



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Confronting Anti-Black Racism & Promoting Black Inclusion and Excellence An Action Plan

**The Anti-Black Racism Task Force
Faculty of Social Work
University of Calgary
2021**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2020, the unjust murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black lives by police fueled a global movement against police brutality and anti-Black racism. In solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, the Faculty of Social Work (FSW) at the University of Calgary released a statement in 2020 affirming its commitment to addressing anti-Black racism. The FSW formed the Anti-Black Racism Task Force to uphold this commitment, with a mandate of promoting Black excellence and contributions while addressing anti-Black racism in its structures, processes, and practices. The purpose of this Action Plan is to articulate the key priorities the Task Force will fulfil in its plight to eradicate anti-Black racism.

Acknowledging the Moment

The increasing strength of the Black Lives Matter movement and calls to address systemic anti-Black racism has struck a chord in Canada. Black communities experience structural disadvantages and systemic exclusion, including disproportionate rates of poverty and incarceration (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2020). The FSW acknowledges that in both the past and the present, the social work profession has been complicit in perpetuating anti-Black racism through the surveillance, policing, and exclusion of Black communities from health and social services (Canadian Association of Social Work Education, 2020). Within the FSW, anti-Black racism manifests in multiple ways, however there is a scarcity of resources to support anti-racist practices and limited mechanisms to address racist incidents.

Our Guiding Principles

The Task Force's work is informed by a set of guiding principles which includes recognizing the impact of power, privilege, and social positionality in the Task Force; accounting for the impact of intersecting forms of oppression on the Task Force and its work; ensuring transparency and accountability in the Task Force's processes and outcomes; and enacting transformative changes that address systemic anti-Black racism.

Our Priorities and Actions

Priority 1: Recruit, Hire and Retain Black Academics and Staff

Some planned actions include: the revision of FSW guidelines on hiring practices to address anti-Black racism; the diversification of recruitment methods to target Black community networks and professional associations; mandated Black representation among academic and staff members and hiring committees; the requirement of anti-racism training for hiring committees; and the development of a mentorship and support program for Black academics and staff.

Priority 2: Recognize Black Experiences, Perspectives and Contributions in Teaching and Learning

This includes actions such as: the requirement of Black knowledge and perspectives in curricula; the promotion of critical perspectives in the curricula; the development of a Teaching Repository for Black Inclusion and Excellence to support instructors; and the development of a database to bring in Black scholars, leaders, and community members as guest speakers.

Priority 3: Provide Training on Africentric Worldviews and Anti-Black Racism to All Faculty Personnel

The proposed initiatives include: the development of an online series of training modules on anti-Black racism and Black perspectives; and the requirement of academic and staff members to address anti-Black racism in their professional development plans.

Priority 4: Increase Recruitment and Admission of Black Students

These action steps include: the collection of race-based data from current students and applicants; a sociodemographic review of offers of admission and non-admission; and the use of collected data to target the recruitment and retention of Black students.

Priority 5: Strengthen Black Student Engagement, Experience and Support

Some initiatives the Task Force will prioritize include: the creation of a peer support network and a faculty mentorship program for Black students; the offering of scholarships and bursaries to Black students; and the development of academic and psychosocial support for Black students.

Priority 6: Strengthen Community Engagement

Proposed actions include partnerships with Black community organizations, social workers, and leaders; the development of Black alumni-student networking opportunities; and the organization of events to celebrate Black history and contributions.

Priority 7: Allocate Adequate Resources to Support Black Contributions and Excellence

Forthcoming initiatives include but are not limited to consultations with financial partners to secure funding for the implementation of the action plan; the allocation of financial and human resources to support the Task Force and its work; the funding of university-wide initiatives to increase awareness of anti-Black racism and promote Black inclusion.

Priority 8: Develop Effective Mechanisms for Reporting and Addressing Incidents of Racism

The Task Force will: review existing policies, structures, and processes for reporting incidents of racism and discrimination; develop transparent and accessible mechanisms and channels for reporting incidents; and develop processes and guidelines for addressing reported incidents.

Accountability and Reporting Measures

Finally, the Task Force will work in consultation with the leadership team, Faculty Council, and relevant partners to implement this action plan. The Task Force will develop a detailed implementation plan with clear timelines; monitor and assess the FSW's annual progress in implementation of the plan; revise the action plan annually; and provide regular, accessible updates about the action plan.

1. Acknowledging the Moment

Black communities experience structural disadvantages and systemic exclusion, including disproportionate rates of poverty, un/underemployment, school dropout/push-out, police victimization and pervasive incarceration (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2020). Despite their established presence in Canada since the 1600's, Black Canadians' roles in the development of the country have been omitted, subsumed, or undermined in historical and contemporary narratives. Black scholars and leaders have primarily carried the burdens of demystifying, correcting, reclaiming, and asserting Black histories and contributions.

