by all members of the StFX University community; constant engagement and partnership with Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black, and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded students, staff, faculty, and local communities; and a recognition that all members of our campus community are responsible for advancing this important work. Together, we will co-create the change that is needed.

Sincerely,



**Robert Upshaw**  
PACAR Co-Chair



**Elizabeth Yeo**  
PACAR Co-Chair



## Acknowledgements

The President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR) represented diverse intersecting perspectives, experiences, and identities. We wish to express gratitude to all members of PACAR who willingly contributed their time, insights, and collective wisdom to this report. Although we were involved in sensitive and emotional discussions, all committee members upheld a vision of change, and welcomed a diversity of voices and opinions.

We are very grateful to those whose dedication to advancing anti-racism and equity has already led to meaningful progress, positioning us to take the next series of recommendations that PACAR has outlined. We hope to honour this previous work in the actions we will now take.

We would like to thank Terena Francis, Tara Reddick, Rebecca Mesay, Lee Anna Osei, Megan Fogarty, Dr. Kevin Wamsley, and Dr. Tim Hynes who labored alongside PACAR to grapple with the issues and bring forth solutions. We would also like to recognize Rhonda Semple, Mary Jessie MacLellan, Ann Sylliboy, Angie Kolen, Andrew Beckett, and Gord Gallimore who served as facilitators for our community consultations. Dr. Joanne Tompkins synthesized the community feedback provided. Her deep knowledge of the issues and valuable perspectives made for excellent contributions to this final report. Dr. Kerri Arthurs was instrumental in drafting this final report and in facilitating the many discussions and interviews required to prepare the Accountability Framework. We also wish to extend our appreciation to Lynne DeLorey who scheduled meetings for PACAR and its constituent communities, coordinated communications, and kept the committee on task throughout the process.



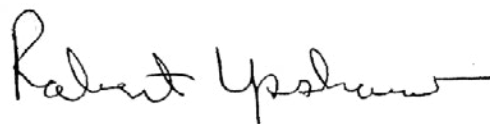


Several community groups, both within and outside of StFX, contributed their perspectives on the topics addressed by PACAR and feedback on the draft recommendations. In particular, PACAR wishes to thank members of Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation and the Black community of Tracadie for their advice, engagement, and review of the draft recommendations.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to those who advised PACAR, and all the many students, staff, and faculty who provided feedback during our consultations. Without your voices at the table, these recommendations would lack the depth that comes from lived experiences and deep allyship. We heard your stories, and your concerns, and we thank you for sharing your insights and experiences with us.

We are also grateful for the commitment made by President Dr. Andy Hakin, as well as senior leaders, towards supporting the values of anti-racism and equity at the University. PACAR has carefully and thoughtfully prepared recommendations as a next step in advancing these values. It is true that initiatives of this scope and complexity are often met with obstacles. This living document will help us move forward with the immediate action that is needed while acknowledging that the recommendations will continue to evolve with further input and changing circumstances over the years.

We look forward to the complete realization of the University's vision: *to build our university the way it is meant to be*, with anti-racism and equity as the centre of this work.



