

# ANTI-BLACK RACISM TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FALL 2021

**Submitted to:** The President and Vice Chancellor; Executive Leadership Team; Anti-Black Racism Working Group; University of Windsor Board of Governors; University of Windsor Senate.

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# ANTI-ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXTS

The United Nations has declared 2015-2024 the International Decade for Peoples of African Descent. It has also established the Permanent Forum of Peoples of African Descent in recognition of the legacies of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the enslavement of African Peoples including racism, racial discrimination, and poverty. The Permanent Forum was established in the wake of the murder of George Floyd which underscored the depth of systematic racism, and xenophobia and associated intolerance. It is also a recognition that contemporary racism and its historical roots of slavery, have never been effectively addressed anywhere in the world. The UN has also declared March 25 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

But these symbolic gestures have been largely ignored and rarely observed and seemed to have escaped public knowledge and attention. In Canada, we have seen the adoption of documents and reports such as Principles on Indigenous Education by Universities Canada, 2015; Inclusive Excellence Principles by Universities Canada, 2017; Report on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion by Universities Canada, 2019; and the Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion by Colleges and Institutes Canada, 2021. The latest of these is the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountabilities. This is a product of the National Dialogues and Actions for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities.

The United Nations' International Day has been formally recognized by Canada but, this and the other initiatives noted here, have not curbed exclusion, marginalization, and various forms of oppression of Black people in every area of our society.

Research indicates that the education sector has in many ways been ground zero for racial oppression with reverberating effects and shocks in every other segment of society. Throughout the country, the postsecondary sector has been hard hit by anti-Black racism prompting a flurry of statements and actions notably since the public killing of Mr. Floyd.

Universities and colleges have been forced to act in response to agitation and advocacy championed by Black students and their allies.

This is not new of course. Generations of Black students have been at the forefront of the fight for civil rights. Black academics and staff have also been on the frontlines and continue to be.

Signatories to the Scarborough Charter commit to redressing anti-Black racism and fostering Black inclusion in universities and colleges across Canada through four broad action areas:

- Black Flourishing
- Inclusion
- Mutuality
- Accountability

The task force calls on the University of Windsor as a signatory to the Charter, to uphold these principles and commitments for improving the campus experiences of Black faculty and librarians, staff, and students.

The Charter is a commitment to doing better. Simply signing it as a performative gesture is not an option. We must commit as an institution to act consistent with the Charter and take leadership.

There are only three years left in the declared International Decade for Peoples of African Descent. We must commit to taking transformative action to advance the interests of Black people on our campus between now and 2024. Going forward, we must act in accordance with the Permanent Forum to make Black advancement a matter of course in our university. Let's be a champion for what Dr. Rosalind Hammond calls the 'anti, anti-Black racism' movement.

## ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

We believe that the University leadership is serious about change and the campus community is ready for it. The University of Windsor acknowledges that it must be better. In the last two decades or so there have been five different investigations of anti-Black racism with detailed reports and recommendations. Precious little has been accomplished in response to these reports. Black faculty,

staff, and students still do not feel safe or protected. They continue to endure blatant racism, microaggressions, hyper surveillance, exclusion, and other dehumanizing behaviour. Unwanted negative press attention has damaged the institution.

The efforts of the current administration to address this scourge has been met with general approval by our campus community. The University has said the right things about ending anti-Black racism. But talk is not enough- not this time. The renewed commitment to building a more inclusive environment for Black people has so far been punctuated with several tangible actions. The establishment of the Anti-Black Racism Working Group was followed by the appointment of the Anti-Black Racism Initiatives Strategic Planning Officer and the establishment of the Anti-Black Racism Task Force. Several other critical actions have been taken since then. This must continue with accepting and implementing the recommendations of the task force.

# I REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Anti-Black Racism Task Force Recommendations Report focuses specifically on issues of anti-Black racism at the University of Windsor. The Anti-Black Racism Task Force recommendations have been thoroughly reviewed and details have been extracted and categorized based the following themes:

1. The Office of Student Experience Restructuring
2. Redress Student Policy
3. Black-Centric Inclusivity and Safe Space Expectations
4. Restructuring of the Office of Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility (OHREA)
5. Respect and Value Campus Afrocentric Initiatives
6. Data Collection and Analysis
7. Proportionate Representation of Racialized Employees
8. Promotion of Black Studies, Education, and Training
9. Specialized Services and Supports
10. Equity Audit of Lancer Athletics

By identifying the categorically organized critical issues that need to be addressed, the Anti-Black Racism Task Force is requesting that the institution review these recommendations with the utmost respect, care, thoroughness, and foresight as it relates to the future of the University of Windsor and the quest to strategically dismantle anti-Black racism. The undermentioned provides detailed explanations to the specific areas of concern and recommendations as to next steps on how these measures can be achieved.

