

# THE FINAL REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON CAMPUS RACISM

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF **STUDENTS**  
FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES **ÉTUDIANTES ET ÉTUDIANTS**

ONTARIO  
CFSONTARIO.CA

General inquiries regarding this document should be directed to:

**Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario**

180 Bloor Street West, Suite 900

Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V6

Tel 416.925.3825

Fax 416.925.6774

Email [federation@cfsontario.ca](mailto:federation@cfsontario.ca)

WWW [cfsontario.ca](http://cfsontario.ca)

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# Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario

With more than 300,000 members at 37 students' unions and in all regions of the province, the Canadian Federation of Students is the voice of post-secondary students in Ontario. Founded in 1981, the Federation represents students at the college, undergraduate and graduate levels, including full and part-time students.

Algoma University Students' Union  
Brock University Graduate Students' Association  
Carleton University Students' Association  
Carleton University Graduate Students' Association  
Association étudiante de La Cité collégiale  
Student Association of George Brown College  
Glendon College Student Union  
University of Guelph Central Student Association  
University of Guelph Graduate Students' Association  
Lakehead University Student Union  
Laurentian Association of Mature and Part-time Students  
Laurentian University Graduate Students' Association  
Laurentian University Students' General Association  
Association des étudiantes et étudiants francophones de l'Université Laurentienne  
McMaster University Graduate Students' Association  
Nipissing University Student Union  
Ontario College of Art and Design Student Union  
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Queen's University Society of Graduate and Professional Students  
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Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson  
Saint Paul University Students' Association  
University of Toronto at Scarborough Campus Students' Union  
University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union  
University of Toronto Students' Union  
University of Toronto at Mississauga Students' Union  
Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students of the University of Toronto  
Trent Central Student Association  
Trent University Graduate Student Association  
University of Western Ontario Society of Graduate Students  
Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Students' Association  
University of Windsor Students' Alliance  
University of Windsor Graduate Students' Society  
University of Windsor Organisation of Part-time University Students  
York Federation of Students  
York University Graduate Students' Association

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# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM IN CAMPUS LIFE

### ***Racism in the Classroom***

- Require the inclusion of equity statements in course syllabi to be read out and discussed at the beginning of each first class.
- Create a departmental advocate for professors.
- Provide professors with teaching and professional support.
- Require and provide anti-oppression training to faculty and staff.
- Encourage professors to intervene in a constructive way whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Encourage students to speak out whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Publicise and promote avenues by which students can report racist incidents in the classroom.
- Ensure safe measures exist for students, faculty and staff to speak out against racism.

### ***Campus life***

#### ***a) Student Events***

- Encourage students to speak out about all incidents of racism at campus events.
- Promote safe avenues by which students can report racist incidents at campus events.
- Include diverse options of events and programmes that are reflective of the student population.
- Promote and advertise for events widely and encourage diverse attendance and participation.
- Ensure event organisers are from various backgrounds so that different perspectives to event planning, organising and promotion are involved.

#### ***b) Student Space***

- Respond immediately to incidents of racism, and work collaboratively to meet the needs of the person or group of people that have experienced racism.
- Organise opposition to racist incidents on campus and in student space.
- Implement “safe space” policies.

#### ***c) Orientation of New Students***

- Organise diverse orientation events to ensure that students from all backgrounds are represented and encouraged to participate.
- Require anti-oppression training during orientation for all campus community members.
- Include information about community and student services in all orientation packages.

### ***Residence Life***

- Ensure that Residence Assistants / Dons go through mandatory anti-oppression training.
- Provide anti-oppression training for all residence students during orientation.
- Create a “safe space” policy for residences.
- Include equity provisions in hiring policy for residence staff to ensure representation from racialised groups.

- Provide resources to ensure that residence programming includes equity-based events.
- Ensure that there is a university or college process for students to safely raise concerns about racism.

### ***Student Engagement and Representation***

- Stop the privatisation of education by uploading user fee costs from students to government through the progressive tax system.
- Hire more tenure-track faculty to reduce average class sizes.
- Ensure that all campus community events and programmes are diverse and reflective of campus population.
- Advertise student union and other representative group elections to include all students.
- Mentor or “buddy” programmes should be established to help orient international students to the campus.
- Provide support programmes and resources for international students.

### ***Campus Media***

- Encourage racialised students to write for, and become editors of their campus newspapers.
- Student newspaper editors should challenge themselves to represent news that may be outside of their personal scope.
- Student newspaper editors must recruit writers that represent a diversity of students.
- Student newspaper editors should encourage students to write stories that are important to them in order to broaden coverage of student issues.
- Student newspaper editors should form relationships with diverse student clubs to create awareness of the opportunity to contribute to the campus newspaper.

## **INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN HIRING AND CURRICULUM**

### ***Curriculum***

- Integrate multiple perspectives into mainstream curriculum.
- Create departmental review committees to examine Eurocentricism and various teaching perspectives.
- Implement more diverse curriculum committees with student representation.
- Create mandatory equity-based courses in every department.

### ***Programmes and Funding***

- Designate targeted funding for the development of critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Create dedicated funding for graduate studies in critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Ensure that students can enroll in minor or major concentrations in critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Ensure that faculty who design and develop curricula for critical theory and equity studies programmes are provided with job security and adequate departmental resources.

### ***Hiring, Promotion and Tenure***

- Conduct equity audits of faculty by department. Audits can include data on new hirings, internal promotions and type of employment status.
- Ensure that promotion and tenure criteria identify the under representation of racialised groups and include faculty members’ contribution to diverse teaching methods and approaches and student mentorship.
- Ensure that hiring committees maintain diverse student and faculty representation.

## **SYSTEMIC RACISM IN INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

### ***Human Rights Offices***

- Ensure that the campus human rights office has autonomy from the institution’s senior administration.
- Ensure that human rights offices are not located in administrative buildings.
- Provide human rights officers with an advocacy capacity, in addition to their role as a mediator.
- Require that human rights offices report to a board comprised of students, faculty and staff.
- Require that human rights offices track and report complaint/case data anonymously and present this information to the Senate or Academic Council bi-annually with recommendations.
- Ensure third parties can make complaints to human rights offices.

### ***Security***

- Require campus security members to annually attend mandatory anti-oppression training facilitated by an external agency or organisation.



- Require campus security to track and report incident data and be subject to equity audits.
- Security and campus police should be diverse and reflective of the campus population.
- Establish extensive policies, protocols and mechanisms to deal with incidences that occur during events.

### ***Decision-Making Bodies***

- Increase the number of seats for students at all governing bodies.
- Establish an equity-based code of conduct for meetings, ensuring that the participation of everyone is encouraged and respected.
- Require anti-oppression training for governors and senators.

### ***Administrative Policy***

#### ***a) Codes of Conduct***

- Ensure that procedural policies that disproportionately affect racialised students are eliminated.
- Track and collect data related to who is being penalised under codes of conduct. Require that this data be presented to the Senate and ensure the public availability of the data.
- Replace codes of conduct with policies that outline students' rights and responsibilities written in collaboration with students.

#### ***b) Appeals Processes***

- Ensure that student advocates are available to be present with students who are undergoing the academic integrity processes. Students' unions should be charged with training and designating student advocates.
- Track and collect data related to race and language in the academic integrity process.
- Increase the face time between students and professors in order to help clarify any confusion with academic integrity guidelines.
- Enact a more constructive approach, involving options that do not rely on a failing grade for first offenders, but instead on academic tutorials where appropriate.
- Ensure that all academic appeals panels have at least one student member, selected through a democratic process.

- Ensure that constructive options such as assigning language or academic tutorials are explored for ESL students before they are penalised.
- Academic integrity offices should track information such as race, gender and language of students who are charged in order to detect systemic patterns of discipline. This could be done through a form or questionnaire that is filled out by a student before they complete the process.

### ***Admissions Criteria***

- Create an Access Category in admissions guidelines for undergraduate, graduate, professional and diploma programmes.
- Conduct equity audits of admissions by department. Audits can also include retention rates and completion times.
- Create transition programmes for people who do not have the formal educational background that is typically required for university or college entrance due to financial reasons, family circumstances or experiences related to systemic discrimination.

## **SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE BROADER SOCIETY**

### ***Financial Barriers***

- Governments should reduce financial barriers for students by immediately freezing tuition fees and instituting a framework that progressively reduces tuition fees.
- Federal and Ontario student financial assistance should be shifted from a debt-based to a grant-based system.
- Governments should reallocate tax credits and expand existing back-end grants to form a comprehensive system of up-front needs-based grants.
- Income contingent loan repayment and other forms of regressive financial aid schemes should be rejected by policy makers.
- Government-funded student loans should not accumulate interest, even after graduation.
- Differential tuition fees for international students should be eliminated.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE TASK FORCE

## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

<b>Wesley Crichlow:</b>	Tenured Associate Professor, Faculty of Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies Programme, University of Ontario Institute of Technology.
<b>Terry Downey:</b>	Executive Vice-President, Ontario Federation of Labour.
<b>Avvy Go:</b>	Director, Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic.
<b>Frances Henry:</b>	Professor Emerita, York University and author of the 2003 report, Systemic Racism Towards Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen's University.
<b>Sandy Hudson:</b>	National Women's Representative, Canadian Federation of Students, Chairperson-Elect, Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario and President, University of Toronto Students' Union.
<b>Ali Mallah:</b>	Vice-President, Canadian Arab Federation.
<b>Lee Maracle:</b>	Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Aboriginal Studies/English Department and Writer-In-Residence at First Nation's House, University of Toronto.
<b>Hildah Otieno:</b>	Services Coordinator, Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario.
<b>Krisna Saravanamuttu:</b>	Racialised Students Representative, Canadian Federation of Students and President, York Federation of Students

For more complete biographies of each of the Task Force members, please refer to the appendices.

## BACKGROUND

The Canadian Federation of Students represents over one-half million college and university students in Canada and more than 300,000 students in Ontario. The Federation advocates for high-quality post-secondary education in Canada that is accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic background, race, gender, ability, citizenship, nationality, sexuality or religious affiliation. While the Federation identifies economic barriers as the most significant hindrance to equal access to post-secondary education, discriminatory practices can also serve to prevent equitable access to universities and colleges in Ontario.

At the August 2008 Ontario General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students, members voted to initiate a task force to investigate and identify how racism manifests on Ontario campuses. This initiative was a student response to increasing student concerns about experiences of racism and discrimination on campus. Students' unions identified a general lack of progress among post-secondary institutions in addressing these issues and decided to launch a Task Force to investigate them. This report follows the Federation's Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students, which was struck in January 2006, and released its final report during March 2007.

This report is timely and important in Ontario, given the province's and Canada's changing demographics. The 2006 Census identified more than 200 ethnic origins of people living in Canada, and more than five million people identified as visible minority.<sup>1</sup> Canada's racialised population is rapidly rising due to increased immigration from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America and the Middle East. Canada accepts roughly 250,000 new immigrants annually, a rate that has been relatively constant since the 1990s. Most new immigrants to Canada settle in Toronto, Montréal or

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006.

Vancouver. Statistics Canada shows that there was a 27 percent growth from 2001 to 2006 in the visible minority population in Canada, compared to a five percent increase in the general population. This trend has also been reflected in the changing demographic of students in college and universities across the country. Given these statistics and trends, students have tried to better understand the needs of racialised students and the manifestation of racism on Ontario campuses.

## GOALS OF THE TASK FORCE

The goals of the Task Force are as follows:

- Provide a forum for racialised students, faculty, staff and campus community members to speak out about racism and racial discrimination;
- Promote awareness and education about racism and racial discrimination and the needs of racialised students, faculty, staff and campus community members in Ontario;
- Document incidents of racism and racial discrimination and institutional responses on Ontario campuses;
- Develop strategies and document successes in addressing the needs of racialised students in Ontario and make recommendations that are both campus-specific and system wide; and
- Produce a Task Force Report on the hearings and promote its findings to administrators, government, and the general community to be released on or about March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racism.



## CAMPUS HEARINGS

A Task Force of nine community members representing a diverse range of experiences pertaining to racism and racial discrimination was struck and materials were developed to advertise and promote hearings on campuses including posters, pamphlets and the website: [www.noracism.ca](http://www.noracism.ca). During the fall of 2008, the Task Force began meeting with community groups and organisations to seek their endorsement, and provided them with information about future hearings on campuses across the province.

The Task Force on Campus Racism was launched in February 2009 at George Brown College with a press conference that introduced the Task Force members and described the overall objectives of the initiative.

In an unfortunate demonstration of the relevance of the Task Force, the initiative itself was met with an incident of racism. A week after the launch of the Task Force, on February 27, the Federation received a death threat. This came in the form of hate mail that included two pictures cut out of a newspaper and placed in an envelope. The first picture was that of Hildah Otieno, a Task Force member, with the words “REFUGEE DOG” written at the top and “KKK” written on the button that she was wearing in the photo. The second was a cartoon picture of two police officers (with KKK written on them) shooting at a chimpanzee. In that picture, racial slurs were written across it, wishing death upon black people using the “N” word. This was clearly a death threat directed at Otieno. Otieno filed a statement with the police and the pictures were collected as evidence and for further investigation. It was evident that there were some people who opposed this initiative or any other anti-racism work that was being done in general.

Hearings were scheduled across the province from February 2009 to October 2009 and were largely organised by local students’ unions, in collaboration with students’ associations and other on-campus student groups. At each campus, students, staff and faculty began by forming campus committees, setting dates for hearings and selecting panellists who could appropriately address the issues faced by racialised students, staff and community members on that particular campus.

Students, faculty and campus staff participated in 17 hearings that occurred across Ontario, where verbal and written statements were submitted to the Task Force. Three to four panel members participated in each hearing, including at least

one Task Force member. Panelists provided introductory remarks to give context to the Task Force and encouraged participants to provide an oral or written statement.

Task Force members attended hearings, shared expertise and insight, and wrote reports that summarised their experiences and observations. Those reports, along with the online, written and oral statements of those who participated in the campus hearings, have informed the findings and recommendations in this report.