**Robert Upshaw**  
PACAR Co-Chair



**Elizabeth Yeo**  
PACAR Co-Chair



## Public Communication of the PACAR Report

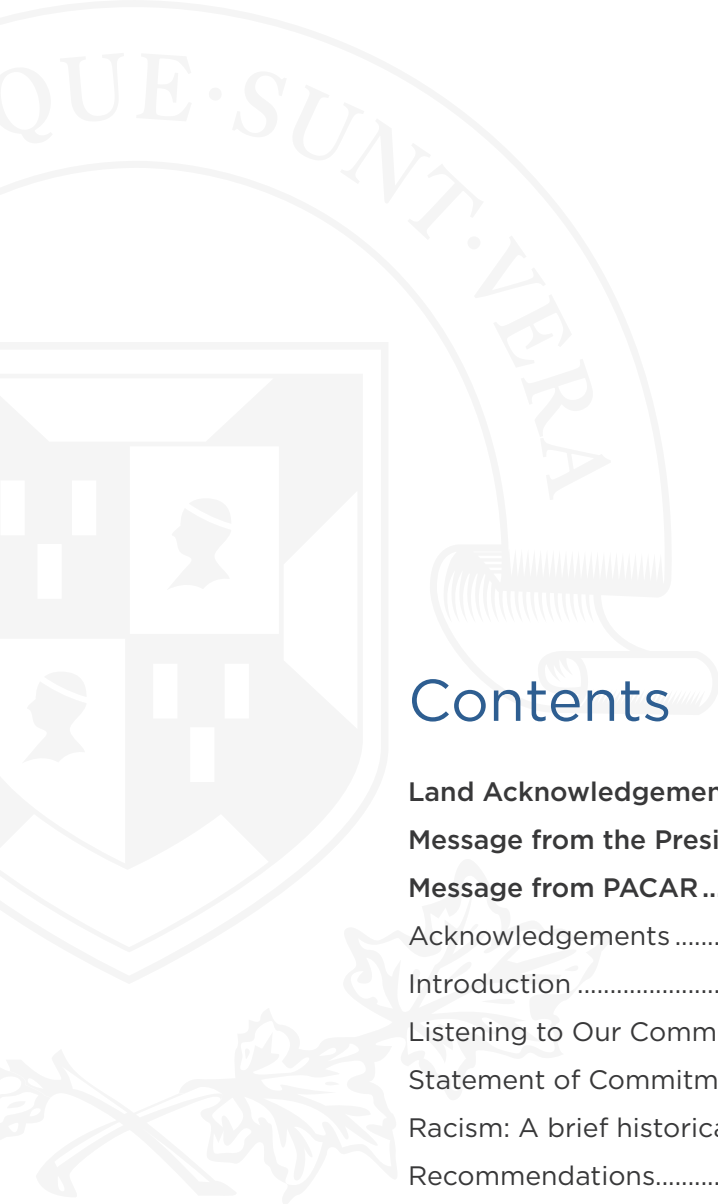
The PACAR Report is available

- Online at [www.stfx.ca/pacar](http://www.stfx.ca/pacar)
- By telephoning (902) 867-2381
- By email at [PACAR@stfx.ca](mailto:PACAR@stfx.ca)
- In alternate formats as requested

Feedback may also be given by emailing [PACAR@stfx.ca](mailto:PACAR@stfx.ca), by telephone at (902) 872-2381. You may also send feedback via regular mail:

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## Introduction

*“The beauty of anti-racism is that you don’t have to pretend to be free of racism to be anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it’s the only way forward.”*

**- Ijeoma Oluo**

Over the years, important work has been done by individuals committed to advancing anti-racism at StFX University through research, curriculum, and service. The past year has precipitated an opportunity for deeper reflection on how we will demonstrate this commitment. We have heard from faculty, staff, and students who have shared their stories and provided feedback and insights that StFX needs to move forward more boldly. Meaningful action is needed, and the time for more action is now.

We know that systemic racism has been part of academia since its inception, and that experiences of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism have impacted many members of our community. A series of Town Hall sessions with Mi’kmaw, Black, Indigenous, and other students, staff, and faculty from historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups during 2020 - 2021 uncovered immediate and swift steps towards ending racism in all areas at the University. During these meetings, many personal experiences were shared, including a lack of safety, experiences of navigating daily microaggressions, exclusion, discrimination, lack of representation, lack of respect, and barriers to academic and career advancement. Students spoke about not seeing themselves reflected in the faculty, staff, administration, and curriculum, racial profiling while on campus, and lack of support. Suggestions on how to reduce systemic barriers and create greater inclusion were also provided.



This context provided the primary impetus for Dr. Andrew Hakin’s directive to establish the President’s Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR) to advise on action-oriented measures to address anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism on our campus. Acknowledging the wealth of existing reports and previous recommendations, PACAR aimed to go beyond identifying problems to offer a bold, solution-focused action plan. PACAR Co-Chairs Robert Upshaw and Elizabeth Yeo were appointed to guide the committee’s work which began in May 2021. See *Appendix A for PACAR Membership*.

As the meetings progressed, the identification of burial sites of Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School entered the nation’s dialogue. We were reminded that racism and hate have existed in our past and continue to harm members of our society. We also continued to witness incidents of white supremacy, hate crimes, and various other forms of racism which brought anti-Black racism back into the spotlight with renewed urgency and focus. As the *Scarborough Charter* states: “The urgent reckoning with the persistence of anti-Black racism, the depths of Black underrepresentation, and the systemic loss of creative contribution compels bold, decisive, and transformative action.”<sup>1</sup>

The long-standing historical contexts of these incidents made clear the need to address systemic racism in general and racism against Mi’kmaw, Indigenous and Black groups and individuals, in particular. The mandate for PACAR, therefore, was to develop recommendations for addressing institutional and other forms of racism against Mi’kmaw, Indigenous, Black, and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded students, faculty, and staff and to promote anti-racism and equity at StFX.

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<sup>1</sup> Blackett, A., Mukherjee Reed, A., Rigaud, M. and Walker, B. (2021). *Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.uts.utoronto.ca/principal/scarborough-charter>

## Focusing on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism

*“If we disrupt and dismantle anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, all other forms of oppression will be dismantled.”*

*- Gord Gallimore, PACAR Committee Member*

As StFX works to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and accessibility on campus, we believe it is important to keep a focus on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. This is not meant to convey a hierarchy of oppressions – all marginalized groups of people are subject to racism and other forms of discrimination. Rather, it is meant to point out that academic institutions have become comfortable taking a ‘diversity approach to racism,’ thereby avoiding a sustained approach to address the practices of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. Further, this approach recognizes the unique history and experiences of Black Nova Scotians and Mi’kmaq in our region and our province.

At the same time, PACAR recognizes the ways in which racism is enacted and experienced is complicated by gender identity, gender expression, disability/ableism, sexual orientation, class, religion, place of origin, language(s) spoken, family status, marital status and other aspects of identity. It is important to give each dynamic specific attention. As we advance anti-racism at StFX, PACAR recommends that ongoing, intentional work take place to better understand the diverse experiences of racism on campus – including the experiences of faculty, staff and students who navigate the University at the intersections of various identities. It is only through ongoing, committed listening and action that we can affect meaningful, systemic change.

### Alignment and Coordination

Shaped by insights from our community, the PACAR recommendations are responsive to the current challenges we face as a University, and the opportunities that we have as we work together in common directions to realize our vision: to build our University the way it is meant to be. It recognizes the necessity of tak-

ing a system-wide approach that is accountable and grounded in meaningful, deliberate, and sustained action. To effect progress and make sustainable, real change, we are committed to integrating anti-racism and equity into everything that we do.

