

Subject: Principal's Update on the Declaration of Commitment to Address Systemic Racism
Date: Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 1:36:48 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: To Queen's Faculty and Staff on behalf of Patrick Deane
To: QFACULTY-QSTAFF@LISTS.QUEENSU.CA
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Dear Queen's Community,

I write to you today to provide you with an update on the progress made to address anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and other forms of racism, discrimination and harassment since our entire university leadership signed and publicly released the 11-point [Declaration of Commitment to Address Systemic Racism](#). I am pleased to report that considerable action has occurred and more is planned.



Harassment & Discrimination Policy

On the most comprehensive level, we are getting close to finalizing our new university policy and procedures on harassment and discrimination. The policy, which is currently [posted for community consultation and discussion](#), features extensive definitions of race and racism adapted from Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) guidelines. The new policy will take a centralized and holistic approach to ensuring a prompt response, efficient intake, fair and effective resolution, and improved data collection with regard to harassment and discrimination. Community education regarding rights and responsibilities will be a cornerstone of the revised policy with the AVP Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion continuing to play a pivotal role in training and awareness as well as supporting equity deserving students, faculty, and staff.



Sexual & Gender Diversity Action Group

With support and direction from the Provost and Deputy Provost, a Sexual and Gender Diversity Action Group has been formed and will shortly begin meeting and producing recommendations for action. This new group will help inform the university's approach to 2SLGBTQ+ matters and will assist in shaping policies and initiatives that recognize and include 2SLGBTQ+ considerations and concerns in decision-making.



Campus Climate Survey for Students

With leadership from the offices of the AVP Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion and the Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs, a campus climate survey for students is being finalized. Student leaders have been active in the development of this survey, which is planned to be released to the student community in early spring. This will provide invaluable information on campus climate and give us a benchmark from which to measure progress as we continue to take action to address systemic issues of racism, discrimination and harassment.



Recruitment & Admission

The university has also made considerable changes to its recruitment and admission processes and procedures. Under the direction of our Division of Students Affairs, significant and deliberate [progress has been made](#) to not only welcome a more diverse student body but to ensure support is provided to students that have been under-represented and underserved at Queen's. An Equity Admission Self-Identification form was launched this fall with over 4000 prospective students opting to self-identify to date. The information gathered from this process will allow the university to assess the success of its outreach efforts to recruit a more diverse student population. In addition, the university has launched the [Commitment Scholars Award](#) for which applications are due mid-February. This new Award will be granted to underrepresented students who have demonstrated leadership in, and commitment to racial justice, social justice, or diversity initiatives. Further, a new [Commitment Bursary](#) will provide financial support to students who identify as members of under-represented groups including Black, Indigenous and racialized students, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.



Faculty-specific work

Faculties and offices across campus are taking action to address EDII concerns and respond to systemic racism in living, learning, research, and work environments. To offer just a few examples. As part of its comprehensive Strategic Plan, the Faculty of Arts and Science continues to work to implement a [Black Studies minor](#). It also recently appointed the Faculty's first Assistant Dean in EDII. The Faculty of Health Sciences launched the [Dean's Action Table on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and the Faculty of Health Sciences Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion this fall. And, just this week, the Smith School of Business launched consultations on a draft EDII Strategy and Action Plan that was developed through extensive conversations with the [Smith EDII task force](#) and community members. The [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#) recently began creating its first strategic plan that will help ensure that its work and the services and supports provided by the Office are integrated across campus.



Education & Training

Recently, I announced the implementation of the mandatory *Working Together* staff training designed by our [Human Rights and Equity Office](#) to educate staff about EDII concerns and best practices. This introductory session underscores the university's commitment to human rights, equity and inclusion and gives staff the tools they need to support and promote an inclusive and equity-minded campus and workplace.

This list is not exhaustive nor is it final. Rather, it highlights a number of actions that I believe will change our institution for the better and exemplifies the promise of more to come. I remain committed to real transformation at Queen's and will continue to update the community on progress being made. I am currently redesigning my website so the community will be able to look to it for real-time reporting. For my part, I am mandating reporting on progress on EDII for all my senior leadership team and the Provost has agreed to do the same for all the academic leaders that report to him.

As I continue to [consult with the community](#) on our strategic vision for the university, I am positive about the future. In the fall, I will release our new strategy and I know it will chart a path for this institution that is bold, embraces change and outlines a future in which all our members can see themselves, and of which they are an integral part.

Patrick .

Patrick Deane
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

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