## I. THE OFFICE OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE RESTRUCTURING

As a post-secondary institution of higher learning, the University of Windsor must be held to a standard of responsibility both on an individual level and a collective level. Defined as “rules and laws that prevent illegal and unethical behavior that harms individuals as well as institutions”, institutional responsibility is foundational to addressing anti-Black racism. This can be demonstrated either individually (staff, faculty, student employees, students, and anyone representing the institution on and off campus) or collectively (per group of people, e.g. an office, department, or union) as a University of Windsor stakeholder.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Racism Misconduct Response Team and Prevention Officer
- 1.2 Review of Student Confidentiality Agreements
- 1.3 Student Assessment and Care Team
- 1.4 Increased Accountability Measures
- 1.5 Consequences for Racist Behaviour
- 1.6 Restructuring the Current Office of Student Experience Positions
- 1.7. Campus Police Re-Assessment Regarding Anti-Black Racism

## 2. REDRESS STUDENT POLICY

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Review all Student Policies at the University of Windsor
- 2.2 Establish Transparent Policies and Procedures
- 2.3 Establishment of EDI Advisory Committee/ Watchdog

## 3. BLACK CENTRIC INCLUSIVITY AND SAFE SPACE EXPECTATIONS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Establish an Office of Black Students’ Access and Inclusion on Campus
- 3.2 Safe Space for Black Students on Campus
- 3.3 Creating a Campus Anti-Black Racism Resource Toolkit
- 3.4 Black Student Leadership Opportunities
- 3.5 Create a Network of Black Alumni that Black Students Can Lean On
- 3.6. Protect Black Students on Campus

## 4. RESTRUCTURING OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY (OHREA)

For the University of Windsor to take crucial steps towards dismantling systemic and oppressive institutional practices that are at the root of anti-Black racism on campus, it is imperative to lead by example. For the institution to stand by its word on commitment to doing better, it is of great urgency to exemplify top-down leadership. The culture of the institution must change for our campus to be safe for all faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

The University of Windsor has stated that it has “failed” its Black faculty, students, staff, and alumni (University of Windsor, 2021). These actions will forge the pathway towards reconciliation and healing.

The task force submits that the process for handling complaints and resolving disputes through OHREA does not function in the interest of justice.

This recommendation is based on the discussions of the task force and the experiences of some members with direct experience with OHREA as well as a consultative process with faculty, staff and students who have had interactions with OHREA. Shortcomings identified related to:

- Visibility and Awareness of OHREA on campus
- Accessibility
- Case Resolution
- Time Management
- Communication
- Effectiveness

Of note is the lengthy and cumbersome reporting procedures and the length of time taken to complete investigations. An inconsistent and less than transparent procedural process was also reported. There were complaints that users of the office's services often feel even more victimized and marginalized through their experience. Some people reported feeling that their complaints were not taken seriously.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Conduct Review of OHREA
- 4.2 Campus Survey of Human Rights Experiences
- 4.3 Transparent Communication
- 4.4 Transparent Review of Human Rights Policy
- 4.5 Timely Management of Complaints
- 4.6 Create Independent Office of Human Rights
- 4.7. Establish Coherent Process of Conflict Resolution
- 4.8 Continually maintain and improve a campus environment free of harassment and all forms of discrimination

## 5. RESPECT AND VALUE CAMPUS AFROCENTRIC INITIATIVES

The University must demonstrate genuine support of and respect for Black undergraduate and graduate students and various Afrocentric campus activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Scholarships and Grants for Black Students

### 5.2 Recommitment to existing and Longstanding Afrocentric Initiatives:

- i. The African Diaspora Youth Conference (ADYC)
- ii. AFROFEST

## 6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Race-based data includes and is not limited to consultations, self-identification, and the overall compendium of the campus community composition. School of Nursing assistant professor at the University of Victoria, Dzifa Dordunoo argues that "collecting race-based data is a good first step toward equity but should not be the only one." (Dordunoo, 2021). Thus, literacy on the data is essential as well. To have data literacy, the first necessary course of action is to collect data on race. Dr. Malinda Smith, Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Calgary states "it is too fundamental to defer to the future" emphasizing that there is, "a data gap on campus wherein no specific data on Black students exists." Dr. Smith further provides a framework for race-based data collection around:

- a. The basic compositional data (quantitative)
- b. Assessing the experiences (qualitative data) focus groups

To move forward, race-based data collection at the University of Windsor must strive to attain the following:

- i. Inform the Campus: When an institution is more informed, the decisions made will be more informed.
- ii. Provide Data Transparency: providing clear communication regarding the collection, usage, storage, and access to information.
- iii. Create Data Literacy: consultations, self-identification, and compendium.