We also recognize that that effective anti-racism work requires a shared and sustained institutional commitment and engagement from all members of the StFX University community. We commit to remaining responsive and accountable to the diverse constituencies of our community including diverse Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black community members, recognizing that recreating an environment free of racism is everyone's responsibility. We commit to sharing successes, learning from challenges, and engaging in activities and strategies that address inequities and actively work to advance anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism through our policies, processes, and practices, and environments.

### **Facilitation and Accountability**

*"By joining PACAR I wanted to make sure that I was a voice that was heard, and this group has done that. [The work] shows growth in the school and what they stand for. You can really tell everyone is trying to make a real difference."*

**- Ché Morales, PACAR Committee Member**

Through its work, PACAR has produced 43 recommendations, which have been organized into four environments: (1) Environments to Support Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Curricula; (2) Working and Organization Environment; (3) Living and Social Environment; and (4) Community Environment. Guided by the StFX University Strategic Plan and related efforts to advance EDIA, each environment identifies initiatives aimed at building capacity, assessing barriers and opportunities, and creating greater alignment through departments and committees. Addressing the recommendations will require ongoing accountability, timely actions and working closely with those who are often at the margins and yet most affected by racial inequities. Now is the time for action. **We all have a role to play.**

It is important to note that the University has already proceeded with the implementation of some the preliminary recommendations and action items identified by PACAR. For example:

- StFX University became one of 50 initial signatories to the *Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities*.
- The University reviewed and implemented a new Harassment and Discrimination Policy, approved in August 2021. The revised policy incorporates evidence-informed practices, significantly compressing process timelines, and includes a definition of microaggressions.
- The University hired a Human Rights Education and Response Advocate (HRERA) to help develop a centralized process to manage complaints related to racism and to provide support to individuals experiencing racism. The HRERA also leads prevention education.
- The University deployed StFX's first in house employee census. Data provided from the census will hold our institution accountable to providing equitable hiring practices, increasing employee diversity, and providing appropriate services and programming.
- Counsellors for Black Student Support and Indigenous Student Support were hired to provide mental health and wellness supports.
- StFX Student Services released a mandatory e-learning course, *You Belong @ X*, in April 2021, and opened it as a mandatory learning course for new students. The learning course is also available to faculty and staff.
- The Diversity Engagement Centre (DEC) established Community Connections Day, an early welcome and orientation program for Black, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ students and developed a peer mentorship program to support first-year students in their transition to StFX.
- Academics established four Faculty Chairs in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and seconded a Special Advisor for Indigenous Research and Learning Partnerships.



These institutional initiatives are in addition to other actions underway through academic and service units across the campus that demonstrate a University-wide commitment to transformative change, including the Library, the StFX Art Gallery, and the efforts of numerous individual faculty and staff members. We celebrate the strides being made but know there is a tremendous amount of work remaining.

Given the scope of PACAR, all the recommendations foreground issues that require immediate attention, yet are not exhaustive of the many challenges experienced by Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black students, faculty, and staff at StFX. We have committed to the recommendations being open to review and evolving over time. This approach allows us to move forward with the urgent action that is needed while at the same time remaining responsive to the ever-changing needs of our community and society. We will be reporting back to the community on our progress on an annual basis.



## Listening to Our Community

*“The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek.  
There are no shortcuts. When it comes Truth and Reconciliation,  
we are forced to go the distance.”*

*- Justice Murray Sinclair*

In May 2021, the President’s Action Committee on Anti-Racism (PACAR) began working to achieve its objectives. During the information gathering process, committee members reviewed key learnings from previous equity summits held at StFX, ongoing work at other Canadian universities, and various document reviews on anti-racism in post-secondary institutions. Data and information were collected on relevant trends, occurrences, and issues within the institution and in other institutions. This information allowed PACAR to evaluate the University’s current state (e.g., its policies, practices, programs, and services), gain insights into the workings of other institutions, and identify opportunities for the University to improve.

PACAR also gathered feedback from students, faculty, and staff using interviews, campus, and community consultation sessions. Stakeholders shared their experiences and expertise at the University and provided suggestions and feedback on the work of PACAR. Between May 19, 2021 and March 15, 2022, PACAR met with members of Mi’kmaw, Indigenous, Black, and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded populations at StFX University, including students, faculty, and staff. The purpose of these consultations was to discuss their observations and experiences of racism on campus, along with their suggestions for change.



In addition, PACAR invited campus community members to make written submissions. This offered an alternative channel for sharing ideas for making StFX a more respectful and equitable place to be. A second round of consultations occurred during March 2022 during which a series of draft recommendations were presented for feedback. Additionally, Senate hosted the Senate Forum on PACAR on March 29, 2022. The aim of the sessions was to increase participation in the planning process, collect feedback on the draft recommendations to support further planning and action, and build and/or strengthen relationships with campus stakeholders and community members to support implementation of the recommendations.

PACAR's efforts over the past year have validated, indisputably, that the incidents of racism at StFX which precipitated the creation of PACAR are not isolated. Rather, they are part of a deeply entrenched anti-Indigenous and anti-Black legacy that remains pervasive in society.

