

Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities

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Preamble

Affirming the fundamental importance for universities and colleges – as institutions uniquely well placed to inspire deep learning in the search for truth, research excellence and community engagement for the benefit of world society - to take up the call to foster pan-Canadian communities of learning that build practices of ongoing dialogue and action yielding inclusion, substantive equality and societal transformation;

Acknowledging the distinct, complex historical legacy of Black people since the first known arrival of interpreter Mathieu da Costa in 1608, including the enslavement of Black people in Canada, Black contributions to the defence of British North America in the War of 1812, the presence of Black communities from the Loyalist Era through the Underground Railroad, Black settlement on the Prairies at the turn of the twentieth century, contributions of people of African descent to the diversification and strengthening of this country, and the on-going relationship of people of African descent to settler colonialism and the first caretakers of Turtle Island;

Considering the urgent reckoning with the persistence of anti-Black racism, the depths of Black underrepresentation, and the systemic loss of creative contribution compels bold, decisive action that fosters reparative justice;

Responding to the United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent, from 2015 – 2024, which has been formally recognized by the government of Canada, alongside the Permanent Forum on Peoples of African Descent, which recognize the legacies of the centuries' long, global institution of slavery and centre the themes of recognition, justice and development in the promotion and protection of the human rights of people of African descent;

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, and leading human rights treaties on equality ratified by Canada, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 1965 and the International Labour Organization's Discrimination in Employment and Occupation Convention, 1958 (No. 111), as well as the Durban Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance, 2001 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

Embracing the constitutional and quasi-constitutional frameworks for redressing systemic discrimination and promoting substantive equality that flow through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federal and provincial human rights codes and charters, and employment equity, pay equity and pay transparency legislation;

Appreciating the importance of the public policy ecosystem in which universities and colleges are situated, the historic relationship of universities and colleges with the communities in which they are embedded, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and the ethical responsibility of universities to contribute sustainably to cultural, social and economic life;

Acknowledging the role that institutions of higher education have played in constructing the bodies of knowledge about historically excluded groups and acknowledging the ethical responsibility to give voice to alternative ways of knowing while supporting community capacity building;

Respecting the historic significance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the power of its calls to action to elicit transformative reflection and action in societies generally and universities and colleges specifically;

Saluting initiatives taken by select institutions of higher education to investigate their relationship to histories of enslavement and commit to reparative justice measures for the future;

Acknowledging the galvanizing role that generations of Black students have played in redressing anti-Black racism, decolonizing curricular offerings, and representing Black traditions of excellence in teaching and learning;

Noting the emergence of caucuses of Black faculty, librarians and staff across university and college campuses in Canada and the importance of supporting their distinct role in guiding the development and implementation of policies, plans and action within their universities and across universities on inclusive excellence;

Recognizing that to address anti-Black racism and support Black inclusion is a crucial part of promoting equality and an inclusive higher education for all;

Underscoring the need to move beyond the notion of equity seeking groups to recognize that equity is deserved, as an incarnation of the principles of human dignity, substantive equality, and reparative justice;

The Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountability (Scarborough National Charter) sets out the following principles, commitments to action and accountability measures that should guide the letter and spirit of governance¹ at universities and colleges across Canada:

Principles:

Signatories of the Scarborough Charter commit to redressing anti-Black racism and fostering Black inclusion in universities and colleges across Canada.

The following four overarching principles should apply to any initiative to redress anti-Black racism and foster Black inclusion in our universities and colleges. The principles should guide the letter and spirit of all university and college policy making and action:

1. ***Black Flourishing***. Universities and colleges are central to enabling the just, fulsome realization of human potential and thriving. They play a pivotal role in redressing anti-Black racism by removing structural barriers to equity, inclusion and social justice, while advancing the innovative research, critical thinking and engaged dissemination of knowledge that foster substantive equality, human dignity, and sustainability.
2. ***Inclusive Excellence***. Inclusive excellence embodies the recognition that not only is post-secondary education enriched by equity, diversity and inclusion; equitable inclusion is critical to excellence. Excellence encompasses the ability of universities and colleges to educate and to innovate; to be alive to complexity and proactive in the face of crisis;

¹ In the context of the *Charter*, governance applies to decision-making processes and structures at all levels of the institution.

to foster fundamental questioning through rigorous, respectful engagements across difference; and to enable societal transformation.

