Summary Report of Campus Consultations: Anti-Racism

Introduction

One of the guiding questions asked at the start of the strategic planning process was: What are the most important directions we need to take to ensure the **University of Windsor becomes a truly inclusive, welcoming, and equitable campus** where everyone can feel they belong? We set out for broad stakeholder engagement, both on and off campus, using a multi-phase consultation process between February and October 2022.

Initial consultation involved integrated broad-based input from campus stakeholders. We recognized that this approach would not be reflective of the lived experiences of those who face inequities and suffer injustice, and these data were treated cautiously. Input from rights-bearing stakeholders and members of equity-deserving groups was a priority in our consultation strategy and we took a systematic approach to engage in discussions on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism with diverse voices to hear different perspectives and listen to difficult truths. Consultations with Indigenous communities both on and off campus were identified early in the strategic planning process as requiring additional time for trust and relationship building. Dedicated consultations with Indigenous community members using informed and appropriate methods will extend into 2023 and lead to the development of an Indigenous Strategic Plan for the University.

The summary report that follows highlights the findings from a collection of consultation activities with the campus community, some of which included broad questions where themes of EDI and anti-racism emerged, and others that involved deeper discussions focused specifically on anti-racism at the University of Windsor.

Aspire Survey

The campus community was invited to participate in the Aspire online survey between   February and March 2022 as the first step in the strategic planning consultation process. The purpose of the survey was to gather perceptions of where the University of Windsor should be and how the University can best get there. More than 2,000 respondents accessed the survey, with 1,534 complete and usable responses. The questions at this stage of consultation were general in nature with the intention to build on identified key topics in later discussions.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked: **What do you consider three (or up to three) strengths of the University?** and **What do you consider three (or up to three) key challenges that the University needs to focus on over the next five years?** A set of themes were developed to organize and group responses into larger themes and subthemes, however, as single words or short phrases were provided to survey questions, contextual analysis of the data was limited.

A key finding from the survey data was that faculty, staff and student respondents most frequently cited EDI as both a strength of the University ($n = 420$) and as a key challenge for the University to focus on ($n = 284$). Figures 1 and 2 show the top 15 responses to both questions and the EDI data report summarizes these findings in more depth.

Captured in the EDI strengths and challenges data were responses regarding anti-racism. When asked about the University's strengths, respondents noted the University's acknowledgement of racism and efforts toward addressing racism on campus; current funding and prioritization of anti-racism work; the publication of anti-Black racism reports; and the formation and work of Racialized Academics & Advocates Centering Equity and Solidarity (RAACES). A number of respondents also expressed that they are proud that the university has begun to do the work to foster strong anti-racism policies, even if there is still a long way to go.

In terms of key challenges identified in the survey, respondents mentioned that the University should continue to work on dismantling anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and other forms of racism on campus, and focus on enhancing a sense of belonging on campus through the integration of anti-racism and Indigenization in coherent and real ways. Respondents also communicated the need for systematic culture change in the way that racism is handled, noting that campus community complaints should be listened to and taken seriously. Other key challenges and areas of focus include sufficiently resourcing offices and individuals that are doing anti-racism work on campus, and implementing Anti-Black Racism Taskforce recommendations.

The theme of EDI, which includes anti-racism, as both a top strength and challenge of the institution reflects polarized opinions expressed by respondents, suggesting that while the University has made efforts in this area, there is more work that needs to be done. This data does not thoroughly capture the complex nature of interpreting questions, nor does it capture the entirety of the on-campus points of view, however, this data provided a starting point for later discussions.
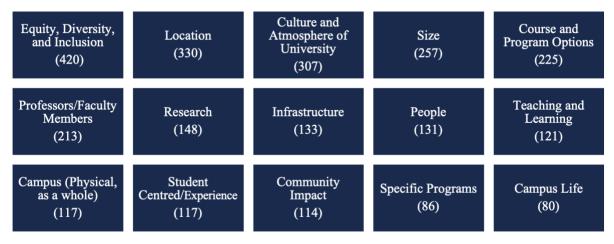
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (420)	Location (330)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (307)	Size (257)	Course and Program Options (225)
Professors/Faculty Members (213)	Research (148)	Infrastructure (133)	People (131)	Teaching and Learning (121)
Campus (Physical, as a whole) (117)	Student Centred/Experience (117)	Community Impact (114)	Specific Programs (86)	Campus Life (80)