In 2020, ongoing police brutality and killings of Black people, including the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, fueled a global movement to address systemic anti-Black racism. Our academic members, staff and students have been reminded of the long-standing inequalities facing Black communities in all aspects of Canadian life. In supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, the Faculty of Social Work (FSW) must confront the ways in which the social work profession has been -- and continues to be -- steeped in whiteness and white supremacy. Our profession has privileged and normalized Eurocentric worldviews, beliefs and practices (Yee, 2015). It is historically and contemporarily complicit in perpetuating anti-Black racism through practices of segregation, surveillance, policing and exclusion of Black communities from health and social services (Canadian Association of Social Work Education, 2020). Social workers primarily work in colonial institutions designed to examine and address the manifestation of social inequalities, yet the long history of Black social workers, activists, and scholars in the development of Canadian social welfare, social work education and social work practice has not been adequately documented and recognized (Este et al., 2017).

In response to ongoing calls to address anti-Black racism, the FSW issued a statement in the summer of 2020 to express our solidarity

and commitment to confronting and addressing anti-Black racism. We continue to grapple with decolonizing approaches and practices to enhance our organizational culture, structures and functions, curricula, teaching methods, and the learning experience. Our students, educators and staff have identified the multiple ways that racism and anti-Black racism transpire within our Faculty and university, including: limited understanding of racism and anti-racism; lack of effective mechanisms to address racist incidents; scarce resources and training support for anti-racist practice; inequitable acknowledgment of the challenges and additional burdens faced by racialized, Indigenous and Black students and educators; and inconsistent engagement with alternative ways of knowing and forms of knowledge in course content and classroom learning activities (Ladhani, Este, & Sitter, 2021). Several frank, critical dialogues on anti-Black racism over the past three years have reinforced the need to confront whiteness, white supremacy, anti-Black racism and their impact on students, staff, faculty members and communities within the FSW.

2. Making Our Commitment to Systemic Change

Development of the FSW Anti-Black Racism Task Force

On July 8, 2020, the FSW embarked upon a formal initiative to address anti-Black racism across the Faculty, which led to the development of the FSW Anti-Black Racism Task Force. Our mandate is to promote Black contributions and excellence while addressing anti-Black racism in the FSW's structures and functions. The Task Force meets biweekly and is committed to undertaking both short- and long-term actions to fulfill its mandate. While we have identified timelines for various aspects of our work, due to the history, gravity and depth of the changes needed, the work of the Task Force is ongoing.

Our Guiding Principles

1. A recognition of our own power, privilege and positionalities.
2. A recognition of the ways in which racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism and intersectional forms of oppression are present and enacted within the Task Force.
3. A commitment to accounting for and minimizing power imbalances with respect to race, class, gender, gender identity, sexuality, (dis)ability and other positionalities within the Task Force.
4. A commitment to respectful relationality, which includes a commitment to contributing with honesty, integrity, humility, respect, and compassion in relation to other members of the Task Force.
5. A commitment to transparency and accountability regarding the processes, practices and outcomes of the Task Force, both within the Task Force and the broader FSW.
6. A commitment to transformative work that addresses anti-Black racism comprehensively, including historic and ongoing systemic anti-Black racism in relation to staff, academic staff, students of the FSW and the communities with which we engage.

7. A commitment to contribute and collaborate in ways that lighten the burdens of time, tasks, and emotional labour on any one individual -- in particular, Black, Indigenous, or racialized Task Force members.
8. A commitment to find ways to meaningfully resource and account for the work of the Task Force.

3. Our Priorities and Actions



Priority 1: Recruit, Hire and Retain Black Academics and Staff

1. Develop and revise the Faculty of Social Work's (FSW) guidelines to address anti-Black racism in hiring practices.
2. Articulate the Faculty's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization in all job postings and invite candidates from Black communities to apply.

3. Diversify methods of recruitment, including targeted search and job advertisement in Black community networks and professional associations.
4. Ensure Black representation among academic and staff members in all regions.
5. Require representation of Black academics in all hiring committees.
6. Require all hiring committee members to complete anti-racism and unconscious bias training.
7. Require all candidates to provide a statement on their applications outlining their perspectives on diversity, equity, inclusion and decolonization.
8. Develop a formal mentorship and support program for Black academics and staff.
9. Support Black academics and staff members to develop and advance their careers.
10. Recognize and provide appropriate course release and/or resources to faculty members who play leadership roles in the development and implementation of the anti-Black racism action plan.