3. **Mutuality.** Universities and colleges are embedded in communities locally, as well as nationally, regionally and internationally. By recognizing a responsibility to foster mutuality, universities and colleges acknowledge the multiple social relations and modes of societal action upon which universities and colleges depend and for which they are accountable. The positive, interactive relationship with Black communities entailed by mutuality includes the special role universities and colleges can assume in Black community economic development, notably as anchor institutions and local employers.
4. **Accountability.** Accountability involves a commitment both to ongoing education - including self-education - and to courageous action built on deeply consultative processes. Accountability includes acknowledging, respecting, and acting responsively in the face of Black life, in its full complexity and intersectionality. Universities and colleges must move beyond mere representation and take responsibility for supporting fulsome, transformative inclusion across university and college structures. By signing the Scarborough National Charter, universities and colleges commit to a process of continuous improvement through ongoing, sustained implementing of the Scarborough National Charter's principles-based commitments to action, and to be answerable for concrete outcomes, including to their respective Boards, communities and constituencies.

Commitments to Action:

Signatories of the Scarborough National Charter will be guided by each of the four principles as they embrace and implement the following concrete, non-exhaustive commitments to action, in letter and in spirit, and with full regard and respect for the rich tapestry of institutional contexts in which universities and colleges are situated. These principles-based commitments to action apply to *governance*, to *research*, to *teaching and learning*, and to *community engagement*.

1. Universities and Colleges commit to promoting **Black flourishing**
 - 1.1. in *governance* by
 - 1.1.1. ensuring that leadership on equity
 - 1.1.1.1. permeates governance structures across all university and college levels;
 - 1.1.1.2. is individually championed throughout senior administration as it progressively diversifies its own representation through mentorship, encouragement and sponsorship of Black faculty and staff;
 - 1.1.1.3. sustains inclusive, deliberative processes that acknowledge, redress and report on anti-Black racism;
 - 1.1.1.4. enlists faculty, staff and student associations as pivotal contributors to achieving equity, who also bear a responsibility to be inclusive and to work constructively with organizations of Black faculty, staff and students;
 - 1.1.2. reviewing and revising dispute resolution processes, including disciplinary measures and protections against reprisals, to secure their responsiveness to redressing anti-Black racism and promoting inclusive, balanced representation;
 - 1.2. in *research* by

- 1.2.1. engaging proactively - including externally with research bodies such as the tri-council of federal funding agencies - to redress Black underrepresentation and build equitable practices into research grant selection and research recognition processes;
 - 1.2.2. building concrete research support practices, including mentorship and sponsorship, to encourage Black faculty thriving through the academic ranks and into positions of research leadership, accompanied by recognition practices for members of historically underrepresented communities bearing disproportionate burdens of the labour;
 - 1.3. in *teaching and learning* by
 - 1.3.1. constructing beautiful, accessible spaces and cultivating naming practices that foster Black belonging, knowledge development and sharing;
 - 1.3.2. enabling, supporting and encouraging Black student leadership, insights, energy and actions throughout academic programs, curricular and co-curricular development and other aspects of university and college teaching, learning and student development;
 - 1.4. in *community engagement* by
 - 1.4.1. commissioning academically rigorous and community inclusive task forces to conduct independent studies of the histories of slavery, colonialism and racial injustice, with a mandate to include recommendations that promote inclusive higher education and community flourishing into the future;
 - 1.4.2. supporting dedicated research, teaching and community engagement in keeping with the themes of the United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent and its Permanent Forum.
2. Universities and colleges commit to fostering **inclusive excellence**
- 2.1. in *governance* by
 - 2.1.1. identifying the extent of (under)representation through baseline data compilation and analysis, providing demographic knowledge of Black faculty, staff and students – with suitable disaggregation of data to reflect domestic and international student populations - within colleges and universities on recruitment at each university and college, as a starting point for action to foster inclusion;
 - 2.1.2. establishing comprehensive strategies where gaps exist, including targets, timetables and transparency mechanisms, and providing sustained resource commitments to
 - 2.1.2.1. recruit and retain Black professors, wherever feasible in cluster hires across academic disciplines;
 - 2.1.2.2. recruit and retain Black staff across university and college units;
 - 2.1.2.3. recruit Black students and support their successful program completion;
 - 2.1.2.4. identify and redress wage discrimination and occupational segregation;
 - 2.2. in *research* by
 - 2.2.1. recognizing, engaging critically with and celebrating traditions of Black intellectual excellence across the academy, including by supporting research clusters that enable plural communities of knowledge to flourish;
 - 2.2.2. increasing equitable and inclusive participation by Black academics in research teams, research chairs and fellowships, university-wide visiting keynote lectureships and other forms of research recognition that celebrate excellence;
 - 2.3. in *teaching and learning* by
 - 2.3.1. encouraging the emergence of Black and Black Canadian studies programs while promoting curricular development across academic disciplines that decentres epistemic Eurocentrism, that holds open space for expansive, world-inspired learning that broadens disciplinary canons to include Black expertise and knowledges;