The campus hearings provided a forum for racialised students, staff and faculty to speak out, encourage awareness and education about the needs of racialised students in Ontario and document incidents of racism

and racial discrimination on the campus. The hearings were open to all members of the campus community. Statements were received by students, staff and faculty who are racialised or who have experienced racism or racial discrimination. Participants were asked to provide statements on the following suggested topics, but were not limited to these issues:

- Racist comments and actions
- Under-representation of racialised students
- Admissions standards and processes
- Issues/interactions with campus security
- Racial profiling on campus
- Representation on institutional governing bodies
- Diversity of faculty
- Diversity of courses available
- Anti-racist pedagogy
- Racism in the classroom, from students and/or faculty
- Hate crimes on campus
- Racist/hateful graffiti
- Incidents of intimidation, discrimination or hate
- Inclusiveness of events and community services
- Eurocentric curriculum

- Availability/effectiveness of human rights services
- Access to campus space
- Systemic racism in post-secondary institutions

Statements were guided by a series of questions (included in the appendices).

Oral statements were reflected in notes taken by campus organisers at the hearing, or transcribed from hearing recordings. Following the hearings, written statements were compiled and coded to identify the major themes that have become the basis for this report.

This report contends that post-secondary institutions are responsible for a healthy and inclusive educational environment. Institutions have an obligation to be aware of whether their practices, policies and programmes are having an adverse impact or result in systemic discrimination toward racialised persons or groups. From a human rights perspective, it is not acceptable to choose to remain unaware of the potential existence of discrimination or harassment, or to ignore or fail to address human rights matters, whether or not a complaint has been made. An institution violates the Ontario Human Rights Code where it directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally violates the Code or does not directly violate the Code but rather authorises, condones, adopts or ratifies behaviour that is contrary to the Code.



# AN OVERVIEW OF THE ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

In order to provide a framework for analysing and understanding themes from the hearings, the Task Force reviewed the rights afforded to individuals through the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). This section provides an overview of how the Code protects individuals in Ontario from racial discrimination and harassment.

The Code protects individuals from discrimination based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status (including same sex partners), family status, receipt of public assistance and record of offences. Organisations in Ontario, including post-secondary institutions, are responsible for implementing policies and practices that uphold the Code.

## DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

### *Terminology*

When it is necessary to describe people collectively, the term “racialised person” or “racialised group” is preferred over “racial minority,” “visible minority,” “person of colour,” or “non-White” as it expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description based on perceived biological traits. Furthermore, these other terms treat “white” as the norm to which racialised persons are to be compared and have a tendency to group all racialised persons in one category, as if they are all the same.

### *Racism*

Racism is defined as an ideology that either explicitly or implicitly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others, based on race. Racist ideology can be openly manifested in racial slurs, jokes or hate crimes. However, it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these beliefs are unconsciously maintained by individuals and have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism differs from simple prejudice in that it has also been tied to the aspect of power—that is the social, political, economic and institutional power that is held by the dominant group in society.

Racism exists at a number of levels, in particular:

#### **1) Individual Racism**

Racism may be expressed in an overt manner but also through everyday behaviour that involves many small events in the interaction between people. This is often described as “everyday racism” and can be subtle in nature.

#### **2) Institutional or Systemic Racism**

Racism is evident in organisational and government policies, practices, and procedures and “normal ways of doing things” which may directly, indirectly, consciously or unwittingly promote, sustain, or entrench differential advantage for some people and disadvantage for others.

#### **3) Societal Racism**

Racism is evident in cultural and ideological expressions that underlie and sustain dominant values and beliefs. It is evident in a whole range of concepts, ideas, images and institutions that provide the framework of interpretation and meaning for racialised thought in society. It is communicated and reproduced through agencies of socialisation and cultural transmission such as mass media, schools, colleges and universities, religious doctrines and practices, art, music and literature. It is also reflected in everyday language.



## **Racial Discrimination**

Racial discrimination cannot be distinctively compartmentalised since manifestations of discrimination can overlap and blur together to a large degree. However, a description of the different ways in which racial discrimination can take place can be helpful in understanding and addressing the experience of racial discrimination.

### **a) Stereotyping and Prejudice**

Stereotyping can be described as a process by which people use social categories such as race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc., in acquiring, processing and recalling information about others. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group, regardless of their individual differences. It is often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalisations. Prejudice is an antipathy or negative feelings held by someone about another person or a group.

### **b) Racial Profiling**

Racial profiling has been defined as any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or different treatment.

### **c) Subtle Racial Discrimination**

In many instances, racial discrimination takes on more subtle and covert forms. It has long been established in Canadian law that intent or motive to discriminate is not a necessary element for finding that a discriminatory act has taken place. It is sufficient if there is a discriminatory effect to the conduct. Subtle forms of discrimination can often only be detected upon examining all of the circumstances. Individual acts themselves may be ambiguous or explained away, but when viewed as part of the larger picture and with an appropriate understanding of how racial discrimination takes place, may lead to an inference that racial discrimination was a factor in the treatment an individual received.

### **d) Racial Harassment**

Harassment is defined in the Code as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.”

### **e) Poisoned Environment**

A single statement or incident, if sufficiently serious or substantial, can have an impact on a racialised person by creating a poisoned environment. A consequence of creating a poisoned environment is that certain individuals are subjected to terms and conditions of employment, tenancy, services, etc. that are quite different from those experienced by individuals who are not subjected to those comments or conduct. Such instances give rise to a denial of equality under the Code.

### **f) Language-Related Discrimination**

While the Code does not include “language” as a prohibited ground of discrimination, language can be an element of a complaint based on the grounds of ancestry, ethnic origin, place of origin and race. A person’s accent is related to his or her ancestry, ethnic origin or place of origin and accents or manners of speech can be racialised characteristics.

## **Issues in Education**

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has identified educational institutions as an area of concern for perpetuating various forms of racial discrimination. Concerns that have been identified include streaming, bias in testing and evaluation, a monocultural and exclusionary curriculum, unfair and unusual discipline, low expectations, failing to deal with racial incidents and bullying, lack of role models, negative attitudes and stereotypes and a lack of programmes that support the needs and concerns of racialised students.

## **Preventing and Responding to Racism and Racial Discrimination**

Organisations and institutions operating in Ontario have an obligation to have in place measures to prevent and respond to breaches of the Code. They have a duty to take steps to foster environments that are respectful of human rights. The Ontario Human Rights Commission suggests that an effective anti-racism programme contains four components: 1) a comprehensive anti-racism vision statement and policy; 2) proactive, ongoing monitoring; 3) implementation strategies; 4) evaluation.



# TASK FORCE THEMES AND FINDINGS

Upon the conclusion of 17 hearings on 14 campuses and the compilation of Task Force participant statements, the Task Force members identified four major themes: Individual and systemic racism in campus life; institutional racism in hiring and curriculum; institutional racism in university policy and governance; and systemic racism in the broader society. The following report outlines each of these areas in detail, with appropriate sub-themes. One of the most common problems identified as hearings were organised, and within the hearings themselves, was the perception amongst some students that racism does not exist, that racism is something of the past or that racism is normal and unavoidable. This report debunks these myths by identifying the ways in which racism exists on campuses in Ontario, and also by demonstrating a willingness on behalf of students to address campus racism meaningfully and seriously. By publicising these issues and creating space for discussion, the Task Force has begun the process of eliminating racism on campuses across Ontario, thanks to the participation of every individual who bravely spoke out.

These statements made by Task Force participants demonstrate that racialised students may experience more than one form of oppression or discrimination. In addition to race, discrimination and oppression occur based on, but not limited to, the following: sex, gender, sexual orientation, social or economic class, (dis)ability, age, country of origin, ethnicity, language, culture and religion. Often, experiences of racism involve other forms of oppression that cannot be easily categorised. Since oppressions are not divisible from one another or simply layered upon each other, the experience of more than one form of oppression is referred to as “intersecting” or “interlocking” oppressions. This is meant to capture the phenomenon of multiple oppressions that produce unique and indivisible sites of oppression as manifested in the lived experience of the different forms of actual and constructed difference.

***“He came in with black paint on his face, an outfit, and spoke with a fake Jamaican accent and he kept saying ‘yo yo yo’ during his presentation. The course instructor thought it was great, the person got a good mark, there were no issues.”***

*Student at the  
University of Windsor*

## INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM IN CAMPUS LIFE

### ***Racism in the Classroom***

Racism is present in college and university classrooms in covert and overt ways. The actions or comments of a single person could create a poisoned environment for racialised students. The poisoned environment can be based on the nature of the comments or actions and the impact of these on an individual, rather than the frequency that this type of behaviour occurs. In an educational context, racism in the classroom compromises the ability of every student – both racialised and non-racialised – to learn in a constructive and critical environment. It places a particular toll on racialised students since these students are subjected to sometimes offensive conditions in the classroom. It disrupts the learning process and damages the learning experience for racialised students.

During the Task Force hearings it was often reported that incidents of racism in the classroom were not addressed by the professor. One example was from a student from the University of Windsor, who was in a class where a student had to do a presentation on a person’s experience of being deported. “He came in with black paint on his face, an outfit, and spoke with a fake Jamaican accent and he kept saying ‘yo yo yo’ during his presentation. The course instructor thought it was great, the person got a good mark, there were no issues.” The student who relayed this story did not feel comfortable raising the issue with her professor.

At Laurentian University, an Aboriginal student described the physical divide of students in a class about Canadian law and Aboriginal people. “This class sits all Indians on this side, all white people on that side. So, from day one it was like this ... you’ve got an angry bunch of people over here and people over here who don’t know what the hell is going on.” This environment brought out the existing tensions between people in the class.

**“...[white privilege] permeates the walls, books, classrooms and everything that makes Queen’s what it is.”**

*Student at Queen’s University*

A Palestinian student at the University of Toronto described her experience in a class where the professor brought up the conflict in the Middle East. The student felt the need to speak up after the professor presented the issue in a way that distressed her: “I spoke up as a Palestinian ... because I felt in a sense attacked because of the things that were being said.” When the student expressed her views in the class, the professor silenced the student by “shushing” her. After class, a few students in the class approached this student and said to her, “what you did was ok, don’t worry.” These students took notice about what happened in the class and agreed that it was an issue.

Another student from Laurentian University was in a biology class and was asked where she was from. In her report to the hearing she noted frustration with the fact that this question is often asked of everyone who is not “the average Caucasian person.” She answered that she was Palestinian. “After that, I realised that every day that we went to class he would make a joke towards me, right? Often the problem is that a lot of them will not outwardly say they’re racist, or will not make outwardly racist remarks, but they’ll pick on you in a way. So, nobody else sees it, but you see it because you are the one being targeted.”

Other students echoed the feeling of being treated differently in subtle ways. A biochemistry student at Trent University said, “It seems that I really need to work four times more than an average student to get the attention of the professor. It’s really hard when I am the only brown person in the class.” A student from Queen’s University said that she was tired of being the only racialised person in the class, being expected to speak for all racialised people in the world.

The hearings demonstrated that large class sizes significantly impacted the quality of students’ interactions with their professors. Racialised students said that due to large classes, overloaded course loads, part-time jobs and family obligations, there was no time to seek out their professors outside the classroom, which affected their academic performance.

A professor at the University of Windsor described the difficulties of teaching about racism in the classroom. She observed that teaching about racism in overt ways, like violence and the general impact of inequalities, is acceptable to most students. However, when the topic of white supremacy or white privilege is brought up, they get very defensive. She expanded, “There are those classes when I actually feel unsafe standing in front of 120 students and talking about things I feel people are resentful of. That means you are naming the responsibility

on the whole system and putting the responsibility back to everybody else. It is very easy to say yes [racism] exists and we should address it but when you have to give up power, that’s when difficulties arise.” In this case, the professor felt physically unsafe when raising important issues in the classroom. The intimidation had an emotional impact on the professor, and on everyone in the class, restricting the scope of the discussion and discourse on racism.

## Recommendations

- Require the inclusion of equity statements in course syllabi to be read out and discussed at the beginning of each first class.
- Create a departmental advocate for professors.
- Provide professors with teaching and professional support.
- Require and provide anti-oppression training to faculty and staff.
- Encourage professors to intervene in a constructive way whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Encourage students to speak out whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Publicise and promote avenues by which students can report racist incidents in the classroom.
- Ensure safe measures exist for students, faculty and staff to speak out against racism.

## Campus Life

Incidents of racism were identified as having occurred in multiple settings of campus life, including during student events, during orientation activities and within designated student space. Several students identified a culture of racism on their campus. Sometimes this was perpetuated by student initiatives, such as at Ryerson University, when some students started a “White Culture Group” on Facebook. This happened just after a student started a Facebook group called “I’m a White Minority at Ryerson,” which was changed to “I’m White Minority at a Toronto University” after the administration at Ryerson pressured the group to disassociate itself from Ryerson. The group claimed that white people were underrepresented on campus and received attention from media outlets, and eventually was endorsed by several racist and Neo-Nazi organisations. When a students’ union representative condemned the Facebook group for its racist connotations, she received threatening hate mail and a death threat. The incident created a chill on campus where racialised students felt particularly threatened.

At other times the culture of racism was not necessarily related to a particular incident, but a general sentiment on campus. For example, a report commissioned by the Queen’s Senate Educational Equity Committee in 2006 identified a “culture of whiteness,” meaning that

white privilege and power were reflected in curricula, pedagogical practices, hiring, promotion and research. The report, entitled the Henry Report after its author Dr. Frances Henry, has been used by campus activists in an effort to have the University administration address racism as a systemic issue on campus. At the Queen's hearing, a Task Force participant said that white privilege "permeates the walls, books, classrooms and everything that makes Queen's what it is."

A graduate student at Queen's was told not to go because it was "too white." She decided to go because she felt as though she wanted to be a part of changing this culture. At Queen's, she was told to "go back to Pakistan," despite not being from Pakistan. She was also spit on. "I've never felt so visible and so invisible all at the same time...I'm also quite angry at the fact that I came here and expected to grow as a person and learn new things and I've turned into a racialised person. I did not want to identify myself as a specific race nor did I want to have to think about fighting for a specific race or fighting for every racialised person, I'm actually really tired of doing that. I'm resentful of the fact that I never got to think of myself as a gendered person, or a person who enjoys certain things. I have to go with my racialised sense of self in order to justify any sort of community belonging."

Another Queen's student talked about the fact that he went to Queen's knowing about the culture of whiteness. He was born in China and grew up in Scarborough, where he was exposed to racial tensions in the city. "I came to Queen's specifically because it was a white school...I came here and took an effort to assimilate myself." This assimilation made him feel more accepted. His "Chineseness" or "Asianness" was less of an issue. "I was just another guy." At the same time he started to feel less able to express his culture and his heritage. When he attempted to do this, people made jokes about him. "When you're a white male in Canada, I guess the metaphor would be a blank slate. You can just be you. When you're a minority, people expect certain things," he said.