As an institution situated within this social, historical, and political context, StFX recognizes the importance of continuing to act against racism. We understand the importance of being attuned to the needs of persons from all historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups and accept our responsibility to address and redress historical and ongoing racial injustices to bring about systemic change. Going forward, we will be responsible and accountable to the members of our community, recognizing that bringing about systemic change is everyone's responsibility. If we realize a University that supports a more welcoming and equitable community for all, the entire University will be lifted.



## Statement of Commitment

As an educational institution, we work proactively to embed practices related to equity, anti-racism, and accessibility in all aspects of our University culture, curriculum, and experience. As a community, we will honour and actively join in the journey of reconciliation and decolonization, including advancing the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action*. We are committed to uplifting Indigenous voices and presence across all aspects of our University and to cultivating a welcoming space of belonging for everyone, especially the Mi'kmaq on whose lands we are privileged to be located. We understand that diversity enriches our learning environment, and we are committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities and individuals who experience barriers to accessibility. Through individual and collective action, we will promote anti-racism in all its forms, including advancing our commitments to the *Scarborough Charter*. We commit to supporting wholistic success and well-being, especially for members of historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.

We recognize that statements can be meaningful but committed, consistent, and on-going action are the only tools that lead to systemic change. We understand that racism is the combination of both social and systemic forces that converge and yield disparate outcomes for members of Mi'kmaq, Indigenous, Black and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.



As a learning community, we will purposefully identify, discuss, and challenge issues that prevent us from becoming an equitable and anti-racist community. We stand committed to:

- Acknowledging that racism is embedded into our organizational structures, policies, and systems. StFX University will play a pivotal role in redressing anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism by removing structural barriers with full recognition of our intersectional identities.
- Cultivating inclusion, including the recognition that post-secondary education is enriched by equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility; and, equitable inclusion is critical to supporting individuals in their personal journey to achieve their own unique goals.
- Fostering mutuality, acknowledging the multiple social relations and modes of societal action upon which the University depends and for which we are accountable. This includes maintaining a rootedness and connectedness with the communities that we are working to engage and support.
- Ensuring accountability, including a commitment to ongoing education, ongoing improvement, and courageous action built on listening to Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black students, faculty, and staff and understanding their lived experiences on our campus.

We recognize that confronting and combating racism is life-long work. As a University community, we must be vigilant in our learning, listening, and action to create change. We pledge to measure our progress as we fight racism, discrimination, and other forms of oppression and injustice with the goal of making our campus more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible environment in which every member of our community, regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, or socio-economic status, can flourish.



## Racism: A brief historical context

The Mi'kmaw People have been in their ancestral and unceded homeland called Mi'kma'ki for more than 5000 years. Mi'kma'ki is made up of all Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and large areas of New Brunswick, the Gaspé Peninsula and Newfoundland.

This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship which Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. In the late-15<sup>th</sup> century the English and French explorers would arrive to Atlantic Canada in search of new opportunities for land settlements and resources for trade.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries people of African ancestry, whose forbears had been brought to the Americas and the Caribbean in captivity as slaves, entered Atlantic Canada either voluntarily or involuntarily. Most of them cherished one abiding hope: they were entering a promised land in which they and their descendants could live as free citizens. This set the stage for “colonialism” in the Northern colonies of Atlantic Canada. Colonialism is the historical practice of European expansion into territories already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples for the purposes of acquiring new lands and resources for the colonialists, also referred to as settlers.



War between England and France, religious cleansing, land grabbing, monopolies regarding the fishing and fur trades, language and heritage rights, the existence of slavery and the suppression of Indigenous Peoples' treaty rights, would all impact the relationship between the white majority group and Indigenous and African Peoples.

In Canada, anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism refers to racism which has risen in the context of the colonization and settlement of Turtle Island. Their manifestations are inextricably interwind with Canada's history and continue to present day. This form of racism has conferred continuing economic benefits to settlers resulting from the appropriation of land and resources at the expense of Indigenous Peoples. The expansion of colonialism precipitated the violent suppression of Indigenous Peoples' governances, legal, social, and cultural structures attempting to assimilate and acculturate Indigenous Peoples.

The term systemic racism represents the structures of power and oppression built over centuries in Canada (and elsewhere) that reinforce the racial hierarchies that confer benefits of certain people at the expense of others. Systemic and anti-Indigenous racism is evident in discriminatory federal policies such as the Indian Act and the residential school system. It has also manifested in the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the provincial criminal justice and child welfare systems, as well as inequitable outcomes in education, well-being, and health. Institutional racism describes the manner in which racism manifests and operates in institutions and is the "collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin"<sup>2</sup>.

We can never forget or permit others to forget the long-standing anti-Black racism, and exploitative practices and an absence of justice where the rights of African Nova Scotians are concerned. From their first arrival, segregation was

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<sup>2</sup> The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, Cm 4262-I, para. 2.17 February 1999.

used as a strategy to maintain a practice of racial superiority of White people over Black people. Evidence of this can be seen in the rural, isolated, barren land given to Black immigrants in the 1700s and 1800s. As well, the establishment pattern of Black servitude prior to 1783 onwards has maintained and provided the philosophical underpinnings of white supremacy and racial intolerance in this province. Throughout the history of Nova Scotia, promises to Black Nova Scotians were never honored.

