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Ena Chadha, LL.B., LL.M.  
Chief Commissioner  
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Ontario Human Rights Commission  
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Toronto, ON M7A 2G5

*Sent via email:* Office of the Chief Commissioner [cco@ohrc.on.ca](mailto:cco@ohrc.on.ca)

March 22, 2021

Dear Chief Commissioner Chadha:

The University welcomed the Ontario Human Rights Commission's recent letter to all Ontario universities and colleges regarding their responsibilities in taking action to create and sustain equitable and inclusive education environments and emphasize our obligations to students under the Ontario *Human Rights Code (Code)*. These are critical issues requiring deep attention to every aspect of our missions, actions, and procedures. We must all continue to work to create environments and processes through which students' experiences of discrimination and racism can be truly heard, understood, and addressed in order that our academic environments become increasingly respectful, equitable, welcoming, and inclusive.

The issues identified by the Commission, and our work to address those issues, are regularly discussed at the University's Senate and the Board of Governors. These efforts include:

Policies and Procedures

While the University's current policies and procedures are consistent with the guidelines outlined in the OHRC guidelines, we are currently undertaking a wide-ranging review of student- and employee-related policies, procedures, and infrastructure. This is being conducted with a view to identifying and eradicating systemic racism within the institution's operations and structures and ensuring that our policies, protocols, and

complaints mechanisms and the outcomes of their implementation are robust, effective, and fair. Components of this review include:

- Consultative review and revision of policies and procedures related to student misconduct, engaging OHRC documentation and criteria
- Human Rights Policy revision, engaging OHRC documentation and criteria.
- Consultative process to establish a new office responsible for responding to student misconduct (dispute resolution)
- Development of a racialized data collection framework
- Collection of more granular Employment Equity data regarding racialized groups
- Planning for an external review of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion structures, policies, complaints mechanisms, employment practices

#### Broad Consultation Processes and Structures

The University is actively seeking direct input from our campus and community to better understand the experiences of students, faculty, and staff as part of ongoing efforts to identify shortcomings in our current practices, address the challenges and impediments to a respectful learning environment, and enhance communications and knowledge exchange on our community. These efforts include:

- Establishment of an Anti-Black Racism Task Force in Fall 2020, which is advisory to the president but operating independently, with reports provided also to the Board and Senate.
- Completion of information gathering through *the UWindsor Indigenous Student Experience Project* and review of feedback with the University's Aboriginal Education Council and University leadership.
- Establishment of working groups with student representation on Racialized Data Collection; Anti-Black Racism; Procedures and Policies; Re-organization of the Office of Student Experience; as well as broad consultation with the campus community on procedures, policies, and new dispute resolution office
- Development Anti-Black Racism website and communications portal
- Continued support of Faculty-level working groups and committees on EDI and ABR
- Establishment of Anti-Black Racism Roundtable to support information exchange and new initiatives across campus (underway)
- Intention is to establish an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Roundtable

#### Education and Support

The University is working to enhance a climate of respect, equity, and fairness through expanded professional development programming and support for anti-racist curricular and co-curricular program development. Activities include the following:

- Launched an initiative to hire 12 Black faculty members
- Established an Anti-Racism Pedagogies Teaching Leadership Chair

- Established Anti-Black Racism Initiatives Fund (including research grants; teaching, learning and curriculum grants; student leadership experience grants; ABR professional development grants);
- Created an Anti-Black Racism Training and Education Framework
- Created three Anti-Black Racism speaker series: ABR Teacher and Learning Series, ABR Professional Development Series, and ABR Executive/Senior Management Series
- Developed online Anti-Racism Resources
- Established counseling services and weekly drop-in sessions specifically in support of Black and other racialized students
- Continue to encourage and support Faculty- and department-level activities

The University of Windsor continues to communicate to the students, staff, faculty, and community regarding our efforts to eradicate anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, as well as other forms of oppression. We recognize that there are pressures to resolve issues of systemic racism immediately and are striving to ensure that we act in a manner that is effective and sustainable, as well as responsive to immediate needs. We are working towards the enactment of a coherent, campus-wide equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy that will inform our planning, action, and interactions with one another moving forward. Post-secondary institutions are in a unique position to have a broader impact on anti-oppression work in society, and we are determined to rise to the challenges of this responsibility.

The University of Windsor values the resources provided by the OHRC, and will be sure to continue to review these as we continue working to address, challenge, and dismantle systemic racism and discrimination on our campus. We would appreciate the opportunity to access your expertise and perspectives as we engage in this difficult yet crucial work.

Sincerely,



Robert Gordon, PhD  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of Windsor