Often college and university administrations do not acknowledge that racism is a problem on campus. Sometimes institutions will organise events intended to celebrate multiculturalism on campus. These events are said to showcase students' various cultural backgrounds through performances, 'traditional' attire and cuisine. While some students feel that these events help them find expression for their normally marginalised or silenced cultural background, other students find these events to be lacking in cultural sensitivity, sometimes to a troubling extent. Students at the Carleton University hearing talked about the fact that "Multicultural" events can often further entrench stereotypes and only tokenistically represent 'cultures.' "The campus administration supports these events in order to showcase the diverse environment on campus, ironically ignoring systemic forms of racism and discrimination" said a student at Carleton.

## **a) Student Events**

One of the most alarming discoveries of the Task Force was the trend of students appearing at campus events in blackface. Blackface refers to a practice in which white performers have painted their faces black in order to portray Black people, creating and perpetuating racist stereotypes for the entertainment of white audiences. The practice was common as early as the 1800s, in minstrel shows, which ridiculed and denigrated Black people. At the University of Windsor, the University of Toronto, and Queen's University, students told stories of white students arriving at Halloween parties with their faces painted black.

"There were incidences of students coming to law student events with black make-up on during Halloween. They were sent home, but it wasn't addressed," said a student from the University of Windsor.

In 2005 at Queen's University, a student dressed up in blackface, a tiara and dress for a Halloween party as "Miss Ethiopia." Task Force participants from Queen's said that this particular incident was reported in the campus media, but that this type of incident happens every year and goes unreported. "When people dress up in blackface, nothing happens to them and nothing is said," explained one Queen's student.

In 2009 at the University of Toronto, a number of white students dressed up as a Jamaican bobsled team for a Halloween party that was organised by three college student associations. U of T students were outraged by the incident when photographs of the group were posted on the Internet. A town hall meeting was organised by a student group, and 250 students turned up for a lesson on the history of blackface from U of T professors, followed by a discussion. The bobsled group was in attendance and submitted an apology.

Another issue identified by Task Force participants was that events on campus were not organised to represent them. This hindered their participation in extra curricula activities. A University of Ottawa student said "It's really hard to know what events are going on unless you are plugged into the organising or promoting of the event. It's almost as if you have to belong to a club, organisation or live in residence to find out about events in general. I wish more emphasis was made to target those random students and draw them in so that we can attend such events because we have opinions that can make campus events better, more engaging and fun."

***"When you're a White male in Canada, I guess the metaphor would be a blank slate. You can just be you. When you're a minority people expect certain things."***

*Student at Queen's University*



A student from Laurentian discussed feeling excluded from events featuring pizza and beer. “Either you have the large group of students from Kapuskasing, Timmins whatever else, they’re all white, they’re all from northern Ontario, and they’re all ‘Canadienne de souche’. ... There is a large contingent of international students from African countries here, like Cameroon, Congo... and they’re not involved at all, at all, at all, at all! I don’t think it’s a hostile thing, but it’s just... there is never any effort made.”

**“... the events that we participated in did not reflect who I am as a person. No wonder most racialised students stay away from frosh week events.”**

*Student at Lakehead University*

### Recommendations

- Encourage students to speak out about all incidents of racism at campus events.
- Promote safe avenues by which students can report racist incidents at campus events.
- Include diverse options of events and programmes that are reflective of the student population.
- Promote and advertise for events widely and encourage diverse attendance and participation.
- Ensure event organisers are from various backgrounds so that different perspectives to event planning, organising and promotion are involved.

### b) Student Space

Where students’ unions have managed to secure student space on campus, such as a student centre, students reported efforts to make this space a “safe space” – free from hatred and discrimination. When students were targeted by racism in their own space it was particularly damaging to the community. At York University members of the Black Students’ Alliance arrived at their office one day to find the N-word along with “Go Back to Africa” scrawled on their office door. One Task Force participant recounted this experience: “Security and police were called and informed about the events. All students on campus were upset and appalled that the administration did not respond until the media got wind of the story and made a big deal of it, as it should. There were also numerous threats to [York University Black Students’ Alliance] members after the graffiti. We were being told that we were being sensitive, and that we took something too seriously.” This student went on to describe the escalation of racist events on campus following the initial incident, including racist graffiti on elections posters for certain candidates and an assault on a Black student on campus which was never properly resolved.

Racist incidents were also reported at Ryerson University’s Student Centre, where the East African Students’ Club’s bulletin board was set on fire. Students, faculty and staff came together to condemn this act.

At Guelph University, a student entered a University Centre washroom stall to find a picture of a swastika. When the administration was informed about the matter it was quickly removed. There was no communication to the campus community that this even had taken place. “It was all swept under the rug,” said the student. “I felt really threatened by it and the fact that the administration did nothing to address it. It makes me feel unsafe on campus sometimes.”

### Recommendations

- Respond immediately to incidents of racism, and work collaboratively to meet the needs of the person or group of people that have experienced racism.
- Organise opposition to racist incidents on campus and in student space.
- Implement “safe space” policies.

### c) Orientation for New Students

At the beginning of every academic year, colleges and universities organise and host various orientation events for all new and returning students. These events usually span a few days before classes start and are mostly attended by students living in residence. Task Force participants discussed feeling marginalised by events during orientation or “frosh week.” In one situation a Queen’s student was the only racialised person in her frosh group. During the activities a homeless man approached her and told her that he loved “coloured” people and pushed her against a wall. Neither her frosh leader nor the five other members of the frosh group intervened to help her.

Commuting students tend not to participate in orientation for a variety of reasons, such family or work obligations. Participants of the Task Force hearings agreed that more diverse and inclusive events during orientation would generally lead to participation among more students. They suggested that institutions have the responsibility to ensure that opportunities for racialised students are properly advertised. A Lakehead University student said “In my first year, I attended and participated in orientation and I quickly noticed that in most of the events I was the only one from my culture, and that the events that we participated in did not reflect who I am as a person. No wonder most racialised students stay away from frosh week events.”

### Recommendations

- Organise diverse orientation events to ensure that students from all backgrounds are represented and encouraged to participate.

- Require anti-oppression training during orientation for all campus community members.
- Include information about community and student services in all orientation packages.

## **Residence Life**

Campus residences allow students to be near their classes without having to look for accommodations in the competitive housing market. This is especially important for students whose permanent residence is not in the same city as their college or university. Some Task Force participants indicated that residence life was a source of emotional and financial stress. For example, most residences do not allow students to cook for themselves. This was a problem because residence food choices are often limited for students that have different cultural preferences and requirements. This problem is further compounded by the fact that residence living usually includes expensive and mandatory meal plans.

Students also identified having to deal with racist incidents in their student residence. Residence becomes a student's home, so a poisoned living environment can affect racialised students in every facet of their education and daily lives. One student at Laurentian University described his experience when he arrived in residence: "When I first met my roommate, he asked where I was from. I said, 'I'm from Saudi Arabia.' The first thing that came out of his mouth was, 'Oh, your uncle is Osama Bin Laden.' I was shocked. But, what could I say back to him? I just held it back. I didn't want to start a fight because he was my roommate. I had to live with him for eight months."

"Students tackle racism on campus on a daily basis, however, it is one thing to tackle racism in school and then go home at the end of the day," said a Ryerson student. "But for those who live on residence, campus is their home and they can't escape racism. You find that there are students who come from across the world from various backgrounds and cultures and then there are students who come from across Canada from areas where racism is acceptable and its common to be non-inclusive. These two different groups of students are living together in residence and there is often friction amongst them. In one instance, an international student from the Caribbean got into an argument with another student, who says he did not understand racialised people, over the use of a racial slur. The international student was visibly upset about why anyone would use such a slur that was used during slavery and colonisation and think that it is acceptable."

Residence Assistants (RAs) and Dons (a live-in advisor and mentor to students in residence) normally play an important role in providing assistance and guidance to students in residence. Students who experience racism or discrimination wanted to be able to turn to RAs and Dons for advice on how to resolve these issues. Task Force participants noted the lack of anti-oppression training for

RAs and Dons, and also for people living in residence. Having RAs and Dons that belong to racialised groups would be beneficial for students who normally wouldn't be able to talk to someone that could relate to them.

## **Recommendations**

- Ensure that Residence Assistants / Dons go through mandatory anti-oppression training.
- Provide anti-oppression training for all residence students during orientation.
- Create a "safe space" policy for residences.
- Include equity provisions in hiring policy for residence staff to ensure representation from racialised groups.
- Provide resources to ensure that residence programming includes equity-based events.
- Ensure that there is a university or college process for students to safely raise concerns about racism.

## **Student Engagement and Representation**

Student engagement can take many forms, including academic engagement, involvement in campus activities and student-faculty interaction. Task Force participants generally spoke about the feeling of being an outsider on campuses with few racialised students. A student from Laurentian said, "having grown up in Oakville, which is a predominantly white city, I was usually the only Black person anywhere. And then I moved here, which is predominantly white as well, it was challenging for me because it's difficult to walk around and see nobody that looks like you anywhere."

Some students identified that there were interested in on-campus clubs and events but were disappointed with how many organisations that coordinated these activities were not diverse and therefore did not feel represented and were unwilling to participate or run for elected positions.

Student engagement is affected by the administration's responsiveness to students' needs and by government policy decisions on post-secondary education. Students emphasised the need for more government funding for post-secondary education to reduce tuition fees and student debt so that students don't have to work while in school and therefore can enjoy an enriched educational experience. A Ryerson University student said: "I am a dad with two children, I'm on OSAP and it's very difficult for

***"If my tuition fees were lower I would work less, perform better in my classes and even have time to spend with my children."***

*Student at  
Ryerson University*

me to balance between working to provide for my kids and attend and participate in my classes. If my tuition fees were lower I would work less, perform better in my classes and even have time to spend with my children.”

Many international students discussed feeling as though they were only valued at the institution because they were paying two to three times more in tuition fees than domestic students. They reported being discriminated against based on their country of origin, ethnicity, culture or religion.

**“Being a racialised student here is a life experience... I have to be an individual that can tell people about me and about my group because there are such racist stereotypes about my culture, my people and my skin colour.”**

*Student at Laurentian University*

“As an international student here at York, I feel like a cash cow because my fees are so expensive and the university has no services or assistance to offer students like me who are new to the country. With all the culture shock and everything, they are still quick to raise my fees by exorbitant amounts every year” said a York student.

International students said they were ignored by the administration when they brought these issues forward and were sometimes told to

integrate and avoid being sensitive. Feelings of isolation, homesickness, and culture shock discouraged most international students from participating in campus life and events. At Algoma University, there has been a large growth of international student enrolment with no effort to integrate these students into the campus. Students cited a lack of orientation programmes and lack of training for employees about how to serve these students’ needs.

Some international students felt a particular obligation to address discrimination while attending college and university in Ontario: “Being a racialised student here is a life experience. I have to show myself. I have to be an individual that can tell people about me and about my group because there are such racist stereotypes about my culture, my people and my skin colour,” said a Laurentian student.

Some institutions had developed initiatives to alleviate the burden on international students and address discrimination. At Lakehead University, students participate in the International Buddy Programme, which pairs new international students with students familiar with the campus, to orient new students to the campus and help students from racialised backgrounds become part of the campus community. Such programmes can positively influence international students’ introduction to the campus.

## Recommendations

- Stop the privatisation of education by uploading user fee costs from students to government through progressive tax system.
- Hire more tenure-track faculty to reduce average class sizes.
- Ensure that all campus community events and programmes are diverse and reflective of campus population.
- Advertise student union and other representative group elections to include all students.
- Mentor or “buddy” programmes should be established to help orient international students to the campus.
- Provide support programmes and resources for international students.

## Campus Media

Student newspapers on campus offer students the space to participate in story-telling while accessing an audience of their peers. Newspapers are often independent entities on campus, where students can volunteer to write stories about news, arts and culture, opinions, feature issues and sports. Student newspapers, like students’ unions, can be agents of change or supporters of the status quo and this often depends on the students involved in the production of the paper, writing of stories and assignment of work.

When a diverse group of students is involved in assigning tasks and writing for a student newspaper, a wider range of stories can be told by the newspaper. If a newspaper’s staff is a homogeneous group, there can be a greater tendency to treat issues that are important to various racialised students as sideline issues, and therefore less worthy of coverage.

There were few incidents of overt racism in the campus press identified at the Task Force hearings. In one case a Trent University student paper called *The Absynthe* published an article in fall 2009 called “Stephen Harper doesn’t care about white people.” The author uses the N-word and claims that white people are now discriminated against just as much as racialised people. This article happened to be published during the same semester where racialised students were physically attacked with mace in Peterborough in what many refer to as “an incident motivated by hate.”

Students noted that most commonly, racism of the campus press was more covert, involving the exclusion of issues. One Ryerson student said that their student newspaper often has white students on the cover if the issue has a person on it, despite the diversity of the University. When campus papers did take on the issues of racialised students, it was met with hostility. At York University, a



campus paper printed an issue about the struggles of Tamil people in Sri Lanka, and some of the newspapers were destroyed in response.

## Recommendations

- Encourage racialised students to write for, and become editors of their campus newspapers.
- Student newspaper editors should challenge themselves to represent news that may be outside of their personal scope.
- Student newspaper editors must recruit writers that represent a diversity of students.
- Student newspaper editors should encourage students to write stories that are important to them in order to broaden coverage of student issues.
- Student newspaper editors should form relationships with diverse student clubs to create awareness of the opportunity to contribute to the campus newspaper.

## INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN HIRING AND CURRICULUM

### Curriculum

Students and faculty raised concerns over course content and curriculum, at many of the Task Force hearings. Eurocentrism, or the focus on Europe and European peoples, was the most common curricular problem identified by students and faculty. Racialised students said that their history was erased, under-represented, or obscured by curriculum.

Course content influences how students develop their value systems and world views. Curricula can re-enforce dominant histories and beliefs and limit diverse perspectives in the classroom. This affects how racialised students engage with their studies, peers and professors. Speaking about racialised students, one University of Toronto student explained, “When they get pushed out of school it’s not because they aren’t capable of learning, it’s because they are fed up and what they are learning is not doing anything for them.”