Black people were given only very small plots of rocky, infertile, and unsuitable land. The broken promises meant inadequate living conditions and few or no rations, which led to exploitation as cheap labor, share-cropping, licenses of occupation and for some, emigration at the earliest opportunity. Others were forced to migrate to the towns and cities where they were often unable to compete with more skilled whites. For those who remained on the rocky farms, the result was abject poverty and near starvation.

Unequal access to education, through a legalized, segregated and poorly-financed school system point to an educational agenda set by the dominant society for the role Black people would play in Nova Scotia society (second class citizens). Education was limited or considered a luxury for Black Nova Scotians well into the 1960s. This placed limits on the employment opportunities for Black people to “the heaviest and lowest paid jobs,” concentrated in manual and menial labour. This perpetuating cycle left few Black youth able to participate in post-secondary education or engage in opportunities beyond those traditionally available to the Black community in Nova Scotia.

Racism in Canada is generally considered a contemporary phenomenon linked to the recent arrival of People of Colour. “It always amazes me when people express surprise that there might be a “race problem” in Canada, or when they attribute the “problem” to a minority of prejudice individuals. Racism is, and always has



been, one of the bedrock institutions of Canadian society, embedded in the very fabric of our thinking our personality”<sup>3</sup>. Racism would also welcome the Chinese, Japanese, South Asian immigrants to Canada, the mid-19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were viewed with the same racial bias, hostility, and resentment as were directed at other minority racial groups.

Racism in Canada is deeply rooted in the legacy and ideology of “whitesettler” colonialism, which reinforces patterns of power and privilege based on racial distinctions. The resistance, activism, and advocacy of the Mi’kmaw, Indigenous, and African Nova Scotian communities have been instrumental in the struggle for survival, identity, and progress.

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<sup>3</sup> Shadd, Adrienne. Where are you Really From? Notes of an ‘Immigrant’ From North Buxton, Ontario. In C. James and A. Shadd (Eds.), *Talking about Difference: Encounters in Culture, Language, and Identity*, 9-15. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1994.

In 2022, the Nova Scotia government created an all-party committee to support and develop an anti-racism and equity legislation.

### **Bill No.96 – Dismantling Racism and Hate Act**

First Reading, March 24, 2022

Second Reading, March 25, 2022

Third Reading, April 1, 2022

AND WHEREAS it is recognized that marginalized and racialized individuals and communities in Nova Scotia experience harmful and unjustifiable inequities and disparities because of systemic hate, inequity and racism;

AND WHEREAS systemic hate, inequity and racism is often caused by government and public body policies, practices and procedures that appear neutral but have the effect of disadvantaging marginalized and racialized groups and can be perpetuated by a failure to identify, monitor and correct disparities and inequities;

AND WHEREAS eliminating systemic hate, inequity and racism and advancing racial equity supports the economic success and well-being of society, and everyone benefits when individuals and communities are no longer marginalized;

AND WHEREAS this Act is intended to establish a commitment by the Government to address systemic hate, inequity and racism to enhance the economic success and well-being of all Nova Scotians;

AND WHEREAS it is important to recognize the heritage of Mi'kmaw communities and the contributions they have made and continue to make to Nova Scotia;

AND WHEREAS it is important to recognize the heritage of African Nova Scotian communities and the contributions they have made and continue to make to Nova Scotia;

THEREFORE, be it enacted by the Governor and Assembly.



# Recommendations

## 1. Environment to Support Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Research

### Goals:

- Expand and diversify supportive teaching, learning, and research practices.
- Apply a lens of cultural proficiency and universal design for learning in reviewing teaching, learning and assessment practices, learning materials and resources.
- Recognize and address systemic barriers at the University which disadvantage Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black students, and students from other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups, particularly those related to academic support.
- Strengthen efforts related to anti-racism and equity within and across the StFX academic research environment, with a focus on advancing Mi'kmaw, Indigenous and Black research and scholarship.

### Initiatives:

- 1.1 Build capacity through expanded resources, supports, and professional development for all faculty and instructors to improve their understanding of racism and develop the skills to prevent and address racial discrimination. Training and professional development should:
  - Recognize anti-racism as a critical aspect of StFX's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA).



- Be mandated across campus and implemented by experts, with a consistent focus on teaching anti-racism and decolonization, anti-discrimination, intersectionality, racial microaggressions, and how to intervene and respond to incidents of racism.
  - The use of inclusive education principles and practices, such as universal design for learning; accessible, anti-racist and trauma-informed practices; and culturally responsive pedagogy to create equitable teaching and learning environments.
  - Occur during new instructor onboarding/orientation and on an ongoing basis for new and existing faculty and staff.
- 1.2 Request Senate review existing course approval processes to ensure principles of anti-racism, equity and accessibility are reflected in newly created courses and programs. Also request Senate develop a process that can be used for the review of existing courses. This should include:
- The use of inclusive education principles such as universal design for learning; accessible, anti-racist and trauma-informed practices; and culturally-responsive pedagogy.
  - Engage subject matter experts including individuals with lived experience when appropriate and on an ongoing basis when developing and reviewing the curriculum.
- 1.3 Ensure students have timely, accessible, flexible, and culturally relevant ways to demonstrate their learning. Resources, materials, and assessment used by faculty and instructors should:
- Be designed using inclusive education principles, such as universal design for learning; accessible, anti-racist and trauma-informed practices; and culturally-responsive pedagogy.
  - Be available in multiple accessible formats.
  - Identify how each assessment option within courses and programs connects to essential academic requirements. When possible, provide examples of alternate ways of demonstrating learning to provide students with clarity around expectations.

