Supporting Black students at Queen’s

Principal Patrick Deane announces three new initiatives to further the university’s commitment to fight racism and create a safe and supportive experience for Black students.

The Black Lives Matter protests now happening around the world have also sparked important and timely conversations at Queen’s. Over the past week, the university has heard from students and others that it can, and must, do more to help fight all forms of racism against Black members of our community.

Acknowledging that there is much work still to do at Queen’s, Principal Patrick Deane has announced new mental health supports and more funding for initiatives to ensure Black students are able to thrive in a positive environment throughout their time at Queen’s.

“Our students have called on us to do our best to create an inclusive and diverse community where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and respected, and we will expand our efforts to make this a reality,” says Principal and Vice-Chancellor Patrick Deane. “We know we have work to do to ensure we are supporting our Black students who have put their trust in Queen’s to deliver a positive and rewarding experience, both academically and personally.”

To support these objectives, the university is implementing three new initiatives. The first is the creation of virtual meeting spaces where those who have experienced anti-Black racism can connect with each other and with new mental health supports. Three of these sessions are planned over the coming weeks with the first taking place on Friday, June 12 at 1 p.m. They are being organized by Student Affairs and the Human Rights and Equity Office and registration is available online. Together these sessions are designed to create a safe space for conversations about experiences of anti-Black racism, to provide strategies to help manage stress and anxiety, and to foster empowerment.

The university is also securing the services of a Black counselor to provide one-on-one counseling for our Black students. More information about how to book appointments will be available on the Student Wellness Services webpage in the coming days.

The second initiative will see more funding available to support Black student-led events, programs, initiatives, and projects on campus through the existing inclusive Queen’s Community Fund. Effective immediately, the Principal has committed an additional $25,000 every year to the fund to be provided by his office, bringing the annual total of funds to $75,000. The fund was established in 2018 to create an inclusive and welcoming environment in which diversity is valued and celebrated by all members of the campus community. Discussions are also ongoing to establish further awards and prizes that acknowledge the work of Black students in undertaking anti-racism work.

The third initiative is Queen’s commitment to hiring more faculty to support the launch of a B.A. Minor in General in Black Studies. This new program is in development and will launch in September 2021.

Along with these initiatives, the university leadership will continue to work with Black student groups on campus, such as the Queen’s Black Academic Society (QBAS). This student group has been leading efforts over the past few weeks to encourage meaningful action and it has successfully raised funds to support a range of organizations in Canada and the US that support Black lives. Donations flowed to these organizations from a wide variety of student, faculty, and staff groups and organizations across the Queen’s community, and Queen’s acknowledges QBAS’s challenge to match these donations. After discussions with QBAS, and in recognition of the difficulties entailed in charitable giving by a publicly-funded university which it is a charity, it was determined that funding the three initiatives would have a greater impact on the immediate needs of Queen’s Black students and the community.

“We are pleased to have begun a new conversation with the university administration and we will be pushing Queen’s to help us create a space that engages many into action towards supporting Black identities and connecting people with the resources they need,” says Catherine Haba, QBAS President.

For our students seeking help in coping with current events, student support counselors are available, as well as as Empower Me and GoodTalk, which can provide 24/7 access to a counselor. Staff and faculty may access support through our Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) program. Our Human Rights and Equity Office is also available to consult with any member of our university community.

Related Stories

Principal’s statement on anti-racism protests in the United States and Canada
March 8-0
March in solidarity
2019-10-18

Waiting undergraduate orientation more inclusive
2018-03-07

Queen’s celebrates swearing in of 63 new Canadians
2020-02-26

Orientation changes encourage inclusively
2018-09-28

Recent Stories...

Featured Event: Faculty Calendar
Join us to celebrate Queen’s December events! As official Queen’s events, as well as community events happening on campus.
About the Faculty Calendar

See events...

Tags: campus community