Figure 1. Fifteen most frequent themes regarding the University's strengths.
Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

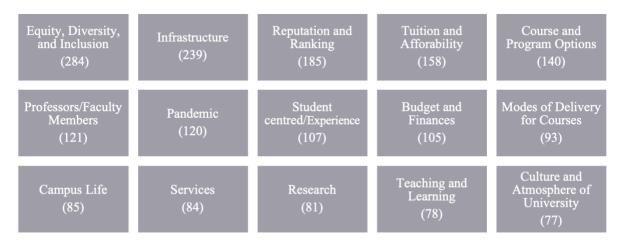|				
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (284)	Infrastructure (239)	Reputation and Ranking (185)	Tuition and Afforability (158)	Course and Program Options (140)
Professors/Faculty Members (121)	Pandemic (120)	Student centred/Experience (107)	Budget and Finances (105)	Modes of Delivery for Courses (93)
Campus Life (85)	Services (84)	Research (81)	Teaching and Learning (78)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (77)

Figure 2. Fifteen most frequent themes regarding the University's challenges.
Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

Aspire Café Conversations
In March and April 2022, students, staff and faculty were invited to attend Aspire Café Conversation events across campus. The events involved interactive table discussions targeted at key topics identified through the Aspire survey. More than 650 students and nearly 200 staff and faculty attended the events. The Café Conversations aimed to gather participants' input on key questions intended to shape strategic priorities and future directions of the institution. As part of the conversation on "an increasingly equitable, just and

welcoming campus culture," students were asked: **What made you feel like you don't belong on campus?** and faculty were asked: **What experiences or practices make people feel like they don't belong on campus?** A set of themes were developed to organize and group responses. Table 1 shows the top 5 themes for each question.

When asked about sense of belonging, responses from students ($n = 53$) and faculty ($n = 10$) often alluded to lack of EDI and racism. Students, for example, expressed that they felt like they do not belong on campus when they experience racism; how the University handles racist situations; and the lack of diversity and representation of ethnic minorities in the student body. Faculty expressed that people feel like they do not belong on campus when they experience racism, prejudice and being treated as inferior; when they experience hatred, microaggressions and their voices not being heard; and when dealing with culturally insensitive faculty and staff.

Table 1. Five most frequent themes regarding belonging at the University of Windsor.

What made you feel like you don't belong on campus?					
Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Students	Pandemic (71)	EDI (53)	Student Centred/ Experience (46)	Campus Life (37)	Academic Standards/ Integrity (33)
What experiences or practices make people feel like they don't belong on campus?					
Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Faculty	EDI (10)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (5)	Belonging (4)	Trust and Integrity (4)	Staffing (2)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

As part of this discussion, students were also asked: **Where should the University focus its efforts first to make the campus more equitable for all students?** and staff and faculty were asked: **How can the University of Windsor foster a sense of welcoming and inclusion on our campus?** A set of themes were developed to organize and group responses.

EDI emerged as a key theme for student respondents ($n = 58$) and staff and faculty ($n = 65$) respondents. Table 2 and 3 show the top 5 themes to both questions and the EDI data report summarizes these findings in more depth.