- 1.4 Establish a transition year program to support Mi'kmaw, Indigenous and Black student academic success (both pre-entrance and during first year) which should include formal (e.g., campus and courses) and informal (e.g., mentorship) supports to enhance assistance to students' success. This program should be developed in consultation with students and apply evidence-informed practices, and may include:
- A Summer Bridge Program focused on academic orientation, community connection, strengths assessment, and connection with local communities.
  - Tailored programming and engagement opportunities for students from historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.
  - Ability to obtain ESL training and supports for international students and other students for whom English is not their first language.
  - Opportunities for faculty, staff, and instructors to learn and practice strategies to support wholistic student success in transition.
- 1.5 Embed anti-racism and equity in the development and execution of special student-facing events and programming, such as Orientation Week, Homecoming, etc. This should include the development and implementation of specific engagement programs designed for members of historically and currently marginalized and excluded communities, as well as programming that provides all students with culturally-relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- 1.6 Create and promote group mentoring networks for students from historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups to come together in community, share experiences, explore, and access academic, personal and career opportunities and pathways. This includes Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black, minoritized, 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.

- 1.7 Review existing co-curricular programs, services and supports through an EDIA lens to meet the needs of both specific and broad intersectional student identities, including Indigenous, Black, minoritized, 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, graduate student, mature students, and students with disabilities.
- 1.8 Increase English language supports for international students, new Canadians, and other students whose first language is not English.
- 1.9 Promote existing financial supports (i.e., scholarships and bursaries), exchange programs as well as other types of opportunities available to Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black students, and students from other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.
- 1.10 Increase funds available for scholarship and bursary programs and create broader terms to make it more accessible for Mi'kmaw, Indigenous and Black students to attend StFX (e.g., needs based financial support, emergency loans, housing, nutritious food), and identify and eliminate barriers to accessing these funds.
  - Develop data collection and reporting structures to track and measure the use and impact of these funds on members of Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black communities.
- 1.11 Create an Indigenous Multi-Disciplinary Centre of Excellence which is centered on Indigenous ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating to one another. In collaboration with Indigenous scholars, students, and community members, integrate Indigenous practices and ways of knowing into existing academic centres, such as the McKenna Centre for Leadership and Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, as well as in the development of new academic centres, such as the Institute for Innovation in Health.

- 1.12 Create a Centre on Integrative Anti-Black Racism which is centered in ways of knowing, being and doing, including the development of a comprehensive program to champion the wholistic (academic, personal and professional) success and overall well-being of students, staff and faculty. The program should:
- Connect Black students, faculty and staff to the programs, people, and resources that will nurture their academic, personal, and professional growth, and build a sense of belonging.
  - Provide a safe space where Black students, staff and faculty can meet, share, socialize and access specialized support and services.
  - Put into place equitable practices for recruiting, hiring, mentorship, and ways to involve Black community and alumni.
- 1.13 Strengthen EDIA and anti-racism within the StFX research environment, with priority attention to expanding the diversity and inclusiveness of the research community by:
- Addressing and/or removing internal barriers to EDIA in academic research-related hiring, promotion, and career progression at StFX.
  - Develop employment policies in support of a more equitable academic research environment at StFX.
  - Strengthen professional development and training to enhance awareness, sensitivity and cultural competencies related to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the StFX academic research environment.

## **2. Working and Organization Environment**

### **Goals:**

- Increase the representation of of Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black, and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded communities at all levels of the institution, including decision-making and management bodies.
- Empower students, faculty, and staff to participate in processes and opportunities which support anti-racist culture change and support their own development.

- Provide all students, faculty, and staff with the knowledge, skills, and resources productively respond to incidents of racism. Assess the impact of these resources, tools, and training opportunities.

**Initiatives:**

- 2.1 Establish an Anti-Racism Implementation Committee or modify an existing equity committee structure to ensure that the work now begun by PACAR continues and supports the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report. Recognizing the impetus for the creation of PACAR, the Committee should address anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. The Committee should be closely aligned with the StFX Accessibility Advisory Committee, and other equity committees, to strengthen efforts in the development of equitable curriculum, policies, practices, and environments.
- 2.2 Create a position(s) at the senior leadership level to sustain EDIA initiatives. This role will work proactively with senior leadership across campus, the Office of Human Rights and Equity, and other EDIA-related partners, and will be resourced for sustained strategy development and implementation.
- 2.3 Design, develop, and implement regular and ongoing training on anti-racism and equity for all StFX staff and students involved in leadership positions. This training should:
  - Be relevant to different roles, departments, and settings, with a consistent focus on teaching unconscious bias, ally training, inclusive communications and workplaces, reconciliation, cultural safety, accessibility and accommodations, and champions for change.
  - Capture StFX values and occur on an ongoing basis to incorporate changes to policies, practices, and procedures.
  - Complement equity and accessibility training for faculty, staff, and instructors, to align with recommendations identified in the StFX Accessibility Plan.