A member of the Native Students’ Association at Laurentian University noted that Laurentian is on Anishinabe territory: “In a tri-cultural mandated institution like Laurentian says it is, it is very important that a first-year student be required to take at least one introductory Native Studies course to expand their academic knowledge of the history and culture of the people that they live among and the traditional area that they are in.” A student from Queen’s University talked about being in a women’s literature class and reading nothing written by women of colour. Participants suggested that this bias within the mainstream curriculum was problematic for racialised students and the

university population as a whole. A student from Carleton University said that in class, students learn about how various groups have been discriminated against through history, but never investigate how racism has existed in a colonial context, and is perpetuated today through power and privilege.

A variety of solutions were offered to address the problems of curriculum. One student at Algoma University said, “Racialised students should be learning about one’s own history, including language and culture, but everyone should learn about each other.” Students at the University of Toronto expressed the desire for action. “As students of this university, we can demand a better approach to what we are learning. So, it’s important to speak up and speak about particular programmes and course offerings.”

A professor at Trent University explained, “In some areas, curriculum or course content may need review for Eurocentrism and strategies for ‘de-Eurocentring’ courses.” In addition to pointing out that curricula are often designed with a Eurocentric lens, the professor added, “There is a great need for wider education at all levels on how whiteness reproduces itself in a myriad of subtle and systemic ways. Basic information about white privilege should be taught in first year courses.”

### Recommendations:

- Integrate multiple perspectives into mainstream curriculum.
- Create departmental review committees to examine Eurocentrism and various teaching perspectives.
- Implement more diverse curriculum committees with student representation.
- Create mandatory equity-based courses in every department.

### Programmes and Funding

At many Task Force hearings students and faculty identified a lack of support for critical theory and equity studies programmes in post-secondary institutions. Critical theory and equity studies programmes include women’s studies, race and racism studies, disability studies, sex and gender studies, and also courses that focus on particular regions, such as East Asian studies and Caribbean studies. These courses tend to examine material with a historical, anti-colonial, critical perspective. They also encourage students to examine and conceptualise inequities in order to bring about positive change in society.

Students and faculty have raised concerns about the lack of support for critical theory and equity studies

***“In some areas, curriculum or course content may need review for Eurocentrism and strategies for ‘de-Eurocentring’ courses.”***

*Professor at  
Trent University*

programmes at universities. These programs have been shrinking or disappearing as a result of programme cuts and under funding.

Recent cuts to the Women's Studies programme at Guelph University, and East Asian Studies and Caribbean Studies at the University of Toronto have caused alarm

***“If I am going to speak out, I may not get tenure because I’ve rocked the boat.”***

*Librarian at the University of Windsor*

for students and faculty at these schools. Students at the University of Toronto have been fighting cuts to the Equity Studies programmes. One student explained, “Despite the advances that have been made by the Equity Studies programme, it is being cut ... if [the university] needs to cut back, why are all those cuts targeted and focused on specific areas of study that are affirming for many students here on campus?” Students and faculty felt that administrative cuts were affecting critical theory and equity studies programmes disproportionately.

Campus administrations are sometimes able to make cuts to these programmes more easily because the faculty members are often contract and part-time employees. These faculty members do not have job security like tenured professors, and are therefore often the first people to be let go by the institution. The fact that these departments are disproportionately filled by contract and part-time faculty impacts the quality of teaching and level of support for students. Without job security, contract and part-time faculty members struggle to devote time to the important task of supervising and mentoring students. They are also less likely to be able to devote time to their own research.

## Recommendations

- Designate targeted funding for the development of critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Create dedicated funding for graduate studies in critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Ensure that students can enroll in minor or major concentrations in critical theory and equity studies programmes.
- Ensure that faculty who design and develop curricula for critical theory and equity studies programmes are provided with job security and adequate departmental resources.

## Hiring, Promotion and Tenure

Students and faculty expressed concern at Task Force hearings about the composition of faculty in colleges and universities. They identified the importance of racialised faculty in ensuring the diversity of teaching methods, research subjects explored and teaching perspectives. Task Force participants stressed that racialised faculty often act as mentors for racialised students who seek them out as role models.

Faculty at Task Force hearings described the gap in faculty hiring and promotion at their institutions. A professor from Trent University explained, “The university as a whole needs to take seriously the large gap between where we should be in terms of percentage of racialised faculty (ten percent) and where we actually are (four percent)... to move forward in this area needs leadership and commitment, as well as systems of accountability, at all levels.”

Statistics show that 14.9 percent of university teachers in Canada are visible minorities.<sup>2</sup> These aggregated data do not accurately describe racialised faculty employment since many such faculty members are clustered in Engineering, Business and Computer technology. Their representation in social science and humanities is far lower. Moreover, there is also an indication that many of these teachers are part-time, contract or junior faculty, which means that racialised teachers are earning substantially less income than their non-racialised counterparts. Women from ‘visible minority’ groups make up about 12 percent of university faculties across the country, despite holding 18.7 percent of the PhDs.<sup>3</sup> A student at the University of Windsor expressed their frustration with finding a faculty position, “I have put in 10-15 applications I believe I qualified for. I did not make anything of it, but I was never invited to any interviews.”

Racialised faculty have encountered problems with regard to promotions and gaining tenure because few of them are in tenure stream positions and those that are must meet the traditional criteria of assessment. There are many ways in which institutions systemically maintain the status quo in academia. Through teaching evaluations, promotion and tenure criteria, and the demand for particular types of publications, racialised faculty members are often at a disadvantage in their quest for promotion.

Racialised faculty make up a disproportionate of part-time and contract faculty, which limits their research and publication capacity, while increasing their teaching and mentorship workload. However, their teaching and mentorship roles are not as seriously considered, while their research and publication records are often deemed to be insufficient when analysed during promotion and tenure reviews. In addition, racialised faculty often lack support from colleagues, departmental chairs and deans. A librarian at the University of Windsor indicated that the administration created an oppressive environment for racialised staff, including incidents where staff would be insulted for their cultural practices. She said that this racist chill in the department was preventing racialised faculty from moving up. “As a librarian, we have to go through a tenure process... If I am going to speak out, I may not get tenure because I’ve rocked the boat.”

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Association of University Teachers.

<sup>3</sup> Audrey Kobayashi.



## Recommendations

- Conduct equity audits of faculty by department. Audits can include data on new hirings, internal promotions and type of employment status.
- Ensure that promotion and tenure criteria identify the under-representation of racialised groups and include faculty members' contribution to diverse teaching methods and approaches and student mentorship.
- Ensure that hiring committees maintain diverse student and faculty representation.

## SYSTEMIC RACISM IN INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

### *Human Rights Offices*

Campus human rights offices usually provide a place where faculty, staff and students can report and seek assistance with racial discrimination on campus. Most college and university campuses in Ontario have offices that address discrimination, harassment and human rights issues. These services can range from supplying information and referrals, facilitating complaint resolution, conducting investigations and providing educational services. The primary problem identified by students at the hearings was that the human rights office was either inaccessible or ineffective.

A student from the University of Windsor said "I know students feel isolated at this school and have nowhere to turn. When we think of the role of the Human Rights and Equity Office we don't know what their role is...Students don't know where to go with problems and the systems in place are ineffective. We need a more transparent system for our students to complain."

Another participant was a staff person from the Human Rights Office at the University of Windsor. "A lot of students do not know that we are there," said the participant. "And I understand this is a common problem at other colleges and universities and maybe people can come up with solutions on how to change that. We do have a human rights policy that says we respect differences and that we abide by the terms of the Human Rights Code."

Students expressed an interest in having a campus human rights office that was transparent, visible, accountable to students, and independent of their administration. Where the human rights office was represented by a member of the senior administration, students expressed discomfort with reporting systemic problems that were directly related to the decisions of senior administration.

Transparency was generally a problem with regards to reporting incidents on campus. At Algoma University students discussed the fact that there was no reporting of

racist incidents on campus. "The University tries to sweep everything under the rug, claiming that they are isolated incidences committed by off campus visitors," said one Algoma student.

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the campus human rights office has autonomy from the institution's senior administration.
- Ensure that human rights offices are not located in administrative buildings.
- Provide human rights officers with an advocacy capacity, in addition to their role as a mediator.
- Require that human rights offices report to a board comprised of students, faculty and staff.
- Require that human rights offices track and report complaint/case data anonymously and present this information to the Senate or Academic Council bi-annually with recommendations.
- Ensure third parties can make complaints to human rights offices.

### *Security*

Most campuses in Ontario have security services with personnel or special on-campus police constables who are hired by the administration. Racialised students described incidents where they were targeted by campus security: "When I was a member of Governing Council planning to attend a convocation I was stopped by one of the members of campus police who didn't think that I was a member of Governing Council and threatened to put me in handcuffs," said a student from the University of Toronto.

Racialised students identified how campus security presence intensified depending on what group of students were organising the event, the speaker(s) at the event or the type of event being organised. "We were told by the university that campus police makes an assessment of events and determines based on that assessment whether the event or the speakers or the nature of the space is at risk or poses a security risk" said a University of Toronto student. At Lakehead University, students noticed an increased presence of security during on-campus Pow Wow, organised by the Lakehead University Aboriginal Awareness Centre. At York University and Ryerson University, Tamil student groups have encountered problems booking rooms on campus, and were often denied access to tabling and other student services by the campus administration.

***"The University tries to sweep everything under the rug, claiming that they are isolated incidences committed by off campus visitors."***

*Student at  
Algoma University*

In 2006, a dress code was implemented at the University of Windsor campus pub, The Thirsty Scholar. The dress code banned people wearing exposed long chains, bandanas or ‘Doo Rags,’ ripped or baggy clothes, or hats that were not worn “straight forward or straight back.” Students identified this policy as racist because it targeted certain types of clothing commonly associated with hip-hop and rap music, and because this type of clothing was recognised as a style that has links to the Black community. Students viewed the policy as being directed at Black/African-

American/African-Canadian students on campus.

**“I felt really threatened by it and the fact that the administration did nothing to address it. It makes me feel unsafe on campus sometimes.”**

*Student at the University of Guelph*

The students’ union held a public forum on the matter, which attracted more than 400 students. Due to the overwhelming response, the dress code was revoked, and an independent inquiry was commissioned to consider issues of concern about racism and discrimination on campus.

Also at the University of Windsor, a January 2008 campus event organised by a student group and attended predominantly by Black students, was reportedly subject to increased security. At the end of the night a student witnessed campus security intervening in a fight that broke out outside the bar. The intervention escalated to the point where some of the events attendees were verbally and physically assaulted by the Windsor police.

A student recounted: “[Windsor police and Campus Security] raided the place, pushing people out without coats on outside into the cold. They had a canine unit there which you have to reserve ahead of time, so they must have anticipated this event. We were in shock and some people started videotaping the incident on their cell phones, which were later confiscated by the police, and some students were arrested that night, we were all shaken.”

In response to the reports of police brutality, individuals who were present at the event and concerned members of the community came together to create a new group called Students Against Anti-Black Racism. A lack of administrative response prompted students to address the incident at a University of Windsor Students Alliance council meeting, through discussions with the University’s Human Rights Office, and during an anti-racism brainstorming meeting, which was hosted on campus by Students Against Anti-Black Racism.

### **Recommendations**

- Require campus security members to annually attend mandatory anti-oppression training facilitated by an external agency or organisation.

- Require campus security to track and report incident data and be subject to equity audits.
- Security and campus police should be diverse and reflective of the campus population.
- Establish extensive policies, protocols and mechanisms to deal with incidences that occur during events.

### **Decision-Making Bodies**

All Canadian post secondary institutions have administrative decision-making bodies that cover academic matters – often called Senate or Academic Council – and non-academic matters – often referred to as a Board of Governors. These bodies set the academic and non-academic policies of the institution, and establish a budget and spending priorities for each academic year. The composition of these decision-making bodies range from senior administration, staff, faculty, students and externally appointed representatives. Students are generally the least represented group in decision-making bodies. Given the mandate of post-secondary institutions, students are the most affected by decisions made by these decision-making bodies. Without proper student representation – particularly students from racialised groups – institutional policies will tend to ignore the needs of those students at the institution.

### **Recommendations**

- Increase the number of seats for students at all governing bodies.
- Establish an equity-based code of conduct for meetings, ensuring that the participation of everyone is encouraged and respected.
- Require anti-oppression training for all governors and senators.

### **Administrative policy**

#### **a) Codes of Conduct**

Many universities in Ontario have implemented student codes of conduct, which are policies and regulations that govern academic and non-academic behaviour. At the few institutions that currently do not have such policies, students have been resisting the administration’s attempts to implement them. Traditionally, the enactment of student codes of conduct have been top-down practices that ignore the concerns of students and bypass the democratic processes of the institution.

In general, codes of conduct stipulate arbitrary academic and non-academic sanctions for non-academic behaviour on students studying at the institution. While regulations often overlap in scope with already existing laws, codes of conduct are criticised for not guaranteeing students the same rights and liberties as any other member of the

campus community. In other words, these codes normally apply to students only, while administrators, support staff and faculty members would be unsanctioned for the same behaviour. Students have asserted that codes of conduct are used as tools to criminalise and stifle dissent on campus. In this way, they threaten basic rights of freedom and speech and freedom of assembly.

Task Force participants said that codes of conduct on university campuses were not only problematic overall, but that they targeted students differently. Students at Task Force hearings reported the unequal application of codes of conduct for racialised students. This has come in the form of suspensions, discretionary sanctions, probation and even arrests that have disproportionately targeted racialised students.

One student at the University of Toronto explained, “We need to recognise that the administration, as it stands, are not our allies. They are not here to protect racialised students.” When racialised students speak out about discriminatory practices on campus, they have found that university administrations have responded heavily-handedly. Another University of Toronto student stated, “Students and workers have actively resisted against racist policies put in place by the administration. However, they have been met with repression and sometimes with violence, which has served to perpetuate racism.”

## Recommendations

- Ensure that procedural policies that disproportionately affect racialised students are eliminated.
- Track and collect data related to who is being penalised under codes of conduct. Require that this data be presented to the Senate and ensure the public availability of the data.
- Replace codes of conduct with policies that outline students’ rights and responsibilities written in collaboration with students.

### b) Appeals Processes

Academic institutions have procedures in place when a student is charged with academic misconduct. An overwhelming majority of these charges are of plagiarism. The academic integrity process would normally involve discussions between instructors and students on the facts of the claim and mediated by a designated authority (academic integrity officer, for example). The outcome of these facilitated discussions is that there is some form of resolution or the student is charged with academic misconduct. In cases where the student is not satisfied with the decision, they could file an appeal.