Students described EDI and belonging as a focus for the University, particularly through the recruitment of a culturally diverse student body, faculty, and staff; equal opportunity for students across departments; and addressing the needs of marginalized groups. Staff and faculty frequently expressed that the University should better address EDI and sense of

belonging issues on campus. Comments included hiring diverse faculty and staff, particularly those in leadership roles; calling out and punishing acts of racism, sexism, and bias and modeling appropriate behaviour; equitable opportunities, space and time for all voices to be heard; and mandatory EDID training.

Table 2. Five most frequent themes regarding where the University can focus its efforts first to make the campus more equitable for all students.

Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Students	Campus Life (157)	Accessibility (86)	EDI/Belonging (58)	Campus Services (48)	Affordability (45)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

Table 3. Five most frequent themes regarding where the University can foster a sense of welcoming and inclusion on our campus.

Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Faculty & Staff	EDI/Belonging (65)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (34)	Campus Life (25)	Communication (17)	Trust and Integrity (11)
Faculty	EDI/Belonging (44)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (13)	Trust and Integrity (9)	Campus Life (6)	Communication (5)
Staff	EDI/Belonging (21)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (21)	Campus Life (19)	Communication (12)	Accessibility (5)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

Anti-Racism Focus Group

In August 2022, faculty and staff were invited to participate in a hybrid focus group discussion on Anti-Racism. This session was organized in partnership with the Office of VP, EDI and the Strategic Planning EDI sub-committee: Clinton Beckford, Selinda Berg, Cherie Gagnon, Elayne Isaacs, Beverly Jacobs, Erika Kustra, Phebe Lam, Rebecca Major, Marium Tolson-Murtty, Radha Patel and Anneke Smit.

Nearly 45 faculty and staff attended the 3-hour session which began with a presentation on the institution's history, current anti-racism initiatives and frameworks, and aspiration for change moving forward. The session was intended to operate in conjunction with an overall effort to pursue inclusive practice through the planning process – a process that was a learning experience for everyone. A diverse group of facilitators guided the discussion using best practice ORID methodology in which participants noted *objective* facts about the data
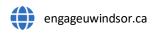
that was presented, *reflected* on how they felt about the data, and *interpreted* what the data was telling them. The key themes summarized below are from the *decisional* stage where participants were asked to identify the institution's untapped potential and strategic priorities related to anti-racism at the University of Windsor. Many of the themes that emerged in this session overlap with those from the EDI focus group.

Participants expressed the need for the University to develop a **culture of anti-racism** and ensure **grassroots voices have processes to be heard**. For a culture of anti-racism, many noted the need for better, more prominent communication around the University's anti-racism initiatives and accomplishments to ensure social understanding and to reinforce the directions that the institution is committed to. Participants acknowledged that a critical mass is needed to shift the campus culture, including those in positions of power and others who traditionally benefit from oppression. Participants communicated that we must apply an anti-racist lens to all that we do and consider any disproportionate impact of our decisions. Many also noted we need a ground up approach where faculties and the broader community are involved in processes, and where grassroots voices can be heard.

Participants expressed that the University should ensure **policy** is in place and reviewed regularly, and that there is **accountability** for success or failure to meet that policy. Participants noted the need for codes of conduct addressing anti-racism with clear language around processes and outcomes if processes are not followed, and that this should be a requirement for third parties as well. Participants communicated that the University's racism misconduct policy should include treatment of students and employees, recruitment practices, and effective complaint and feedback mechanisms. It was stated that performance appraisals are necessary to hold leadership accountable, and suggested that an Oversight Team monitor the University's progress towards anti-racism efforts and communicate accomplishments. Others noted that there needs to be deeper departmental- and faculty-level engagement in dealing with anti-racism for the institution to systematically improve.

Another theme that emerged is the need for **training** that is extensive, systematic, and provides extra credit and recognition. Participants suggested mandatory training and pedagogy for members of the campus community – educational opportunities that are inclusive, responsive, and focused on anti-racism, anti-oppression, and equity, diversity and inclusion. This should include broad-based training opportunities for all members of campus, as well as focused programming for managers, senior leaders, the Board of Governors and those with roles that strongly impact the student experience. Others identified potential challenges with that approach. Many noted that we need our colleagues to be empathetic, compassionate, informed of unconscious biases, and be champions of anti-racism. Others mentioned the University should focus on expanding curriculum by developing courses and programs focusing on anti-Black racism and Indigenous studies.