A growing number of post-secondary institutions in Canada are now collecting racialized data from students.

This is recent in Canada but has been done in the United States for decades. The University of Windsor has been discussing such an initiative but even after years of consultation and discussion about this had not taken concrete implementation steps. Interestingly, the University has been collecting such data for employees for years through the Self-Identification Survey through the Office of Human Rights, Equity and Accessibility (University of Windsor, 2021). The task force submits that it is time to implement a student racialized data collection project.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Collect Raced-Based Data Now

- a. Demographic Data
- b. Student Success
- c. Overall Campus Experience

### 6.2 Long-Term Data Collection Initiative Data Is Collected on Overall Student Experience

### 6.3 Ensure Safe and Secure Race-Based Data Collection Process for faculty, students, and Staff

### 6.4 Data on hiring, Promotion, Tenure, and Renewal (PTR) for Faculty and Staff

## 7. PROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF RACIALIZED EMPLOYEES

The current demographic of employees at the University of Windsor is not reflective of the extraordinarily diverse racial and cultural makeup of the study body. This under-representation is most noticeable at the university amongst professorate but also rings true at the staff levels. This low representation begs to question the recruitment and hiring practices of the institution.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Review and Revise Employment Equity and Institutional Hiring Practices

### 7.2 Diversification and Inclusion on Board of Governors and Senate

### 7.3 Race-based Salary Review

### 7.4 Permanence of Vice-President Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Portfolio

### 7.5 Twelve (12) Black Faculty Hires at the University of Windsor

## 8. PROMOTION OF BLACK STUDIES, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

Building an educational framework that will foster knowledge sharing and knowledge mobility, by not only educating the campus community about eradicating anti-Black racism but establishing ourselves as a leader in empowerment and advancement of Black students and the development of Black talent from undergraduate to the professorate. Decoloniality of curriculum and pedagogy is critical in this regard.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Implement a Black Studies Program

### 8.2 Anti-racism Education and Training

## 9. SPECIALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

It is recognized that there is a lack of specialized services on campus to address the unique needs of Black students. These specialized services can serve Black students with specialized academic, mental health and physical well-being services to ensure students can continue to engage in a safe environment and learn and thrive in an environment that fosters growth and development. A holistic approach to ensure students are receiving the best guidance possible to be the best students they can possibly be. It is of utmost importance that these services be accessible and free of cost.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9.1 Black Student Support Office and Coordinators

### 9.2 Create A Network of Black Alumni

## 10. EQUITY AUDIT OF LANCER ATHLETICS

It is recognized that the University of Windsor Department of Athletics has ongoing issues based around anti-Black racism. The University of Windsor's Athletic Department must undergo a departmental equity audit. This includes hiring practices of coaches, recruitment processes, Black and racialized student athlete academic support, discrimination complaint process etc. In consultation with former and current student athletes, the current culture in the Athletics department is unhealthy, unwelcoming, anti-Black, and harmful to Black student athletes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 10.1 Review of Hiring Practices for Coaching Staff

### 10.2 Implementation of a Safe Student Athlete Complaint Process

# ANTI-BLACK RACISM TASK FORCE MEMBERS

**WIDMIA ALTAGRACIA RIVIERE** - Student, University of Windsor Student Alliance (UWSA) Representative

**JESSICA BONA-MENSAH** (Co-Chair) - Student, Making it Awkward (MIA) Representative

**FAITH ENEMAKU** - Student At-Large

**TABITHA VALDEZ** - Student At-Large

**KEVINPRECIOUS FAWEHINMI** - Student, African Students' Association (ASA) Representative

**KEVIN LIMBOMBE** - Student, Black Law Students' Association (BLSA) Representative

**SATHISH PICHKA** - Student, Graduate Students' Society (GSS) Representative

**WESLEY ROSE** - Student, Fusion Representative

**REBECCA WILLIAMS** - Student, Caribbean African Organization of Students (CAOS) Representative

**KATIA BENOIT** - Staff At-Large

**RADHA PATEL** - Staff At-Large

**KAITLYN ELLSWORTH** - Community/Alumni Representative

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**DR. RICHARD DOUGLASS-CHIN** - Faculty At-Large

**NICOLE SCOTT** - Faculty At-Large

**DR. CAMISHA SIBBLIS** (Co-Chair) - Faculty At-Large

**DR. CLINTON BECKFORD** - Ex-Officio Academic Administrator

**DR. KEVIN MILNE** - Ex-Officio Academic Administrator

**DR. RAJESH SETH** - Ex-Officio Faculty, Windsor University Faculty Association (WUFA) Representative

**DE'NEA BURTON ROSE** - Student, Organization of Part-time Students (OPUS)

**Note-taker:**

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