In 2008 at Ryerson University, there were 700 facilitated discussions that resulted in 256 charges of academic misconduct and 71 appeals.<sup>4</sup> Students at Ryerson

expressed their concerns about the power dynamics in these discussions since the other attending officials are all employees of the university. It was also reported in one instance that the instructor involved in the case was able to receive support from the Department Chair during the appeal process, which further distorted the power relationship between the student and instructor.

Students at Ryerson were concerned about the impact of academic integrity issues on racialised students. Students indicated a pattern in which a disproportionate number of facilitated discussions and appeals involved racialised students. In particular, students documented a significant number of racialised students having difficulties with academic integrity issues from the School of Nursing. Appeals were reported to usually involve white officials and a racialised student, where the student stands accused. Similar problems were reported at George Brown College. A student noted that the appeals officer at the College made a number of recommendations on this matter that were eventually adopted by the Nursing department.

***“Even if they feel that they are discriminated against, they feel like they have to respect the authoritative power and feel like they can’t really stand up to it.”***

*Student at  
George Brown College*

At student at George Brown College echoed that many students from immigrant backgrounds have language and cultural barriers to learning. “Even if they feel that they are discriminated against, they feel like they have to respect the authoritative power and feel like they can’t really stand up to it.”

Students at Ryerson and elsewhere raised the impact of the academic appeals process on students who speak English as a second language (ESL). The high frequency of ESL students involved in the academic appeals process suggests a cultural bias in the administration of the academic integrity policy. It was pointed out that ESL students may often have difficulty fully understanding academic integrity guidelines. Given the high frequency of offenses among ESL students, it is likely that instructors are penalising students without being sensitive to their language challenges.

In order to address the issues around academic integrity and the differential impacts of the administration of the policy, adequate data collection is required. At Ryerson University, the Ryerson Students’ Union and Continuing Education Students’ Association of Ryerson developed a form to track the types of complaints by gender and race related to the academic integrity process. The form collects the pertinent data by requesting that students voluntarily self-identify.

<sup>4</sup> Taskforce on Anti-Racism at Ryerson University.



## Recommendations

- Ensure that student advocates are available to be present with students who are undergoing the academic integrity processes. Students' unions should be charged with training and designating student advocates.
- Track and collect data related to race and language in the academic integrity process.
- Increase the face time between students and professors in order to help clarify any confusion with academic integrity guidelines.
- Enact a more constructive approach involving options that do not rely on a failing grade for first offenders, but instead on academic tutorials where appropriate.
- Ensure that all academic appeals panels have at least one student member, selected through a democratic process.
- Ensure that constructive options such as assigning language or academic tutorials are explored for ESL students before they are penalised.
- Academic integrity offices should track information such as race, gender and language of students who are charged in order to detect systemic patterns of discipline. This could be done through a form or questionnaire that is filled out by a student before they complete the process.

## Admissions Criteria

Racialised people have been historically marginalised in Canadian society and continue to face barriers to post-secondary education and the labour market. Tuition fees act as a barrier to post-secondary education for racialised students, and racialised students are more likely to rely on loans to pay for their education.<sup>5</sup> Only a few programmes and institutions have implemented policies that aim to improve access to post-secondary education for traditionally marginalised groups.

***“The university has already done damage to the [Transitional Year Programme to provide equity access]... It has cut our budget by 65 percent.”***

*Student at the University of Toronto*

The Queen's University Faculty of Law has an Access Category for students applying for entrance to the law school. It encourages applications from candidates with backgrounds, experiences and qualities that would provide unique contributions to the law school community and the legal profession in general.

Specifically, the faculty “encourages applications from members of historically disadvantaged or marginalised groups, from applicants who have overcome some form of previous educational disadvantage, from applicants who have a disability and from mature candidates with impressive non-academic experience that demonstrates the skills necessary for legal studies.”<sup>6</sup> The three sub-categories in the Access Category are classified as ‘disadvantaged,’ ‘disabled,’ and ‘mature.’ According to provisions under the Access Category, traditional measures of academic performance may be given comparatively less weight, while personal factors that illustrate the applicant’s unique qualities or special circumstances may be given more weight.

The University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law also has an Access Category, which applies to applicants whose academic performance has been significantly affected by cultural, financial, physical or learning disability barriers. At York University, the Osgoode Hall Law School does not have an established Access Category, but outlines its aspiration to accept students that reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. According to Osgoode, “Diversity factors include, and extend beyond, equity factors to include considerations that may not be related to systemic barriers to equal access to education. Particular attention will be paid to exceptional personal characteristics or experiences that are under-represented in the Osgoode student body, or in the legal profession.”<sup>7</sup>

The University of Toronto established its Transitional Year Programme 40 years ago, which is a special access programme for adults who do not have the formal educational background that would usually qualify them for university admission. Students who are enrolled in the programme engage in one year of full-time course studies that will lead them to entrance into an Arts and Science degree programme. One Task Force participant explained the programme’s importance: “Community organisers and academics founded this programme to give an opportunity to people who would otherwise not have access to university and are underrepresented on this campus. It is an opportunity for people who could not pursue their education because of financial reasons, family problems or other experiences they have as racialised people.” Students at the University of Toronto expressed their concerns about cuts to this programme and the effect this would have on marginalised people in the community. “The university has already done damage to the programme... It has cut our budget by 65 percent... and now [the university] is taking action to limit fewer of us getting in,” said one student who went through the TYP.

The inclusion of Access Categories in admissions guidelines or transition programmes are an exception at Ontario universities and colleges. While they exist at

5 Costa Kapsalis; Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario.

6 Queen's University.

7 York University.

only a few institutions and programmes, they are virtually absent with regards to college, undergraduate or graduate programmes in Ontario.

## Recommendations

- Create an Access Category in admissions guidelines for undergraduate, graduate, professional and diploma programmes.
- Conduct equity audits of admissions by department. Audits can also include retention rates and completion times.
- Create transition programmes for people who do not have the formal educational background that is typically required for university or college entrance, due to financial reasons, family circumstances or experiences related to systemic discrimination.

## SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE BROADER SOCIETY

### Financial Barriers

In just under 20 years, the average undergraduate tuition fees have more than tripled in Ontario. Undergraduate students pay an average of \$5,951, while graduate students pay \$8,642 per year.<sup>8</sup> This has impacted racialised people disproportionately because on average, the poverty rate for racialised families and individuals is higher, while racialised people earn lower incomes compared to non-racialised people. Between 1980 and 2000, while the poverty rate for the non-racialised population fell by 28 percent, it rose for racialised families by 361 percent.<sup>9</sup>

Students at the University of Toronto expressed their concerns about the University of Toronto President David Naylor's support for raising tuition fees and bringing in only the students with the highest grades as part of the institution's long-term plan. "That's preposterous – he's calling to raise tuition fees, while saying they want to attract the cream of the crop of students. Obviously, this will make access to education even more restricted for racialised communities," said one student.

Racialised people are increasingly unable to afford the cost or rising tuition fees. As a result, racialised students are more likely to be employed while studying or need loans to finance the cost of post-secondary education.

One student at University of Toronto recalled a friend's experience: "[He] worked two jobs just to pay his tuition fees, his parents worked full-time just to help him pay the fees... but the administration just reduces us to financial basic income units where your worth is measured by what you could pay."

Racialised students are more likely to incur more debt than non-racialised students. Since racialised people make lower than average incomes, regardless of educational attainment, this results in racialised graduates taking longer to repay their loans after graduation and paying more for their education as a result of compound interest.<sup>10</sup>

Rising tuition fees, debt-based student financial assistance, and a patchwork of insufficient and unevenly applied grants together form regressive government policy. Given the unequal burden that racialised students experience, the high fee and high debt model for financing post-secondary education is a form of systemic discrimination.

***"The administration just reduces us to financial basic income units where your worth is measured by what you could pay."***

*Student at the University of Toronto*

### Recommendations:

- Governments should reduce financial barriers for students by immediately freezing tuition fees and instituting a framework that progressively reduces tuition fees.
- Federal and Ontario student financial assistance should be shifted from a debt-based to a grant-based system.
- Governments should reallocate tax credits and expand existing back-end grants to form a comprehensive system of up-front needs-based grants.
- Income contingent loan repayment and other forms of regressive financial aid schemes should be rejected by policy makers.
- Government-funded student loans should not accumulate interest, even after graduation.
- Differential tuition fees for international students should be eliminated.

8 Canadian Association of University Teachers; Statistics Canada, 2009.

9 Colour of Poverty Campaign.

10 Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario.



# IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This report is the culmination of a comprehensive investigation into the first-hand experience of racialised students, faculty and staff on campuses across Ontario and was intended to assess the breadth and scope of institutional discrimination for a growing segment of the population. It is not a formal research study and therefore does not purport to be conclusive. However, as this report demonstrates, instances of racism and racial discrimination are not isolated; discrimination toward racialised students, faculty and staff is a systemic feature of Ontario's post-secondary education system.

Over the course of nine months, students, faculty and staff across Ontario participated in 17 on-campus hearings. During these hearings, racialised students, faculty and staff shared personal and intimate details of their on-campus lives with Task Force members in the hope of making positive contributions toward affecting real change. It is the hope of the members of the Task Force on Campus Racism that this report will cause some positive movement and support proactive and progressive change that will benefit all those who participated in the Task Force hearings and the broader community.

Racism can be broadly conceptualised to include more subtle and covert forms of discrimination, lack of understanding or embedded beliefs that are tied to aspects of power that are held by the dominant group in society. The most egregious examples of systemic racism took place in classrooms where professors and other students made uninformed or racist comments that promoted stereotypes about racialised people and where discussions about race or culture had made students feel uncomfortable, intimidated, undervalued and singled out.

The Task Force findings identify numerous instances of what the Ontario Human Rights Code refers to as a “poisoned environment,” where racialised individuals are subjected to an atmosphere that is different from those who do not

experience harassment or discrimination. This was evident by comments from peers and professors, racially biased and/or selective course content and the racialised community members' own experiences of being treated differently by campus security, administrative bodies, peers and faculty.

Task Force participants discussed a general lack of available resources to address incidences of discrimination and discriminatory policies. Racialised groups or associations were often cited as a place where racialised community members could help meet each other's needs and come together as a community in the face of discrimination. However, these organisations experience marginalisation and discrimination on campus as well.



Photo By Monirul Pathan

The Ontario Human Rights Code clearly puts the onus on institutions and organisations to implement a human rights framework. According to the Code, organisations have a duty to be aware of their practices, policies and programmes and to ensure that they are not having an adverse impact or resulting in discrimination against racialised persons or groups. However, responsibility also lies with government to enforce the Ontario Human Rights Code and to ensure that

***Policy and decision-makers at all levels should implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Campus Racism to ensure that campuses across Ontario uphold the tenets of the Ontario Human Rights Code.***

its policies and practices comply with the spirit and intent of the Code. As identified in this Report, financial barriers to post-secondary education affect racialised students in a disproportionate way. The high fees and high debt model of post-secondary education in Ontario is discriminatory because racialised students are less likely to afford the up-front cost of tuition fees and will often find themselves paying more than their non-racialised counterparts for the same education through compound interest on student loans.

The college and university campus should be a place where discriminatory ideas are challenged and disabused, and all community members work together in the pursuit of knowledge. This report demonstrates that in too many instances, the campus reinforces discriminatory behaviours and ideologies within the broader society. While students' unions or student organisations are often a place of refuge for racialised students, there is no assurance that every person is free from discriminatory acts based on ethnic origin, religion, citizenship or any other grounds without the support from the institution.

Currently, there is little academic research into the experience of racialised students in Canada's post-secondary education system. The Final Report of the Task Force on Campus Racism provides a qualitative

assessment of the atmosphere experienced by racialised students, and draws on substantial first-hand experiences to demonstrate the systemic nature of racism within institutions of higher learning. Nevertheless, this Report is only a first step—further investigation and monitoring of racial discrimination is required and post-secondary institutions must address this issue on an ongoing basis.

Task Force members also heard a number of positive stories in which students, staff and faculty challenged racism and united to successfully advocate for a more inclusive campus. In these cases, rather than feeling more isolated in the face of racist incidents, the campus community rebuilt and broadened its sense of community, building the confidence of racialised and non-racialised community members alike. Action is required to address the atmosphere of discrimination and harassment that racialised students experience in Ontario. Fortunately, improving this atmosphere can be accomplished with the implementation of the recommendations in this report and continuing to work together to challenge racism on campus. Policy and decision-makers at all levels should implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Campus Racism to ensure that campuses across Ontario uphold the tenets of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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# APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

## ***Blackface***

Blackface refers to a practice in which white performers have painted their faces black in order to portray Black people, creating and perpetuating racist stereotypes for the entertainment of white audiences. The practice was common as early as the 1800s, in minstrel shows, which ridiculed and denigrated Black people.

## ***Critical Area Studies***

Critical area studies is a general term that refers to several heterogeneous fields of scholarship that pertain to geographical or cultural regions. These fields are interdisciplinary, typically encompassing humanities and social sciences, involving history, literature, political science, languages, sociology, geography and cultural studies. They also often include study of the diaspora of the area studied. These fields of study are often informed by critical theory that emerged from the area of study, often through the process of anti-colonial struggle or formal political decolonisation.

## ***Culture of Whiteness***

This refers to a culture in which everyday interactions and discourses, value systems, socially acceptable behaviours, knowledge and institutional practices are shaped by white privilege. Whiteness is also constructed as the “norm” in the absence of race. As such, an academic perspective that takes race into account may be said to be biased but one that assumes a white perspective is more likely to be considered “objective.” The privileges accrued through systemic racism are made invisible through a pervasive culture of whiteness.

## ***Eurocentrism***

This is a term that emerged during a period of formal decolonisation and independence that occurred in the latter part of the twentieth century. It refers, more generally, to the practice of viewing the world from a European perspective that constructs non-European peoples and cultures as “other” or “different.” It includes a belief, implied or explicit, in the superiority of European culture, knowledge and civilization. The term most often describes an unstated European bias and perspective that undervalues or ignores non-European values, cultures and knowledge or constructs it as fundamentally different. As such, Eurocentrism produces Europe as the norm against which non-European cultures are measured and compared.

## ***Harassment***

Harassment is defined in the Human Rights Code as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.” In the case of racial harassment, inappropriate comment or conduct is made on the basis of race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc.