- 2.4 Continue work to support the Mi'kmaw community and strengthen supports for people of African Descent at StFX through aligned committee work.
- Review current equity committees and structures for alignment to the work and each other, including the Committee for Aboriginal and Black Student Success (CABSS) Committee.
  - Identify the Joint Advisory Circle to the University and the community.
  - Review leadership and membership of the Joint Advisory Circle - Indigenous Knowledge Keeper on campus.
- 2.5 Review existing committee structures and revise Terms of Reference to give Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups meaningful voice at decision-making tables without overburdening representative members of those groups. Particular attention should be paid to major stakeholders and decision-makers, including the Board of Governors; Senate; Committees on Nominations; faculty, staff and student union leadership committees; and senior leadership council.
- 2.6 Examine all existing employment-related policies, processes, and structures from an anti-racism and equity lens, and improve or overhaul them. Improve the communication and dissemination of existing and newly developed policy/procedure information. When developing, reviewing, and implementing employment-related policies and practices, StFX will ensure that:
- Persons with lived experiences are consulted about these decisions.
  - These decisions are informed by a broad base of evidence-informed practice that prioritizes lived experience and expertise.
- 2.7 Encourage and incentivize the hiring, recruitment, and retention of under-represented populations into staff and faculty positions in accordance with EDIA principles and practices. Work with Human Resources and employee groups/unions to establish goals and remove barriers where they exist.

- 2.8 Clarify reporting avenues, processes, and expected outcomes for complaints of racial discrimination or breaches of the StFX Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Develop a strategy to communicate clear pathways for how individuals can receive and/or report incidents.
- 2.9 Hire a Human Rights Education and Response Advocate (HRERA) position in the institution to advocate for students experiencing racism, harassment, and discrimination and support them in navigating reporting channels. This position should also focus on education and prevention work.
- 2.10 Work with faculty, instructors, Chairs, and Coordinators to develop and promote a clear process which achieve justice for students when dealing with racist actions. Create a mechanism to seek input from community in the decision-making process.
- 2.11 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 and currently marginalized and excluded communities. This may include those based on restorative justice principles, to address incidents of racism.
- 2.12 Increase the number of co-curricular engagement and paid employment opportunities available on campus, with a particular focus on expanding employment opportunities for students from historically and currently marginalized and excluded students, including Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQIA+, minoritized, international, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.
- This should include:
- Identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessing current paid employment opportunities for students from historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups, including internship and co-op placements.

- 2.13 Strengthen capacity of on-campus and off-campus employers to create culturally-relevant, trauma-informed, accessible, and supportive workplaces for students.
- 2.14 Increase integration and partnership between equity and inclusion work at the Coady International Institute and other areas of StFX.
- 2.15 Bring together an alliance of local, provincial, and national union representatives to engage in discussions on what roles the unions have played and can continue to play in addressing and implementing anti-racism work.

### **3. Living and Social Environment – Support Networks and Well-being**

#### **Goals:**

- Increase Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black representation in leadership, gaps in inclusion, and validation of Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black perspectives.
- Address the intentional and unintentional ways in which University communications at all levels contribute to the climate and culture of StFX.
- Increase visible diversity and access to culturally relevant supports for students, faculty, and staff.
- Collect and use data (e.g. race-based data) to inform thinking, measure impact, and identify strategies to ensure that we are effectively serving students, faculty, and staff from historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.

#### **Initiatives:**

- 3.1 With input and expertise from those who have been on the receiving end of racism on campus, create an anti-racism campaign that educates the campus community about racist behavior and how to address it appropriately.

- 3.2 Develop a communications strategy to publicly acknowledge university activities and functions that celebrate significant cultural events as a visible and public way of demonstrating StFX's commitment to EDIA and anti-racism.
- 3.3 Review and improve student recruitment strategies to increase the number of applications from members of Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded communities. This strategy should be a radical departure from current StFX recruitment practices and co-designed with members of historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups who are remunerated for their service and expertise. The strategy should include:
- Setting specific admissions goals for domestic Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black Students, at the undergraduate level.
  - Investigating if application fees and/or deadlines may create unintended barriers.
  - Hiring recruiters who bring lived experience of diverse communities and have expertise connecting with members of historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups.
  - Developing student recruitment strategies specific to individual communities.
  - Allocating awards to support recruitment and retention to specific areas of study, including master's programs.
- 3.4 Provide on-campus supports and services to help community members impacted by racism (e.g., culturally relevant, trauma-informed mental health counselling). Special consideration should also be given to those with intersecting identities (e.g., with differing sexual orientation and gender identities). Ensure that existing services (academic, mental, etc.) are appropriately and adequately resourced to address specific gaps that exist.
- Explain counselling and health services intake processes with greater clarity.

- Make information and resources about mental health easy to find, including implementing one platform to learn about services and supports on-campus and off-campus.
- Ensure healthcare practitioners can provide culturally-relevant, trauma-informed, and safe services that are reflective of the diversity of students.
- Consult Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black individuals and members of historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups on an ongoing basis. Apply their feedback to continue to improve on-campus supports and services.

3.5 Develop guidelines for institutional data collection, reporting, and use of demographic/benchmarking data on faculty, staff, and students. Use data to strategically support the recruitment and retention of more Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black students, faculty, and staff, as well as persons from other historically and currently marginalized and excluded groups, including 2SLGBTQIA+, international students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.

3.6 Introduce culturally safe, ethical and, transparent approaches to data collection, analysis and interpretation to allow the University to track and respond to trends related to EDIA.