Priority 2: Recognize Black Experiences, Perspectives and Contributions in Teaching and Learning

1. Require Black knowledges and perspectives in learning outcomes and learning activities in all modules and courses in the BSW, MSW and PhD programs.
2. Promote critical perspectives, including anti-colonial approaches, anti-racist social work practice, Africentric social work approaches and critical race theory in BSW, MSW and PhD curricula.
3. Include in all course outlines a link to the Faculty's statements on anti-Black racism.
4. Develop and promote a Teaching Repository for Black Inclusion and Excellence that offers teaching resources to all instructors.
5. Develop, update and promote a database that supports instructors to access Black scholars, teachers, leaders and community members as guest speakers and lecturers.
6. Revise remuneration criteria for guest lecturers to value the time and knowledge of Black guest speakers and lecturers.

Priority 3: Provide Training on Africentric Worldviews and Anti-Black Racism to All Faculty Personnel

1. Develop an online series of Anti-Black Racism and Black perspectives training modules and seminars that focus on:
 - a) Black Canadian history, experiences, perspectives, and contributions
 - b) Anti-Black racism (personal, interpersonal, and systemic dynamics and impact)
 - c) Black engagement
 - d) Equity movement and social change

2. Require academic and staff members to address anti-Black racism in their individualized professional development plans.

Priority 4: Increase Recruitment and Admission of Black Students

1. Collect race-based data on all FSW application forms.
2. Collect race-based data from current students.
3. Conduct a sociodemographic review of program applications, offers of program admission and non-admissions at the BSW, MSW and PhD levels.
4. Identify and address the obstacles impeding Black student recruitment and admission application.
5. Use data to inform the targeted recruitment and retention of Black students.
6. Promote social work programs in Black communities, organizations, and professional networks.

Priority 5: Strengthen Black Student Engagement, Experience and Support

1. Initiate a peer support network specifically for Black students (i.e., Virtual Café).
2. Develop a peer and faculty mentorship program for Black students.
3. Consult with and develop responsive academic and psychosocial support for Black students.
4. Offer scholarships and bursaries to Black students.
5. Engage Black students to participate in various faculty committees.
6. Conduct a comprehensive annual survey to assess the well-being and retention of Black students.
7. Strive to continuously improve the experiences of Black students.

Priority 6: Strengthen Community Engagement

1. Establish reciprocal partnerships with Black community organizations, social workers, and leaders.
2. Organize Black alumni-student networking opportunities.
3. Work with Black community partners and leaders to organize multiple events (including Black History Month) to celebrate Black history, contributions, and excellence.

Priority 7: Allocate Adequate Resources to Support Black Contributions and Excellence

1. Determine the support needed to facilitate Task Force initiatives.
2. Consult with financial partners to establish the funding required for the implementation of the action plan.
3. Provide financial and human resources to implement the identified priorities and actions and support the work of the Task Force.

4. Work with university partners to fund university-wide initiatives that expand awareness of anti-Black racism and promote Black inclusion and excellence.
5. Seek external funding to support the implementation of the action plan.

Priority 8: Develop Effective Mechanisms for Reporting and Redressing Anti-Black Racism

1. Create educational resources (e.g., brochure, pamphlet) that define anti-Black racism and outline rights and responsibilities for reporting and addressing anti-Black racism
2. Establish Black advisory board/committee to support Black students, staff and faculty who have experienced anti-Black racism
3. Develop protocols, processes, procedures for addressing and redressing complaints of anti-Black racism
4. Create two paid student peer support positions
5. Hire Black race trauma-informed counsellors to support students, staff, and faculty members

Accountability and Reporting Measures

The Task Force, in consultation with the leadership team, Faculty Council and relevant partners (HR, Student Services, etc.), will commit to implementing the actions identified in this plan. The Task Force will monitor, assess, and provide recommendations on the Faculty's progress in promoting Black excellence and addressing anti-Black racism.

1. Develop a detailed implementation plan that outlines the Task Force's priorities, actions, outputs, timelines, and indicators of success.
2. Monitor and assess the Faculty's annual progress in implementing the action plan.
3. Consult with the university community and Black communities on the action plan and its implementation.
4. Revise the action plan on an annual basis.
5. Provide regular updates of the action plan at Faculty meetings, Faculty Council meetings and on the Faculty's/Task Force's website.



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APPENDIX A

Implementation and Accountability Template

Priority	Action	Output	Indicators of Success	Timeline	Led by	Consulted with

APPENDIX B

Terms of Reference

Preamble	<p>On July 8, 2020, the Faculty of Social Work (FSW) embarked upon a formal initiative to address anti-Black racism across the Faculty. The FSW Anti-Black Racism Task Force was developed to help facilitate a number of initiatives. Our Faculty has a commitment to address systemic issues that are relevant to anti-Black racism in our historical and political contexts. Anti-Black Racism Task Force is a sub-committee of the Equity Action Committee (which has a long-term mandate). The Task Force will work with the Equity Action Committee and other FSW Committees to create an all-encompassing faculty-wide action plan to confront all forms of racism and inequities within our Faculty.</p>
Purpose	<p>The purpose of the FSW Anti-Black Racism Task Force is to guide the advocacy, development and implementation of strategies to address anti-Black racism in the Faculty of Social Work. We will inform other Faculty efforts and the Equity Action Committee for the duration of this Task Force. We balance addressing anti-Black racism, learning, and celebrating, e.g., marking Black History month, Black achievements, etc.</p>
Definition	<p>Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy (Government of Ontario, 2020). Anti-Black racism is enacted and reinforced in policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as education, health, social and community services, and the criminal justice system (modified from Black Health Alliance, Toronto, 2020).</p>