## ***Interest and Interest Relief***

Provincial and federal student loans bear interest. The only exception to this is where the government has established an “interest-free” period while in-study or where interest relief is provided. During periods of interest relief the borrower is not required to make payments on either the outstanding principal of the loan or the interest. The Government of Ontario and/or the Government of Canada pays the interest. Neither government makes payments to reduce the outstanding principal. Interest relief is granted for periods of six months, up to a maximum of 30 months. Full-time students are not charged interest while in study but their debts begin accruing interest once they are no longer registered. The practice of collecting interest leads to a higher cost paid by marginalised communities who, on average, have lower incomes.

## ***Multiple/Intersecting Oppressions***

Racialised students may experience more than one form of oppression or discrimination based on other perceived or socially constructed differences. In addition to race, discrimination and oppression occur based on, but not limited to, the following: sex, gender, sexual orientation, social or economic class, (dis)ability, age, country of origin, ethnicity, language, culture and religion. Often, experiences involving more than one form of oppression cannot easily separate them. For example, oppressive comments about Muslim women being “meek” are both sexist and racist. The stereotype of Muslim women as submissive is racist sexism or sexist racism – the two things cannot be divorced from one another.

Since oppressions are not divisible from one another or simply layered upon each other, the experience of more than one form of oppression is referred to “intersecting” or “interlocking.” This is meant to capture the phenomenon of multiple oppressions that produce unique and indivisible sites of oppression as manifested in the lived experience of actual and constructed difference.

## ***Ontario Student Assistance Programme (OSAP)***

OSAP is the provincial student financial assistance programme for Ontario. Financial assistance for post-secondary resident students in Ontario is available through a variety of programmes that are funded by the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Programme policies are the responsibility of the funding agency, and programme processes and procedures are developed in cooperation by the two levels of government. Full-time students may be eligible to receive an integrated students loan. The Canada-Ontario Integrated Student Loan is funded by both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

## ***Person of Colour***

This is a term that is used to refer to racialised people. It is a term meant to construct a common identification among racialised people, emphasising the shared experience of racism. For the purposes of this document, the term racialised will be used instead, since it reflects the terminology adopted by the Federation with regard to the Racialised Constituency group.

## ***Prejudice***

Prejudice is an antipathy or negative feelings held by someone about another person or group based on social categories such as race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc.

## ***Racialised***

Racialisation refers to the process through which physical traits, as well as geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, become the basis for designating distinct groups or “races” to which inferior value is attributed without justification. The use of the term racialised rather than “visible minority” or “person of colour” acknowledges this artificial social process through which concepts such as race, racial superiority and racial prejudice are formed.

## ***Stereotyping***

Stereotyping can be described as a process by which people use social categories such as race, colour, ethnic origin, place of origin, religion, etc., in acquiring, processing and recalling information about others. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group, regardless of their individual differences. Is it often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalisations.

## ***Systemic***

When speaking about racism at the systemic level, if it is a reference to the presence of racism in organisational and government policies, practices, procedures and “normal ways of doing things” which may directly or indirectly, consciously or unwittingly, promote, sustain, or entrench differential advantage for some people and disadvantage for others.

## ***Tuition Fees***

Tuition fees are paid by the student to enroll in a university or college. Tuition fees are the main contributor to student debt and are a barrier to access. Ontario has the highest average tuition fees in the country, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Overwhelmingly, research shows that financial barriers are the largest barrier for students. Financial aid, largely in the form of repayable loans, is the only avenue for most students to contend with high tuition fees. Estimates from the Government of Ontario show that the average student with debt graduates with \$22,000 in public debt alone. There is little known on the amount of private debt—which generally includes loans from family, banks and credit card companies.

## ***Visible Minority***

“Visible minority” is a common term used to describe people collectively and is often used in the field of social sciences and in mainstream media. For example, Statistics Canada uses the term “visible minority” in census data to describe racialised people. However, “racialised person” or “racialised group” is preferred

over “visible minority,” as it expresses race as a social construct rather than as a description based on perceived biological traits or demographic data. Furthermore, the term “visible minority” tends to treat “white” as the norm to which racialised persons are to be compared and have a tendency to group all racialised persons in one category, as if they are all the same.

### ***White Privilege***

This concept refers to the benefits experienced by people who are not racialised as a result of systemic racism. It is a concept used in critical race theory to describe racial inequities from the perspective of the advantages accrued as result of this system of inequity. This is in contrast to the more common approach of investigating the nature and extent of the disadvantages experiences by racialised people, which tends to focus only on racialised people to address racism. The concept of privilege posits that those who experience it view it as normal, rather than as social advantage. White privilege is a manifestation of systemic societal racism that exists regardless of whether overt racism occurs in a given context.



# APPENDIX 2:

# TASK FORCE MEMBERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

## **Wesley Crichlow**

Dr. Wesley Crichlow is a tenured Associate Professor in the Faculty of Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies Programme at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa. There, he teaches Introduction to Criminal Law; Introduction to Customs and Immigration Law; Introduction to the Canadian Legal System; Rights and Freedoms in The Canadian Justice System; Youth Crime & Diversity; and Legal Issues in Law. He is currently on sabbatical at the University of The West Indies - St. Augustine, Trinidad, Centre for Gender and Development Studies and the Faculty of Education, where he is engaged collaboratively researching *Masculinity, Risk and Crime: How Gay Men Make Sense of and Take Risk in Forming Gay Relationships* and *Culture, Race and Class in Caribbean Mediation*.

## **Terry Downey**

Terry Downey has been the Executive Vice-President at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) since 2005. She is the first African-Canadian to serve as an OFL executive officer. Originally from Nova Scotia, Terry has been a member of the Ontario Public Service Employees’ Union for 19 years. She worked at the Ontario Human Rights Commission for 17 years before she commenced her work with the Federation. Her areas of responsibility at the OFL are many and varied: education and training, health care, human rights, social services, and special projects. Terry has seen the OFL convene its first-ever Aboriginal conference and campaigned for high-quality accessible child care, employment equity, and ending violence against women. She also participated in the Canadian Federation of Students’ Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students.

## **Avvy Yao-Yao Go**

Avvy Yao-Yao Go obtained her LL.B. from the University of Toronto and LL.M. from Osgoode Hall Law School. Since 1992, she has been the Clinic Director of the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic. She served as a benchler of the Law Society of Upper Canada and has served on the board of directors of a number of non-profit organisations including the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto.

## **Frances Henry**

Dr. Frances Henry is one of Canada’s leading experts in the study of racism and anti-racism. Since the mid-seventies, when she published the first study of attitudes towards people of colour, she has consistently pioneered research in this field. Her books include co-authoring the third edition of *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* and co-editing *Racism in the Canadian University: Demanding Social Justice, Inclusion and Equity*, that are widely used in universities. Now retired as a Professor Emerita from York University in Toronto, she continues an active research and writing career. Frances is the author of the 2003 report, *Systemic Racism Towards Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen’s University*.

## **Sandy Hudson**

Sandy Hudson is a fourth-year Sociology and Political Science student at the University of Toronto. She is currently the President of the University of Toronto Students’ Union and the National Women’s Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students. Sandy was previously the National Students of Colour Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students, the Women’s Commissioner of the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario and the Vice-President Equity of the University of Toronto Students’ Union.



### ***Ali Mallah***

Ali Mallah has served on the Board of Directors of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations for three terms. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Social Justice, including having served one term as Treasurer. Ali has represented the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Peace Alliance at international conferences in the USA, UK and Egypt. He is currently the Ontario Vice-President of the Canadian Arab Federation.

### ***Lee Maracle***

Lee Maracle is a Professor in the Department of Aboriginal Studies at the University of Toronto, in addition to being a mentor for Aboriginal Students at the institution. She is also the Traditional Cultural Director for the Indigenous Theatre School, where is a cultural instructor. A member of the Stó:lō Nation, her written works include co-editing *My Home As I Remember and Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures*, and a number of anthology publications and poetry published across North America. Through her works, Lee has established a reputation as an award winning author and teacher.

### ***Hildah Otieno***

Hildah Otieno is the current Services Coordinator of the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario. She was previously the National Executive Representative for the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario and in this capacity, Hildah was responsible for representing the needs and interests of 300,000 college and university students across Ontario to the National Executive of the Canadian Federation of Students. Hildah attended York University as an international student from Kenya and completed her undergraduate degree in Political Science and Philosophy. In 2007-2008, Hildah served one term as Vice-President Student Rights at the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson. She is currently pursuing a post-graduate certificate at Ryerson University in Non-Profit Management. Hildah was the first international student to be elected to a full-time position within the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario.

### ***Krisna Saravanamuttu***

Krisna Saravanamuttu is a fourth-year Criminology student at York University, with a specific interest in systemic racism within the criminal justice system and post-secondary institutions. He is currently in his second term as the President of the York Federation of Students and is the National Racialised Students Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students. He was previously the Vice-President Equity of the York Federation of Students and the Racialised Students Commissioner of the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario. Krisna has been a long time activist in the anti-racism and anti-war movements.

# APPENDIX 3: LIST OF HEARINGS

<b>DATE</b> (2009)	<b>CITY</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS</b>
February 18	Toronto	George Brown College
March 3	Kingston	Queen's University
March 3	Toronto	University of Toronto - St. George
March 4	Ottawa	University of Ottawa
March 5	Ottawa	Carleton University
March 5	Toronto	York University
March 12	Guelph	Guelph University
March 17	Sudbury	Laurentian University
March 18	Sault Ste. Marie	Algoma University
March 26	Windsor	University of Windsor
March 31	Thunder Bay	Lakehead University
September 25	Peterborough	Trent University
October 1	Toronto	Ryerson University
October 7	Ottawa	Carleton University
October 7	Toronto	York University
October 20	Mississauga	University of Toronto - Mississauga
October 22	Toronto	University of Toronto - St. George



# APPENDIX 4: **WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**The Task Force on Campus Racism will use anecdotal experiences about racism from students, faculty and staff to develop strategies for how to challenge racism on our campuses.**

- 1. Please describe the general atmosphere towards racialised students, faculty and staff on campus. If you are racialised, do you feel represented? (Examples: in the curriculum, in the faculty, in your students' union?)***
  
- 2. Are you aware of any acts of discrimination or hate directed at racialised students, faculty and staff or other acts of discrimination or hate? Have you ever been the target of hate motivated intimidation or aggression on campus? Please describe.***
  
- 3. Please use this additional space to elaborate on your answers or provide any additional information or reflections.***





# APPENDIX 5: MEDIA

## QUEEN'S JOURNAL

Jennifer Macmillan, Editor in chief  
December 1, 2005

### RACE, RACISM AND BLACKFACE

When trying to decide on a university, Kareena Elliston, ArtSci '06, said she was warned by her high school teachers and counsellors against choosing Queen's.

"Word of mouth travels a whole lot faster than anything else," said Elliston, a Toronto native. "When I was leaving high school, teachers and counsellors told me not to go. I met students who transferred out because of the potency of racism [on campus]." Elliston said it wasn't long before she encountered racist attitudes during her first year.

"One student told me I 'wasn't really black,'" she said.

"The sad thing is that every single student, particularly of African descent, has an example of [experience with racism]," Elliston said.

Elliston said one student's recent Halloween costume is another example of racism on campus. A second-year Arts and Science student sparked an online debate after a photo of herself at a Halloween party in costume—in blackface as "Miss Ethiopia"—was circulated via e-mail and posted on several web forums. Elliston said she was "absolutely horrified" when she first saw the photo.

"I couldn't believe that somebody would have the gall to dress up like that," she said. "This is something that's not a joke. It's degrading ... it's really important because it speaks to what we tolerate and what we accept and what we maintain here at Queen's University. It's not a coincidence that we happen to be the lowest on the diversity ranking of [the Globe and Mail] every year and we have something like blackface showing up here." Elliston, who is a member of the African and Caribbean Students' Association (ACSA), said the campus group wants to make sure the University is proactive in dealing with racism among students.

"I think that in terms of what ACSA or students of African descent want to see happen is the University come forward and condemn this behaviour, and sensitize students and faculty," Elliston said. "[A] stronger effort should be made on their part to address the issues of racism and discrimination that are experienced by students on campus." ACSA is also planning to take action by hosting events next semester that aim to raise awareness and educate students.

"We're hoping to have a speaker series that will address specifically the history of blackface and representation of race in the media, and that will hopefully shed some light on this situation and come out of this ignorance because ignorance isn't a justification for offence," said ACSA executive member Nitha Karanja, ArtSci '08. "ACSA wants to work very hard at making sure there isn't ignorance." However, Karanja added that the University's stance is ACSA's primary concern.

"ACSA want to make it clear we're not coming out against any individual or any individual act," she said. "We're more concerned about the University's approach to certain acts or the way [they've] dealt with certain things.

"Queen's seems not to want to defend against or take any responsibility for this type of ignorance. The responsibility doesn't have to come in the form of discipline, but [they need to ask] 'Are we preparing students for this global society if they don't know it's wrong to dress up in blackface?' Students should question this too. You have to take responsibility for your education." Elliston pointed to a similar case at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. According to the Orlando Sentinel, members of the university's all-white women's softball team dressed up in blackface to impersonate the varsity men's basketball team this past Halloween at a city bar.

## THE JOURNAL



This photo of a student in blackface was circulated online. (Photo courtesy of livejournal.com)

## **YORK STUDENTS RALLY AGAINST RACISM**

### ***University 'has to do a better job of protecting us,' says one after racist graffiti, sexual attacks***

In loud, clear and united voices they had a simple message: Enough is enough.

Hundreds of angry York University students yesterday lashed out at racists – and school administration – after anti-black graffiti was scrawled at two campus locations.

“This space is ours,” Nazareth Yirgalem of the York University Black Students’ Alliance (YUBSA) told a rally in the Student Centre. “We pay enough money to be here. York has to do a better job of protecting us.”

Phrases including “All N- - - - s must die” and “N- - - - s go back to Africa” were found Tuesday on the door of YUBSA’s office and an adjacent washroom. It was the second such discovery on campus this month, Yirgalem told the crowd.

The vandalism is the latest high-profile crime on the sprawling campus of Canada’s third-largest university. Since September, there have also been three sexual attacks and an assault on a Student Centre employee.

Students, who say administration is not doing enough to keep them safe, were angry that it took until yesterday – two days after the racist graffiti was scrawled – for York president Mamdouh Shoukri to issue a statement condemning it.

“By not condemning it, one would think they (racists) can go on writing it,” Yirgalem said.

Shoukri’s attempts to walk to the microphone and address the crowd were blocked by event organizers. After a brief exchange with Zannalyn Robest of YUBSA, the president, and journalists trying to interview him, were physically moved off the makeshift stage by students as the rally continued.