- 2.3.2. providing scholarships, bursaries, fellowships and related, dedicated support including increased research opportunities, mentorship and alumni engagement to support
 - 2.3.2.1. Black admission to universities and colleges;
 - 2.3.2.2. Black enrollment in graduate and post-doctoral studies;
 - 2.3.2.3. Black thriving through to program completion;
- 2.4. in *community engagement* by
 - 2.4.1. developing pathways for access to higher education for Black students, including promoting student outreach with local, regional, national and international communities and providing robust “wrap-around” support;
 - 2.4.2. building mechanisms for ongoing outreach and sponsors for broader Black communities, including career advisors, advancement staff, and alumni coaches that include representation of Black communities.
- 3. Universities and colleges commit to enabling **mutuality**
 - 3.1. In *governance* by
 - 3.1.1. reassessing the existing campus security and safety infrastructure and protocols with a view to protecting the human dignity, equality and safety of Black people on campus;
 - 3.1.2. undertaking periodic climate surveys that consider local community relations, to assess and guide initiatives to build inclusive campuses;
 - 3.2. In *research* by
 - 3.2.1. confirming that research about Black communities or that is likely to affect the welfare of Black communities respects principles of co-construction, including sustained outreach to relevant communities on inputs and the interpretation of research results;
 - 3.2.2. collaborating on the development of tri-council guidelines on research affecting Black communities [in Canada], fostering community-engaged research principles fostering representation of Black community members and respect for their lived experiences;
 - 3.3. in *teaching and learning* by
 - 3.3.1. building grade school through university and college outreach programs;
 - 3.3.2. adopting policies, educational sessions and practices of inclusion that sustain harassment-free classrooms and other learning environments in which rigorous study can occur;
 - 3.4. in *community engagement* by
 - 3.4.1. requiring Black community prior-impact assessments as part of procurement processes, to move equity initiatives away from risk mitigation toward proactive, sustainable opportunity creation and integrating Black community impact assessments into any restructuring initiatives;
 - 3.4.2. building robust community partnerships with Black-led organizations.
- 4. Universities and Colleges commit to ensuring **accountability**
 - 4.1. in *governance* by
 - 4.1.1. establishing ethical data [co-creation and] governance practices, notably by
 - 4.1.1.1. confirming that the collection of data is undertaken as a means to foster inclusive, just, equitable post-secondary environments that are enabled by rigorous, evidence-based decision-making;
 - 4.1.1.2. exercising caution in the face of the systemic inequalities and racial biases that may be perpetuated within artificial intelligence big data, surveillance and other technological advances, while deepening the understanding of technological inequities;

- 4.1.1.3. mapping, retrieving, maintaining and to the extent permitted by law sharing reliable, disaggregated data on Black representation and with Statistics Canada and other relevant external institutions over defined periods of time;
- 4.1.1.4. benchmarking data to enable comparisons over time and between signatories to the Scarborough National Charter and that promote transparency about the reasons that any identified categories of data may not be collected;
- 4.1.2. establishing a suitably staffed office in senior administration dedicated in whole or in part to redressing racism across the university and college with responsibility for academic affairs, human resources and student life and learning, led by a senior administrator, wherever possible reporting to the university or college president or principal;
- 4.2. in *research* by
 - 4.2.1. collecting specific data on the representation of Black researchers on research teams, in research grant awards, in research chairs and fellowships;
 - 4.2.2. building robust reporting mechanisms and reward systems that assess and recognize research contributions to Black flourishing, inclusive excellence and mutuality;
- 4.3. in *teaching and learning* by
 - 4.3.1. providing anti-Black racism education for all members of the university or college while developing performance expectations for faculty and staff that build capacity on anti-racism and Black inclusion;
 - 4.3.2. building robust reporting mechanisms that assess and recognize teaching and learning contributions to Black flourishing, inclusive excellence and mutuality;
- 4.4. in *community engagement* by
 - 4.4.1. enabling and reporting on co-creation in the data collection process by communities most concerned;
 - 4.4.2. retaining contact with professional orders and related regulatory bodies where they exist (including doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, lawyers, social workers, teachers) to be able to assess the admission and career progression of Black university and college graduates.