<p>Scope & Responsibilities</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>The Task Force’s mandate is to expand awareness, confront and address Anti-Black racism within our Faculty.</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>Under the direction of the Dean, the Task Force is responsible for the coordination of initiatives and actions to eliminate Anti-Black racism and to eradicate racist beliefs, behaviors and actions within the Faculty of Social Work.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the day-to-day experiences of Black Faculty, staff, students, alumni, community, and stakeholders are respectful and equitable. • Reviewing FSW values, policies, procedures, structures, curriculum, and functions from an anti-Black/anti-racist lens. • Identifying issues and areas of priority. This would include a review of any relevant research (e.g., Dr Este’s work and Dr. Sitter’s project) and a review of student concerns. Previous faculty actions and pertinent FSW Equity Action Committee data will also be reviewed to consider what might be built upon. • Ensuring that faculty members and staff are aware of the work of the Task Force by regularly reporting to Faculty meetings and Faculty Council. • Review effective practices, research to inform our work, review our resources in consultation with students. • Providing oversight for the alignment of our social work values and actions against Anti-Black racism in the Faculty of Social Work. • The group will also strive to align with the purpose and values of this Task Force with respect to the FSW Equity Action Committee. • Creating an implementation plan that includes the strategies, priorities, concrete actions resources required, and dates for evaluation (i.e., effectiveness of each item of the action plan and completion). • Consider community realities, faculty realities, points of tension/ opportunities.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the organizational structure and functional change when we address anti-Black racism. • Developing a long-term plan for implementation, which includes monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Establishing mechanisms for involvement of and communication with stakeholders (internal/external). Identifying structures to support change process (i.e., roles and responsibilities of each member of our Faculty). • Work closely with the FSW Equity Action Committee to support faculty-wide work to take action against racism in all forms. <p>The Chair or designate is responsible for liaising and reporting with offices and committees such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Faculty and Staff at the Faculty of Social Work • The Equity Action Committee for the Faculty • University of Calgary Dimensions Steering Committee • The U of C Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion • The University of Calgary Diversity and Equity Network • Annual review and update of this terms of reference with the committee.
<p>Composition</p>	<p>The FSW Anti-Black Racism Task Force consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean (as Co-Chair) • Academic Co-Chair • Vice-Dean • Associate Dean, Research & Partnerships • Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning • Associate Dean, Graduate Programs • Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs • Up to eight additional academic staff (including sessional instructors) • Representation from Staff (2) • Representation from Students (1 Undergrad, 1 Graduate) • Community stakeholders (2) • University liaison/rep • Equity Action Committee liaison • Others to be consulted as required

	<p>Voting, Membership, Proxies and Quorum:</p> <p>Voting may be useful for determining actions at certain times. All Task Force members vote except for the Chair who votes in the event of a tie. No proxies are accepted. If a voting member is required to be absent from a meeting, it is that member's responsibility to designate an alternate to attend and provide the name of the alternate to the Chair in advance of the meeting. A quorum is 50%, as for policy committees.</p> <p>If any committee member is experiencing a conflict of interest with any part of a discussion (e.g., resource allocation), then that committee member shall inform the Chair, and the Chair shall designate an alternate to work with the Task Force to consider that issue.</p>
Agendas & Meetings	<p>The Task Force will meet bi-weekly, with additional subcommittee meetings held as required to accommodate the implementation of the action plan. The Task Force will also meet as required at the call of the Chair. The Chair will provide information for review to members at least one week in advance of the meeting.</p>
Reporting	<p>A report will be provided regularly to the Dean and the Faculty of Social Work Faculty Meeting on the Task Force's plan, actions completed, and evaluation of various initiatives, every three months.</p>
Resources	<p>An annual budget will be allocated to support the implementation of different initiatives. Time may be requested from staff positions as needed.</p>
Evaluation	<p>The functioning and extent to which the Task Force is meeting its intended mandate, including these terms of reference, will be evaluated on at least a yearly basis.</p> <p>Measurable outcomes include increased awareness of anti-Black racism and its effects, mandatory training for Faculty and staff, development of anti-Black racism resources/ database, curriculum development with a particular focus on anti-Black racism, and implementation of mechanisms to address incidents of anti-Black racism across the Faculty.</p>

¹ That the quorum for academic policy committees be 50% (Faculty Assembly, September 22, 1999)