Robest thanked Shoukri for posting a statement on the York website calling the acts “deplorable and unacceptable,” but also chided him for the delay. “It came too late. We had to do everything first,” Robest told Shoukri, to cheers from students.

“They have a very good reason to be upset. They have a very good reason to be emotional,” Shoukri told reporters after students barred him from speaking.

“I’ll continue to support them,” Shoukri, an Egyptian-born engineer and the first Muslim appointed as the permanent head of a Canadian university, said of the students’ battle to combat racism and other forms of violence on campus.

Shoukri has ordered an audit of the safety and security of York’s campus by an independent third party. He also said he will work with students to develop better programs to address all forms of hatred and violence, whether racial, gender-related or physical.

“On a large campus, on an open campus, these incidents will take place,” he said. “We’d like to minimize them through improved security and safety.”

York students acknowledge that other university and college campuses have faced recent incidents of sexual and physical assaults as well as racism. But many say the recent wave of violence has them fearing for their personal safety.

“It’s not to say that York is a breeding ground for racists and homophobes and sexual predators,” said Gilarly Massa of the York Federation of Students. “It’s just that we’re a large campus – like a small city – so we need to be looking at this at an institutional level to prevent it from happening again.”

Last week, the third female student this school year reported being sexually assaulted in a campus building. During the first week of school in September, two women were allegedly raped in their dorm rooms. Two men face charges.

York hired 22 “residence watchers” before the winter break to bolster security. “All of this is making the community unsafe,” said Besmira Alikaj, 22, a fourth-year political science student who attended the rally. “We’ve heard enough ‘It’s just a bad apple’ argument. This institution has a lot of systemic problems that have to be overcome.”

Students said these are not just issues of safety for women or visible minorities. “I’d be scared if I lived on campus,” said Matthew Capogna, 18, a first-year history student from Woodbridge. “It’s not right what’s going on here. They have to do something about it.”

**MORE DEFACED POSTERS FOUND**

***People should be 'mindful of their personal safety,' Campus Security Director says***

More posters defaced with racist phrases were turned in to Campus Security last week.

Two posters were found two weeks ago near campus and contained racist slogans, signed by stormfront.org, an online white supremacist group.

After the second round of posters was discovered, Campus Security sent out an e-mail to all faculty, staff and students asking them to watch out for further racist activity and report suspicious-looking people.

David Patterson, Campus Security director, said the e-mail wasn't prompted by threats or direct attacks written on the posters.

"We're just wanting people to be mindful of their personal safety," he said. "There were no threats uttered at any individual or group."

Campus Security gave the posters to the Kingston Police to investigate.

Detective Jeff Dempster, who's in charge of the investigation, couldn't be reached for comment.

Ethan Holtzer, ArtSci '10, found one of the first posters, which was a Colour of Poverty event advertisement defaced with racist slogans, one of which had "Help Africa save the white race the only one that gives a fuck" scrawled in pencil on one side.

He found it on a pole at the corner of Brock Street and University Avenue.

"I was a bit suspicious because I was just walking and I saw something written on this poster so I stopped and read it and realized it was a hate crime." He said even outside the context of the Colour of Poverty poster, it's evident what the group was trying to accomplish.

"From what was written, it was definitely pushing for recruitment," he said.

Holtzer said the phrases talked about what white supremacist groups advocate for.

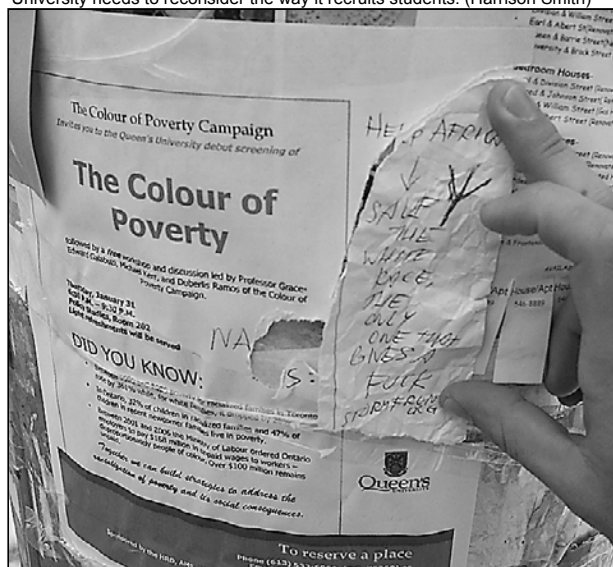
He said that, after he read the poster, he tore it down.

"After I tore it down I realized the first thing I should have done was take a picture of it," he said.

Holtzer then went home to get his camera, took the poster back to the pole and took a picture of it. After that, he reported it to the Human Rights Office.



Sociology and women's studies professor Cynthia Levine-Rasky says the University needs to reconsider the way it recruits students. (Harrison Smith)



This defaced poster was found on a pole on the corner of Brock Street and University Ave. (Supplied)

Holtzer said he has also encountered racist comments in Stauffer Library bathroom stalls. He couldn't remember exactly what was written, but said it was in reference to black-focused schools in Toronto.

When he went back to take a picture of the comments, he found caretakers removing them.

"When they were taking it down I asked them, 'Have you reported this to the Human Rights Office?' and they said, 'We keep this within

Stauffer Library because it happens too often.'"

Sociology and women's studies professor Cynthia Levine-Rasky

advised Holtzer to report the poster to the Human Rights Office.

“What white supremacist groups want is to keep people silent, intimidated and in their place,” she said. “They say, ‘We’re not racist as long as you shut up.’” Levine-Rasky said some groups at Queen’s have a code of silence around those who perpetrate racist acts. She said this is evidenced by the University’s inability to discover the identities of four male students who shouted racial slurs at a faculty member and forced her off the sidewalk on Nov. 14.

“I think they’re going to protect each other. ... There’s some kind of perverse camaraderie.”

Levine-Rasky said a lot of racism on campus takes on subtle forms that are hard to identify and easy to deny.

It’s good more people are reporting incidents, she said, because this makes racist groups scared and strengthens anti-racist initiatives.

Levine-Rasky said she’s not surprised more explicit incidents are taking place on campus, because the University has been more actively engaged in fighting racism with events such as the faculty-led rally against racism in January.

“This is a place where not only do we talk about racism and anti-racism, we fight it,” she said. “It moves into a public sphere; therefore, it’s going to elicit responses from racist groups. ... In some ways, it means that anti-racist struggles are effective. We’re disturbing someone.”

It’s not a surprise universities have to deal with these issues, because racism happens everywhere, she said.

“Maybe in university we have this idea that people ought to know better,” she said. “[Racism] conflicts very much with this fundamental nature of higher education.”

Levine-Rasky said she doesn’t think Queen’s is more racist than other campuses.

“People say that Queen’s and York [University] are different in demographics, yet things like this happen on both campuses,” she said.

Anti-black graffiti was posted on the York University Black Students’ Alliance’s office door Jan. 22.

She said the University should recruit from more diverse groups.

Once students arrive, they need a support system—such as financial aid, on-campus culture-based associations and a mandatory course on racism and diversity issues—to ease their transition and help them feel they belong, she said.

“We have enough reports, we have enough knowledge, we know that, yes, a significant number of racialized students are met with hostility,” she said. “If it happens to a single person, it’s a problem. ... It happens to many people here.”

Aliya Kassam, ArtSci ’09, who identifies as African and Indian, said many of her friends have experienced racism on campus.

“One of my friends who went here in the early ’90s was walking down the street and was called the n-word by someone in a car.”

She said she has an easier time fitting in because she was born and raised in Canada. The recent racist acts have made her consider her actions more carefully, however.

“I think about using Walkhome at night when I’m at Stauffer, and that’s something that I’ve never done before,” she said.

Kassam visited the Stormfront website after hearing about the defaced posters.

“There’s a level of idiocy I expected to encounter, but I found the addresses of several mosques on there,” she said. “There was nothing threatening [towards them] but ... it’s actually really frightening.”

She said she wouldn’t be surprised if Stormfront had members on campus.

“If a faculty member can be pushed down in the middle of daylight on campus, clearly there’s some sentiment there towards racism.”

Kassam said the University shouldn’t only be focused on addressing the “culture of whiteness” on campus. She said there’s a culture of conformity as well.

While this may sometimes be unintentional, she said it excludes students who aren’t familiar with “white” culture.

Kassam said the University is right in trying to recruit students from diverse backgrounds. However, she said people’s mindsets have to be changed as well, and that takes a lot longer.

“Numbers are all well and good but they don’t solve all the problems.”



## **FORUM HEARS CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION AT ONT. CAMPUSES**

The Canadian Press

TORONTO — A medical textbook that calls black people's hair thick and kinky and Asian hair smooth and silky exemplifies Eurocentric teaching materials at Ontario's colleges and universities, a forum exploring campus racism heard Wednesday.

Such textbooks are woefully inadequate when it comes to teaching how to care for visible minority patients, nursing student Liana Salvador, 24, told the panel as it launched provincewide hearings.

"They use white as the reference point and everyone else is pigeonholed or extra," said Salvador, a student at Ryerson University, who cited an example from one textbook that discusses hair type.

"It said, 'black people have kinky, thick hair that is often dry, and Asians have smooth, silky hair.'

"Just the way that it's written and the language that it's written in often can encourage stereotyping."

Committees need to be struck that have broad representation, including students, when it comes to the selection of teaching materials for post-secondary programs, Salvador told the panel.

The forum at George Brown College was the first of several the Ontario chapter of The Canadian Federation of Students will be holding across the province before the end of April.

The concept was born from another task force that, two years ago, examined the needs of Muslim students. Federation representative Hildah Otieno said incidents of Islamophobia were identified at campuses across the province, but so too were incidents of racism and discrimination involving other religions and ethnicities.

"We're trying to look at individual acts of racism, discrimination and hate, and see how that impacts those racialized students, faculty and staff on campus," Otieno said at a news conference prior to the hearing.

"But we're also going to try and look at the systemic way in which institutional structures may be affecting the same people."

Although the focus of the panel's work is racism, Canadian Arab Federation president Khaled Mouammar -- who was invited to speak at

the press conference -- instead focused his comments on what he called the problem of private funding to universities.

Institutions are "susceptible to blackmail" because private donors put pressure on them to "curtail and muzzle freedom of expression and freedom of speech," said Mouammar, who did not offer any concrete examples when asked.

Mouammar made headlines earlier this week after Immigration Minister Jason Kenney threatened to slash the CAF's funding, a move that came after Mouammar called Kenney a "professional whore" for criticizing the presence of Hamas and Hezbollah flags at anti-Israel rallies in Toronto.

Later, the panel heard that the name-calling and graffiti that often go hand-in-hand with racism are still alive and well on campus.

Last year, the Black Student's Alliance at York University had "nigger" and "go back to Africa" written on its office door on Martin Luther King Day. At Ryerson, the bulletin board belonging to the East African Students of Toronto was set on fire.

"I find it really upsetting and pointless, and I think people that write that stuff down don't realize the impact," said Mike Auksi, a 27-year-old Ojibway from Lac Seul First Nation.

The Ryerson social work student told the panel about hateful epithets he's seen scrawled on bathroom walls.

"It impacts me even if it isn't myself that's being targeted."

The hearing appears next at the University of Toronto, and has other stops scheduled in Kingston, Ottawa, Guelph and Sudbury. The work will culminate in a report the federation hopes to have completed in the fall.



**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Release at 11:00 am  
Thursday, March 5, 2009

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES RECEIVE RACIST HATE MAIL AND DEATH THREAT FOR LAUNCHING STUDY OF RACISM ON CAMPUS**

Toronto – One week after launching a province-wide Task Force to study racism on Ontario campuses, the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario received a racially-motivated death threat in the mail. Inside an anonymous envelope delivered last week were two newspaper clippings, one a photo of Task Force panelist Hildah Otieno, an international student from Kenya and the other a racist editorial cartoon that met with controversy when it was originally printed in the New York Post and that depicts two police officers shooting a monkey. On the pictures were hand-written epithets such as “REFUGEE DOG”, “KKK” and “DIE N \_\_\_\_ DIE.” A police report was filed and an investigation is underway.

“Receiving a hateful letter wishing death upon me and members of my community was a very upsetting experience,” said Hildah Otieno, Ontario National Executive Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students. “There is no way that threats and insults are going to intimidate students out of confronting racism. We won’t back down.”

“This is a deplorable act and speaks volumes about the importance of the work that we are doing to challenge racism,” said Krisna Saravanamuttu, Vice-President Equity of the York Federation of Students and the Ontario Students of Colour Commissioner of the Canadian Federation of Students. “When we launched the Task Force some media outlets reacted with surprise, asking if racism still existed. This hate mail is stark evidence that, yes, it does.”

The Task Force on Campus Racism was launched by the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario on February 18 and will include hearings on campuses across the province during the month of March, including one at the University of Toronto later today. The purpose of the Task Force is to collect verbal and written statements about experiences with racism on college and university campuses with the goal of releasing a report containing strategies to combat racism within the post-secondary education sector.

“Unfortunately, on campuses across the country many racialised students, faculty and staff have their own stories about experiencing racism, prejudice and discrimination,” said Sandy Hudson, President of the University of Toronto Students’ Union and National Students of Colour Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students. “We need to work together to challenge racism and send a message that this kind of bigotry has no place on any campus or in any community.”

The Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario unites more than 300,000 college and university students at 35 students’ unions across the province. For more information on the Task Force visit:[www.noracism.ca](http://www.noracism.ca).

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For more information contact:

Hildah Otieno, Ontario National Executive Representative: 416-925-3825

Joel Duff, Organiser: 416-925-3825 or cell: 416-707-0349

## TORONTO SUN

Brett Clarkson  
March 6, 2009



### RACIST MAIL SHOCKS STUDENT GROUP

Police are probing the racist taunts and death threat contained in a disturbing envelope of newspaper clippings mailed to the Canadian Federation of Students' Ontario office after the launch of their anti-racism campaign.

Hildah Otieno, the CFS Ontario representative, was "shocked" to see the black-marker racist scrawl on two newspaper clippings -- one of which was a photograph of her that appeared in the Toronto Sun on Feb. 19.

"KKK" was scrawled on a CFS button she was wearing in the photo. Otieno is black.

"It was shocking," she said, adding she felt threatened. "You hear about it everyday but when it hits you, it's very different. It makes you feel very, very isolated and exposed. So then we called the police."