Participants expressed that the University can be a **leader in demonstrating anti-racism** both on and off campus. Situated in one of the most diverse regions in Canada, participants shared the sentiment that we can be a regional leader in this space by engaging surrounding communities, and we can be a leading University for EDI and anti-racism. It was

acknowledged, however, that to do this there must be a focus on establishing permanent positions, leaders and succession planning.

Another theme that emerged was the need for **systematic diversification of the workforce**. Participants noted the need for hiring a diverse workforce and expressed that the diversity of the student body and broader community is not reflected among staff and faculty. Others noted that the University should continue the process of establishing and supporting the Black Scholars Hiring Initiative, and should focus on inclusive recruitment, career development and retention strategies for all employee groups.

Participants communicated that the University should focus on the **experience of international students** and noted the need for better services, support and consideration. Many participants expressed concerns for international students and their sense of belonging at the University of Windsor, highlighting that we need to better integrate international students into our campus community to enhance their university experience. It was noted that international students may experience marginalization for many reasons including racism, for those international students who are racialized.

It was noted by participants that the University needs to better **recognize and reward campus employees** doing anti-racism work. Participants acknowledged that too few individuals on campus are taking on the added workload of dismantling racism, and argued that those who are doing the work must be acknowledged and compensated for their efforts. It was also noted more generally that more **resources and support** for anti-racism work are needed. Individuals, offices and departments doing anti-racism work should be resourced properly. Participants also discussed the need for encouragement and support to change processes without worrying about repercussions.

External Community Consultations

Between June and September 2022, alumni, industry partners, community leaders, and residents of Windsor-Essex were asked to participate in consultation activities including surveys, group discussions, listening events and community pop-ups. Consultation with the external community involved engagement from more than 700 alumni, partners and residents and a total of 28 hours spent in the community. While the questions asked at these events were broader in nature, themes of EDI and anti-racism often emerged, and respondents shared similar sentiments as on-campus stakeholders.

Respondents in the Alumni survey often cited efforts toward EDI as a key strength of the institution noting the University's recent commitment to EDID, and the diversity within our student body, programs, and personnel. However, respondents also noted that one key change that University should focus on from now until the next strategic plan in 2027 is increasing EDI-related efforts on campus. Respondents noted racism is a challenge for the University, and suggested the University should focus on more resources into anti-oppression programs, and being a leader in anti-racism for the community more generally.

Consultations with community partners, leaders and residents expressed the desire for the University to play a more critical role in advocacy for EDI, anti-racism, and accessibility in the broader Windsor-Essex community. Respondents noted the importance of building relationships and partnerships with diverse organizations and groups in the community, as well as helping to address poverty, housing, educational attainment, and transit issues.

Next Steps

Over the past several months, the campus and broader community have engaged in discussions on how to move the University of Windsor forward in areas of EDI and anti-racism. Participants acknowledged the difficult truths of our institution's past and present, appreciated the progress we have made, and recognized that much more work needs to be done to become a **truly inclusive, welcoming, and equitable campus** where everyone feels they belong.

Across the consultation activities, participants noted we must apply an EDI and anti-racism lens to all that we do. These conversations have led to the identification of several tactical actions needed to create an environment where opportunities flourish so that the University to reach its full potential. These conversations have also led to the identification of promise areas for future institutional initiatives, many of which focus on the potential for the University to build on current work in order to foster inclusive, fair, and welcoming campus cultures and to become leaders in this work across all aspects of the University's mission and practice. These conversations have helped shape the values and goals of the institution, and will inform the operationalization of the strategic plan in the cascading strategies.