Accountability

1. ***Scarborough Inter-Institutional Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education.***
 - 1.1. The Scarborough National Charter establishes the National Inter-institutional Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (National Consortium).
 - 1.2. Partner institutions of the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities are the founding members of the National Consortium.
 - 1.3. The National Consortium will be convened at the University of Toronto – Scarborough, where archives of the University of Toronto National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities, the Scarborough National Charter and the National Consortium will be housed and preserved.
 - 1.4. All universities and colleges in Canada, including members of the CÉGEP system in Québec, may apply to join the National Consortium, by committing to implement the Scarborough National Charter.
2. ***Commitments.***

- 2.1. Member institutions undertake to make the Scarborough National Charter a core resource guiding policy creation and implementation for decisions and actions, across university and college governance, in research, teaching and learning, and in community engagement.
 - 2.2. Member institutions commit to adopting accountability mechanisms to sustain stable, long-term and enduring inclusion, while cultivating a culture of accountability that extends beyond reporting exercises to embody the spirit of the guiding principles of the Scarborough National Charter.
 - 2.3. Member institutions commit to fostering communities of learning to galvanize continuous improvement on inclusion, within the National Consortium.
 - 2.4. Member institutions will commit the requisite financial and human resources to the National Consortium to enable the Scarborough National Charter to be fully implemented.
 - 2.5. Member institutions commit to sharing data, to the extent permitted by law, with each other, within the National Consortium and under the guidance of the Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education.
3. ***Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education.***
- 3.1. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee on Inclusive Higher Education (Inter-institutional Steering Committee) is the steering committee for the Inter-university Consortium.
 - 3.2. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee will assume responsibility for
 - 3.2.1. determining membership in the National Consortium;
 - 3.2.2. encouraging the development of communities of practice within the National Consortium, where good practices are shared and on-going learning is supported;
 - 3.2.3. fostering implementation and accountability by member institutions of the Scarborough National Charter, including through
 - 3.2.3.1. data collection from member institutions and the encouragement of consistency in data governance and data sharing;
 - 3.2.3.2. periodic reporting, both within the National Consortium and publicly;
 - 3.2.3.3. commissioning studies and otherwise serving as a clearinghouse for the sharing of core knowledge on redressing anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion by fostering [Black] [human] flourishing, inclusive excellence, mutuality and accountability; and
 - 3.2.4. interfacing with relevant governments, institutions, organizations, communities and other actors on behalf of the National Consortium to secure implementation of the Scarborough National Charter.
 - 3.3. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee's founding membership comprises the current membership of the Inter-institutional Advisory Committee for the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities.
 - 3.4. Membership terms range from 2 – 4 years, and will be renewed on a staggered basis.
 - 3.5. Within its first year of operation, the Inter-institutional Steering Committee will establish terms of reference to govern its actions.
 - 3.6. The Inter-institutional Steering Committee will establish and periodically review the schedule of [recommended] contributions for member institutions.
4. ***Permanent Forum for National Dialogues and Action.***
- 4.1. Member institutions commit to establishing a permanent, rotating forum, which will convene on a [biennial][annual] basis to

- 4.1.1. share insights and good practices on the principles-based commitments, foregrounding one or more principle and related action per forum;
- 4.1.2. strengthen the inter-institutional communities of practice; and
- 4.1.3. discuss reports on progress on implementation of the Scarborough National Charter.
- 4.2. Rotations by host institutions will show due regard for bilingualism, regional diversity, and the representation of universities and colleges in the Inter-institutional consortium.