The airmail envelope was received at the Bloor St. W. and Avenue Rd. office on Feb. 23 -- five days after the Feb. 18 launch of the CFS's on-campus anti-racism task force. The Sun photograph of Otieno was from an article of that launch.

The envelope also contained a controversial New York Post editorial cartoon depicting police shooting a monkey and remarking,

"They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill."

Also written on the clippings was "REFUGEE DOG".

Otieno, a York graduate who now attends Ryerson, said the letter proves the legitimacy of the task force, which will release a report outlining ways to combat campus racism after conducting hearings at schools across Ontario. "It's a testament to why we need to be doing this."

The envelope contained a reference to a mental health organization and had on it a return address of 441 Jarvis St. in Toronto, she said.

The address is home to the Ontario Mental Health Foundation (OMHF) and a small real estate office.

Alexander Greer, OMHF's executive director, said yesterday that he is "outraged" somebody is using their address on the hate mail.

Greer also explained that the foundation provides research grants. It doesn't offer services to mental health patients and as such, doesn't receive visits from patients.

It would be highly unlikely somebody from the real estate office sent the mail, he added.

## HOW A HALLOWEEN GETUP WENT BADLY WRONG

Few things are more cringe-inducing than blackface. For a group of University of Toronto students, that's the most recent lesson learned.

At a Halloween party on Oct. 29, a Trinidadian student and four white friends decided to dress up as the Jamaican bobsled team from the 1993 kitsch film *Cool Runnings*.

They wore brightly coloured tracksuits, one dreadlocks wig and Jamaican flag T-shirts. Oh, and face paint: for the black student, posing as the coach played by John Candy, thick white clown makeup. For the white students, brown foundation slightly darker than George Hamilton's self-tanner.

The day after the party, [torontoist.com](http://torontoist.com) posted a photo of the group, kicking off a heated comment section debate on satire and tribute. Criticism centred on the notion that the bobsled team had apparently won a costume prize.

"There wasn't voting or any rationale or best costume award," says Deryn Robson, a South Asian student at St. Michael's College, who organizes events like the Halloween gathering for 1,500 at Mansion Bar and Wet Lounge. Robson, who went as Mickey Mouse, says that after every party, he sends his mailing list a bunch of photos. This time, he singled out group costumes he thought were fun.

But the U of T's Black Students' Association wanted official apologies from the three colleges that threw the party.

Halloween is exuberantly tasteless, which usually slides until there's an accusation of racism. Target, Walgreen and eBay pulled an "illegal alien" costume from the shelves this year, after an immigrants' rights group objected to the alien mask attached to a bright orange prisoner's jumpsuit. The blog *Angry Asian Man* does an annual roundup of offensive gear, such as an exaggerated rubber face mask dubbed *Fee Ling You*.

Thoughtful depictions of blackface (think *Bamboozled* or *Tropic Thunder*) have recently been considered worthwhile commentary.

In a defence posted on [torontoist.com](http://torontoist.com), the U of T group said the costume was a specific tribute to a movie that played "a large



University students who donned black makeup as part of their Jamaican bobsledders costumes have apologized.

TORONTOIST.COM

part in our childhoods."

But Sanelifo Moyo, social chair for the Black Students' Association, says their costumes were too undefined to be taken seriously. "In no way did their costumes represent the Jamaican bobsled team."

"If you ask 50 different people, they'll all see 50 different things," says Stephen Johnson, a professor at U of T who has studied blackface and minstrelsy for 20 years.

Johnson says that while actors and costume-wearers want to invoke specific characters, viewers who have had racist experiences could be legitimately hurt or offended.

The Black Students' Association and other student groups organized a Tuesday night town hall meeting on the uproar. Some 250 students turned up for a quick lesson on the history of blackface from U of T professors, followed by a discussion. The bobsled group was there and submitted an apology.

Robson wasn't bothered by the *Cool Runnings* getup, saying the fivesome are being "unfairly pegged as racist."

## **RYERSON TOLD TO CRACK DOWN ON RACIST 'CHILL'**

A sweeping year-long probe into racism at Ryerson University has found a staggeringly diverse campus where some visible minority students say they feel harassed and excluded, where profs don't always deal with offensive comments made in class and some non-white staff report a "chill" that shuts them out of the power loop.

The 107-page report, commissioned by the university after a string of racist incidents in 2008, calls for immediate anti-racism training for senior staff, sharper targets for hiring visible minorities, more courses on diversity and the collection of race-based statistics on staff and students so the university can track whether equity is improving.

While noting most students and staff call the booming downtown campus "a great place to learn and work," the report, to be released Monday, cites a worrying lack of diversity in faculties such as communication and design, a need for more ESL support in programs such as nursing and business, and more black professors across the board.

Ryerson is the latest Ontario university to examine how it approaches its growing diversity; York University, the University of Western Ontario and Queen's University have reviewed aspects of how they approach minority rights and cultural tension in recent years.

"Each and every one of us needs to take responsibility for the university becoming a truly inclusive environment," declared the study by the task force of staff, students and community members that was co-chaired by Ryerson professor Grace-Edward Galabuzi and University of Toronto professor Eileen Antone, a member of the Oneida of the Thames First Nation.

Some of the incidents that prompted the appointment of the task force include the burning of an African students' club bulletin board and death threats against a student leader for being a "race traitor."

The report by the Task Force on Racism at Ryerson tells of students who say overt and subtle racism makes it difficult for them to fit in and at times makes the learning environment "toxic."

"Fostering a racism-free and inclusive environment requires bold leadership, action and vigilance on the part of everyone in the Ryerson community, and there are key gaps the institution needs to address," said the report, a copy of which was obtained by the Star.

"Many minority faculty believe there is a 'chilly climate' at Ryerson that includes stereotyping, double standards, isolation, exclusion and condescension. One member put it this way: 'Many of us feel we are in a game that we don't

really know the rules of.'"

A five-month task force at York University last year also examined ways to diffuse racial and political tensions on that campus.

The Ryerson task force used face-to-face interviews, surveys and forums to uncover a campus where some Muslim students resent having to lift their face-coverings to enter the library, where Jewish students have reported eight incidents of anti-Semitic harassment in 18 months and native students say security guards have mistaken them for homeless trespassers.

Others longed for teachers who look like them, especially aboriginal and black students.

The report calls for a powerful new Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, with a vice-president or vice-provost at the helm, to give teeth to harassment investigations and spearhead new anti-racism curriculum.

The office should also organize a pilot "Census Day" where staff and students are asked to fill in questionnaires about their race, language and culture to allow Ryerson to begin tracking the demographics of student achievement and equal employment.

Some of the anecdotes are poignant.

Black students reported problems finding classmates willing to do group work with them, saying they sometimes feel shunned on the basis of stereotypes about not being hard-working or being "dumb."

Some observant Muslim students complained teachers often use jokes about sex that can make them uncomfortable.

One professor who was teaching students how to modulate their voices for radio told the class to pretend they were having sex and to imagine the voice they heard when they experience "pleasure." Other students joined in and began making "very weird noises," leaving some students very uncomfortable.

Among the report's recommendations: evaluate managers and department heads in part by how well they have fostered diversity;

have the Learning and Teaching Office develop guidelines for dealing with unwanted classroom behaviour;

develop a course on anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, sexism, homophobia and disability that is open to all students and could be considered as mandatory in future;

have a special faculty-student subcommittee examine the curriculum and recommend the addition of non-Western themes and course offerings;

set targets for hiring minorities and enforce them;

assign struggling English-as-a-second-language students to mandatory ESL classes before merely giving them a “zero” for their lack of language skills.

# APPENDIX 6: **CHALLENGING RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM**

## **CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT**

An institution's responsibility to address discrimination is necessary under the Ontario Human Right's Code. According to the Code, an institution is required to have in place measures to prevent and respond to breaches of the Code. For colleges and universities, ensuring adherence to the Code enables inclusive and dynamic higher learning for all students.

A central part of such measures must be to address racism and discrimination that exist in the classroom. These measures should include the following:

- Training sessions for faculty and staff***  
Anti-oppression training for faculty and staff should be required by and provided through the institution. This will help ensure that professors have the tools to intervene in a constructive way whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Ensure diversity within course materials***  
Course materials should include multiple perspectives that reflect a diverse student body. Measures should exist to allow students to tailor independent assignments to reflect diversity.
- Equity statements in course syllabi***  
Require the inclusion of equity statements in course syllabi to be read and discussed at the beginning of each class. Reporting mechanisms should be included, and students should be encouraged to report racism that they witness or experience.
- Ensure safe reporting mechanisms***  
Avenues by which students, faculty and staff can report racist incidents in the classroom should be created, promoted and publicised, including in course syllabi. Students should be encouraged to speak out whenever a racist incident occurs in the classroom.
- Create a departmental advocate for professors***  
Professors or teaching staff that experience racism in their classes should have a departmental advocate to assist them in addressing the situation and, where necessary, mediate for them.
- Provide support for professors and teaching staff***  
Supports should exist for professors and teaching staff when a racist incident occurs in the classroom. Human rights or equity offices should include professional supports and advising to assist professors and staff to effectively address racism that occurs in the classroom. These supports should include equity staff who can provide anti-oppression training to classes.





# APPENDIX 7: COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION CHECKLIST

Students' unions, student groups and institutional administrations should meet to discuss ways to concretely and effectively address the occurrence of racism and the needs of racialised students. Establishing an anti-racism committee to meet regularly and respond to issues of racism as they arise will also assist in proactively addressing racism on campus. Here are some anti-racist measures to discuss:

## STUDENT LIFE

- Require that Residence Assistants / Dons go through mandatory anti-oppression training.
- Implement a “safe space” policy for residences.
- Provide support programmes and resources for international students.

## ACADEMIC CULTURE

- Create departmental review committees to examine Eurocentrism and various teaching perspectives in core curriculum.
- Implement more diverse curriculum committees with student representation.
- Conduct equity audits of faculty by department, including data on new hirings, internal promotions and type of employment status.
- Ensure that promotion and tenure criteria identify the underrepresentation of racialised groups and include faculty members' contribution to diverse teaching methods and approaches and student mentorship.
- Ensure that hiring committees maintain diverse student and faculty representation.
- Designate adequate funding for critical theory and equity studies programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

## HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICES

- Ensure that the campus human rights office is autonomous from institutional administration.
- Require that human rights offices report to a board comprised of students, faculty and staff.
- Require that human rights offices track and report complaint/case data anonymously and present this information to the Senate or Academic Council bi-annually with recommendations.
- Ensure that third parties can make complaints to human rights offices.

## SECURITY

- Require campus security members to annually attend mandatory anti-oppression training.
- Require campus security to track and report incident data and be subject to equity audits.
- Security and campus police should be diverse and reflective of the campus population.
- Establish policies, protocols and mechanisms to deal with incidences that occur during events.

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

- Collect and make public demographic data related to who is being penalised and disciplined under codes of conduct, and through academic integrity offices.
- Ensure that all academic appeals panels have student representation, selected through a democratic process.
- Ensure that constructive options such as assigning language or academic tutorials are explored for ESL students before they are academically penalised.
- Include equity provisions in hiring policy for residence staff, security personnel, administrative staff and professors to ensure representation from racialised groups.
- Increase the number of seats for students on governing bodies, to be more reflective of the student population.

## ADMISSIONS

- Create an Access Category in admissions guidelines for undergraduate, graduate, professional and diploma programmes.
- Conduct equity audits of admissions by department. Audits can also include retention rates and completion times.
- Create transition programmes for people who do not have the formal educational background that is typically required for university or college entrance, due to financial reasons, family circumstances or experiences related to systemic discrimination.

# APPENDIX 8: **HOW TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION ON CAMPUS**

The Final Report has revealed that many students, faculty and staff have or know someone who has been the target of discriminatory acts on campus. The Final Report identifies numerous incidences of what the Ontario Human Rights Code refers to as a “poisoned environment,” where racialised individuals were subjected to an atmosphere that was different from those who did not experience harassment or discrimination. Task Force participants also identify a general lack of available resources to address incidences of discrimination and institutional policies that had a discriminating effect.

## **A CULTURE OF REPORTING**

Many students, faculty and staff do not report incidents of discrimination because they are afraid that it will impact them negatively, that it will not help the situation, that it will make things worse for them, that it will take too much time or that they will be judged and labelled.

It is important to remember that it is your right to be free from discrimination of any kind. Here are some reasons to report discrimination on campus:

Many acts of discrimination can only be investigated if someone reports them.

- You are protected under the law against intimidation or harassment if you report discrimination.
- Reporting discrimination is the first step to stopping it on campus. You could be ensuring that others are not subjected to the same discrimination that you have faced.
- As a third party who has witnessed an incident of discrimination it is important to know that you can file a complaint as well.

## **HOW TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION**

### ***Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario***

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario has a duty to receive and process complaints of discrimination filed under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Tribunal is mandated to resolve applications brought under the Code, a role that was previously filled by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Telephone (Toronto): (416) 326-1312  
Telephone (Toll free): 1-866-598-0322  
TTY: (416) 326-2027  
TTY (Toll Free): 1-866-607-1240  
Fax: (416) 326-2199  
Fax (Toll Free): 1-866-355-6099  
Website: [www.hrto.ca](http://www.hrto.ca)

## ***The Human Rights Legal Support Centre***

The Human Rights Legal Support Centre offers legal services to individuals throughout Ontario, who believe they have experienced racism. The Centre's services range from legal assistance in filing an application at the Tribunal to legal representation on human rights applications.

Telephone (Toronto): (416) 314-6266  
Telephone (Toll free): 1-866-625-5179  
TTY: (416) 314-6651  
TTY (Toll Free): 1-866-612-8627  
  
Fax: (416) 314-6202  
Fax (Toll free): 1-866-625-5180  
Website: [www.hrlsc.on.ca](http://www.hrlsc.on.ca)

## ***Campus offices to report discrimination***

Most campuses have an Office for Discrimination or Harassment or a Centre for Human Rights, which is an arm's length campus service from the administration offering impartial mediation and problem solving. Their job is normally to address and resolve concerns and complaints about allegations of unfairness and to address allegations of discrimination and/or harassment as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code. These offices can normally searched and found through your institution's website.

## ***Campus Security***

Campus security services have a duty to create a campus environment that is safe for, and perceived as safe by students, faculty, staff and visitors. Campus security services would normally operate out of a central location on campus and have a contact number for urgent matters. Contact information for your local campus security can normally searched and found through your institution's website.





**[www.NoRacism.ca](http://www.NoRacism.ca)**

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