#### **4. Community Environment**

##### **Goals:**

- Create a diverse and welcoming environment in which Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, Black and other historically and currently marginalized and excluded students, faculty, and staff are actively engaged as integral contributors to the community.
- Increase recognition of cultural practices, inclusion, and celebration with a special emphasis on practices for Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black students, faculty, and staff at ceremonies, gatherings, and in the classroom.
- Increase understanding and awareness of the University's relationship to the Land upon which it is situated.

**Initiatives:**

- 4.1 Develop a clear response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action that relate specifically to institutions of higher learning, and any that relate to disciplines taught at StFX. Establish a mechanism for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including which Calls to Action are being addressed and those that require further action. Introduce an ethical and transparent data collection system to allow the University to track progress, and release an annual report to all stakeholders.
- 4.2 Create an EDI Anti-Racism Assessment Tool that will gather information about what each of the various units and departments on campus are doing to foster an equitable and anti-racist environment.
- 4.3 Require the Human Rights Education and Response Advocate (HRERA), with support from the Equity Committee, to provide an annual plan for education and prevention and next steps to foster an equitable and welcoming environment at StFX.
- 4.4 Consult with Mi'kmaw, Indigenous, and Black community members to create a cultural practices policy and/or procedures to accommodate honouring ceremonies such as smudging and libation at StFX. Develop a strategy to communicate these policies to the wider campus community.
- 4.5 Incorporate libation ceremonies and those that acknowledge Black Ancestors into StFX graduation ceremonies, along with the Mi'kmaw Honor Song.
- 4.6 Create opportunities for all members of the StFX community to learn about and experience Indigenous Talking Circles, a cultural practice that allows for deep listening and speaking among groups (e.g., learning lodges, restorative justice practices, healing spaces).

- 4.7 Create resources that educate the campus community on the University's relationship to the Land, as well as the historical connection between local racialized communities and the University. This can include, but not limited to, providing education on the purpose of Land Acknowledgements; providing visual representations about the Land on websites, wayfinding, signage, and visual art installations.
- 4.8 Develop and make publicly available a history of StFX's relationship with Mi'kmaw, Indigenous and Black Peoples. Make this information accessible to community members and visitors on the website and/or other public commemorations on campus.
- 4.9 Involve the Town and County of Antigonish in EDIA and anti-racism change initiatives on campus. There should be an ongoing and formal partnership with the Town and County in combating racism and educating the wider community about EDIA and anti-racism work. Training with the wider community should include providing anti-racist educational resources to stakeholders such as the Landlord's Association, Business Associations, and the municipalities of the Town and County of Antigonish.



## Implementation and Accountability

The work of anti-racism and equity must be visible. We must track, measure and report on the outcomes and progress and do so in a manner that is transparent, sharing both our successes and challenges. A commitment to continuous improvement means celebrating our wins and owning our missteps. As a learning organization, we model inclusive excellence, not only in how we get things right, but also when we do not.

PACAR recognizes that the successful implementation of the recommendations depends on all members of the StFX community advancing EDIA and anti-racism. Faculties, departments, administrative units, and individuals are encouraged to connect their internal plans and priorities with the recommendations of PACAR. University Plans and initiatives relevant to implementation of the PACAR recommendations include, but are not limited to: University Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, Student Experience and Opportunity Plan, Research and Creative Works Plan, Strategic Enrolment Management, Campus Master Plan, and Unit and Department Strategic Plans.

Given this complexity, PACAR proposes an accountability framework to help initiate the implementation of these recommendations. For each recommendation, PACAR proposes a leader in the University that responsible for its implementation; a metric or key performance indicator (KPI) to measure its progress; and includes activities that have occurred or are occurring in the University in response to it.





Those tasked with implementation will have authority to define accountabilities and resource requirements; PACAR offers what follows in subsequent pages as a starting point for this discussion.

PACAR also wishes to draw attention to the shared responsibility of the entire University community to work together to action these recommendations, assist those accountable for the work, and effect changes across campus.

Furthermore, PACAR advises that the University develop a mechanism to regularly report on the progress made on all 43 recommendations. Frequent reporting (e.g., on a quarterly or biannual basis) is proposed at the onset of the implementation to identify and address any critical issues or barriers that could impede the implementation of the recommendations and the success of the overall initiative. As the initiative progresses, annual reports may suffice. These reports should be provided and discussed at the University's governing tables (i.e., Board of Governors, Senate, Executive Council), with the intention of reviewing progress, mitigating identified risks, and celebrating successes.

To improve transparency and ensure accountability, updates should also be made available to the University community. The community should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the progress made on the recommendations to facilitate continuous learning and improvement.

It is also important that the University assess the impact of the recommendations on achieving the established goals for each environment to ensure that the recommendations are attaining their intended outcomes and advancing the work of anti-racism and the values of EDIA for the university.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: PACAR Membership





## Appendix A: PACAR Membership

The list below consists of the members of the President's Action Committee on Anti-Racism, working groups, collaborators and advisors and includes faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community members who supported the work of PACAR\*.

Amanda Cockshutt

Lynne Delorey

Megan Fogarty

Gord Gallimore

Krista Hanscomb

Tim Hynes

Ché Morales

Ella Mulvihill

Ornella Nzindukiyimana

Lee Anna Osei

Sabrina Skinner

Joanne Tompkins

Shelley Price

Kerry Prosper

Ann Sylliboy

Robert Upshaw

Kevin Wamsley

Elizabeth Yeo

\*This list includes individuals that are no longer at the university

